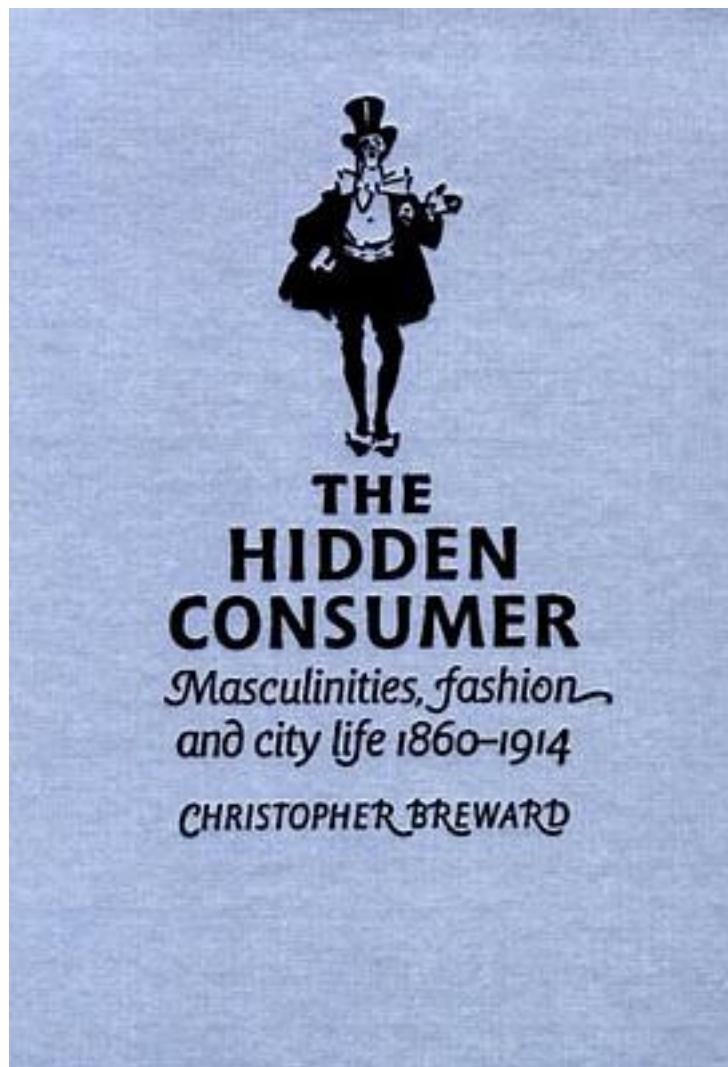


The Hidden Consumer



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This work uncovers the consuming habits of urban men from the second half of the 19th century to the outbreak of World War I. It focuses on the fraught relationships which emerged at this time between ideal models of manly behaviour and attitudes towards the expression of sexual and class identities through the medium of dress. The period has been identified by many historians as a crucial moment in the development of a commodity culture and its characteristics have generally been discussed in terms of a "feminization" of practices linked with shopping and fashionable display. In a challenge to the accepted picture, Christopher Breward tracks previously hidden connections between the formation of popular sartorial models for male consumers, the organization of associated retail industries and the promotion of new leisure activities, repositioning men as crucial subjects in debates on the nature of modernity, fashion and city life. This work offers a re-reading of the material qualities of Victorian and Edwardian social life and a model for the cultural study of fashion.

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