

JERROLD SEIGEL

Modernity and Bourgeois Life

Society, Politics, and Culture in
England, France, and Germany since 1750



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Modernity and Bourgeois Life

To be modern may mean many different things, but for nineteenth-century Europeans “modernity” suggested a new form of life in which bourgeois activities, people, attitudes, and values all played key roles. Jerrold Seigel’s panoramic new history offers a magisterial and highly original account of the ties between modernity and bourgeois life, arguing that they can be best understood not in terms of the rise and fall of social classes, but as features of a common participation in expanding and thickening “networks of means” that linked together distant energies and resources across economic, political, and cultural life. Exploring the different configurations of these networks in England, France, and Germany, he shows how their patterns gave rise to distinctive forms of modernity in each country and shaped the rhythm and nature of change across spheres as diverse as politics, money and finance, gender relations, morality, and literary, artistic, and musical life.

JERROLD SEIGEL is Kenan Professor of History Emeritus, New York University. His previous publications include *The Idea of the Self* (Cambridge, 2005), *Bohemian Paris* (1986), and *Marx’s Fate* (1978).

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