

CHANGING ATTITUDES TO CAUDWELL A REVIEW OF CRITICAL COMMENTS ON THE AUTHOR 1937-87

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'Whether my writing has any quality of greatness, I cannot say, or you either. Leave it for another hundred years',¹ exclaims a character in an unpublished short story by Christopher Caudwell. If we take this for a moment to express the author's own secret desire, and try, after half that span of time, to define his place in the literary firmament, we tread on shaky ground. Caudwell is not widely read today; his works do not usually figure on literature or philosophy syllabuses. Yet he has been in print now almost continually for the last fifty years, and one or other of his theoretical writings is available in most world languages today, including Russian, Spanish, Portuguese and German.² Moreover, since the late 1960s an increasing number of doctoral dissertations and articles have been written about him. This is more than we can say about most British cultural critics this century, and among Marxists hardly any one has fared better.

Is it, as one line of argument goes, that we only take notice of Caudwell because in a desert any oasis is welcome? Terry Eagleton's curt remark 'Who is the major English Marxist critic? Christopher Caudwell, hélas'³ suggests this much. But Caudwell stands out from the 1930s, not as a literary critic - there were other theoretically informed and, as regards textual application, more convincing approaches to literature, most notably by Alick West and George Thomson—⁴ but as a 'scrutineer' of ideology. The common denominator of his theoretical works was the analysis, from a Marxist perspective, of the philosophical confusions underlying the humanities no less than the sciences. Hence the gigantic task of 'deconstructing' one major discipline after another: aesthetics, philosophy, history, religion, physics, biology, psychology. If the magnitude of this project singles him out in an English context, it also sets him apart from the international Marxist discussion of his time; for nowhere is there a similarly ambitious enterprise under way. Hence it is difficult to make out how an overcoming of the often bemoaned 'insularity' and, by implication, 'poverty' of British Marxism in the thirties could have facilitated Caudwell's self-imposed task —if ever there was such isolation. Evidence to the contrary includes Ralph Fox's study at the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute in Moscow

overlapping with Lukács's stay there, Alick West's long sojourn on the Continent and Francis D. Klingender's exhaustive use of European sources.⁵

It is, of course, true that interest in Caudwell has at all times tended to focus on his poetics. The following survey of (mainly Western) Caudwelliana will thus inevitably take a similar direction. But at the outset we should at least note the author's uncommonly wide range of interest and his more strictly literary ambitions.

Early Responses

Caudwell's death in the Spanish Civil War, his personal courage as recorded in an eye-witness account of his last hour,⁶ naturally coloured the initial reception of his work. To mention the unity of theory and practice, which his example afforded, became almost a commonplace; *in extremis* this could take the hagiographic form of invoking the fight against Fascism as a validation of the aesthetic theory, as in a review of *Illusion and Reality* in the American *New Masses*.⁷

A more surprising feature is the number of eminent reviewers Caudwell's books found, given the fact that he was practically unknown when he died, except as a thriller-writer, and that under a different name.⁸ W.H. Auden, Stephen Spender, E.M. Forster and Herbert Read all provided largely favourable comments on his work, ranging from enthusiasm (Auden) to reservation (Read).⁹ And the positive response of the Auden Group is completed by a nodding assent to *Illusion and Reality* from Louis MacNeice and Cecil Day Lewis.¹⁰

But very few of these early reviews examine any of Caudwell's ideas. An exception of some sort is John Middleton Murry's idiosyncratic and, after a generous opening, increasingly hectoring piece on *Illusion and Reality* in the *Criterion*. What irritates Murry, is the address to the contemporary leftwing poets in the final chapter of the book, with its appeal to assimilate to the proletariat, and the vision of a future classless art under Communism. This chapter has struck many subsequent commentators as doctrinaire; and one may, of course, take issue, as Murry does, with the idealisation of the proletariat, or criticise Caudwell for underestimating the staying power and adaptability of bourgeois culture. But whatever one objects to, Caudwell's argument at this point can hardly be said to present a 'labyrinth'.¹¹ Yet the author of *The Necessity of Communism* (1932) capitulates before Caudwell's distinction between 'proletarian' and 'communist art', is unable or unwilling to grasp that the one has an ideological quality referring to present-day oppositional tendencies in literature, while the other is an epochal term, referring, like 'feudal' or 'capitalist', to a whole (future) social formation. In any case, it reveals an extraordinary lack of judiciousness to devote a four-page review to this the least important issue of the book.

By contrast, Douglas Garman's short essay on *Illusion and Reality* in *Left*

Review is a model of perceptive reviewing, not only because the author makes an effort to disentangle the 'clear meaning' from the 'confused terminology' of the book and gives a perspicacious account of its main propositions, but also because he acutely registers 'a consistent method' at work, 'applicable to all functions of living, all methods of knowledge', at a time when the various *Studies in a Dying Culture* (1938) and *The Crisis in Physics* (1939) were yet unknown. In view of later developments it is also interesting that Garman finds Caudwell's separation of the 'positive content' of modern psychoanalysis from its more 'fallacious' aspects and its subsequent application to the 'dream-work' of poetry entirely conclusive.¹²

The outbreak of the War prevented any sustained engagement with Caudwell's aesthetic and cultural theories, though it is clear from a number of oblique references in wartime publications that his ideas were gradually catching on in marxist circles.¹³

The Postwar Surge

The years 1947-51 were an exciting, even hectic phase in the history of Caudwell's reception. Every one of the works originally published between his death in February 1937 and the beginning of the War was repeatedly reprinted (*Studies in a Dying Culture* no less than five times), a new selection of essays (*Further Studies in a Dying Culture*, 1949) added to the corpus, the first translations effected,¹⁴ and a climax finally reached with the controversy over Caudwell's status in the *Modern Quarterly*. Even a memorial volume with reminiscences, firsthand material and studies of the author's writings was planned, though it never materialised.¹⁵

One name stands out from the general run of Caudwell's promoters in those years, that of George Thomson. Not because he became his staunchest defender in the *Modern Quarterly* 'Discussion'—that was only the logical consequence of his previous engagement with the author—but because he was practically alone in consistently developing and concretising Caudwell's theory of poetry. Thomson's reworking of Caudwell's conclusions covers a period of thirty years, from *Marxism and Poetry* (1945) via *The Prehistoric Aegean* (1949) to *The Human Essence* (1974). What is so impressive about this undertaking is first, the lucidity of the presentation, which is free from any of the slipshod formulations and argumentational jumps that have exasperated even Caudwell's admirers, and second, the universal perspective of the author, which allows him to draw his illustrations from the whole range of world literature. In this crossing of national cultural borders as well as the boundaries of the disciplines Thomson is acting in Caudwell's spirit.

