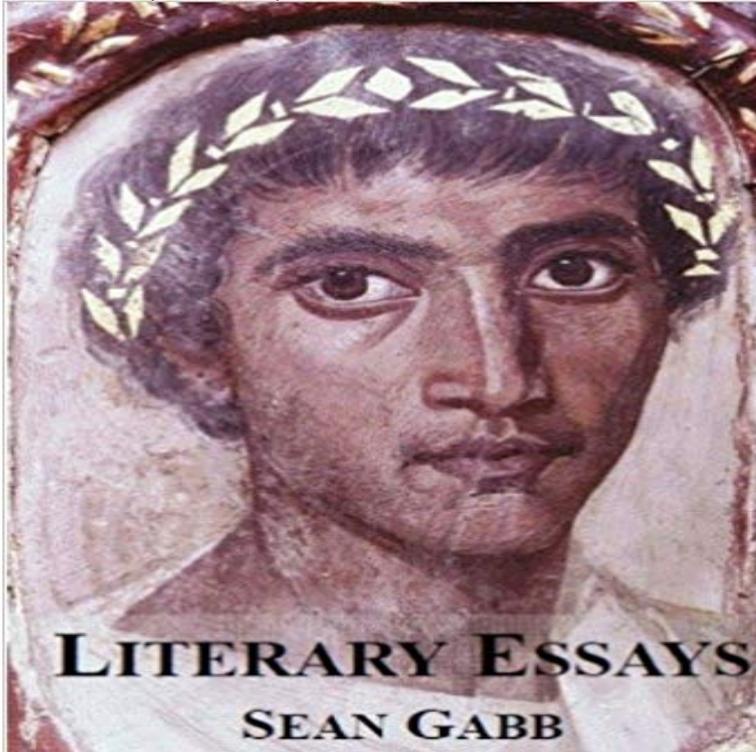


## Literary Essays



This book sets out to answer the following questions: Why bother learning Latin? How did the Romans pronounce Greek? Should the Elgin Marbles be handed over to the Modern Greeks? Did the ancients have market economies? Should Epicurus be venerated above Plato and Aristotle? Why is Carol Ann Duffy not even a bad poet? What makes Macaulay a great historian and L. Neil Smith a great science fiction novelist? Why is The Daily Mail easily the best newspaper in England not fit for wrapping fish and chips? Sean Gabb deals with these and other issues in this collection of essays. Lively and provocative, they are written for every lover of ancient or modern literature. Extract: The answer, I think, to Carol Ann Duffys popularity and official endorsement is the democratisation of the arts. The modern movement was motivated in part by a snobbish elite that wanted things to praise that ordinary people could not appreciate. Since then, however, the idea has taken hold that anything that everyone cannot do should be shunned. The full horror is in poetry. Here we find the verbal equivalents of Tracey Emin and a universal insistence that what they write is poetry. What makes Carol Ann Duffy so popular is the knowledge that anyone else might have written her works. Writing in her style needs nothing more than a word processor with the spelling checker turned on. Her nationality, sex and possible sexuality aside, she is the ideal poet for an age that calls itself democratic and, in a debased sense, probably is.

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Essays and Reviews of the 1930s and 40s shows Wilson at the midpoint of his extraordinary career as critic and scholar, and includes in complete form