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## Consumerism in the 1920s

A comment gathered about modern consumer culture, 1924-1931 PDF Florine Stettheimer, Fifth Avenue Cathedral, Oil on Canvas, 1931 METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART/NHC PDF - Big Picture - View with discussion PDF Humorists on salesmanship PDF Theater Advertising (silent) LIBRARY CONGRESS Mass production of consumer goods such as cars and ready-to-wear clothing was not new in the 1920s, nor was there advertising or mail order catalogs. But something was new about American relations with manufactured products, and it was accelerating faster than it could be defined. Not only has the latest goods become a necessity, consumption itself has become a necessity, it seemed. Was that good for America? Yes, said some - people can live in unprecedented comfort and material security. Not so fast, said others- can we predict where consumerism will take us until we are inseparably there? A comment has been collected. Advertising, the purchase of installments, consumer credit, the solution to ever better mass-produced goods—have these proclaimed the triumph or decay of American civilization? Illustrated by a number of advertisements, this collection has taken on fierce opinions expressed by consumer champions and critics in the 1920s. What was the basis for their disagreements? Did they agree on any central points? How does their discussion resemble today's consumerism comment? Selections can be divided into students for research and discussion in the classroom. (16 p.m.) Fifth Avenue Cathedral, oil on canvas, 1931. A personal style unique among American modernists, artist Florine Stettheimer has created a showcase for his cathedral series, and whimsically satirize, New York's preferences for entertainment, consumerism, finance and art. The four large paintings - each five feet four feet - are flamboyant, witty, unapologetically busy, and undeniably eye-catching. Each unfurls the altar of the central arch, the cathedral, and is built as an elaborate stage design for an over-the-top Broadway musical production number. 1 At fifth avenue cathedrals, the cathedrals are secular temples of consumer worship – exclusive fifth avenue shops and restaurants, their names and logos, snected into the sky like fireworks. In the center is the cathedral altar, modeled on the entrance to St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral, as a public wedding party comes out of the church and falls enticing in the secular domain of Fifth Avenue. What is the response to the picture and consumerism, do you think Stettheimer is for? Why is painting interesting to look at (and why it is important to ask)? Compare the Cathedrals of Fifth Avenue with the Broadway cathedrals in this collection. (2 p.m.) METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART/NHC Humorists on salesmanship. For better or worse, wrote consumer activist Stuart Chase, we entered the age of the seller. The seller's goal is to put it through, get away with it to secure the order. The signature on the dotted line becomes the Supreme Good. 2 In many articles with hard-hitting prose, Chase warned Americans about modern salesmanship wiles. And its unique fashion, so are the humorists. Here we read two of the most popular humorists of the 1920s— the columns of the city's mosivers Robert Benchley on how to sell goods and the cowboy philosopher Will Rogers, deciphering slogans in advertising and politics. (See Rogers on Credit Purchase and Chase on Age of the Salesman in a collected comment.) What are the unique ways of transmitting a message with humor? What is the successful use of humor in the faithful

