Barnard

Fashion

Over the last forty years or so academic interest in fashion has burgeoned, and, since the 1970s at least, attempts to define, analyse, and critically explain fashion phenomena have become vital areas of research and study in almost all disciplines within the humanities and social sciences. As serious academic work on and around the theory and practice of fashion continues to flourish as never before, this new title in the Routledge Major Works series, Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies, meets the need for an authoritative reference work to make sense of a rapidly growing and ever more complex corpus of literature, and to provide a map of the area as it has emerged and developed. It is a landmark collection of foundational and the best cutting-edge scholarship in the field and is organized in four volumes. What is meant by fashion? Volume I provides a conspectus of some of the most important definitions and philosophies of fashion. The philosophical sources of the various senses of the word 'fashion' in the work of Kant and Adam Smith, for example, are represented here. Volume II examines the many ways in which analysts have tried to make sense of the incredible variety of things that people wear. One of the simplest ways of doing this is to describe and classify those things. A slightly more sophisticated approach has been to attempt an analysis of them. Volume II presents the best of both the descriptive and analytical approaches to the understanding of fashion. In addition to describing and analysing fashion, many scholars and other thinkers have tried to account for the very possibility of fashion. The critical task of explaining what makes fashion possible may be described as answering the question 'Why does this item of clothing look the way it does?' and it demands social, cultural, economic, and political answers. Volume III, therefore, collects the pre-eminent and most influential work to explore and explain what people wear. From whence does our individual and personal identity spring? Is it even appropriate, in an age of mass fashion, to think of ourselves as having individual identities? Volume IV gathers the essential scholarship which addresses these and other hotly contested questions about identity, image, and performance that are raised by postmodern critical analyses of fashion. Fashion is fully indexed and has a comprehensive introduction, newly written by the editor, which places the collected material in its historical and intellectual context. It is an essential work of reference and is destined to be valued by scholars and students as a vital one-stop research and pedagogic resource.

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