

# Fictions of Commodity Culture

From the Victorian to the Postmodern

Christoph Lindner, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands



July 2003  
198 pages  
978-0-7546-3483-6

219 x 153 mm  
Hardback  
£55.00

---

What is retail therapy? Why is shopping fun? Where does desire end and ideology begin in a world of mass consumption? These are some of the central questions of *Fictions of Commodity Culture*, a wide-ranging study of consumerism and its literary representation from the Victorian period through to the postmodern era. Cutting across period boundaries, this lively book draws on recent thinking in critical and cultural theory to offer analysis of works by writers as diverse as Elizabeth Gaskell, William Thackeray, Anthony Trollope, Joseph Conrad, and Don DeLillo. From Gaskell's prefiguring of Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting* to Conrad's foreshadowing of the Sex Pistols story, *Fictions of Commodity Culture* shows the ways in which cultural production in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries often anticipated the crazy and disorienting consumer world of late capitalism.

---

## Contents

Can't get no satisfaction: the world of commodities; Down and out in Gaskell's industrial novels; Thackeray's gourmand: carnivals of consumption in *Vanity Fair*; Trollope's material girl: gender and capitalism in *The Eustace Diamonds*; Damaged goods: decay in Conrad's *The Secret Agent*; Shop till you drop: retail therapy in DeLillo's *White Noise*; Postscript: 'Step right up'; Bibliography; Index.

---

## About the Author

Christoph Lindner is Professor and Chair of English Literature, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands. He has published articles and reviews on Victorian literature, modernism, and postmodernism, and is the editor of *The James Bond Phenomenon: A Critical Reader*.

---

[www.ashgate.com/isbn/9780754634836](http://www.ashgate.com/isbn/9780754634836)

# ASHGATE

To order this book please visit [www.ashgate.com](http://www.ashgate.com), or email [orders@ashgate.com](mailto:orders@ashgate.com)  
A 10% discount applies to orders placed through [www.ashgate.com](http://www.ashgate.com)