



Evil and the Demonic: A New Theory of Monstrous Behaviour

Paul Oppenheimer

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In this study, the author sets out to unravel and expose one of the most powerful and compelling phenomena, a subject which has generated books, films and media, and has now become one of the most popular topics of entertainment: evil. This book argues that evil may be understood empirically as a type of mental and physical behaviour. Analyzing this behaviour in terms of all aspects of popular culture, painting, psychology, law, philosophy and history, it argues that evil contains predictable, specific ingredients. It also takes place within a highly specialized landscape, in which its massive violence, its diabolical self-consciousness and its impersonal selections of victims may develop with impunity. Evil is thus a demonstratable fact: by understanding its nature we can diagnose its specific manifestations in mass murder, genocide and serial killings. The book crisscrosses a variety of cinematic and literary genres in developing its evidence. It considers such films as "Persona", "The Silence of the Lambs", "Brazil" and "Performance", while from literature it draws upon such works as "Richard III", "Oedipus the King" and "The Picture of Dorian Gray". Relevant works of art, by Goya, Fuseli, Dali and Waterhouse, among others, plus a re-examination of the biblical story of the Tower of Babel, complement enquiries into the role of criminality and a peculiar linguistic straining and collapse that is seen in environments of evil.

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