



Against the Grain: Essays 1975-1985

Terry Eagleton

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These essays (and a ballad) have their origins in Terry Eagleton's continuing engagement with the possibilities of a literary criticism that is both materialist and open to diverse currents of thought in the human sciences.

Eagleton's combative intelligence here explores the encounter between Marxism and contemporary European and American literary theory. Included are a survey of the Althusserian contribution to literary analysis; thoughts on the fraught relations between Marxism and poststructuralism; and a brilliant evocation of the affinities and tensions between Wittgenstein, Derrida and Bakhtin.

Intellectual figures in this wide-ranging topography include Jacques Derrida; the radical critic Fredric Jameson; the apostle of deconstruction, Paul de Man; the liberal humanist John Bayley; Bertolt Brecht; William Empson and Pierre Machery. The volume also includes Eagleton's brilliant reading of Conrad's *The Secret Agent*.

Against the Grain is an excellent introduction to the range of Terry Eagleton's thought and his considerable body of work. It is also a useful primer for all readers interested in the vitality of literary theory today.

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