

George Orwell and the Radical Eccentrics

examines the lives, literature, and politics of a group of four writers working in London during the 1930s and 1940s—the suburban satirist Stevie Smith, the Marxist Indian nationalist, Mulk Raj Anand, and the beautiful socialist bohemian Inez Holden—who formed a friendly circle around the famously radical and eccentric George Orwell. Demonstrating that Smith, Anand, and Holden matter for literary history just as they mattered for Orwell, this book gives name and shape to a neglected movement, “inter-modernism,” within interwar and wartime English writing. It focuses on the lives and texts of the three lesser-known writers, arguing that they challenge assumptions about standard relations between literary form and sex, gender, race, class, and empire in ways that their group’s most influential radical, Orwell, cannot. Undertaking a biographical-political cultural-literary criticism, Kristin Bluemel brings to life the radical eccentrics’ potentially transformative conversation, suggesting fascinating new approaches to the study of literary London during the 1930s and 1940s.