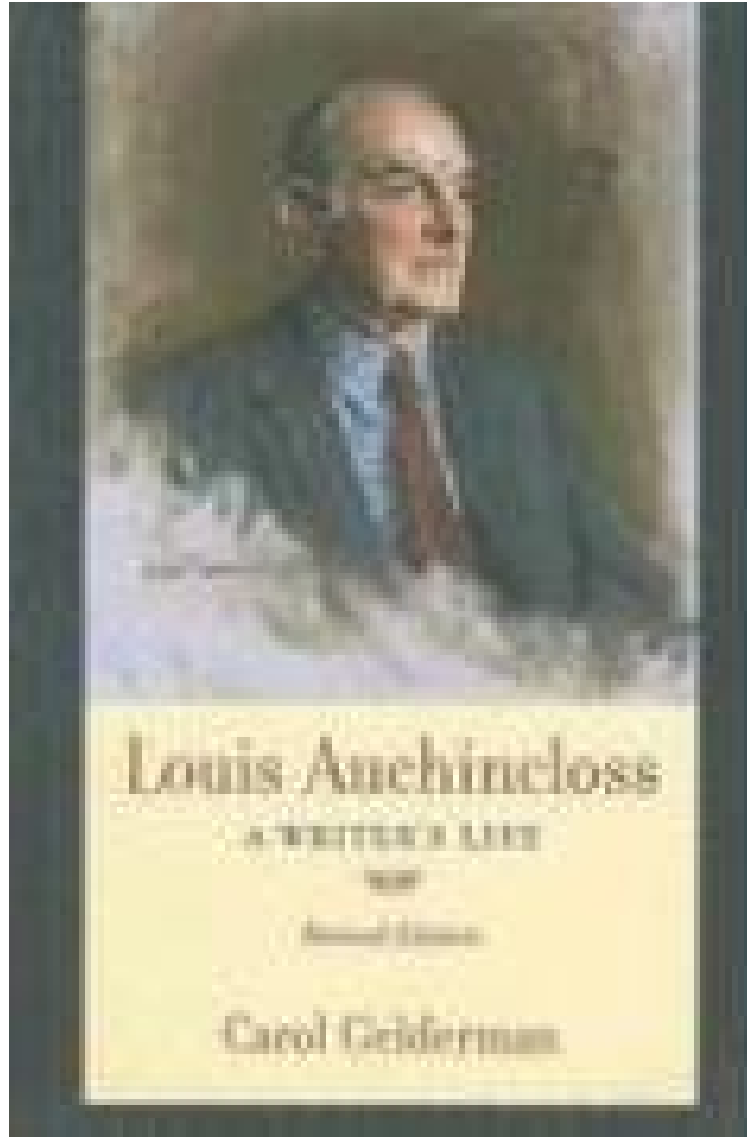


[E-BOOK] Louis Auchincloss: A Writers Life

Louis Auchincloss: A Writers Life

Carol Gelderman

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Carol Gelderman : Louis Auchincloss: A Writers Life before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Louis Auchincloss: A Writers Life:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Good BioBy reading man Auchincloss is one of the few serious novelists who combined his artistic career with a full-time job as a Wall Street lawyer. He was prolific, perhaps too prolific, because only one or two of his books is first-rate (The Rector of Justin, The House of Five Talents). On the other hand, his "lit crit", though not extensive, is outstanding, mostly because he wasn't a full-time reviewer and read,

as he often says, for "pleasure". His brief essays on Proust, Wharton, and Saint-Simon are excellent. His full-length study of Henry James, his favorite writer, is superior to most academic Jamesian criticism. His life, of course, is not varied, romantic, or particularly interesting in any respect, but it's worth reading this short biography to see how he balanced his twin careers and remained a happy man.

With more than sixty published novels, short story collections, and works of criticism and history to his credit, Louis Auchincloss is the very definition of prolific. He has garnered widespread acclaim for his unrivaled critical observations of Manhattan circles of wealth and influence, the same elite society in which he moves. In her definitive literary biography of Auchincloss, Carol Gelderman traces the iconic writer from boarding school to his early literary forays at Yale, from law school to naval service in World War II, and then to Wall Street, chronicling his success in both legal and literary careers. Gelderman notes that Auchincloss's greatest personal struggle-and perhaps greatest accomplishment-was to reconcile his competing impulses to follow his father's path to prominence in law and to write the stories of his world. "Of all our novelists," Gore Vidal has observed, Auchincloss "is the only one who tells us how our rulers behave in their banks and their boardrooms, their law offices and their clubs." Gelderman shows how Auchincloss came to be our preeminent novelist of manners and power in this update to her 1993 biography of the only writer to be named a "living landmark" by the New York Landmarks Conservancy. She offers keen insights into his life, careers, and writings, including his best-selling novels *Portrait in Brownstone*, *The House of Five Talents*, and *The Rector of Justin* as well as the more recent works *The Scarlet Letters*, *East Side Story*, and *The Young Apollo and Other Stories*

From Publishers Weekly Author of biographies of Mary McCarthy and Henry Ford, Gelderman has produced an admiring, bland account of novelist Louis Auchincloss (b. 1917), witty observer of Manhattan's rich and powerful. Reared by a strict, overprotective mother and a sweet-natured father who suffered recurrent depressions, the future writer, we learn, developed a "simultaneous insider-outsider view," a keen sense of irony that would inform his biting portrayals of upper-class greed and duplicity. Gelderman sheds a bit of light on Auchincloss's psychoanalysis, which apparently helped him emerge from his mother's autocratic influence. Studded with fresh, biographically informed literary criticism, her carefully researched narrative, which was written with Auchincloss's cooperation, follows Auchincloss from boarding school to Yale, where he was a budding novelist, to the Navy, where he was a lieutenant in WW II, and then to Wall Street, where he practiced law. Claiming that Auchincloss's best work "is in the first rank of American literature," Gelderman portrays the novelist as the literary heir of Edith Wharton, recording the breakup of New York's monolithic old-money elite. Photos. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal In this critical biography, Gelderman (Henry Ford, LJ 2/1/81) ranks novelist/lawyer Auchincloss with Edith Wharton in his importance to American literature. Well written and well organized, this excellent biography details Auchincloss's family history, social background and values, and education, then goes on to describe his law practice, marriage, struggle to establish himself as a writer, insights gained through psychoanalysis, and eventual success in a dual career. Gelderman does an outstanding job of portraying the inner tension and outside pressures on a man torn between his writing and his law practice, who felt he owed "a literary debt to the law." Auchincloss's interest in New York City's history and civic and social affairs is detailed at some length, while major works, including *The Rector of Justin* and *Portrait in Brownstone*, are discussed for the insights they provide into his life. Textual notes are included, but there is no formal bibliography. Recommended for law collections and American literature collections in public and academic libraries.- Lesley Jorbin, Cleveland State Univ. Lib. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Studded with fresh, biographically informed literary criticism, Gelderman's carefully researched narrative, which was written with Auchincloss's cooperation... portrays the novelist as the literary heir of Edith Wharton, recording the breakup of New York's monolithic old-money elite." - Publishers Weekly"