

and their efforts to shape public opinion during a formative period of mass communications in America.

## Baby Citizens, Baby Consumers

Golden, Janet Lynne. *Babies Made Us Modern: How Infants Brought America into the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. 268 pp. \$27.99 (hardback), ISBN 9781108415002.

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In her recent monograph, Janet Golden traces the social and economic status of babies from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries and, in doing so, follows the cultural trajectory of babies becoming both citizens and consumers. Golden's work interrogates the infant experience by examining demands for feeding, sleeping, stimulation, affection, and health care, as well as familial and social responses to those demands. Her focus offers a different frame on shifts in the parenting and childhood experience from scientific motherhood in the early twentieth century through intuitive parenting popularized by Dr. Spock in the postwar boom years.

Golden executes this history with a wide range of sources, including more than 1,500 baby books held by the University of California at Los Angeles. This collection is key to her analysis and results in a unique contribution to histories of infancy and childhood. Using these baby books, Golden frames trends over time: gifts of silver goods give way to bank notes and bonds, and changing dietary practices, with twentieth-century babies failing to avoid castor oil dosing, much to their dismay. Other developments include the rise and effectiveness of vaccination and the pasteurization of milk in preventing infant disease and death. Most baby books were kept for individuals and/or passed down in families, though parental reporting still reflected social expectations, which shifted over time. Prior to World War II, baby books often included a baby's first physical injury, or in some cases, a list of accidents, but in postwar America these notations virtually disappeared, though physical injuries did not. Taken as a whole, baby books reveal the ways both babies and parents adopted or resisted expert advice from a range of traditional practitioners, public health officials, and even advertisers.

Given the breadth and depth of her text, there are rare instances in which other recent work might inform it. For example, Golden discusses "Dr. Martin Couney" a handful of times in the book. Despite Couney's achievements in caring for premature infants and introducing his care regime to hospitals, there is little evidence he received formal medical training.<sup>1</sup> This detail matters in a text tracing the public acceptance of modern medicine, which encouraged a rise in programs, services, and products, aiming first to save infant life, and then to enrich it. The author also repeats the conclusion that

photographs of living infants replaced postmortem photographs in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as infant mortality rates declined. Yet the surviving collection of the Boston-based daguerreotype studio, Southworth & Hawes, which operated from 1844 to 1862 (when infant mortality was still startlingly high) offers numerous examples of living babies and young children photographed alone and with family members. In some African American communities, postmortem photography continued through the 1920s and 1930s as evidenced by the work of Harlem Renaissance photographer James Van Der Zee. As Golden's work demonstrates, it is challenging to balance depictions of universal baby care practices (e.g., feeding, washing, playing) with variations in execution among and between races, classes, and geographical locations.

Yet throughout the text, Golden ably weaves these variations into discussions of infant life. She addresses a wide range of issues that affected infants, from their physical health and development to a growing awareness of social and emotional needs, which prefaced an embrace of psychology among twentieth-century child experts, and ultimately, by many parents as well. There are fascinating accounts of regional practices, which parents and lay practitioners turned to in the absence of a formally trained doctor, or, as Golden notes, after ineffective care. The author recounts the occasional failures of traditional medicine to solve developmental issues and cure diseases that strained both parental resources and patience (e.g., teething and Pertussis). She astutely interprets racial, class, and gender inequities, be they in training (e.g., midwifery programs for women of color) or resource allocation.

In concert with baby book entries and ephemera, Golden draws on oral histories, state and federal government studies and agency reports and findings to reconstruct local, state, and federal efforts to save baby citizens. Her critiques of inconsistent federal support for baby citizens are informed by nonprofit and grassroots groups as well as official reports and publications. When the Voluntary Parenthood League claimed the government should allow parents access to knowledge to limit family size or, barring that, provide "a good rearing" for all children, Golden quips, "the government elected not to follow either logical option" (82). By demonstrating the ineffectiveness of relying solely on either community-based or government-run programs and services, she wrestles with ongoing questions about who can best care for babies and how this care should manifest in the home as well as in society. While these questions are well-covered in the available literature, Golden's representation of the view from the cradle is a necessary reorientation in which babies become active social agents.

Golden's analysis offers a vital addition to previous work on infancy and childhood health. She closes by reminding the reader that despite marked decreases in mortality rates, and shifts in public knowledge about babyhood as a distinct phase marked by particular needs, the United States maintains the highest infant mortality rate in the industrialized world. Although the consumer product landscape exploded to include the nursery in the early twentieth century and expanded again after World War II, the nation did not buy its way out of infant mortality. In view of Golden's previous innovative and incisive publications on both medical and children's history, the final sentence of this monograph, which admonishes that "baby dismissing" is a "blight on our nation," is a powerful critique (209). Considering current debates over immigration and asylum, the privileges of citizenship and the rights of children, readers will hopefully view this timely book as a call to continued action on behalf of citizen and non-citizen babies alike.

## NOTE

1 Dawn Raffel, *The Strange Case of Martin Couney: How a Mysterious European Showman Saved Thousands of American Babies* (New York: Blue Rider Press, 2018).

## Historicizing the Golden Age of “Independent” Journalism

Rodgers, Ronald R. *The Struggle for the Soul of Journalism: The Pulpit versus the Press, 1833–1923*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2018. xvii + 320 pp. \$40.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8262-2158-2.

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We often hear complaints about how journalists today are straying from their primary calling. “Real journalists,” the argument goes, perform independent investigative work that prioritizes “truth” over the interests of the media’s investors or owners. Yet, there was never an era when commercial journalists were entirely independent of their corporate sponsors. In the early twentieth century, the high point of so-called “independent” journalism, advertising was bringing in more money to newspapers than sales of papers themselves; all papers had some responsibility to please their sponsors. Muckraking abounded where writers found patrons, but truly “objective” reporting, to the extent it was explored, never captured the public interest. When and where, then, did these aspirational journalistic ideals come from? In a thoughtful intellectual history of journalism as a profession, Ronald Rodgers convincingly traces these ideals back to the Social Gospel movement.

Rodgers grounds the “soul of journalism” in the rivalry between the press and the pulpit in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many of the nation’s most influential ministers of the late nineteenth century, he shows, worked as public intellectuals. Among these were Lyman Abbott, Washington Gladden, Josiah Strong, Charles Sheldon, and Walter Rauschenbusch, editors of the eminent publications, the *Outlook*, *Collier’s*, and *The Independent* and authors of popular paperbacks. Each of these ministers accused the press of either offering an insubstantial effort at grasping social problems, or of doing so without inspiring the public to systematically reform society. Not unselfishly, these Social Gospel leaders urged the public to instead support their truly “independent” editorial work.

Rodgers convinces us that Protestant ministers’ rivalry with mainstream newspaper editors was also grounded in their concern that the pulpit was losing its once-prominent authority in American life. Ministers were so jealous of the popularity of commercial Sunday newspapers that they criticized them for violating the Sabbath