More substantively, his indebtedness to Caudwell starts from the view of poetry and science as two interdependent forms of social energy, both of central importance to the human race. Thomson further accepts Caudwell's thesis that to understand their function we have to reconstruct their origin and

development. Hence they both begin their enquiry with the magic rituals and myths of paleolithic hunters and food-gatherers. Poetry at this primeval stage, they agree, is inseparable from dance and song, at once a bodily and a vocal action. But in describing how the tribal dancer participates in, and is inspired by, the performance, Thomson places greater emphasis on the mimetic aspect of the ceremony. 'Just as in the labour-process man forms a preconceived image of the desired result, so in the mimetic dance he pre-enacts in fantasy the fulfilment of the desired reality.'¹⁶ Caudwell, by contrast, never speaks of imitation in connection with 'the group festival, the matrix of poetry'. He accentuates not its relationship with outer reality, but how 'in the rhythmic introversion of the tribal dance each performer retired into his heart, into the fountain of his instincts.'¹⁷ It is, of course, only a shift of emphasis, for the whole point of the emotional reorganisation affected by the illusion of the dance-mime is that it fortifies the men and women of the tribe for future real-life collective tasks; yet it is significant in view of Caudwell's ambiguous, wavering attitude to reflection-theory as applicable to (modern lyrical) poetry. This he theoretically denies in *Illusion and Relity*, while practically subscribing to it in his historical and sociological survey of English poetry since Shakespeare. Only in the somewhat later essay on 'Religion' is magic called a 'distorted reflection' of reality, and its association with economic production given further consideration. But it is difficult to ascertain whether this represents a conscious revision of an earlier position or is simply the result of a loosely employed terminology, owing to the hasty composition of the *Studies*.¹⁸ This inconsistency can even be found within a single work. In *Illusion and Relity* Caudwell once states that 'it is correct to have a materialist approach to art, to look in the art-works of any age for a reflection of the social relations of that age', but at other times he appears to exempt lyrical poetry from such reflection.¹⁹

Thomson quietly modifies the original argument in yet another respect. Whereas Caudwell tends to regard rhythm, one of his essential characteristics of poetry, as an 'aboriginal physical' property,²⁰ his disciple, while endorsing the view of its emotional and physiological effect on human beings, traces its source, not in the pulse-beat or respiration, but in the labour-process, that is, in the need to synchronise the movement of human bodies in collective work. Hence the universal rise of labour-songs, specially from neolithic agricultural times onward. For Thomson, the basic principles of sentence structure and song structure resemble one another to the extent that their common origin in the labour-process can be asserted, with speech reflecting its objective and cognitive aspect, and song or poetry corresponding to its subjective or affective side, 'the one organised in logical form, the other in rhythmical form'.²¹

The gist of these amendments is to reduce the weight carried in Caudwell's edifice by the 'genotype' and the 'instincts'. Thomson, in fact, dispenses with these concepts altogether, though the role of the unconscious in the apprehension of poetry is retained: 'The effect of poetry is still, as it has always been, to

withdraw the consciousness from the perceptual world into the world of phantasy.²²

Whether and how to appropriate the findings of modern psychology was, of course, precisely one of the issues around which the *Modern Quarterly* 'Discussion' turned. It has been observed that underlying the overt controversy over Caudwell was 'a displaced and ill-conducted argument between dogmatic and creative Marxism, for which the structures of the Communist Party offered no other outlet.'²³ In order to understand the tensions surfacing here, we have to inspect the pre-history of the 'Discussion'.

Maurice Cornforth's attack on Caudwell, which sparked it off, is symptomatic of a wider concern among some party stalwarts over the increasing hold of Caudwell's ideas on a number of literary intellectuals of high standing in the CP. Not only George Thomson, who apart from *Marxism and Poetry* had also written the 'Biographical Note' for the postwar edition (1946) of *Illusion and Reality*, but also Alick West and Edgell Rickword turned out to be critical proponents of Caudwell's thought, the former by speaking at Party schools on the author's relevance for the heightening of class consciousness,²⁴ the latter by providing the introduction to *Further Studies in a Dying Culture*. Earlier on Douglas Garman, Rickword's erstwhile collaborator on the *Calendar of Modern Letters*, and subsequently the national education organiser of the CP, had, as we have seen, praised Caudwell's grasp of Marxism and constructive use of psychoanalysis. Another supporter, prior to the 'Discussion', was the Hungarian historian George Pálóczi-Horvath, then still—and after 1957 again—living in Britain, who in a *Modern Quarterly* article in 1947 had placed our author alongside Lukács and Lifshitz, the editor of Marx's and Engels's writings on art and literature, and who in the same year had protested in a letter to the *New Statesman* against a 'muddled and somewhat unfair "critique"' of the reprint of *Illusion and Reality* from the pen of Stephen Spender.²⁵

But the threat to 'correct' Marxism, as it was then interpreted by such watchdogs as Maurice Cornforth or Emile Burns, did not only stem from Caudwell. In 1949 Jack Lindsay published his *Marxism and Contemporary Science*, which among other things displayed a preference for the young Marx, embraced Gestalt psychology and proposed a 'unitary dialectics' for the evaluation of contemporary science and art. Now wherever else they may differ, Lindsay and Caudwell share this wide compass, the fascination with the explorations of psychoanalysis and the endeavour to integrate them into a coherent dialectical outlook. Seizing on Lindsay's admittedly eclectic and confused account, Cornforth published a devastating attack on the book in the *Communist Review*, which reads like a rehearsal for the assault on Caudwell.²⁶

Still in 1949, Lindsay started a new literary magazine, *Arena*, and while in the first Editorial he quoted approvingly Caudwell's phrase about 'the lie at the heart of contemporary culture, the lie which is killing it', he was careful to advance the quite un-Caudwellian argument that British culture as a whole

could not meaningfully be labelled as 'decadent' and that *Arena* stood for a policy of sorting out the 'confused and often vital trends of resistance' to the forces of destruction in that culture.²⁷ This, one would expect, ought to have pleased King Street, if only for tactical reasons, but the call fell flat with the guardians of Marxism in the Communist Party,²⁸ perhaps because Lindsay cherished contacts with such eccentric writers as Edith Sitwell. Lindsay often found himself fighting on two fronts in those glacial days, and a singularly humiliating occasion arose when he was forced to publish a piece of self-criticism in the *Communist Review*, in which he paractically abnegated the whole of *Marxism and Contemporary Science*.²⁹

Such 'heresies' and their presecution, aggravated by the growing polarisation of intellectual life into two clearly demarcated camps of Communism and Western Freedom, provide the inner-Party backdrop to the 'Discussion'. Since Caudwell was not available for a self-critique, someone else had to do the demolition job. Cornforth's error, in retrospect, was that he took the easy way out, preferring to level general criticisms of idealism and metaphysics on account of Caudwell's borrowings from psychoanalysis and biology rather than undertake a detailed demonstration of any weaknesses in the theory. No real effort is discernible in his article to penetrate beyond the 'innumerable obscurities, misunderstandings and blunders' to the core of Caudwell's thought. Instead we get an often inadequate paraphrase of some of his ideas interspersed with extremely brief and arbitrarily chosen quotations. This dubious method tends to discredit even the valid strictures of his polemic, e.g. those directed against Caudwell's readiness to fit the entire history of English poetry since Shakespeare 'into a cut-and-dried scheme' of bourgeois illusion.³⁰

Cornforth's demotion of Caudwell was promptly reported in the *Daily Worker*. It is worth quoting the unsigned notice in full, for it carries all the weight of an *ex cathedra* statement:

Revaluation

Ever since Christopher Caudwell's death in Spain in 1937, his writings on art, science and philosophy have been widely read in Britain with uncritical enthusiasm.

Now the task of subjecting Caudwell's writing to a thorough critical analysis has been undertaken by Maurice Cornforth in the *Winter Modern Quarterly*.

Caudwell's main fault, Cornforth finds, is a confusion of thought arising from his inability to make a complete break with the system of ideas imposed by his bourgeois upbringing. Instead of throwing it all off, he tries to use Marxism to make it into a coherent whole and fails.³¹

This judgment has the tone of finality; and it seems clear that no discussion was initially intended. Only an outcry from party members and the swift

reaction of George Thomson, like Cornforth a member of the Executive Committee of the CP, led to a change of editorial policy. But the explanatory note in the next number of the journal, that owing to a 'regrettable oversight' Cornforth's article had not been announced as the opening contribution to a discussion, is a piece of camouflage pure and simple.³²

Since Thomson's position has already been made abundantly clear, there is no need to enter into the details of his reply, except for a comment on his method. As becomes a philologist, he is first of all anxious to restore the context out of which many of the quotations adduced by his adversary have been torn. But then he also quotes lengthily from Marx, Engels and Lenin, despite his own sound observation that 'appeals to Stalin can never be a substitute for a serious study of one's subject'.³³ This recourse to the Marxist classics was obviously motivated by the wish to refute Cornforth's principal accusation regarding Caudwell's achievement: 'Whatever all this may be, it is certainly not Marxism.'³⁴ Yet an inevitable by-product of this referential framework was the definition of the terms of the debate in a quasi-scholastic manner: Are Caudwell's ideas Marxist or not? Do they conform to the letter of the 'Scriptures'?