prose? (4 p.m.) Silent theatrical advertising. Imagine yourself settled into a movie theater seat and view these short ads for flour, hand cleaner, and electric refrigerator against the main feature. How do manufacturers expect to motivate viewers to buy products? What do they use as a visual lure? What information did they transmit? Does any use humor? Which of the three ads was the most successful, in your opinion? How are they compared today to cinema advertising? LIBRARY OF CONGRESS In general, what benefits and harm did American civilization bring about modern consumer culture, according to the commentators in this section? What are the unprecedented opportunities and threats to American democracy from mass production and consumption? increasing standard of living? Does the American economy produce too many goods to consume? Was it a real or implicit problem? How would modern consumerism change Americans' basic attitudes, goals and character, for better or worse? How was American consumerism singular in America? Collected commentary \_\_\_\_ Fill in the chart below when reading a comment to manage the main issues and positions. Add two or more comments about each factor (paraphrase comments). POSITIVE ASPECTS OF CONSUMER CULTURE FACTOR NEGATIVE ASPECTS 1. Christine Frederick2. William Cheney Consumption gives the user more power than ever before. We are healthier, happier people because of the mass production and advertising of goods. Prosperity based on the consumption of goods If consumers stopped buying enough goods, the whole nation would be seriously weakened. People lose their savings habits and avoid waste. 1. Samuel Strauss 2. Stuart Chase Comfort & Convenience From Manufactured Products Advertising & Salesmanship Down payment Purchase & Consumer credit [Factor] [Factor] by Samuel Strauss, how has there been a significant increase in consumer goods as an external proof of the new force of American democracy? What was this new force and why the Americans see it as the natural fruit of that democratic seed that the earliest colonists had America? Why does Strauss think that the founders would have disagreed with such an approach to modern consumer culture, despite their hope that future generations would live in material comfort? What did Strauss put in the top role as the main danger of new use? How could this threaten the nation itself? How does Middletown - Muncie, Indiana - reflect national consumerism in the 1920s, according to sociologists Lynd and Lynd? Compare two lists of modern amenities and expectations in the comment: (1) New Standard of Living Chase's Prosperity: Fact or Myth? and (2) new tools and services favored by muncie residents of Lynd and Lynd's Middletown. How do the lists compare to America's standard of living today? What are the positive aspects of home economist Christine Frederick's identification in the new consumption? Why was it the biggest idea that America has to give to the world [today]? What power did consumers have in the new consumption that they could not use before, according to Frederick? Why were women the most important in this development? why American women? Why did Frederick support advertising, especially in women's magazines? How did she claim that she strengthened, not weakened, character? How did Stuart Chase disagree? Why did Stuart Chase describe the abundance of manufactured goods as a wild nature in which we consumers roam without a chart or compass? How did Frederick disagree? How did William Cheney, editor of Collier's, respond to Chase and Frederick? What was the benefits of advertising for which consumers should be grateful? How does William Retlaw list the magical words that most often appear in ads compared to a similar list today? What was Retlaw's opinion on this phenomenon? How would you describe Andy Consumer's ads in Life magazine? Empowering? Gracious? Simple? Manipulation? Do you think they were effective? Why, according to Life editors, did they create a series of Andy Consumer ads? How did they explain their decision to their advertisers (series of advertising and sales ads) and to their readers Andy Consumers? What were the pros and cons of the down payment purchase, according to James Couzens and C. H. Hanch? How has each person's experience in car manufacturing influenced his opinion? According to John Crowe Ransom, what made the American consumer a new man worse? According to William Cheney, what made the American consumer the new king for the better? The fifth Avenue \_\_\_\_ Lithuania What is your general impression of the Series of Cathedral Paintings? Were you visually convincing? conceptually interesting? (See additional sites below.) Why is Fifth Avenue Cathedral fun to look at (and why is it important to ask)? Describe the visual elements and Fifth Avenue Cathedral. Compare your altars with american Gothic-style cathedrals such as St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral and St. Thomas Episcopal Church, both on Fifth Avenue in New York. How does the cathedral's motive give Stettheimer an effective format for portraying the secular aspects of American culture? (Compare the Cathedrals of Fifth Avenue with the Broadway Cathedrals in this collection.) What comments, if any, have Stettheimer included in the Cathedrals of Fifth Avenue? What response do you think she hoped to give the viewer? Why are the bride and groom depicted as figures on the wedding cake? Why are their parents more realistically portrayed, the father of the bride looking directly from the canvas? Why are viewers more interested in a wedding party than a tick band parade when visiting dignity (center left)? How did Stettheimer portray himself and his sisters in the picture (right)? Create other questions for yourself and others according to the details of the painting. What did you discover when you watched the canvas? Humorists on salesmanship \_\_\_\_ What are the key points for Robert Benchley and Will Rogers to present their humorous essays? How could one of the economists or social scientists (in the commentary collected) express the same points? What are the unique ways of transmitting a message with humor? What is the successful use of humor in the faithful prose? Try your hand at humor. Choose one of the serious narrative pieces collected in the comments and rewrite it in the style of Robert Benchley or Will Rogers. Why is it so hard? Silent commercials \_\_\_\_ How do manufacturers expect to motivate viewers to buy their products? Is similar motivation used today? What do they use as a visual lure? What information did they transmit? Do they use privileges, repetitions, humor or other devices? Which commercial was the most successful, in your opinion? Why? \_\_\_\_ Select one of the following pairs and create a dialog (not all couples considered to be the opposite). At the beginning of the dialog, type a question about consumerism in the 1920s. Be sure to show how the perspective of speakers, like consumer activists, humorists, etc., has influenced their positions. Engage in dialogue with (a) a general insight that amazes both parties, b) the 2000 forecast, or (c) your appearance with a reading they have not noticed. Stuart Chase and Christine Frederick are consumer activists Lynd & Lynd and Wilbur Plummer, social scientists Will Rogers and Robert Benchley humorists Florine Stettheimer and Winson McCay artists/illustrators William Cheney, Collier editor and life editors; Andy Consumer, the editors of the ad magazine, write an editorial comparing the consumerism of the 1920s with that of the 21st century. Express a specific approach and suggest insight, prognosis or critical analogy with the past. Start or ask your version in one of the following resource sentences in this section. Collected comment by Stettheimer, Fifth Avenue's Robert Benchley Cathedral on salesmanship Will Rogers on slogans silent theater advertising TOTAL16 pp. 2 pp. 2 pp. 2 pp. Check online. P. P. 22 pp.

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