



The Event of Literature

Terry Eagleton

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In this characteristically concise, witty, and lucid book, Terry Eagleton turns his attention to the questions we should ask about literature, but rarely do. What is literature? Can we even speak of "literature" at all? What do different literary theories tell us about what texts mean and do? In throwing new light on these and other questions he has raised in previous best-sellers, Eagleton offers a new theory of what we mean by literature. He also shows what it is that a great many different literary theories have in common.

In a highly unusual combination of critical theory and analytic philosophy, the author sees all literary work, from novels to poems, as a strategy to contain a reality that seeks to thwart that containment, and in doing so throws up new problems that the work tries to resolve. The "event" of literature, Eagleton argues, consists in this continual transformative encounter, unique and endlessly repeatable. Freewheeling through centuries of critical ideas, he sheds light on the place of literature in our culture, and in doing so reaffirms the value and validity of literary thought today.

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