From the start, therefore, the 'Discussion' risked being drowned in the sterile polemic then rife in Communist Parties over 'bourgeois' and 'proletarian' science. Caudwell, as we know, with his inflationary use of the epithet 'bourgeois', was not exactly innocent in this respect either. But in practice he made the important distinction between the empirical discoveries of science and its ideological implications, between the knowledge accumulated by the scientist and his or her epistemological position. Thus he was prepared to accept, and use for his own end, the validity of many of Freud's findings and even concepts (such as the 'dream-work' or the distinction between 'manifest' and 'latent' content), without however sharing for one moment the individualistic and pessimistic outlook of their originator,³⁵ whereas Cornforth seized on 'the reactionary hypotheses of biology and psychology'³⁶ only to reject their evidence lock, stock and barrel. This postulated antinomy between 'bourgeois' and 'marxist' science and its concomitant assumption of a marxist as opposed to a bourgeois stock of factual knowledge, or worse still, the equation of the one with the truth and the other with falsehood, was a disastrous oversimplification.

It is to the credit of the subsequent contributors to the 'Discussion' that the controversy steered largely clear of this impasse. Taken together the various comments on Caudwell's work contain a number of valuable, if not elaborated observations. Those that emphasise his originality refer to his preoccupation with 'subjective experience, and particularly aesthetic experience' (West), the analysis of the creative process (Beeching), the usefulness of the distinction between the manifest and latent content of art (Bush), and the 'poetic intensity' of the author's style (Smith). On the negative side we find pointers to Caudwell's lack of historical sense (Bernal), the danger of forcing different

kinds of poetry, historical as well as generic, into one mould (Heinemann), the study of modern poetry from no other angle than that of the 'bourgeois illusion' (Matthews), and the predilection for antithetical statements which lend themselves to misunderstandings (Smith).³⁷

It should finally be noted that among Communists abroad the 'Discussion' did not go unnoticed. It provided, for example, the occasion for an article in *Science and Society*, the American counterpart of the *Modern Quarterly*, and was eventually also summarised in a Hungarian periodical, *Filológiai Közlöny*.³⁸ Interestingly enough, and in open contrast to the majority view of the English Caudwellians, the thrust of both reports was disparaging of Caudwell's achievement. In the United States in particular this more sober, downgrading account comes as a surprise, as there had previously been two highly sympathetic assessments of the author, both from a communist viewpoint and a liberal academic perspective.³⁹

Slow Progress: the Fifties and Sixties

After the climax, the fall. In the next two decades the reception of Caudwell comes almost to a halt. There is no significant attempt to carry on his legacy, and for searching commentaries on his work one has to look hard. But a new development is the attention eventually paid to Caudwell by non-Marxist critics.

Interest in Caudwell, though paramount in the Communist ambit, had, of course, never been entirely restricted to it. It is as well to remember that none of his books was originally published by Lawrence & Wishart, and that some of the most enthusiastic early references to *Illusion and Reality* came not from Marxists. It was W. H. Auden who had compared it with the writings of I.A. Richards and suggested that it offered 'a more satisfactory answer to the many problems which poetry raises', and Edwin Muir who had hailed it as 'an extremely able piece of interpretative criticism from the Marxian point of view.'⁴⁰ But these were voices from the past, from the popular front era in the arts. No such sympathy from left liberal quarters had greeted the appearance of *Further Studies in a Dying Culture* in 1949; and the 'Caudwell Discussion' remained, as we have seen, an inner-Party affair.

Raymond Williams's dialogue with Marxism in *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (1958) breaks through the block mentality forged by the Cold War; and though distanced and qualifying, his brief treatment of Caudwell marks a new beginning, not least because of the powerful influence of his book. An unfair summary of Williams's discussion could confine itself to the words with which he introduced Caudwell's sociology of English poetry: 'In fact he has little to say... that is even interesting... for the most part his discussion is not even specific enough to be wrong.'⁴¹ But this would be beside the point, for Caudwell is cited mainly as a witness to the perennial difficulty in marxist theories of culture to account for an active role of the arts in society without

discarding, or substantially modifying, the received base-superstructure model. Williams quite rightly points in this context to Caudwell's emphasis on the interaction, between man and Nature, the genotype and the social environment, through which the agency of art in shaping new attitudes and stirring energy is revalued. But, with the *Modern Quarterly* polemic at the back of his mind, Williams has doubts about whether the concept of the 'genotype' can be accommodated within the marxist tradition.⁴²

Another influential book which takes up one of Caudwell's arguments is David Lodge's *Language of Fiction* (1966), concerned, as its title indicates, with the linguistic and stylistic qualities of narration. His enquiry leads the author to the passages in *Illusion and Reality* which deny the linguistic structuring of fiction by asserting a radical difference between the language of poetry and other kinds of discourse:

In poetry the thoughts are to be directed on to the feeling-tone of the words themselves. Attention must sink below the pieces of external reality symbolised by the poetry... Hence poetry in its use of language continually distorts and denies the structure of reality to exalt the structure of the self. By means of rhyme, assonance or alliteration it couples together words which have no rational connection, that is, no nexus through the world of external reality. It breaks the words up into lines of arbitrary length, cutting across their logical construction...

In the novel the emotional associations attach not to the words but to the moving current of mock reality symbolised by the words. That is why rhythm, 'preciousness', and style are alien to the novel; why the novel translates so well; why novels are not composed of words. They are composed of scenes, actions, *stuff*, people, just as plays are.⁴³

Against this position Lodge argues that 'no kind of discourse can be so detached form "external reality" as to constitute a special and self-contained system of language —which is what Caudwell... implies'. And he adds that, although Caudwell's remarks about plot, character and setting have a certain pragmatic appeal, there is no escaping the fact that all the experiences in a work of fiction are conveyed through language and that consequently 'reality is structured by the novelist not only in the particular characters, events, and objects in which he represents it, but initially in the words and arrangements of words with which he creates these characters, events, and objects.'⁴⁴

Lodge arrives here independently at a conclusion that strikingly echoes Lukács's objections to Caudwell's antithetical view of the lyrical mode on the one hand, and the dramatic and fictional modes on the other. Lukács (1956/1967) also notes that Caudwell adheres in his definition of the characteristics of poetry —as opposed to his reconstruction of its genesis— to a conception ultimately derived from French symbolism. And again, like Lodge, he refers to the statement about the capacity of modern lyrical poetry to destroy the structure of external reality. What Caudwell does not see,

according to Lukács, is the fact that there can be no 'genuine great poetry' which is not also a reflection of reality, and that there is no artistically successful representation of reality in the novel 'without the evocative power of words, parables and so on.' And elsewhere he notes 'the curious consequences of this theory', the assertion that 'the novel knows no rhythm or style, is composed not of words, but scenes.'⁴⁵

All these critical comments, from Williams to Lukács, address themselves to isolated aspects of Caudwell's poetics —one could also cite here Paul C. Ray's discussion of Caudwell's 'anti-surrealism'⁴⁶ digging in that meanwhile proverbial 'quarry of ideas'⁴⁷ for insights or suggestions from which to elaborate, often in opposition, their own argument. As long as individual postulates and procedures of *Illusion and Reality* and the various *Studies* present such a challenge, and the metaphorical language in which Caudwell has frequently clothed his views retains its persuasiveness and suggestiveness, he will, despite the controversial nature of many statements, continue to be read.

