

H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences



David L. Bender. *American Values, Opposing Viewpoints*. San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press, 1989. 312 pp. \$9.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-89908-411-4; \$17.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-89908-436-7.

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When teaching freshman students, I often forget how little my students know about the culture which surrounds them. Many young people are so caught up in their private lives (sports, music, clothing styles, dating, etc.) that they don't notice the cultural pressures which are pushing and shoving their daily choices. In my composition and philosophy courses, students are often puzzled when I talk about individualism, conspicuous consumption, a work ethic, or conservatives and liberals in politics. This book is a very helpful tool for getting our students up to speed about the basic social forces and ideas around us.

In this text you will find 34 articles from a representative mix of perspectives. A sampling of topics are: baby boomer values, the work ethic, religious values and public education, morals in our culture, the American dream,

family values in our culture, capitalism, and consumption as a cultural force. One of the dangers of any book of this type is that one's favorite author or issue has been overlooked. However, if this work is viewed merely as an introduction to cultural issues, one can see that Cozic has done a good job of finding representative authors and issues.

The articles are organized around six questions: What values should America uphold? ; How are American values changing? ; Is America in decline? ; How important are family values? ; How do religious values influence America? ; and How does materialism affect America? The articles are given individual introductions. Resources for further readings are found throughout the book. Interesting cartoons are included.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

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