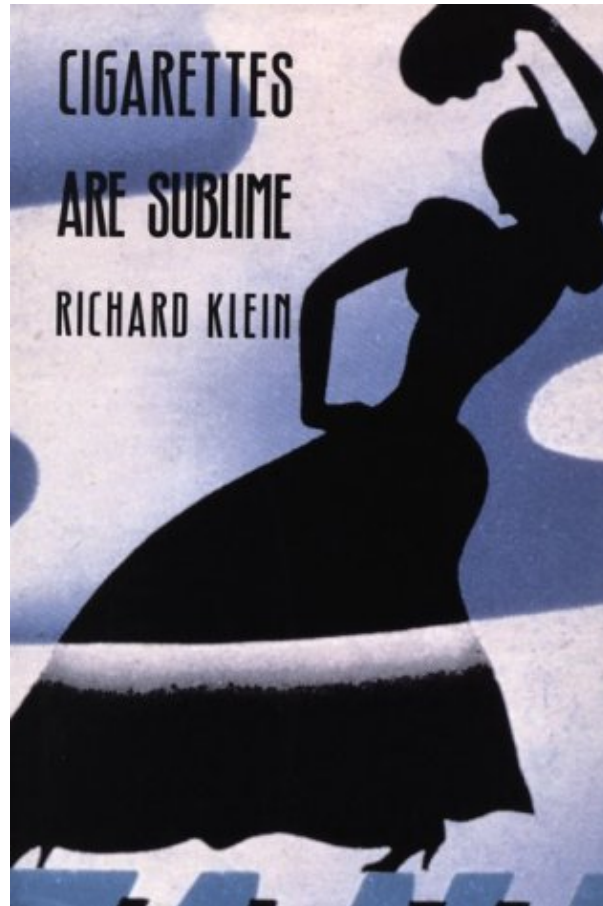
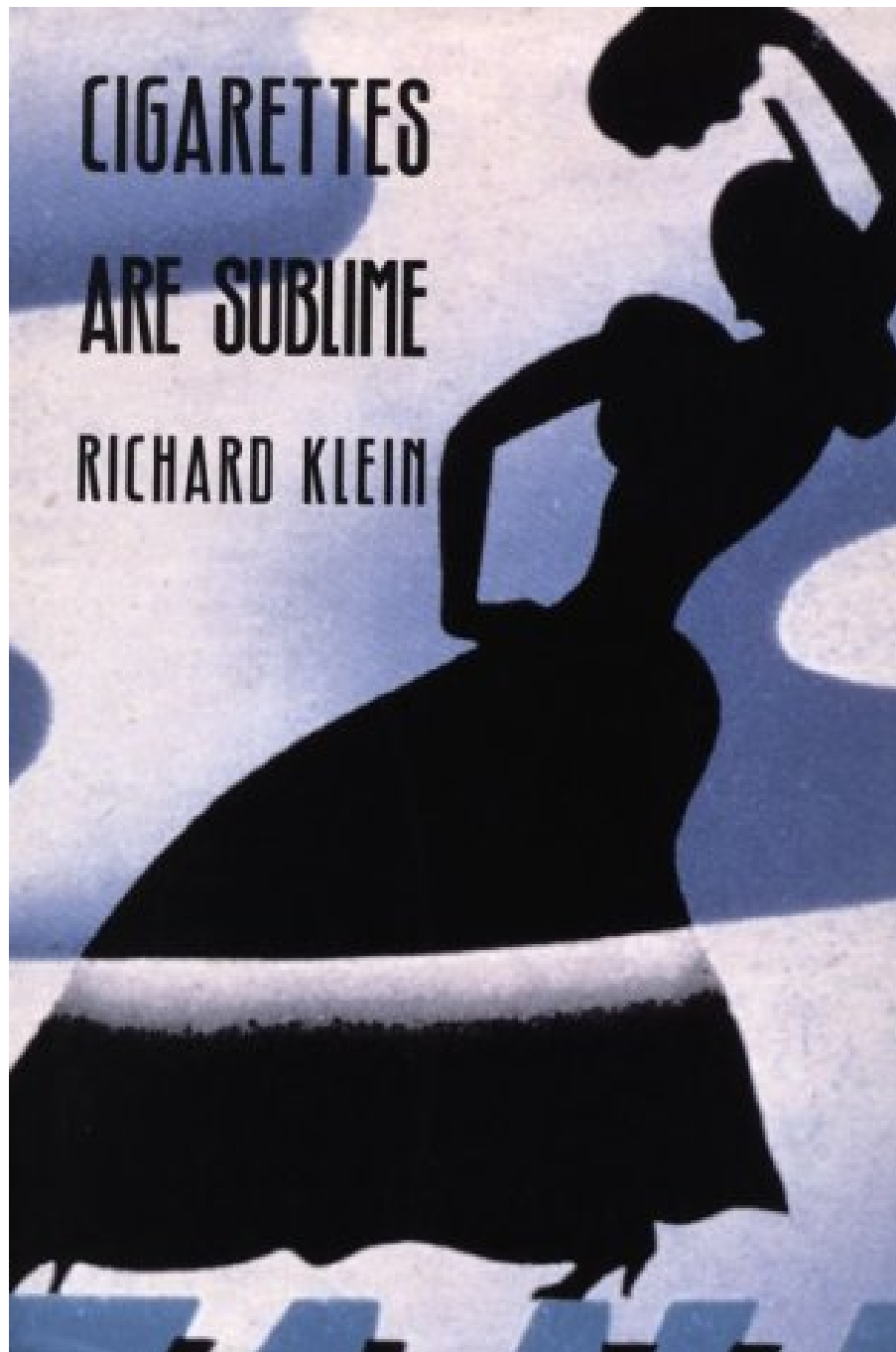