Yet at some stage there had to be a probing into the aesthetic theory as a whole, a reconstruction of the genesis of the entire *oeuvre*, and a provision of details about the author, who remained a largely obscure figure. Towards the end of the sixties all these issues were being tackled, and without exception by American scholars. Stanhope Sprigg's bitterness about the neglect his brother's work suffered in his own country⁴⁸ had some justification, though this inattention was part of the wider suppression of the socialist cultural achievements of the 1930s, whose pivotal point in critical orthodoxy had by then become the Auden Group. Nor did the rise of the new Left, which falls into this period, help to redress the balance, as this movement defined itself precisely through its demarcation from the old Left, under whose aegis the wide-ranging projects of the thirties had stood. Its negative interpretation of the decade as a 'moment' of crude Marxism, dogmatic approaches to literature and art, and duped or naive intellectuals was, if for different motives, equally dismissive.

It is understandable then that researchers from outside Britain could move more confidently past the native ideological and cultural blocks that were barring the access to writers like Caudwell. David Margolies's *The Function of Literature* (1969) and Andrew Hawley's 'Art for Man's Sake' (1968), which was also based on a thesis, were the first two studies to demonstrate clearly the socially necessary role of poetry, in its most general sense, in Caudwell's architecture, its vital contribution to the humanisation of man. They were pioneering, too, in their comprehensive and sympathetic approach to the author, establishing first the cornerstones of his philosophy, then situating the aesthetic theory within it, tracing influences and parallels (Plekhanov, I.A. Richards) on the way, and aiming to define Caudwell's place in a lineage of materialist aestheticians.⁴⁹

Margolies still departed from the premise —whose origin I have failed to

track down— that *Illusion and Reality* was composed between *Studies* and *Further Studies in a Dying Culture*. It was left to Samuel Hynes to rectify this widespread error and supply the first reliable data on Caudwell's career, apart from making another essay, *Romance and Realism* (1970), available.⁵⁰

With Margolies, Hawley and Hines, Caudwell criticism came of age. It remains to consider its mature state.

The Post '68 Phase

Four books on the author in West Germany, and half a dozen Ph. D. theses in the United States immediately convey a sense of the explosion of Caudwell studies since the late sixties. The mention of these two countries is not fortuitous. It was here that the liberating influence of the student movement made itself felt earlier and more powerfully in the heart of academia than elsewhere, challenging received notions and syllabuses of Literature, questioning unhistorical and uni-disciplinary approaches to the object of cognition, reassessing learning processes inside and outside the classroom, and thereby connecting the world of knowledge with the social and political struggles in the world at large.

One consequence of this upsurge was to open up a space and create an ambience favourable to the recovery of submerged radical traditions. At the same time, the various critical investigations now undertaken were often permeated by a deep suspicion of, even hostility to the orthodox Marxism of the 'actually existing' type established in Eastern Europe and implanted in Western Communist Parties. Moreover, these interrogations led to a reconsideration of the 'subject' of history as well as a revaluation of the concept of 'subjectivity' at variance with traditional emphases in Marxism.

It would be wrong to assume that Caudwell's works inspired any of these reorientations. Nor was he resurrected in their wake to the same extent as other figures on the margin of Communism in the thirties, such as Walter Benjamin, Karl Korsch or Wilhelm Reich in Germany. Nevertheless, the study of Caudwell gained a fresh stimulus in this context, as the new attitudes emerging to his work now testify. Four distinct, if occasionally converging routes to Caudwell can be identified since the seventies:

- I. the reclamation of the author for an anti-Stalinist position,
- II. a shift away from the aesthetics to other areas of his thought,
- III. a re-reading of Caudwell in the light of current 'Western' Marxism,
- IV. an integrated analysis of Caudwell's literary and theoretical output.

The amount of work produced during the last twenty years makes it imperative to concentrate on these new departures, rather than on the continuing engagements with Caudwell's poetics.

- I. The attempt to employ Caudwell for an anti-dogmatic, dissident position

inside Communism need not, of course, spring from any impulse to activate and develop the creative, self-critical inheritance of Marxism. As the first West German commentary (1970) on the author reminds us, it can also serve downright reactionary ends, as when an unorthodox voice is introduced only to underscore the ulterior fallacy of even 'intelligent' and 'sincere' marxist approaches to art and literature.⁵²

In intention and argument E. P. Thompson's case for this proposition is on an entirely different plane (1977). Thompson takes Caudwell's elaborate interactionism and his attack in *The Crisis in Physics* on positivism as a mode of thought that reduces consciousness to 'a mere passive reflection of the world', 'a pale copy of existing practice',⁵³ to conduct an arcane argument with the dominant marxist reflection-theory of his time. 'The entire body of Caudwell's work may be read as a polemic against mechanical materialism of this [the Cornforth, HGK] kind, masquerading as Marxism.'⁵⁴ Now it is one thing to say that Caudwell was read in this way by dissident party members in the forties, and that his works thus began 'to acquire a kind of underground, proto-revisionist status',⁵⁵ which may have been the case, but which in order to be confirmed would need more than the ready evidence of, say, Thompson and Lindsay. (For one thing, those who sided with Caudwell in the *Modern Quarterly* controversy, including his main populariser and defender George Thomson, cannot all be put into the 'underground, proto-revisionist' corner.) But it is a different matter to suggest —and this is the direction of Thompson's argument— that Caudwell developed an 'implicit hostility to orthodox reflection theory', which hardened into a conscious '“heretical” rejection' of this doctrine.⁵⁶ As indicated above, Caudwell's use of the terms 'reflection', 'mirror' and 'mimesis' lacks consistency throughout his works, thus defeating any attempt to burden them with such an imputation. Nor is there any hint in his surviving letters or notebooks that he saw his role as carrying out revisions in a world-view which he had only just begun to master. All his energy was absorbed by what he considered as the 'laborious' task of subjecting the contemporary exponents and spheres of bourgeois culture —an epochal term— to a merciless critique, while avoiding 'thrusting the richness of our heritage of knowledge and art into sterile formulae'.⁵⁷

II. A potentially more fruitful proposition of Thompson's was to contest what had for a long time simply gone unexamined: the assumption that Caudwell's central preoccupation was with aesthetics. This notion was obviously based on the status accorded to *Illusion and Reality*, and understandably so, since it was not only the most comprehensive of Caudwell's works but also the only one he ever saw through the press, whereas all the various *Studies* were left behind in an unfinished state. But for Thompson, who relies heavily on Raymond William's negative 1958 judgment and remains unconvinced of the claims made for Caudwell's poetics by Margolies or Francis Mulhera,⁵⁸ *Illusion and Reality* is basically an apprentice work, not represen-

ting the 'mature' author. Hence his call to give greater due to the anatomist of ideology and the consistent epistemologist, who comes to the fore in the following works. This plea may well be underwritten by many Caudwellians, but whether it entails a necessary downgrading of the aesthete and the literary sociologist, as Thompson maintains, is doubtful. I do not myself see the causal connections between these two evaluations. Caudwell's audience has in all probability always been a predominantly literary-minded one. Neither philosophers nor scientists have responded to his writings by contributing anything of consequence to the growing body of secondary literature. Indeed, the last pronouncement of a scientist (1951) on Caudwell's forays into his domain, J.D. Bernal's intervention in the *Modern Quarterly* 'Discussion', was anything but laudatory.⁵⁹ Thus to ask us to scrap the aesthetic theory might end by depriving Caudwell of his last readers.

