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Autore	Keen Paul
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Sommario/riassunto	This book explores the ways that critics writing in the early nineteenth century developed arguments in favour of the humanities in the face of utilitarian pressures. Its focus reflects the ways that similar pressures today have renewed the question of how to make the case for the public value of the humanities. The good news is that in many ways,

this self-reflexive challenge is precisely what the humanities have always done best: highlight the nature and the force of the narratives that have helped to define how we understand our society - its various pasts and its possible futures - and to suggest the larger contexts within which these issues must ultimately be situated. .