CIGARETTES ARE SUBLIME BY RICHARD KLEIN



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From Booklist

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Review

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--Hendrik Hertzberg, "New Yorker"

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CIGARETTES ARE SUBLIME BY RICHARD KLEIN PDF

Cigarettes are bad for you; that is why they are so good. With its origins in the author's urgent desire to stop smoking, *Cigarettes Are Sublime* offers a provocative look at the literary, philosophical, and cultural history of smoking. Richard Klein focuses on the dark beauty, negative pleasures, and exacting benefits attached to tobacco use and to cigarettes in particular. His appreciation of paradox and playful use of hyperbole lead the way on this aptly ambivalent romp through the cigarette in war, movies (the "Humphrey Bogart cigarette"), literature, poetry, and the reflections of Sartre to show that cigarettes are a mixed blessing, precisely sublime.

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--Hendrik Hertzberg, "New Yorker"

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21 of 25 people found the following review helpful.

A superbly spun, well-researched "In Your Face" to the Nanny State!

By Sophia Bezirganian

In this iconoclastic gem of a book, Klein manages to provide a wonderful tool to those of us readers who resonate with his wonderful voicing of one giant "in your face" to the new and stultifying "Nanny State". This statement summarizes the message of "Cigarettes are Sublime" !

Usually we who chafe at "Big Brother" telling us how to treat our bodies, resort to arguments like: "Well, I want to have the right to smoke on my balcony at work 'dammit'!" Such protest can sound a bit like an adolescent stamping one's foot. Klein however, in this so well-spun book, with its rich historical analysis spanning many cultures, gives us a unique and powerful tool to use, in voicing our protest.

"Cigarettes are Sublime" manages to capture what is the CULTURALLY EMBEDDED power, and perhaps (if you agree with Klein) what is in fact the VALUE, as means of self-expression, of smoking, as a social symbol and act. As the Editorial reviews note, "vices" in general (drinking, playing poker, smoking, eating gloriously at sumptuous tables with friends) are all very powerful "games" or "props" in that very underappreciated arena of how we humans "play" with each other in private life--what mischief we toy with, what message we project to others about our "attitude"; to death, to sex, to an embrace vs rejection of the message (broadcast daily in ominous bulletins from our media), that our bodies are entities vulnerable and besieged by a barrage of "risks" that we must always vigilantly guard against, at any cost, including sacrifice of our bodies as instruments of pleasure and work. In this light, the puff on a cig is not JUST recklessness, but in fact, can give that same royal pleasure that one gets in reveling on one's roof to catch rays, as others , anxiously monitoring the daily published "cancer index" of the sun, huddle indoors.

Seen from this very often ignored angle of pleasure and play and social intercourse, cigarettes--as are so many of our personal habits and messages to others in our myriad relationships--are a sublime pleasure in the playground of life, the very thing that those who cry for quantity of life, ignoring quality of the play, indeed need heed, if life is what they wish to "celebrate".

20 of 22 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent Book !

By A Customer

I can not remember the last time I read such a well written book. Klein is an amazing wordsmith & this book is a treasure in understanding the lure, beauty, and sublime charms which keep 1.4 billion people in the world smoking every day.

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Leisured, Surprising and maybe even Universal.

By Benggriffin

I adored this intelligent, iconoclastic book, and wrote a long review on a blog that ceased to exist... Suffice it to say that if you enjoy flirting with academic seriousness, yet don't want to drown in it, then you will adore this based on style alone. Mr. Klein writes with a non-chalance and thoroughness that only an official 'Reader' at a university ever really attain. Treasure this read, and enjoy it's many yet leisured tangential reflections on ... Life.

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