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Sommario/riassunto	Jürgen Habermas' pioneering work has provoked intense discussion about the rise of a modern public sphere and civil society. Redekop revises and expands the Habermasian thesis by demonstrating that, rather than being particularly "bourgeois," the eighteenth-century German public was a problematic, amorphous entity that was not based on a single social grouping - a beckoning figure that led Lessing, Abbt, and Herder on unique but comparable quests to give it shape and form. His perspective provides an important new understanding of the work of authors who have often been placed in overly narrow and restrictive categories.