



The Bourgeois: Between History and Literature

By Franco Moretti

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"I am a member of the bourgeois class, feel myself to be such, and have been brought up on its opinions and ideals," wrote Max Weber, in 1895. Who could repeat these words today?

Thus begins Franco Moretti's study of the bourgeois in modern European literature, where a gallery of individual portraits is entwined around the analysis of specific keywords – such as 'useful' and 'earnest', 'efficiency', 'influence', 'comfort', 'roba' – and of the formal mutations of the medium of prose. The book charts the rise and fall of bourgeois culture, exploring the causes for its historical weakness, and searches for the seeds of its failures.

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Review

‘A passionate and astute scholar’ —Jonathan Franzen

‘Cleverly strips away the counting-house walls, watch chains and waistcoats to reveal a phase of middle-class history that was at least as anxious and self-scrutinising as its snobbish detractors could wish’ —*Times Higher Education*

‘Shows how the novel as form served as the capacious and adaptable home within which the bourgeois could both assert and camouflage itself’ —*LA Review of Books*

‘It’s a rare literary critic who attracts so much public attention, and there’s a good reason: few are as hellbent on rethinking the way we talk about literature’ —*Times Literary Supplement*

‘An illuminating, data-rich analysis of a fraught and nuanced null set’ —*New Inquiry*

About the Author

Franco Moretti teaches English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University. He is the author of *Signs Taken for Wonders*, *The Way of the World* and *Modern Epic*, all from Verso.

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