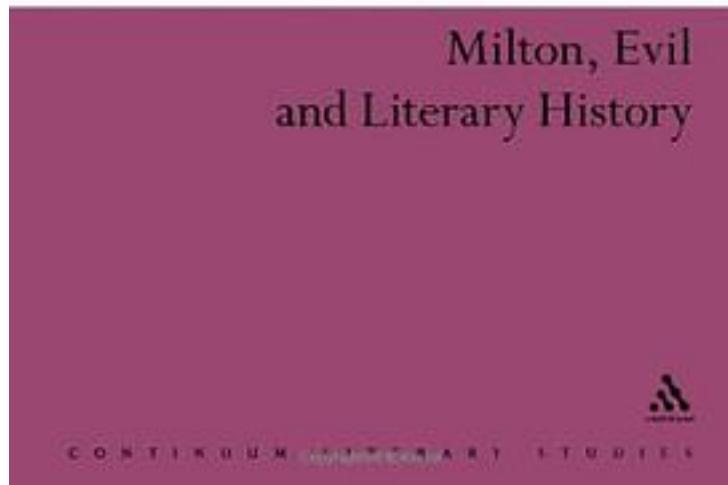


Milton, Evil and Literary History

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Claire Colebrook



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出版者:Continuum Intl Pub Group

出版时间:2008-2

装帧:HRD

isbn:9780826484925

"Milton, Evil and Literary History" addresses the ways in which we read literary history according to quite specific images of growth, development, progression, flourishing and succession. Goodness has always been aligned with a life of expansion, creation, production and fruition, while evil is associated with the inert, non-relational, static and stagnant. These associations have also underpinned a distinction between good and evil notions of capitalism, where good exchange enables the agents to enhance their living potential and is contrasted with the evils of a capitalism system that circulates without any reference to life or spirit. Such images of a ghostly and technical economy divorced from animating origin are both central to Milton's theology and poetry and to the theories of literary history through which Milton is read. Regarded as a radical precursor to Romanticism, Milton's poetry supposedly requires the release of his radical spiritual content from the fetters of received orthodoxy. This literary and historical imagery of releasing the radical spirit of a text from the dead weight of received tradition is, this book argues, the dominant doxa of historicism and one which a counter-reading of Milton ought to question.

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