The positive core of Thompson's suggestion has, however, lately been taken up by at least two scholars, one working in the field of the philosophy of science, the other in the 'science' of philosophy. It is too early to hazard a judgment on Helena Sheehan's as yet unpublished critical history of Marxism's relation to science, in which Caudwell occupies a major place. But from a summary of her main contentions it would appear that she ranks the author's contribution to a materialist foundation of science well above (and including) anything proposed between Bogdanov, the father of Proletkult, and Lysenko. As recurrent and hence characteristic procedures of Caudwell's diverse explorations, Sheehan notes the elucidation of the specific variant of the 'bourgeois illusion' in each particular realm of knowledge, and the pursuit of the phoney dualisms governing all these areas of knowledge. In her unqualified praise for Caudwell's analytical faculties as well as his synthesising gifts, Sheehan stands out as the most fervent champion of the author in recent years.⁶⁰

Synthesis plays no prominent role in Bernd Klahn's study of the evolution of Caudwell's dialectics (1984), which undertakes to fathom the extent of Hegel's influence on the author. Since the German philosopher does not figure in the voluminous bibliography of *Illusion and Reality*, which is our principal mine of information on Caudwell's sources, this endeavour is beset by difficulties, some of which the author meets by tracing the mediation of Hegelian categories in works by Marx, Engels and Benedetto Croce. Klahn portrays the growth of the dialectician Caudwell as a delicate balancing act between a historically and anthropologically grounded conception of the subject-object relationship, taking its orientation from the *Theses on Feuerbach*, and a formal abstract movement of logic based on one master-contradiction and derived from Hegel, in which the latter finally gains the upper hand, resulting in an ontological and speculative theory of Nature in *The Crisis in Physics*. The author thus contradicts E.P. Thompson not only in attributing a more materialistic foundation to *Illusion and Reality*, but also in upholding the aesthetic theory as an unrelinquishable part of Caudwell's oeuvre. But his case is weakened a) by the no longer tenable assumption of a

qualitative difference between *Studies* and *Further Studies in a Dying Culture*, and b) by the thin evidence presented to support the claim of the indebtedness of Caudwell's dialectic to the Hegelian system, which rests mainly on some conceptual analogies and one —to me not conclusive— structural comparison between the chapter on 'The Organisation of the Arts' in *Illusion and Reality* and Hegel's 'system of the individual arts'.⁶¹

III. Though it seems doubtful whether Lukács can legitimately be labelled a 'Western' Marxist —even following Perry Anderson's own criteria—⁶² he will for simplicity's sake be treated under this rubric.

We have already drawn attention to Lukács's repeated references to Caudwell, and if it seemed as if he had only negative things to say about our author, this impression must be corrected. It is sufficiently expressive of the esteem in which he held Caudwell that almost whenever Lukács offers a quintessential statement on the nature of poetry, the 'very gifted, witty English Marxist' comes to his mind.⁶³ Yet at the same time his praise for Caudwell's firm social and historical grounding of art is usually mitigated by what he felt to be the unduly subjectivising thrust of his conception of poetry, 'subjectivism' being, of course, Lukács's signpost for any theory which expressed reservations about reflection-theory.

It comes as no surprise therefore that the first comparisons between Lukács and Caudwell were drawn by Hungarian critics, and still during Lukács's lifetime.⁶⁴ Peter Egri has been the most persistent —and harshest— of these critics.⁶⁵ Out of his frequent contrastings of the two aestheticians Lukács regularly emerges incomparably superior, whereas Caudwell's poetics appear ridden with contradictions and inconsistencies. Whether it is the vacillating stance towards poetic reflection or the ambiguous definition of the instincts, Egri sees these contradictions as ultimately disabling. It never occurs to him that they might be read as provocative theses, calling attention to as yet unresolved problems in the act of artistic creation and reception.

A much more sympathetic Hungarian estimation of Caudwell can be found in a recent study by József Szili (1981), who shows not only that Lukács misreads Caudwell when he accuses him of considering poetry exclusively from its evocative side and thus conceding too much to 'pure isolated subjectivity', but that Lukács himself operates, if tacitly, in *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen* (1963) with a related concept when he speaks of the self-consciousness [Selbstbewußtsein] of the human race as pervading the object of aesthetic reflection. Szili thus finds Caudwell's explicit distinction between inner and outer reality more helpful than Lukács's view of reality as one and the same, which only disguises the fact that the reality art is concerned with is not identical with the objective world of Nature or society, existing *an sich*, independently of consciousness. And he prefers Caudwell's complementary view of science and art to Lukács's implicit hierarchisation of objectivity and reality, in which scientific reflection tends to provide the touchstone for

cognition proper, and in which a realism-centred conception of art is privileged to the detriment of other (utopian, grotesque, etc.) representations.⁶⁶

If Egri and Szili elaborate the cleavage between Caudwell and Lukács, Eileen Sypher (1976) emphasises the common ground between the two. She points, for example, to an affinity between Lukács's notion of the specific nature of poetic reflection and Caudwell's image of the poem as a 'switch-board'⁶⁷ permitting the transfer between external reality and man's inner world. For Lukács, reflected reality in fiction and drama offers us characteristically the already achieved union of 'the particular with the universal, the phenomenon with the essence, whereas the lyric, by contrast, shows us 'the reality being shaped under our eyes, as it were, *in statu nascendi*'. Lyrical reflection operates through a fusion of the poetic ego with the social, and this 'veritable artistic process' becomes visible in the poem.⁶⁸ This proposition is, indeed, not far from Caudwell's statement that 'poetry expresses in a generalized and abstract way the dynamic relation of the ego to the elements of outer reality symbolised by the words.'⁶⁹ As Sypher is fully aware, there remain, however, some unbridgeable differences. Whatever reflection, or rather selection of particles of outer reality, there is in Caudwell, stops at the level of the manifest content of a poem. Once it has passed the 'switchboard' and is affectively coloured, no recognisable correspondence with the outer world is left over. Another divergence concerns the function ascribed in each case to poetry, which Sypher sums up somewhat reductively, but not unjustly as follows: 'For Lukács, poetry is *cognitive*; for Caudwell it is ultimately *productive*.'⁷⁰

It is this attractive view of poetry as some kind of *praxis*, rather than a mere object of aesthetic cognition, which has endeared Caudwell to critics working within an Althusserian framework, though not to them alone. As Francis Mulhern (1974) puts it, poetry for Caudwell 'is in no sense a transcription either of the individual subjectivity (expression) or of "Reality" (representation); rather, it co-operates in the production of historically necessary forms of social consciousness.'⁷¹ Mulhern provides a valuable analysis of Caudwell's aesthetic theory, but in true Althusserian fashion he is also quick to point out its 'historicist' limitations. By this he understands the reduction of the social totality at each historical stage to an 'inner principle', the dialectic of man and Nature, of which all the other dualities posited by Caudwell (instinct/environment, subject/object, etc.) are mere derivations, and of which the most destructive consequence is the loss of contours of the specific practice of poetry, which dissolves into an 'undifferentiated unity of praxis, governed by the dialectic of man and Nature that is social action.'⁷² An answer to this criticism is given, in part at least, by Sebastiano Timpanaro, who writes in the same number of *New Left Review* which carried Mulhern's article:

The historicist polemic against 'man in general'... errs when it overlooks the fact that man as a biological being, endowed with a certain

(not unlimited) adaptability to his external environment, and with certain impulses towards activity and the pursuit of happiness, subject to old age and death, is not an abstract construction, nor one of our prehistoric ancestors, a species of pithecanthropus now superseded by historical and social man, but still exists in each of us and in all probability will exist in the future.⁷³

