



The Tender Passion: The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud, Volume 2 (v. 2)

Peter Gay

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Education of the Senses, the first volume of Peter Gay's *The Bourgeois Experience*, was published in 1984 to enormous critical acclaim--and controversy. Now, in *The Tender Passion*, Gay continues his eloquent, psychoanalytically informed exploration of the Victorian era and its middle classes.

Whereas *Education of the Senses* focused on the sexual attitudes and practices of the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie, *The Tender Passion* concentrates on their notions of love. No less revisionist than he was in his first volume, Gay argues here that the Victorians were able not only to enjoy their sexuality but to know love in its most exalted sense. The realities of love for the Victorians, he shows, came much closer to their ideals than many have thought. Gay delves into a huge body of material, from philosophical treatises to medical texts, from letters and diaries to works of fiction. The book is replete with fascinating insights into the lives and works of individual Victorians--Dickens, Stendhal, Wagner, Oscar Wilde, Beatrice Potter and Sydney Webb, among them--and his discussions range from the "discovery" of homosexuality to the ways love was diverted or disguised in music and religion.

Particularly compelling is the opening section in which Gay analyzes in depth the separate love stories of two young men, one English and one German--stories which, in Gay's view, "dramatize some of the careers in love open to the middle class in the decades of Victoria and beyond."

A work of remarkable learning, analytical sophistication, and stylistic verve, *The Tender Passion* is an impressive addition to a monumental historical enterprise.

About the Author:

Peter Gay, Sterling Professor of History at Yale University, is the author, most recently, of *Freud for Historians*.

The latest volume in the acclaimed historian's monumental series

·Focuses on the Victorians' notions of love

·Filled with fascinating glimpses of individuals

·Draws on huge body of letters, diaries, and other original sources

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