

modern popular satanic literature, Woods refers them to the more solid studies in that subject.

So the devil may be real, but he is not to be sought in a spectacular display of satanic possessions. These are rare and happen only under the most extraordinary circumstances. The reality of evil is to be located in the ordinary, in the absolute alienation of the individual and in the demonic nature of totalitarian institutions. Evil is not an entity by itself but lives in the hearts of men, where it is directly subjected to the irresistible goodness of God in Jesus Christ.

But has Woods' demythologisation of evil not obscured the distinction between evil and Satan as the power of evil? Although man is indeed the subject of evil, he is not altogether

its initiator, and the sin in him is also experienced as the work of a stranger. Is this not the paradox by which people are so baffled and which they try to challenge and explore in their obsession with Satanism? This enigma needs perhaps to find expression in the myth of the stranger who takes possession as if he were working from an outside realm. There is a cosmic dimension to the war between good and evil, and to recognise this is perhaps the most effective answer to the modern concern with the objectivity of evil. Christian preaching needs a frank presentation of the myth of the descent into hell where the victorious Christ confronts Satan in a realm which is indeed quite beyond the ordinary life in this world.

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This latest collection of working papers from the Birmingham Cultural Studies Centre reveals an interaction between theoretical generality and tightly-focused particular surveys which now seems characteristic of the Centre's pioneering work. On the one hand, we have rigorously analytic 'readings' of specific cultural texts and events—Walter Greenwood's drama, the political structure of *All's Well That Ends Well*, an ethnomethodological treatment of reactions to the public announcement of a fatality; on the other hand, a range of penetrative theoretical studies in the literature/society field.

The theoretical centrepiece is a collectively produced project which 'maps the field' of the literature/Society debate, briefly reviewing the various 'positions' (Lukács, Goldmann, Adorno, Marcuse, Sartre, Brecht, Benjamin, Barthes and the structuralists) from which the naive empiricism of orthodox English literary criticism can be placed. Two emphases emerge here as crucial. First, a developing (though critical) engagement with structuralism and semiotics, as methods of cultural analysis which can add some 'scientific' backbone to what began as the Centre's rather nebulously conceived, idealist and phenomenological approach to cultural meanings as expressive 'objectifications' of intersubjectivity. Second, coupled with this, a relatively new encounter with that tradition, passed from Benjamin and Brecht to Sartre and the Althusserians, which by grasping art and literature as social *practice* and *production* subverts the bourgeois myth

of 'creativity' and qualifies the neo-Hegelian Marxist critical tradition (Lukács, Goldmann) which still grasp the literary text essentially as an object. (It is a pity here that the important work of the French Althusserian critic Pierr Macheray, who has 'theorised' this approach most succinctly in recent years, receives only a passing footnote reference).

The particular theoretical studies then radiate out from this nub: most of them (with the exception of Colin Spark's fairly unoriginal piece on Lukács) reflect a shift away from the neo-Hegelian heritage. Thus Adrian Mellor's contribution on Goldmann is properly critical of its subject, astutely demonstrating the theoretical shifts in the meaning of 'dialectics' hidden beneath the deterioration of his later work; and Alf Louvre's excellent 'Notes on a Theory of Genre' is grounded firmly in a materialist aesthetics indebted to Brecht, Benjamin and Enzensberger. Andrew Tolson's 'Reading Literature as Culture', while less easy to place, similarly opposes a highly systematised analysis of the various levels of the act of reading to the empiricism or intuitionism of conventional approaches. It is good, also, to see that the Centre is continuing its practice of including in each batch of working studies an important 'document'—this time, a translation of part of an article by Helen Gallas, of the German Marxist journal *Alternative*, concerning Lukács's part in the League of Proletarian Revolutionary Writers in the 1930s.

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