

Jacobson, Lisa. *Raising Consumers: Children and the American Mass Market in the Early Twentieth Century*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004

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Volume 35, Number 1, Fall 2006

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1016005ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1016005ar>

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Publisher(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (print)

1918-5138 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Fahrni, M. (2006). Review of [Jacobson, Lisa. *Raising Consumers: Children and the American Mass Market in the Early Twentieth Century*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 35(1), 59–60. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1016005ar>

De nombreuses contributions concernent l'École littéraire de Montréal : celle-ci fait l'objet de sept textes, en plus d'être fréquemment mentionnée par d'autres auteurs. Le symbolisme est le sujet de deux de ces textes, l'héritage de Louis Dantin est étudié dans deux chapitres tandis qu'Albert Ferland et Charles Gill font l'objet de deux autres contributions. Enfin, François Couture schématise le réseau associatif de l'École littéraire de Montréal, montrant que ses membres ne sont pas tous impliqués au même degré et que le groupe est en relation avec d'autres institutions et associations. Bien qu'il ne faille pas s'attendre à ce qu'un ouvrage couvre tous les aspects d'un sujet aussi vaste et complexe que la culture, on peut remarquer (et regretter un peu) que *La vie culturelle à Montréal vers 1900* couvre surtout le domaine des arts avec un grand « A » : littérature, musique, peinture et théâtre forment la majorité des sujets abordés. Certaines productions et pratiques plus populaires sont incluses, comme le conte et les illustrations d'Henri Julien, publiées dans la presse à grand tirage, mais on note l'absence de sujets comme le développement des médias de masse, la commercialisation de la culture, les sports et les loisirs.

En terminant, il faut souligner une des qualités du recueil : sa richesse iconographique et sonore. *La vie culturelle à Montréal vers 1900* contient, luxe rare, des reproductions couleur de quelques œuvres, en plus de très nombreuses illustrations noir et blanc. Les toiles reproduites permettent d'apprécier le style et les tendances artistiques de l'époque et certaines ont comme sujet des gens s'adonnant à des pratiques culturelles : lecture, musique, et même la consommation du tabac. L'ajout d'un disque compact contenant dix-neuf pièces musicales judicieusement choisies est aussi très appréciable : il permet de découvrir des œuvres de compositeurs canadiens, comme *La Rose nuptiale* de Calixa Lavallée (cela nous change du *Ô Canada!*), *Vive la France !* d'Ernest Lavigne, ainsi que des pièces de Guillaume Couture et Alexis Contant. Il contient également quelques enregistrements anciens, dont une pièce interprétée par la soprano canadienne Emma Albani et une autre par le pianiste Ignace-Jan Paderewski, deux artistes connus internationalement dont les passages à Montréal ont constitué des événements culturels d'envergure. Les illustrations et pièces musicales permettent à ce recueil de mieux remplir son premier objectif : évoquer une vie culturelle riche, vivante et effervescente.

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Jacobson, Lisa. *Raising Consumers: Children and the American Mass Market in the Early Twentieth Century*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

Raising Consumers: Children and the American Mass Market in the Early Twentieth Century is a well-written book that blends family history and consumer history in an innovative and convincing fashion. Lisa Jacobson's topic is the construction, between 1890 and 1940, of a consumer market targeting children. Her book explores competing visions of

twentieth-century childhood—those promoted by advertisers and marketers, on the one hand, and those espoused by middle-class parents, educators, and childhood 'experts,' on the other—as well as the ways in which children themselves cultivated, participated in, and occasionally criticized the expanding consumer market. A worthwhile contribution to the history of American childhood (reminiscent of such earlier studies as Viviana Zelizer's *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children*), *Raising Consumers* is also an important addition to recent works on the history of consumption, such as Lizabeth Cohen's *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*. Like many of these recent works, *Raising Consumers* insists upon both the "liberating" and the "limiting" (p. 225) aspects of consumer culture.

The juvenile market developed in the early-twentieth-century United States was created within a specific set of material and ideological conditions. Child labour laws, curfews, and compulsory schooling measures were intended to render children dependent for longer periods of time, and helped to effect a transition from children as producers to children as consumers. Increasingly, children, and middle-class children in particular, were seen as persons to be protected rather than put to work. If some children participated in the market thanks to their meagre earnings, an increasing number of children were spending allowances provided to them by their parents. The greater length of time spent in school by these cohorts of children and adolescents, along with the organized youth groups of the period (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire Girls), both created a target market for advertisers and subjected these children and teenagers to the consumer pressures of their peers. A youth market was created through juvenile advertising in children's periodicals, through contests, games, and radio clubs, and through corporate "enrichment materials" supplied to public schools. Significantly, children's spending came to be seen as a positive development over the course of the interwar years. If in the 1920s childhood 'experts' promoted thrift education and school savings banks, their Depression-era counterparts chose to focus instead on training in proper spending (through allowances, for instance). Ironically, as Jacobson points out, it was in the economically-depressed 1930s that youth spending was encouraged, a trend perfectly in tune with the Keynesian thinking of the late 1930s and the value accorded by popular psychology to children's self-expression. Children's consumer desires, experts argued, needed to be shaped rather than curbed.

