

Common writing: essays on literary culture and public debate

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Abstrak

In a series of penetrating and attractively readable essays, Stefan Collini explores aspects of the literary and intellectual culture of Britain from the early twentieth century to the present. The book focuses chiefly on writers, critics, historians, and journalists who occupied wider public roles as cultural commentators or intellectuals, as well as on the periodicals and other genres through which they attempted to reach such audiences. Among the figures discussed are T. S. Eliot, Graham Greene, J. B. Priestley, C. S. Lewis, Kingsley Amis, Nikolaus Pevsner, Hugh Trevor-Roper, Christopher Hitchens, and Michael Ignatieff. The essays explore the variety of such figures writings-something that can get overlooked or forgotten when they are treated exclusively in terms of their contribution to one established or professional category such as novelist or historian-while capturing their distinctive writing voices and those indirect or implicit ways in which they position or reveal themselves in relation to specific readerships, disputes, and traditions. Explicitly addressed to the non-specialist reader, these essays engage with recent biographies, collections of letters, and new editions of classic works, thereby making some of the fruits of recent scholarly research available to a wider audience. Collini has been acclaimed as one of the most brilliant essayists of our time, and this collection shows him at his subtle, perceptive, and trenchant best. The book will appeal to (and delight) readers interested in literature, history, and contemporary cultural debate.