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REVIEWS

John Harris, *Caradoc Evans: The Devil in Eden, a biography* (Bridgend: Seren, 2022), pp. 410. £19.99.

It is hardly surprising that in *The Devil in Eden* John Harris has produced an exhaustive and authoritative biography of Caradoc Evans. Over the past forty years, Harris's superb editions of Evans's writings, furnished with excellent introductions, have set a benchmark for the study of his work. And this biography exhibits all of Harris's notable gifts, in particular a scrupulously thorough and even-handed treatment of its notoriously controversial subject and a prose that is unfailingly elegant, trenchant, precise and armed with a sardonic wit. The biography is a pleasure to read, and has been handsomely produced by Seren Books. It takes a historical imagination such as that of John Harris to appreciate, in this day and age, the seemingly wild and intemperate passions aroused by those battles long ago which engaged Evans – most particularly the struggle against the malign theocratic power of the Liberal-Nonconformist hegemony of that distant era at its worst that produced such overheated reaction, at once amusing and dispiriting.

Displaying his credentials as a bibliographer and biographer to the full, Harris excels at meticulously tracing the complex publication history of Evans's works and at extensively chronicling contemporary reaction to material that so many in Lloyd George's Liberal Nonconformist Wales found offensive and incendiary. His account of Evans's life is judiciously empathic, although he stops well short of claiming to like a man who, erratic, unfailingly quarrelsome ('porcupinous' he styled it), cantankerous and a professional drinker, seems in any case to have worked very hard at not being likeable. Harris's handling of the fiction is adroit and consistently perceptive. He is also careful to observe the no doubt necessary limits of any reliable biography by refusing to be distracted by the many stimulating assessments and reassessments of Evans that have been produced over the past half century by a talented cohort of students of Welsh Writing in English. These have sought to place his work in a multitude of promising cultural contexts.

One advantage of Harris's approach is that it protects him from the seductions of any kind of reductive psycho-analytical account of Evans's life and fiction. Harris does not seek any theories that seek to 'explain' Evans by referring to such slights, real and imaginary, as he himself so liked to recall from his youth. And he is careful to emphasise that Evans was an accomplished embroiderer and self-mythologiser, ever ready to invent a past that suited his purposes. His claim for example that his mother had been excluded from the chapel for a failure, through poverty, to pay her dues is briskly dismissed as a lie. And it is doubtful, to say the least, whether Evans's uncle, Dr Joshua Powell, was the monster of hypocrisy Evans so inventively depicted him as being, or whether David Adams – in reality a very progressive and liberal theological thinker – was the bigoted tyrant of Hawen chapel that Evans bitterly loved to recall. Surprisingly, Harris relegates to a footnote mention of Lizzie Owen, the young farm girl who innocently prevented the schoolboy Evans from acquiring the coveted post of pupil teacher. Fuller attention to her later career as the popular author 'Moelona' (briefly mentioned in a footnote) could have led to an illuminating reflection on the powerful late-nineteenth cult of the 'gwerin,' which was Evans's most prominent target.

One of his most impressive fictions was 'Caradoc Evans' himself. It seems fitting that the very name 'Caradoc' was a mysterious invention – it did not appear on his birth certificate, and how he came by it is still unknown. And the shrewd and calculating performative dimension of his writings and self-representations needs constantly to be borne in mind. He was a man powerfully attracted to theatrical productions of every kind. In his later years he obviously cultivated the art of being a 'character' (that pipe was an excellent stage prop) and it is appropriate that he should have ended up married to one who was every bit as colourful and indefatigably self-dramatising as himself.

As Harris shows, Evans's most remarkable alchemical achievement was to transform himself into a writer, having had to first fight free from what was genuinely a very poor, marginal and disadvantaged background (although he duly magnified this) and then from the depressing and demeaning confinements of the highly exploitative drapers' trade. There is something heroic about his stubborn self-education and bloody-minded struggle to establish himself as an author. And there is something moving, too, about his sympathy with the socially downtrodden, and his humane and tolerant socio-political

vision informed by a kind of Christian Socialism and marred only by some ugly prejudices.

Evans's *My People* (rechristened *My Piffle* by the talented humourist Idwal Jones), with its image of a mean and peasant land inhabited by primitive Neanderthals and held in the grip of megalomaniac preachers, it was to Nonconformist Wales what *The Satanic Verses* was to reactionary Islam. The response from the respectable Welsh middle classes was all the more fierce since the country had worked so pathetically hard for more than half a century at living down the ignominy unfairly heaped upon it by the Treachery of the Blue Books – an aspect of the case of which Harris surprisingly makes no mention. By 1915 (the date when *My People* appeared) a pathetically bombastic Wales was even boasting that its piety was a beacon unto the entire world, and its unique contribution to the civilising efforts of the glorious British Empire.

