



Thrift and Thriving in America: Capitalism and Moral Order from the Puritans to the Present

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Thrift is a powerful and evolving moral ideal, disposition, and practice that has indelibly marked the character of American life since its earliest days. Its surprisingly multifaceted character opens a number of expansive vistas for analysis, not only in the American past, but also in its present. Thrift remains, if perhaps in unexpected and counter-intuitive ways, intensely relevant to the complex issues of contemporary moral and economic life.

Thrift and Thriving in America is a collection of groundbreaking essays from leading scholars on the seminal importance of thrift to American culture and history. From a rich diversity of disciplinary perspectives, the volume shows that far from the narrow and attenuated rendering of thrift as a synonym of saving and scrimping, thrift possess an astonishing capaciousness and dynamism, and that the idiom of thrift has, in one form or another, served as the primary language for articulating the normative dimensions of economic life throughout much of American history. The essays put thrift in a more expansive light, revealing its compelling etymology-its sense of "thriving." This deeper meaning has always operated as the subtext of thrift and at times has even been invoked to critique its more restricted notions. So understood, thrift moves beyond the instrumentalities of "more or less" and begs the question: what does it mean and take to thrive?

Thoroughly examining how Americans have answered this question, *Thrift and Thriving in America* provides fascinating insight into evolving meanings of material wellbeing, and of the good life and the good society more generally, and will serve as a perennial resource on a notion that has and will continue to shape and define American life.

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