Another answer to the 'historicist' charge can be found in a recent German study, which shares Mulhern's marxist structuralist orientation and many of his reservations, but is alert to Caudwell's deviations from the 'essentialist' path. Jürgen Schmidt (1982) rehabilitates first of all the 'genotype', rejected by so many critics (including Sypher and Mulhern) as metahistorical, in interpreting it, along with Thompson, as an in practice historically situated category, without which poetry's function as defined by Caudwell is obliterated, and on which thus both the emphasis on active subjectivity and literature as *praxis* to a good deal rest. He then insists on the anticipatory utopian dimension of Caudwell's concept of poetry, as a specific propensity of literature not inherent in other social practices, its kinship to a dream, whose 'prophetic and world-creating power' Caudwell extols.⁷⁴ But the difficulty with the latter part of the argument is that though the idea recurs metaphorically in *Illusion and Reality*, as for example, in the memorable image of art as a 'magic lantern',⁷⁵ Caudwell furnishes next to no illustrations of it once he has moved from tribal to class society.⁷⁶

IV. It is not easy to fit Jean Duparc's monumental *Christopher Caudwell et l'esthétique* (1979) in any of our neat categories, for it is at once a painstaking reconstruction of Caudwell's intellectual trajectory and a substantial reading of his ideas, fantasies and obsessions, supported by a thorough and yet unobtrusive knowledge of Lévi-Strauss, Althusser, Seve and Lacan. The hallmark of this study, undoubtedly the peak of Caudwell scholarship, is the unusual breadth with which the entire *oeuvre* of the author, published as well as unpublished, literary and theoretical, is approached.

Duparc was, of course, not the first critic to point to the connections between the imaginative and the expository work. Roy Fuller (1972) had, on the occasion of the British publication of *Romance and Realism*, proposed a reading of the novel *This My Hand* (1936) on the lines of Patricia Highsmith's intriguing fiction about ordinary characters who imprisoned within overpowering social mechanisms eventually turn to crime. He had also referred to Caudwell's last thriller *The Six Queer Things* (1937) and suggested that had the author lived he might have had most to offer in the field of poetry — a judgment from a fine practising poet worth considering.⁷⁷

An integrated view of the literary and the theoretical writings was also offered by Michael Draper (1977) in an article otherwise not distinguished by originality or depth.⁷⁸ And dissatisfaction with the once current assumption of a *coupure* between the pre-marxist and the marxist phase had also led H.

Gustav Klaus in *Caudwell im Kontext* (1978) to trace Caudwell's path from an unquestioning journalist in the service of commercial aviation and colonial exploitation to the dedicated communist of 1935-7. The analysis of Caudwell's ideas could, he maintained, not begin with the ready-made Marxist but had to analyse the stages of the evolution of this thought, which necessitated a systematic investigation of his previous literary output, the detective stories, the 'serious' fiction and the poetry, even though Caudwell later disowned this work as belonging to his 'dishonest sentimental past'.⁷⁹

But Duparc begins even earlier, by providing details of Caudwell's family background and of his professional career from the days on the *Yorkshire Observer* to the bankruptcy of Airways Publications Ltd. in 1934, the firm he owned jointly with his brother. Though at times heavily drawing on Moberg's biography,⁸⁰ he always guards himself against that author's frequent flights of speculation. And when, after some four hundred pages on the pre-marxist period alone, he comes to Caudwell's thirteen months in the Poplar branch of the CP, he presents an astounding amount of firsthand material, based on the oral testimony of no less than seven of Caudwell's former comrades.

Duparc is very illuminating on such unpublished works as *The Wisdom of Gautama*, a series of aphorisms written in the vein of Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, and *Heaviside*, a science-fiction novel,⁸¹ where he already detects such characteristic Caudwellian features as the effortless absorption and reshaping of new ideas, an antithetical construction of situations and a talent for parody (in the former work), as well as the interest in linguistics and the assimilation of psychology to biology (in the latter). All this underscores Duparc's central contention that there was no sudden 'conversion' from the unpolitical to the committed writer, but an extended process of casting off the catholic creed, going through a period of doubt, search and experiment, making a new departure with the detective fiction, taking an antibourgeois stance in the late poems and *This My Hand*, and leading only in the final stage to the positive embracing of Marxism. But even during that phase Caudwell's ideas remain in flux and evolution, as emerges from a comparison between the first draft of *Illusion and Reality*, entitled 'Verse and Mathematics', and its published version, or in the transition from *Illusion and Reality* to the *Studies*. Never blind to Caudwell's own illusions, in particular his now naive-looking belief that a marxist 'world-view' as opposed to its bourgeois counterpart could be free from ideology, Duparc yet emphatically insists on his pioneering work in the field of what would today be called a 'theory of the subject'.⁸² And he concludes his study with words that can also serve as an epitaph for the present article:

The texts which he has left us have a strange sound today, as if of a voice at once near and far. Far, because he reminds us of lost illusions. Near because of his search for transparency and competence in the face of misery, obscurantism, reaction and oppression. But these texts have

also a more tangible interest: they suggest that men and women stand in need of art and poetry, for these activities enable them to become conscious of their desires, to situate themselves in relation to others, to compare and choose.⁸³

- * Following is a list of the books published under the pen-name Christopher Caudwell: *This My Hand* (London, 1936, a novel), *Illusion and Reality* (London, 1937), *Studies in a Dying Culture* (London, 1938), *The Crisis in Physics* (London, 1939), *Poems* (London, 1939), *Further Studies in a Dying Culture* (London, 1949), *Romance and Realism* (Princeton, 1970), *Collected Poems* (Manchester, 1986), *Scenes and Actions* (London, 1986). Except for the first title they were all published posthumously.

Notes:

1. 'A Great Man' from the collection *The Rock*, of which five (other) stories have been chosen for publication by Jean Duparc and David Margolies in their edition of Christopher Caudwell, *Scenes and Actions. Unpublished Manuscripts* (London, 1986).
2. For an (incomplete) list of Caudwell translations up to 1980, see Alan Munton and Alan Young, *Seven Writers on the English Left. A Bibliography of Literature and Politics, 1916-1980* (New York, 1981). The translations into Spanish include *Ilusión y realidad: Una poética marxista* (Buenos Aires, 1972) and "D.H. Lawrence: Estudio sobre el artista burgués", in *Dialéctica y literatura: Ensayos de crítica inglesa y alemana*, eds. Ramón López Ortega and Antonio Regales Serna (Madrid, 1979), pp. 71-90.
3. Terry Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology* (London, 1976), p. 21.