Not surprisingly, much of Jacobson's evidence comes from advertisements in children's, women's, and parenting magazines. These advertisements, many of which are reproduced and integrated in the text, are carefully analysed. They are supplemented with other prescriptive evidence (advice columns, literature on child-rearing) and with sources that attempt to capture children's lived experiences (market research interviews, trade journals, contest data, autobiographies). The endnotes also reveal the use of oral histories, although there is no methodological discussion of these (number? provenance? basis for selection?) in the text.

The youthful shoppers analysed in this book are not depicted as dupes of advertisers or the market (witness the discussion of children's "consumer disappointment" in Chapter 6). Rather, Jacobson "restores agency to the non-corporate elites—children, parents, educators, child experts, and reformers—who played a crucial role in both moderating and fostering a culture of consumption" (p. 4). The early-twentieth-century culture of juvenile consumption, she argues, was the result of the merging of market strategies and new family ideologies that privileged companionate relations between parents and children, crystallized in the notion of "play." During the interwar years, ideas of the companionate family meshed nicely with ideas of the family as a consumer democracy (or "the family firm," p. 77). However, while both early-twentieth-century childrearing theories and corporate marketers promoted the democratic family, their emphases differed: while "advertisers promoted a vision of family democracy that privileged children's consumer desires, child experts envisioned an enlightened family democracy that retained a fair degree of parental control" (p. 178). The limits to cooperation and consensus can be seen in Jacobson's Chapter 5, which describes middle-class parents 'fighting back' against commercial recreation by creating spaces devoted to play at home. Ironically, however, the counterattack waged by parents and their supporters echoed the "strategies of enticement" (p. 181) developed by the promoters of commercialized leisure. In the end, Jacobson argues, defenders of the companionate family settled into an "uneasy alliance" (p. 217) with the promoters of juvenile consumer culture.

Raising Consumers provides insight into relationships between marketers and the family but also into relationships within the family. Advertisers calculated how best to win over children without alienating their parents, while at times (such as in the case of Depression-era radio clubs) revealing a willingness to sacrifice parental goodwill in order to capture the children's market. Children and adolescents were occasionally marketers' best allies ("active selling agents within the home," p. 18), convincing parents of the necessity or desirability of particular purchases. Like advertisers, children adopted gendered strategies of persuasion. Daughters, for example, 'seduced' fathers into opening their wallets. Consumption could also reinforce existing familial fault-lines. Mother-daughter "consumer alliances," for instance, could threaten "the breadwinner's prerogatives" (p. 50), while consumer culture was a realm in which savvy boy consumers "could stage imaginary Oedipal coups, triumphing over fathers as tutors in consumption and master persuaders" (p. 115).

Jacobson is generally careful to distinguish among children, demonstrating the ways in which consumption was enabled and shaped by social factors such as class, gender, and ethnicity. Although most of the evidence in this book concerns middle-class children, *Raising Consumers* includes intriguing and occasionally moving evidence of the relationship of working-class children to money, particularly during the Depression years: the boy who faithfully deposited his earnings in the school savings bank so as to protect them from his "erratically employed" father;

the teenagers in Muncie, Indiana who entered their high school by the side door rather than endure the exacting consumer scrutiny of their better-off peers, gathered on the front steps. Jacobson's use of gender as a category of analysis likewise produces some of the most innovative material in the book: Chapter 3, for example, examines the savvy, modern, decisive "boy consumer"—a boy who combined consumption with manly producer virtues, avoiding the fickle and irrational tendencies attributed to female consumers. Jacobson pays less attention, however, to race and ethnicity. She notes that "black and other minority children" were neglected by advertisers (p. 6) and she provides scattered bits of evidence on immigrant children and consumption (immigrant children properly trained in spending, for instance, were seen as potential "agents of Americanization in their own homes," p. 67). But the whiteness of the children analysed in this book goes unproblematicized. Canadian readers might also find the lack of attention to region rather unsettling: this is a study of the United States that makes little allowance for geographic differences within the nation. Surprisingly, there is also relatively little analysis of age in *Raising Consumers*. Jacobson does not, for instance, provide us with a clear sense of when 'childhood' ends in the period under study. And although Chapter 4 introduces us to "a new archetypal consumer: the peer-conscious adolescent girl," there is little analysis of contemporary distinctions between childhood and adolescence.

Despite these criticisms, *Raising Consumers* is a compelling and persuasive book and an enjoyable read. Its most important contribution is probably that related to periodization: Jacobson's emphasis on the emergence of child-centred consumption in the 1920s and 1930s (that is, long before the arrival of television in American homes) reminds us that the targeting of children by corporate interests is by no means a recent phenomenon.

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Nemes, Robert. *The Once and Future Budapest*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2005. Pp. xi, 247.

How did urbanism and nationalism intersect in nineteenth-century Budapest? Why did nationalism mobilize so many women and men, and how did it shape the development of this city located on both sides of the Danube? Finally, how did Budapest become a manifestly Hungarian city in the nineteenth century? These are the questions that Robert Nemes (history, Colgate University), using extensive archival materials, memoirs, travelers' accounts, and newspapers, answers in a well-crafted and well-written monograph, that is informed by recent work in cultural studies and cultural history.

A town with an undeniable German character in the early 1800s (symbolized by the presence and the political power of the Habsburgs), Budapest gradually evolved from a muddy, dusty, marshy, and provincial city into a burgeoning metropolis and, since the *Ausgleich* of 1867, a capital. This complex