



# Cool: How the Brain's Hidden Quest for Cool Drives Our Economy and Shapes Our World

*Steven Quartz, Anette Asp*

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**A bold argument that our "quest for cool" shapes modern culture and the global economy**

Like it or not, we live in an age of conspicuous consumption. In a world of brand names, many of us judge ourselves and others by the products we own. Teenagers broadcast their brand allegiances over social media. Tourists flock to Rodeo Drive to have their pictures taken in front of luxury stores. Soccer moms switch from minivans to SUVs to hybrids, while hip beer connoisseurs flaunt their knack for distinguishing a Kölsch from a pilsner. How did this pervasive desire for "cool" emerge, and why is it so powerful today that it is a prime driver of the global economy?

In *Cool*, the neuroscientist and philosopher Steven Quartz and the political scientist Anette Asp bring together the latest findings in brain science, economics, and evolutionary biology to form a provocative theory of consumerism, revealing how the brain's "social calculator" and an instinct to rebel are the crucial missing links in understanding the motivations behind our spending habits. Applying their theory to everything from grocery shopping to the near-religious devotion of Harley-Davidson fans, Quartz and Asp explore how the brain's ancient decision-making machinery guides consumer choice. Using these revolutionary insights, they show how we use products to advertise ourselves to others in an often unconscious pursuit of social esteem. Surprising at every turn, *Cool* will change the way you think about money, status, desire, and choice.

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