

The Commercialized Child And The New Consumer Cult:

In today's digital age, children have become a major target for consumerism. From a very young age, they are bombarded with advertisements and product placements that influence their desires and shape their perception of the world. This commercialization of childhood has given rise to a new consumer cult, where children not only consume products but also become brand ambassadors and influencers themselves. As a result, the impact on their development and society as a whole cannot be underestimated.

One of the key factors contributing to this commercialization is the widespread use of technology. With the rise of smartphones, tablets, and social media platforms, children are constantly connected to a virtual world that tempts them with materialistic pleasures. Advertisements disguised as games, videos, and interactive content are strategically designed to capture children's attention and create a desire for products that promise happiness and satisfaction.

These advertisements are not only influencing children's preferences but also their self-esteem and identity. In order to fit in with their peers and be accepted in the consumerist culture, children feel the pressure to possess the latest toys, gadgets, and fashion trends. This constant pursuit for material possessions can lead to feelings of inadequacy and a distorted sense of self-worth when they are unable to keep up with the ever-changing trends.

Born to Buy: The Commercialized Child and the New Consumer Cult by Juliet B. Schor(Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

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Word Wise : Enabled
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The commercialization of childhood has also affected the relationship dynamics within families. Parents often find themselves caught in a vicious cycle of needing to provide their children with the latest products to meet societal expectations. This can lead to increased financial strain and the overindulgence of children, which in turn can hinder their understanding of the value of money and the importance of hard work.

The problem with this consumer cult is not limited to the impact on individuals and families alone. The excessive consumption driven by the commercialized child has severe ramifications for the environment. The production, packaging, and disposal of goods contribute significantly to pollution, waste generation, and carbon emissions. By fostering a culture of uncontrolled consumerism from an early age, we risk perpetuating a cycle of unsustainable practices that will affect future generations.

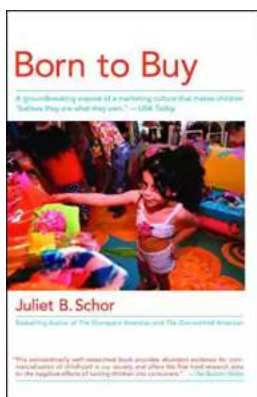
It is crucial for society to address this issue and take meaningful action. Parents and educators can play a significant role in teaching children critical thinking skills and promoting media literacy. By encouraging children to question the motives behind advertisements and understand the persuasive techniques employed,

they can become more aware consumers who make informed choices rather than impulsive ones.

Furthermore, governments and regulatory bodies need to enforce stricter guidelines on advertising to children. Limiting the use of manipulative tactics, such as psychological and emotional appeals, can help shield children from excessive commercialization. Additionally, promoting alternative forms of entertainment and self-expression, such as creative play and outdoor activities, can provide healthier alternatives to consumerism for children.

Finally, it is important to foster a culture that values experiences and relationships over material possessions. By shifting the focus away from materialistic desires, we can help children develop a sense of fulfillment and happiness that stems from meaningful connections rather than acquiring the latest products.

, the commercialization of childhood and the new consumer cult has significant consequences for both individuals and the world at large. It is imperative for parents, educators, and society as a whole to recognize the issue and take proactive steps to counter it. By empowering children to become critical thinkers and promoting a culture that values experiences over possessions, we can strive for a more balanced and sustainable future.



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Ads aimed at kids are virtually everywhere -- in classrooms and textbooks, on the Internet, even at slumber parties and the playground. Product placement and other innovations have introduced more subtle advertising to movies and television. Companies are enlisting children as guerrilla marketers, targeting their friends and families. Even trusted social institutions such as the Girl Scouts are teaming up with marketers. Drawing on her own survey research and unprecedented access to the advertising industry, New York Times bestselling author and leading cultural and economic authority Juliet Schor examines how a marketing effort of vast size, scope, and effectiveness has created "commercialized children."

Schor, author of *The Overworked American* and *The Overspent American*, looks at the broad implications of this strategy. Sophisticated advertising strategies convince kids that products are necessary to their social survival. Ads affect not just what they want to buy, but who they think they are and how they feel about themselves. Based on long-term analysis, Schor reverses the conventional notion of causality: it's not just that problem kids become overly involved in the values of consumerism; it's that kids who are overly involved in the values of consumerism become problem kids. In this revelatory and crucial book, Schor also provides guidelines for parents and teachers. What is at stake is the emotional and social well-being of our children.

Like Barbara Ehrenreich's *Nickel and Dimed*, Mary Pipher's *Reviving Ophelia*, and Malcolm Gladwell's *The Tipping Point*, *Born to Buy* is a major contribution to our understanding of a contemporary trend and its effects on the culture.



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