

treatments of architectural design to explorations of the socio-economic dimensions of mass consumption. Overall, what the contributions share is a vision of department stores as symbols rather than as business enterprises. This book looks through the plate glass and imagines the people surging along the streets outside. Two of the articles—those by Tim Coles on department store locations in Germany and Gábor Gyáni on class and consumption in Budapest—are contributions to debates about the extent and speed of economic modernization. Others, such as Erika Rappaport's on the image of shop girls on London stages and Christopher Hosgood's on the feminization of shopping, assess the impact of occupational and consumer mobility on Victorian and Edwardian women. Articles like these do not tell us much about department stores, but they do represent the breadth of information that might be gleaned from trade sources and from contemporary discussions of marketing.

Cathedrals of Consumption begins well, with a fine synthetic article by Crossick and Jaumain. Displaying Europe's goods, departmentalizing the scholarship, and tantalizing with unfulfilled suggestions, Crossick and Jaumain's contribution is not unlike the stores they study: big, all-encompassing, and strangely out of step with the times. They offer us a reassuringly familiar social history of the departmentals, their primary concerns being the class basis of consumerism and the politics of opposition to the great stores. They seem uncomfortable with the cultural deconstruction of retailing and with the feminism that informs many of the contributions to the volume. Still, it is an auspicious beginning.

Things quickly unravel. Clare Walsh spends too many pages telling us about eighteenth-century retailing and why what we take as department store innovations were nothing new—an exercise not unlike comparing apples and oranges and concluding that both are fruit. Then Tim Coles tells us that department store chains in Germany migrated from small places to large, and he makes assertions based on an assumption that one can accurately profile the classes of consumers by assessing store attributes (defining stores as serving the upper, middle, or working class on the basis of their location and aesthetic characteristics). Hosgood and Rappaport, who both focus on London, and Lisa Tiersten, who writes on Paris, then offer articles about the impact of department store shopping and selling on women's roles. Hosgood sees shopping as empowering, Tiersten does not, and Rappaport is not sure. Uwe Spiekermann follows with a discussion of attitudes to shoplifting that tells us how medical and legal perceptions changed but not why. In a chapter on Ghent, Donald Weber then reveals that department store advertising sold “the genteel classes” what they wanted (it commercialized bourgeois culture) and so manifested the “dream marriage” between the middle class and the great stores. Although, in passing, Weber offers interesting insights into retail developments in a small city, his main point provides nothing new in a way not easily understood.

And so it goes. There are bright spots—Hosgood's and Rappaport's articles are fine enough—and I liked Kathleen

James's comparison of the design of the Wertheim store in Berlin to the Schocken store in Stuttgart, which, while saying nothing new about Wilhelmine or Weimar culture, does make one more aware of the sheer beauty of some of these stores. But there is also much here that is very weak indeed.

Most surprising is the absence, once one moves past Crossick and Jaumain's article, of a comparative approach. There is a defiant nationalism to the collection: Gábor Gyáni cites nothing but Hungarian works, Uwe Spiekermann has eyes only for the German, Hosgood refers only to the British. Surely in a book about *Europe*, a book that grew, after all, out of an international conference, one might expect people to at least try to think comparatively. In fact, though the North American scholarship is largely ignored, the United States gets more references in most of these articles than other European countries. The result, unfortunately, is that contributors end up providing complex national justifications for developments that are common to many countries.

Readers of this journal will be similarly disappointed to find little attention given to the interplay of local, regional, and national agents. Department stores are fascinating because they are both highly localized enterprises and purveyors of national and international product cultures. They develop in and because of local markets, but they do not necessarily reflect, in their architecture or in their advertising, regional tastes or ideals. The tension here is especially intriguing for urban historians, but it is largely absent from this collection.

Cathedrals of Consumption is an unexpectedly disappointing book. While it does fairly reflect the range of scholarship department stores are attracting, it adds little that is new or challenging. Some of the articles are certainly worth reading—most notably the introduction—but given the high cost of the volume, one must conclude, *Caveat emptor*.

David Monod
Department of History
Wilfrid Laurier University

Baxandall, Rosalyn, and Elizabeth Ewen. *Picture Windows: How the Suburbs Happened*. New York: Basic Books, 2000. Pp.xxii, 298. Black-and-white illustrations, index. US\$27.50, Can\$41.50 (cloth).

The strength of the economic boom of the 1990s has been likened to that of the 1950s. It has spawned a new wave of suburban development, together with a renewed interest in the subject by academics, planners, and the public. Those who wrote about suburbs in the 1950s marvelled at the novelty of what was happening, and sought no precedents. Today, many writers look backwards, some nostalgically, others from a desire to trace how we arrived at our present state, and a few to draw lessons. With all three purposes in mind, Rosalyn Baxandall and Elizabeth Ewen claim to tell us “how the suburbs happened.” Addressing a broad audience, they speak of a suburban history