



Shopping: Material Culture Perspectives

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The degree to which shopping, or, more broadly, consumerism, is both critiqued and defended in American society confirms the role that commercial goods play in our daily lives. This collection of essays provides case studies depicting selected aspects of this engaging activity. The authors include several historians with diverging specialties, an art historian, an anthropologist, an environmental journalist, a geographer and urban planner, and practicing artists. Each author demonstrates how a material culture perspective—a focus on the relationship between people and their things—can illuminate a specific corner of consumption. Connecting the essays are concerns about the spaces in which shopping occurs; about the experience of shopping itself, both individual and social; and about its economic, environmental, and personal downsides. Collectively, these essays demonstrate how a material culture perspective on shopping yields insights into multiple aspects of American culture.

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