The editors of *Cultures of Femininity in Modern Fashion*, Ilya Parkins and Elizabeth M. Sheehan, have arranged a well-written collection of essays perfect for art research libraries focused not only on the study of fashion, but also on the study of femininity and modernity in nineteenth-century Western culture. The book is part of the *Reading Dress Series*, which is a subseries of the *Becoming Modern: New Nineteenth-Century Studies* series published by the University Press of New Hampshire. The *Reading Dress Series* is recently formed, with only a few titles currently under its name; *Cultures of Femininity in Modern Fashion* fits in perfectly with the other titles in the series, providing quality scholarship on a neglected topic. Much of the previous scholarship on modernity’s formation has left out the role of women, causing the discussion on modernity to be imbalanced and focusing strictly on masculinity’s role. The authors of this book provide a counter to this perspective, highlighting the influence femininity had on modernity through such avenues as fashion, dress, and clothing.

The book is comprised of nine essays by female scholars with expertise in a variety of fields such as history, visual/material culture, women's studies, art history, dress, and sexuality and gender. The essays are focused on women’s dress and fashion in both American and British societies, covering a wide spectrum of female life in the late nineteenth century, from domestic to professional life, from upper-class couture to secondhand thrift, from identity to ethnicity and race.

At first glance this book appears to have a standard layout and design, including an introduction, several essays as chapters, and a conclusion. Looking closer, the book presents itself as an attractive publication with a beautifully designed dust jacket over a handsome, though traditional, cloth binding. On the interior, several color illustrations, arranged on eight pages of plates in the center of the book, are accompanied by black and white illustrations placed throughout the different chapters. These illustrations help provide strong support for the chapters’ theses. The choice of including such illustrations is crucial for a publication on fashion and dress and adds support to the scholarship. The book also includes chapters followed by several pages of notes and a brief, but well-organized, index. Taking all the book’s elements into consideration, this is a highly recommended resource for an art research library.

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