4. Cf. Alick West, *Crisis and Criticism* (London, 1937); George Thomson, *Aeschylus and Athens* (London, 1941).
5. H. Gustav Klaus, review of Ralph Fox, *The Novel and the People*, 1979 edn., *Red Letters*, 10 (1980), p. 64; Alick West, *One Man in His Time* (London, 1969); Francis D. Klingender, *Marxism and Modern Art* (London, 1943).
6. 'The last they saw of Sprigg was that he was covering their retreat with the advancing Moors less than thirty yards away. He never left that hill alive, and if any man ever sacrificed his life that his comrades might live, that man was Sprigg.' Quoted by John Strachey in his Introduction to *Studies in a Dying Culture* (London, 1938), p. VI.
7. Richard H. Rovere, review of *Illusion and Reality, New Masses*, 17 August 1937.
8. Between 1933 (*Crime in Kensington*) and 1937 (*The Six Queer Things*, posthumously) Caudwell published seven detective novels under his real name Christopher St. John Sprigg.
9. W.H. Auden, review of *Illusion and Reality, New Verse*, 25 (May 1937), pp. 20-22; Stephen Spender, review of *Studies in a Dying Culture, Tribune*, 23 December 1938; E.M. Forster, review of *Studies in a Dying Culture, New Statesman*, 10 December 1938; Herbert Read, review of *Studies in a Dying Culture, Purpose*, XI, 2 (1939), pp. 124-7. For an annotated list of reviews, see Jürgen Schmidt, *That Paralysing Apparition. Beauty: Untersuchungen zu Christopher Caudwells Ideologie und Widerspiegelungstheorie* (Amsterdam, 1982).
10. Louis MacNeice, *Modern Poetry* (Oxford, 1938), p. 157; Cecil Day Lewis, 'A Reply', in Julian Bell, *Essays, Poems, Letters*, ed. Quentin Bell (London, 1938), p. 332.
11. J. Middleton Murry, review of *Illusion and Reality, The Criterion*, XVII, 67 (January 1938), p. 376.
12. Douglas Garman, 'Testament of a Revolutionary (Christopher St. John Sprigg)', *Left Review*, III, 6 (July 1937), pp. 352-4.
13. Cf. Thomson, *Aeschylus and Athens, op. cit.*, p. 378; Jack Lindsay, *Perspective for Poetry* (London, 1944), pp. 8, 13.
14. Cf. Munton and Young, *op. cit.*, pp. 245-8.
15. See Hyman Frankel's letter to the *Daily Worker*, 10 March 1949.
16. George Thomson, *The Human Essence* (London, 1974), p. 39.
17. Christopher Caudwell, *Illusion and Reality* (London, 1937), pp. 18, 172.
18. Christopher Caudwell, *Further Studies in a Dying Culture* (London, 1949), p. 30 - As his parting letter to his friend Paul Beard testifies, Caudwell was well aware that the 'studies will have to be rewritten and refined' and that they stood in need of 'balancing, getting in the movement of time, ripening and humanising'; letter of 9 December 1936, written two days before his departure for Spain, in *Scenes and Actions, op. cit.*, p. 231.
19. Caudwell, *Illusion and Reality, op. cit.*, p. 229. But see p. 135 and *passim*.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
21. Thomson, *The Human Essence, op. cit.*, p. 29.
22. George Thomson, *Studies in Ancient Greek Society: The Prehistoric Aegean* (London, 1949), p. 455. - Thomson's work have to date been translated into twenty-two languages, including Chinese; Caudwell's reputation abroad can only have profited from this spectacular record.
23. E.P. Thompson, 'Caudwell', *The Socialist Register* (1977), p. 234.
24. Cf. West, *One Man in His Time, op. cit.*, pp. 181-3; and his essay 'On "Illusion and Reality"', *Communist Review* (January 1948), pp. 7-13.
25. George Pálóczi-Horváth, "'That Paralysing Apparition, Beauty'". Notes on "Humanist" and Marxist Aesthetics', *The Modern Quarterly Miscellany*, 1 (n.d.

[1947]), pp. 21, 25-6, 31; *idem*, letter to the *New Statesman*, 26 April 1947. Spender's review had appeared in the issue of 12 April.

Following his return to Hungary Pálóczi-Horváth was imprisoned, thus suffering the same fate as *Daily Worker* correspondent and Lukács translator Edith Bone, who had prepared the latter's first edition in English, *Studies in European Realism* (London, 1950). Roy Pascal's 'Foreword' to this book contains another reference to Caudwell (p. VII).

26. Maurice Cornforth, 'An Attempt to Revise Marxism', *Communist Review* (November 1949), pp. 719-28.
27. *Arena*, 1 (n.d. [1949]), p. 3. The journal was jointly edited by Lindsay, Randall Swingler and John Davenport, but Lindsay maintains that he wrote this particular Editorial, cf. his *Meetings with Poets* (London, 1968), p. 128.
28. Dereck Kartun, in the *Daily Worker* of 12 May 1949, gave *Arena* a rather mixed welcome.
29. Jack Lindsay, 'A Note of Self-Criticism', *Communist Review* (March 1950), pp. 93-5. - For a recent assessment of the merits and demerits of Lindsay's book see Robert Mackie and Neil Morpeth, 'From Nietzsche to Marx: The Passage and Formation of Jack Lindsay', in *Jack Lindsay: The Thirties and Forties*, ed. Robert Mackie, Australian Studies Centre, London, Occasional Paper, 4 (1984).
30. Maurice Cornforth, 'Caudwell and Marxism', *The Modern Quarterly*, VI, 2 (1950-1), pp. 20, 29.
31. *Daily Worker*, 14 December 1950. - George Thomson has told me that repeated attempts to establish the author of this notice failed. He suspects Cornforth of having reviewed his own article.
32. *The Modern Quarterly*, VI, 2 (1951), p. 134. - It is true that a much earlier issue (IV, 3, 1949, p. 288) had announced an assessment of Caudwell from Thomson and Cornforth, following a brief controversy over an article by an Oscar Thomson, 'The Poetic Instinct' (III, 4, 1948, pp. 62-6), in which appeals to Caudwell had been made. This had little relevance for the 'Discussion' proper, except as another indication of the popularity Caudwell's works enjoyed among party members.
The said editorial announcement, George Thomson claims, refers to a briefing by the Cultural Committee of the CP, that he and Cornforth produce a joint evaluation of Caudwell, or report back in the case of any disagreement. In the event, Cornforth's article appeared without Thomson's or the Cultural Committee's notification. And for his reply Thomson was given a ridiculously short-dated deadline. - Information provided by George Thomson during two conversations in 1973 and 1974. I did not have the opportunity to hear Cornforth's version before he died. But E.P. Thompson has heard much the same story from George Thomson, cf. his 'Caudwell', *op. cit.*, pp. 273-4.
33. George Thomson, 'In Defence of Poetry', *The Modern Quarterly*, VI, 2 (1951), p. 124.
34. Cornforth, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
35. See his 'Freud' essay in *Studies in a Dying Culture*, *op. cit.*
36. Cornforth, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
37. 'The Caudwell Discussion', *The Modern Quarterly*, VI, 3, and VI, 4 (1951), pp. 266, 273, 260, 353; pp. 349, 342, 272, 352.
38. Fred Wharton, 'Christopher Caudwell's *Illusion and Reality*', *Science and Society*, XVI, 1 (1952), pp. 53-9; Tibor Lutter, 'A költészet védelmében', *Filológiai Közlöny*, I (1959), pp. 245-9.
39. Louis Harap, 'Christopher Caudwell: Marxist Critic, Poet and Soldier', *Daily Worker* (New York), 24 November 1945; Stanley Edgar Hyman, *The Armed Vision* (New York, 1948), pp. 168-208.

40. Auden, *op. cit.*, p. 22; Edwin Muir, *The Present Age from 1914* (London, 1939), p. 296.
41. Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (London, 1958), p. 277.
42. Williams's later rapprochement with Marxism has allowed him to see Caudwell and the 1930s in rather more positive terms; cf. his *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford, 1977), p. 3.
43. Caudwell, *Illusion and Reality*, *op. cit.*, pp. 224-6.
44. David Lodge, *Language of Fiction* (London, 1966), pp. 17, 18.
45. Georg Lukács, 'Über die Besonderheit als Kategorie der Ästhetik', in his *Probleme der Ästhetik* (Neuwied, 1969), pp. 768-9, which is vol. 10 of *Georg Lukács Werke*. This book-length essay was first serialised in the East German *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, vol. 4 (1956), but stopped when Lukács got involved with the Hungarian up-rising and the editorial board of the journal was entirely substituted after the arrest of Wolfgang Harich. The complete version was first published in 1967 in West Germany. - The second quotation is from the *Ästhetik*, Part One: *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen* (Neuwied, 1963), p. 598. This is vol. 11 of the *Werke*.
46. Paul C. Ray, 'The Anti-Surrealism of Christopher Caudwell', *Comparative Literature Studies*, VI, 1 (1969), pp. 61-7.
47. The phrase is J.B.S. Haldane's and has made history in Caudwell studies. It was coined in a review of *The Crisis in Physics*, *Labour Monthly*, XXI, 8 (1939), p. 508.
48. Expressed in a conversation with the present writer in 1973.
49. David N. Margolies, *The Function of Literature. A Study of Christopher Caudwell's Aesthetics* (London, 1969); Andrew Hawley, 'Art for Man's Sake: Christopher Caudwell as Communist Aesthete', *College English*, XXX, 1 (1968), pp. 1-19. See also Hawley's unpublished Ph. D. thesis, 'The Literary Criticism of Christopher Caudwell' (University of Michigan, 1967). Prior to his book, Margolies published an essay, 'Christopher Caudwell and the Foundations of Marxist Literary Criticism', in *Marxism Today*, XII, 5 (1967), pp. 149-55.
50. Christopher Caudwell, *Romance and Realism. A Study in English Bourgeois Literature* (Princeton, 1970), ed. Samuel Hynes.

