



Rise Of Fashion: A Reader

Daniel Leonhard Purdy

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Writing more than a century before "Vogue, no less a figure than G.W.F. Hegel reviewed the fashion of his day and found it wanting because, in becoming outmoded so quickly, it drew attention away from the timeless beauty of the human form. And Hegel is not unique among philosophers in his interest in fashion's role; for more than 250 years, social thinkers have considered fashion--its transitive nature, the conformity it inspires, the vast range of its influence--as a defining feature of modern life. In "The Rise of Fashion, Daniel Leonhard Purdy brings together key writings from the Enlightenment to the twentieth century that explore fashion as the ultimate expression of modernity. Making available many previously untranslated or otherwise unfamiliar works from French, German, and English, Purdy establishes an extraordinary lineage of fashion commentary dating back to Mandeville and Voltaire, which laid the groundwork for the writings on commodity culture of Adorno, Benjamin, and the Frankfurt School. From critiques of aristocratic excess to accounts of fashion's influence on our ideals of masculinity or femininity, from the figure of the dandy and the eroticism of clothing to the class politics of fashion, this landmark reader includes works by philosophers (Carlyle, Rousseau, Georg Simmel) and social theorists (Herbert Spencer, Veblen), as well as writers (Goethe, Baudelaire, Mallarme, Wilde) and critics (Karl Kraus, Adolf Loos, Simone de Beauvoir). Collecting and contextualizing many of the earliest and most significant formulations of fashion theory, "The Rise of Fashion provocatively examines the proposition that to be modern is to be fashionable.

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