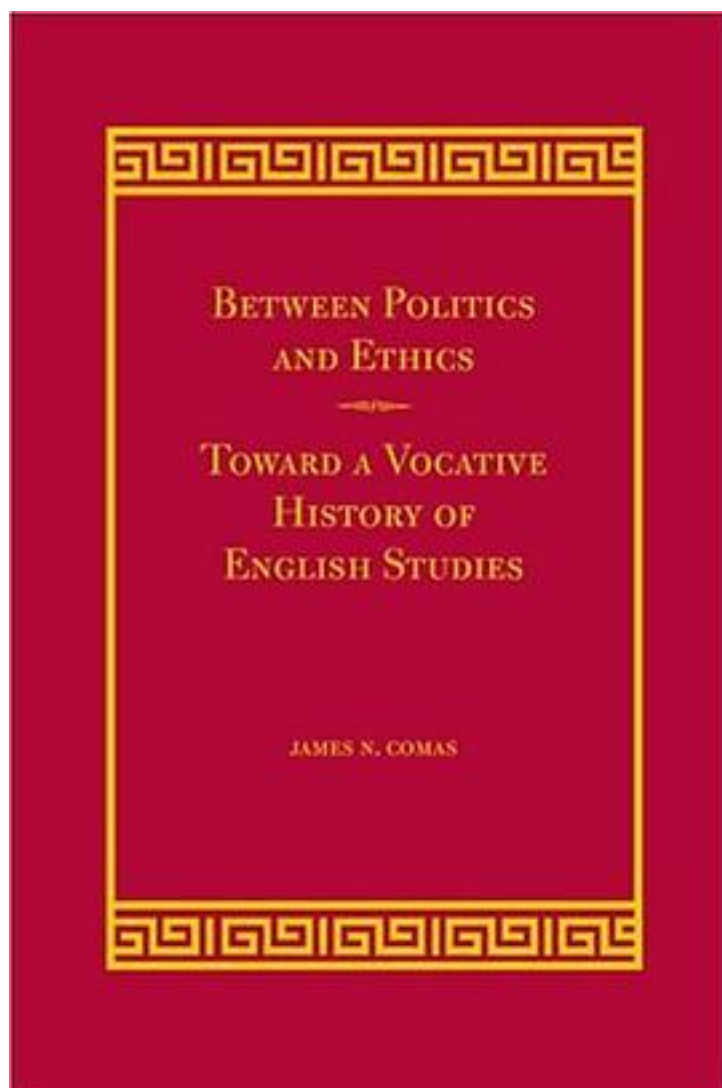


Between Politics and Ethics



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For nearly twenty-five years, English studies has been focused on two terms: "politics" and "ethics." However, the institutional emergence, development, and relationship of these two concepts have yet to be examined. "Between Politics and Ethics: Toward a Vocative History of English Studies" traces the development of politics and ethics in contemporary English studies, questions the current political orientation of the discipline, and proposes a rethinking of the history of English studies based on a "vocative" dimension of writing--the idea that writers form a virtual community by "calling to" and listening to other writers. In a series of interrelated discussions, James Comas examines the historical trends leading to recent confusion regarding ethics and its relation to the politics of English studies. Through close, rhetorical readings of texts by Judith Butler, Stephen Greenblatt, Edward Said, and others, Comas argues that this confusion is largely the result of a "political turn" that resists theorizing itself. In addition, he argues that work on ethics by Wayne Booth, Geoffrey Harpham, and J. Hillis Miller reflects an uneasy dialectic between the ethics and politics of reading and writing. In response to this discord, Comas turns to the theories of Emmanuel Levinas and Maurice Blanchot, as well as to the examples of Georges Bataille and Kenneth Burke, and proposes a vocative approach to assessing English studies and its history. In doing so, this volume offers a thoughtful reassessment of English studies that affects our understanding of the rhetoric of disciplinary histories.

作者介绍:

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