Despite Hynes's clear evidence, a number of later studies still repeat this error and make much of the supposed advances from *Studies to Further Studies in a Dying Culture* (cf. Ingrid Weber, *Evolution und Literatur*, Munich, 1980; and Bernd Klähn, *Materialistische Kunsttheorie und dialektisches Modell*, Cologne, 1984; see also my review of Weber in *Kritikon Litterarum*, X [1981], pp. 88-91), as if Caudwell's 'Foreword' to *all* these studies with its explicit reference to 'art, philosophy, physics, psychology, history, sociology, and biology' (p. xx) and again 'art, science, religion, economics and ethics' (p. XVII) had not named practically all the themes of the essays and hence signalled that they were conceived as a unitary enterprise.

To dispel the last doubts we now also have Caudwell's own words that the 'Religion' and 'Beauty' essays, both collected in the *Further Studies* volume, were already written by November 1935, well before the rest of the studies and within two months of the completion of *Illusion and Reality*; see his letter to Elizabeth Beard of 30 November 1935, in *Scenes and Actions*, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

51. To complete the tally, one could also mention George Moberg's Ph. D. thesis 'Christopher Caudwell. An Introduction to His Life and Work' (Columbia University, 1968), which was completed before Hynes's Introduction but failed to get published; and the first substantial reading of Caudwell's poems by D.E.S. Maxwell, *Poets of the Thirties* (London, 1969), pp. 63-82. It was finally in America, too, that *Studies and Further Studies in a Dying Culture* were made available again within a single cover, ed. Sol Yurick (New York, 1971).

52. Hans-Dietrich Sander, *Marxistische Ideologie und allgemeine Kunst-theorie* (Tübingen, 1970), pp. 185-93.
53. Christopher Caudwell, *The Crisis in Physics* (London, 1939), p. 65.
54. E.P. Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 248.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 236.
56. *Ibid.*, pp. 243, 265, 234.
57. The word 'laborious' is from the 'Foreword' to the *Studies in a Dying Culture*, *op. cit.*, p. XIX; the second quotation from his letter to Elizabeth Beard of 30 November 1935, in *Scenes and Actions*, *op. cit.*, p. 225.
58. Cf. Francis Mulhern, 'The Marxist Aesthetics of Christopher Caudwell', *New Left Review*, 85 (1974), pp. 37-58.
59. *The Modern Quarterly*, VI, 4 (1951), pp. 346-50.
60. Quoted from a précis of her work, 'Marxism and the Philosophy of Science: a Critical History', in the Appendix of Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 535-7.
61. Klähn, *op. cit.*, p. 204; see also note 50.
62. Cf. Perry Anderson, *Considerations on Western Marxism* (London, 1976).
63. Georg Lukács, 'Bechers Lyrik', in his *Schicksalswende* (Berlin, 1956), p. 229.
64. Pálóczi-Horváth (1947), see note 25; Peter Egri, 'On Caudwell's Literary Theory', *Filológiai Közlöny*, VII (1962), pp. 23-7; István Eörsi, 'György Lukács and the Theory of Lyric Poetry', *New Hungarian Quarterly*, VI, 18 (1965), p. 35.
65. Egri (1962), see preceding note; *idem*, 'Lukács és Caudwell költészettelfogásáról' ('On Lukács' and Caudwell's Concepts of Theory'), *Irodalomtörténet*, LVII (1975), pp. 710-35; *idem*, 'of Poetry', in *Language, Literature & Meaning*, vol. 1, ed. John Odmark (Amsterdam, 1979), pp. 215-82 (pp. 223-31).
66. József Szili, *A művészi visszatükrözés szerkezete: A művészet ismeretelméleti kérdései Christopher Caudwell és Lukács György esztétikájában* (The Structure of Artistic Relection: Epistemological Problems in the Aesthetics of Christopher Caudwell and Georg Lukács) (Budapest, 1981).
67. Caudwell, *Illusion and Reality*, *op. cit.*, pp. 18, 242.
68. Lukács, *Ästhetik*, Part I, *op. cit.*, p. 663.
69. Caudwell, *Illusion and Reality*, *op. cit.*, p. 327.
70. Eileen Sypher, 'Toward a Theory of the Lyric: George Lukács and Christopher Caudwell', *Praxis*, 3 (1976), p. 177.
 A similarity not noted by Sypher, but acknowledged by Lukács himself, concerns the respective views of the appeal of poetry, its evocation of what Caudwell described as the 'common ego', but his Hungarian counterpart called the 'self-consciousness' of man. This omission results from Sypher's inattention to Lukács's monumental *Ästhetik*. In the absence of English translations of this and of Lukács's essays on poets, she bases her comparison on the exposition of Lukács's poetics by Eörsi, *op. cit.*
71. Mulhern, *op. cit.*, p. 51. - Between Lukács and Althusser one would have to place Lucien Goldmann as a point of reference ever since the publication of Caudwell's *Romance and Realism* (1970). But the two major studies which have explored the parallels between Caudwell and Goldmann remain unpublished: Charles LeRoy Elkins, 'The Development of British Marxist Literary Theory: Toward a Genetic-Functional Approach to Literary Criticism', Ph. D. thesis (University of Southern Illinois, 1972); Christopher Pawling, 'Culture and Reality: A Critical Study of Christopher Caudwell', Ph. D. thesis (University of Birmingham, 1981).
72. Mulhern, *op. cit.*, p. 57.
73. Sebastiano Timpanaro, 'Considerations on Materialism', *New Left review*, 85 (1974), pp. 15-16.
74. Caudwell, *Illusion and Reality*, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

75. *Ibid.*, p. 294.
76. For a longer and more critical discussion of Schmidt's book, *op. cit.*, see my review in *Gulliver*, 15 (1984), pp. 176-8.
77. Roy Fuller, 'Caudwell Continues', *The Listener*, 6 January 1972.
78. Michael Draper, 'Christopher Caudwell's Illusions', *Renaissance and Modern Studies*, XXI (1977), pp. 80-100; repr. in John Lucas ed., *The 1930s: A Challenge to Orthodoxy* (Hassocks, 1978), pp. 78-102.
79. H. Gustav Klaus, *Caudwell im Kontext* (Frankfurt, 1978). The last phrase is taken Caudwell's parting letter to Paul and Elizabeth Beard of 9 December 1936, quoted from *Scenes and Actions*, *op. cit.*, p. 231.
80. Moberg, *op. cit.*, (see note 51).
81. Short excerpts from both works are included in *Scenes and Actions*, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-5, 36-41.
82. The 'subject orientation' of Caudwell's theory, which Duparc believes to have been indebted to Bukharin, is also at the centre of a recent Danish study, which came too late to my attention for detailed consideration; see Allan Hilton Andersen and Finn Krog, *Christopher Caudwell og marxistisk litteraturteori* (Copenhagen, 1981).
83. Jean Duparc, 'Christopher Caudwell et l'esthétique', doctorat d'état thesis (Paris III, 1979), p. 989 (my translation - HGK); available in two volumes from Atelier National de Reproduction des Thèses in Lille.