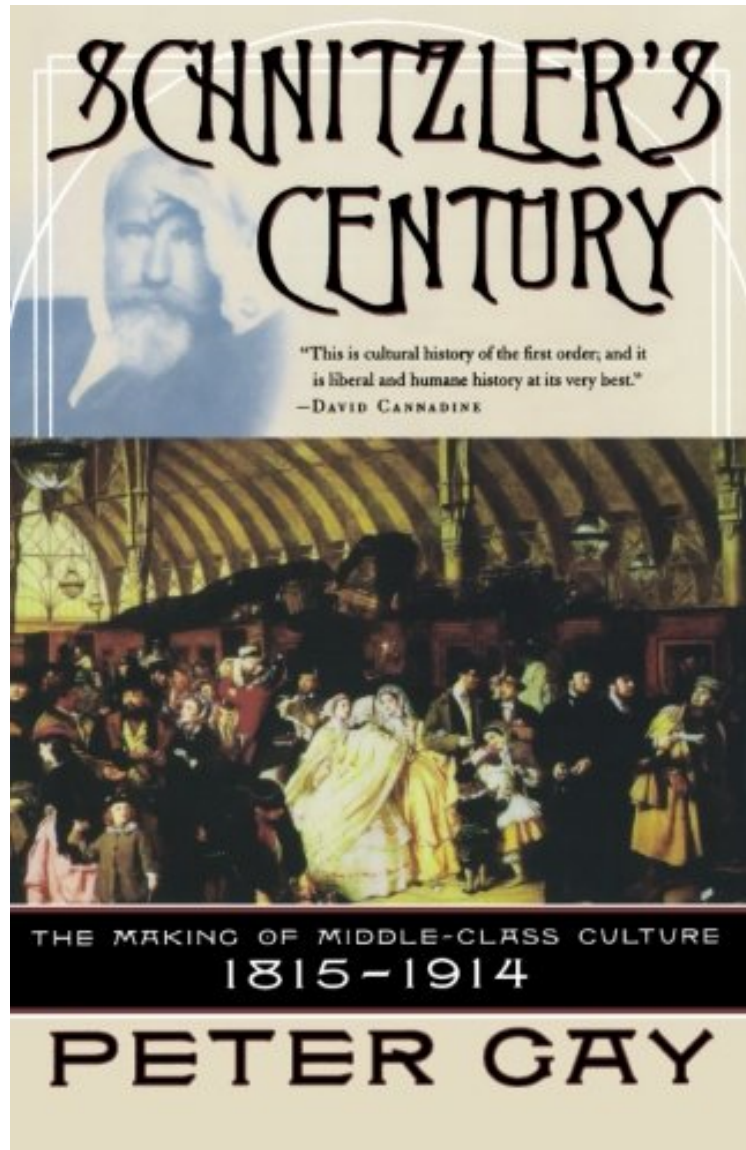


Schnitzler's Century: The Making of Middle-Class Culture 1815-1914

Peter Gay

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Peter Gay : Schnitzler's Century: The Making of Middle-Class Culture 1815-1914 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Schnitzler's Century: The Making of Middle-Class Culture 1815-1914:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Past and PrologueBy demarus "angstrom buff" Well written - by a

scholar whose comprehension of the various topics is excellent. On the other hand, he has put many disparate things into the same pot. It's clear to me that the author is more at home in historical matters than in literary ones. It wasn't "Schnitzler's Century". As the author himself made clear, Schnitzler was one of many outstanding creative writers who passed over the continental stage in Europe in those hundred years. The author has dealt frankly with Schnitzler's extensive liaisons, and more generally with socio-sexual matters in this period, and with the devastating effects of STDs when there was little effective treatment. An interesting book, worthwhile reading. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. and I recommend it to the lay reader. By DAVID K ROGERS. By utilizing Mr. Schnitzler's biographical info, Gay tells the story of his century in a most personal way, while never losing touch of the institutional matters that are needed to round out the study. Gay is an accomplished and versatile writer, plus being an historian of impeccable qualities. This is a book which is both interesting and highly informative, and I recommend it to the lay reader. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An overview of an overview. By Adam H. Peter Gay gives the reader a quick breeze over the psyche of the middle classes across industrialized Europe during the latter half of the long 19th century (despite the years given on the cover.) The book categorizes the various aspects that historians often consider the main themes of bourgeois experience, and then expounds upon each of them in a concise manner (albeit filled with detail and two-sentence anecdotes.) The reader should be prepared with a wealth of resources - namely Google - if he or she is unfamiliar with 19th century European literature, because Gay makes frequent references to works that extend beyond the basic oeuvre of common knowledge. Overall, it is a fairly light read and incredibly enlightening not just about people of the past but also about the becomings of our own psychosocial state, all without making one feel he or she is reading a textbook.

