

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910815410503321
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Titolo	Modernity and bourgeois life : society, politics, and culture in England, France and Germany since 1750 // Jerrold Seigel
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Cambridge, : Cambridge University Press, 2012
ISBN	1-139-36624-6 1-107-23087-X 1-280-66410-X 1-139-37881-3 9786613641038 1-139-08737-1 1-139-37595-4 1-139-37738-8 1-139-37196-7 1-139-38024-9
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (xi, 626 pages) : digital, PDF file(s)
Classificazione	HIS010000
Disciplina	305.5/5094
Soggetti	Middle class - Europe, Western - History Social classes - Political aspects - Europe, Western - History Civilization, Modern
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Title from publisher's bibliographic system (viewed on 05 Oct 2015).
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Machine generated contents note: Preface; 1. Introduction: ends and means; Part I. Contours of Modernity: 2. Precocious integration: England; 3. Monarchical centralization, privilege, and conflict: France; 4. Localism, state-building, and burgerliche gesellschaft: Germany; 5. Modern industry, class, and party politics in nineteenth-century England; 6. France and bourgeois France: from teleocracy to autonomy; 7. One special path: modern industry, politics, and bourgeois life in Germany; Part II. Calculations and Lifeworlds: 8. Time, money, capital; 9. Men and women; 10. Bourgeois morals: from Victorianism to modern sexuality; 11. Jews as bourgeois and network people; Part III. A Culture of Means: 12. Public places, private spaces; 13. Bourgeois and others;

14. Bourgeois life and the avant-garde; 15. Conclusion.

Sommario/riassunto

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.
