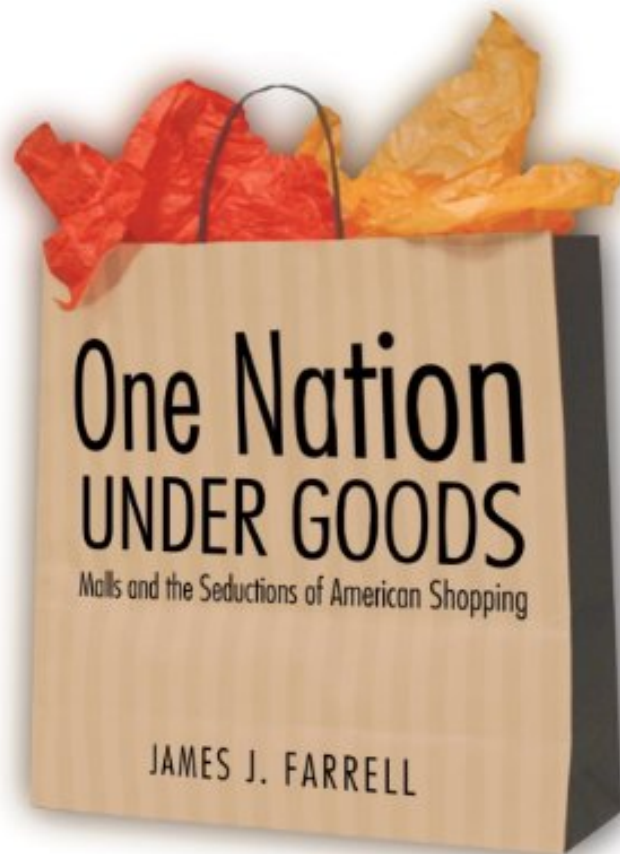


[Pdf free] One Nation Under Goods: Malls and the Seductions of American Shopping

One Nation Under Goods: Malls and the Seductions of American Shopping

James J. Farrell

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James J. Farrell : One Nation Under Goods: Malls and the Seductions of American Shopping before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised One Nation Under Goods: Malls and the Seductions of American Shopping:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. youAmerica's strange personal historyBy SteekIf you're old enough to remember when there were no malls, or young enough to not know life without them, this is the history of how and why they came here.11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. One Nation Under Goods a Durable GoodBy

