



The Theory of the Leisure Class

Thorstein Veblen

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This scathing critique of America's preoccupation with wealth and status in the Gilded Age continues to resonate more than a century after it was first published

According to economist Thorstein Veblen, the leisure class produces nothing, contributes nothing, and creates nothing, yet exercises a peculiar control over American society. The shallowness of their interests—from fashion to sports to entertainment—endows the practice of “conspicuous consumption” with an undeserving air of respectability.

Veblen deploys a razor sharp wit to expose the pretensions of the idle rich and their disastrous influence on the national character. From ruthless business practices to the plight of women in a male-dominated culture, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* tackles difficult subjects with sophisticated analysis and a vibrant literary style that influenced the work of authors including Edith Wharton, Henry James, and F. Scott Fitzgerald.

A must-read for students of American history and anyone concerned about economic inequality, Veblen's classic treatise is timelier today than ever.

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