"This is cultural history of the first order, and it is liberal and humane history at its very best." David Cannadine. An essential work for anyone who wishes to understand the social history of the nineteenth century, Schnitzler's Century is the culmination of Peter Gay's thirty-five years of scholarship on bourgeois culture and society. Using Arthur Schnitzler, the sexually emboldened Viennese playwright, as his master of ceremonies, Gay offers a brilliant reexamination of the hundred-year period that began with the defeat of Napoleon and concluded with the conflagration of 1914. This is a defining work by one of America's greatest historians. 12 b/w illustrations.

.com Prolific author Peter Gay describes the rise of the middle class in the 19th century through an unexpected lens: the life of Viennese playwright Arthur Schnitzler. Yet Gay's themes are much larger than the somewhat obscure Schnitzler: "If we may call [my book] a biography at all, it is one of a class," he writes. Schnitzler's Century necessarily focuses on the Victorians--a term often applied only to the British, but here extended to all of Europe and the United States--and Gay seeks to portray them in their complexity and diversity. "There are many people who think they have grasped the Victorian mentality when they have smiled at gushy keepsakes, maudlin poems, shy euphemisms, silences about matters that matter," he writes. In fact, "they lived with their eyes open." Gay has written a history of habits, with close attention paid to sexual ones. It is the sort of provocative book that the stereotypical Victorian would want to see removed from the storefront window--but also would want to peek at when nobody else was looking. --John Miller. From Publishers Weekly. Though distinguished historian Gay declares in the preface that his new work is not "merely a Reader's Digest condensation of the bulky texts that preceded it," readers of his five-volume study, *The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud*, will find most of the material decidedly familiar. As in the series' first book, *Education of the Senses*, he argues here that the Victorian middle classes were much less inhibited about sex than modern stereotypes suggest. As in the last, *Pleasure Wars*, he finds that bourgeois philistinism has been vastly overstated and that there were plenty of respectable patrons for avant-garde art and music. Indeed, as Gay admits, some of the actual examples here are drawn from his former work. So what's new? Interweaving incidents from the life of Austrian playwright and novelist Arthur Schnitzler, "sometimes briefly as an impetus to broader investigations, sometimes as a participant," Gay begins his main text with Schnitzler's father breaking into the 16-year-old's locked desk to find, and vehemently reproach Arthur for, a diary indiscreetly recording the boy's erotic exploits; he closes with the diary's August 5, 1914, entry about the "dreadful and monstrous news" of WWI's outbreak. In between, the incident with Schnitzler's diary turns up several more times: as a demonstration of conflicted bourgeois notions about privacy, as an illustration of more lenient treatment of children (Dr. Schnitzler lectured his son, but didn't beat him). As is always the case with Gay, the prose is graceful, the insights solid, the specific examples vivid and illuminating. Fellow historians and longtime readers will feel (correctly) that the author really isn't saying anything he hasn't said before; for those who lack the stamina for *The Bourgeois Experience*, this is an agreeable one-volume summary with some additional nuance. Illus. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From *Library Journal*. The author of *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, *Freud: A Life for Our Time*, and many other works, Gay takes a fresh look at the 19th century and challenges long-held assumptions about the Victorian age. In this sweeping and provocative survey, Gay uses Viennese playwright Arthur Schnitzler as his guide to exploring the erotic and unconventional currents of bourgeois life in Europe and the United States. He weaves together strands of philosophy, psychology, literature, science, religion, and domestic practices, and the narrative frequently spins off into unexpected territory. For

example, Gay offers a delightful discourse on Victorian anxiety, its causes, and its cures. The book can be seen as a distillation of and companion to Gay's five-volume series, "The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud," but it clearly stands alone as a vital contribution to modern history. Recommended for academic libraries.- Thomas A. Karel, Franklin Marshall Coll. Lib, Lancaster, PA Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.