Kendra D. Smith In *One Nation Under Goods*, Jim Farrell takes readers on a tour of American malls to discover the cultural patterns they display. As Farrell steers readers up escalators, he calls attention to the ways that shopping center executives plan the spaces of consumerism. As he parades them in front of dressing-room mirrors, he illustrates ways that consumer goods contribute to construction of identity. As he points out malls' potted plants, he reveals the processes through which shopping centers alter their ecological surroundings. Farrell notes in his introduction that American malls are variety stores—they sell a wide variety of goods to a vast diversity of people that make multiple meanings from those objects. *One Nation Under Goods* similarly provides a cornucopia of good ideas on American culture; it's a kind-of sales rack of ideas from which readers can pick and choose. It's even replete with intellectual display cases (tables, photos, and cartoons), that help provide opportunities to browse quickly for the most value-able concepts and lessons to be learned. Farrell's book, like the best mall merchandise, is neither out-of-date nor too faddish for scholars to take note. *One Nation Under Goods* provides an original and important perspective on the aesthetics, economics, ethics, and politics of American shopping malls. Three elements of the book that seem particularly successful and that, in combination, distinguish the book from others in its field: its emphasis on spatial analysis; its ability to communicate playfully difficult concepts in concrete terms; its challenge to create an ethical framework for American consumerism. First, I like the way that Farrell draws attention to the physical spaces of American malls. Malls take place—and Farrell asks readers to consider both the indoor and outdoor places transformed by shopping centers. Part of Farrell's success in illuminating indoor spaces comes from his close reading of documents overlooked by many mall scholars—the retail design manuals and marketing magazines that shopping center executives use to create retail spaces. Farrell also considers the environmental impacts of malls on water quality and indigenous vegetation and contemplates the ways in which mall-goers' experiences shape the ways in which they conceptualize their spaces. As he notes, "It's interesting that the endangered species and ecosystems that are featured in the mall are not generally the ones we live in." The Mall of America in Bloomington, has a Rainforest Cafe; but he notes that it "doesn't have a Prairie Cafe; or a Corn-and-Soybeans Cabaret or a suburban Back-Yard Bistro." (238-239) By engaging in cultural and physical geography, Farrell's study recognizes how American values are embodied and sited in place. Secondly, Farrell skillfully uses concrete objects and instances to illustrate complex theories. You could say that Jim Farrell writes about Rainforest Cafe; in *One Nation Under Goods*, and it's true, but only partly right. What he's really doing by writing about Rainforest Cafe; is playing with big ideas: primitivism, exoticism, cosmopolitanism, and authenticity. You could hand a student a stack of densely-written classics from Jean Jacques Rousseau to Edward Said to David Hollinger to address these big ideas; but until the students become graduate students, I think they'd find Farrell's chapter titled "The World in a Shopping Mall" equally provocative. *One Nation Under Goods* playfulness grants us access to these ideas in a fresh way. Finally, I like the way that Farrell reveals the ethical and political decisions that take place in shopping centers. He notes that "The mall, explicitly about aesthetics and economics, is also implicitly about ethics and politics." (xxi) My favorite part of the book, Part IV, makes explicit the ethics and politics of economic and aesthetic interactions that we take for granted. Jim Farrell's consideration of the ethics of shopping comes through parables, not prescriptions. He argues that "ethics is a way of telling stories about the goodness of the good life" and suggests that Americans could demand better stories for our money. Rather than telling just-so stories of economic exclusion and environmental degradation, he asks readers to try to tell different stories from their products—stories of sustainable society, social justice, and political responsibility. He provides readers with practical tools: like a shopping list for considering purchasing decisions that includes questions like "what good is this thing? Could I borrow one? Who lives well as a result of this purchase? Who lives poorly?" But most of all, he provides practical tools by pointing out the impracticalities of American life as it currently works at the mall. *One Nation Under Goods* is not academic planned obsolescence. It's a durable good. One that I highly recommend you try on for size. 7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. *The Value of Values in Shopping* By John With good wit and numerous plays on words, Farrell reveals the implicit value statements of shopping and buying, exposing the price we pay (above the sticker) in consumer society. The book isn't anti-consumer, but points to the hidden costs of various purchases, such as the implicit acceptance of sweatshop labor in buying many brands of shoe or the acceptance of environmental degradation for buying paper. He's also effective at illustrating how, despite the American affinity for shopping, a doubling of our material possessions in the past 50 years has not made us any happier. A thoughtful and insightful look at the meaning of malls in the making of the American Dream.

Loved and hated, visited and avoided, seemingly everywhere yet endlessly the same, malls occupy a special place in American life. What, then, is this invention that evokes such strong and contradictory emotions in Americans? In many ways malls represent the apotheosis of American consumerism, and this synthetic and wide-ranging investigation is an eye-popping tour of American culture's values and beliefs. Like your favorite mall, *One Nation Under Goods* is a browser's paradise, and in order to understand America's culture of consumption you need to make a trip to the mall with Farrell. This lively, fast-paced history of the hidden secrets of the shopping mall explains how retail designers make shopping and goods "irresistible." Architects, chain stores, and mall owners relax and beguile us into shopping through water fountains, ficus trees, mirrors, and covert security cameras. From food courts

and fountains to Santa and security, Farrell explains how malls control their patrons and convince us that shopping is always an enjoyable activity. And most importantly, *One Nation Under Goods* shows why the mall's ultimate promise of happiness through consumption is largely an illusion. It's all here— for one low price, of course.

“The Mall is the dipstick of our 20th-century culture. It's a quart down and dirty and James Farrell is telling us why.” —Paco Underhill, author of *Why We Buy* and managing director of Envirosell
James Farrell shares his deeply held moral conviction that there is something wrong with a society based on the continued cycle of “work-and-spend,” but he never preaches, and, like many other Americans, he revels in the details of the mall experience. Carefully researched, often laugh-aloud funny, and sometimes brilliant, *One Nation under Goods* is an important book. —Susan Strasser, author of *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market* and *Waste and Want: A Social History of Trash*.
About the Author James Farrell is professor of history and director of the American Studies program at St. Olaf College. He is the author of *Inventing the American Way of Death, 1830-1920* and *The Spirit of the Sixties: Making Postwar Radicalism*.