

# Henry James and the Culture of Consumption

Miranda El-Rayess



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This book explores Henry James's imaginative engagements with the burgeoning consumer culture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, focusing on his hitherto neglected fascination with shops and the shopping experience. Examining a wide range of the author's fiction and non-fiction in the context of developments such as the rise of the department store, the growing public presence of women shoppers and shop workers, and the increasing sophistication of commodity display and advertising, the book argues that consumer desire constitutes an integral part of James's understanding of modern subjectivity. It also demonstrates that the structures and strategies of commodity culture are deeply embedded in his style, his aesthetic and his conception of authorship. The study offers new readings of familiar and less familiar texts, and includes a wealth of original historical documentation that has been gleaned from contemporary newspapers, periodicals, advertising manuals, sales catalogues and guidebooks.

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