Evans readily conceded that his image was a blatant travesty but convincingly argued that it served an important purpose. Lethally unfair yet selectively accurate, like all great satire, it exposed a dark truth about the world it depicted. A consummate verbal caricaturist, Evans created a parallel universe as grimly claustrophobic as an Ibsen play – a dramatist who had so recently performed a not dissimilar service for his native Norway. It also brings to mind the paintings of Ibsen's fellow Norwegian Edvard Munch. The grotesquely misshapen, pseudo-biblical English that is the disturbing vernacular of this gothic world is a brilliant 'modernist' invention. *My People* is a remarkably bold language experiment in which words function as a distorting glass, as paint does in Cubist paintings. But Harris rightly concentrates on demonstrating the social nuances and fine-grained aspects of these verbally-gnarled texts which tend to be overlooked because the cumulative effect is so powerful. And he brings out the sympathy that is mixed with the contempt in the writing.

To a rising school of Welsh writers in English, 'Caradoc' came to seem the Great Liberator. The pilgrimage path beaten by Glyn Jones and Dylan Thomas to his door in Aberystwyth remains a landmark feature of modern Welsh letters. An unfortunate consequence was a *kulturkampf* between writers in Welsh and in English that was to last for half a century and inhibit the development of a mature modern bicultural society. General supposition to the contrary, *My People* looks more typical of its era than unique when set in its full cultural context.

Most of the brilliant generation of young Welsh-language writers who were his contemporaries also had their conspicuous quarrels with Welsh Nonconformity, to which they gave expression in a number of vivid texts. The distinguished dramatist D. T. Davies declared that the Welsh stage had declared war on the deaconate. Indeed, considered in its entirety this body of work in Welsh and in English constitutes a remarkable phenomenon; a war for the word between pen and pulpit that shaped cultural history in Wales for decades. But as Harris – who unfortunately pays no attention to this wider context – correctly points out, Evans's unique sin was to write his exposés in English, for an amused and bemused London audience. That is what made him a hated cultural quisling in the eyes of his hurt and angry nation.

Evans's profound influence on future 'Anglo-Welsh writing' has long been acknowledged. It was Gwyn Jones who long ago devised the (sexist) label 'sons of Caradoc' to describe the stellar inter-war generation. But the extensive ramifications of that influence – which extended even as far as the Iago Prytherch poems of R. S. Thomas – remain to be properly explored. And such investigation would need to take reaction as well as positive influence into account. Both Emyr Humphreys and Raymond Williams confessed to fashioning a prose style as far as possible removed from the cramping Evans model.

'Anglo-Welsh' writers' ambivalent relationship to Evans is paralleled in the writings of Welsh-language writers. While the severe, chiselled prose of the great Kate Roberts is a kind of antidote to Evans, in his shattering verse-drama *Meini Gwagedd* Kitchener Davies explores the same darkly disfigured rural world that is the hallmark of Evans's stories. And then there is the matter of genre. When *My People* was published, anglophone Wales was best known in London for its drama – thanks primarily to the work of the disgracefully neglected J.O. Francis. It was Evans's work that was largely responsible for altering that perception, so that by the 1930s Wales had become known to the metropolis as a country that specialised in the short story.

Not that Evans confined himself to that genre. After the *succès de scandale* of *My People*, he published several more collections that suffered the unfair fate of seeming derivative and earned him the reputation of being a one-trick pony. But he also produced the noteworthy semi-autobiographical *Nothing To Pay,* that skewered the London Welsh drapers who had brought the graspingly acquisitive practices of their rural background to the city. As for his play *Taffy*, staged to a

mixture of jeers and cheers, it is a period piece still very much worth reading. The fantastic loomed ever larger in his writing the longer his career progressed, and he continued to pursue his numerous public feuds with unabated energy and relish.

Believing in keeping your enemies close, in retirement he eventually ended up in Aberystwyth, Nonconformity-on-Sea and the capital city of enemy country. His bizarre life there as a 'kept man' with the colourful, voluminous romantic writer Marguerite (aka Oliver Sandys, or the Countess Barcynska) and her pampered son (a devotee of white magic) is vividly chronicled by Harris. Addicted to the provocative and outrageous, and never averse to a fight (like his beloved terrier Jock), Evans gamely supported his second wife's enterprising (or condescending) attempt (praised by Novello, Coward and Edith Evans) to bring English plays to the rural Welsh stage. Soon after, he fled from Aberystwyth, threatened by imprisonment for non-payment of debts. Refuge at Broadstairs and Margate proved brief and the pair returned to Aberystwyth. Some of his conduct seemed unhinged. By then, Evans's fiction had lost its burning focus and bite (bar his final collection *Pilgrims in a Foreign Land* and the novella *Morgan Bible*), but his notorious reputation outlived his talent and at his death in 1945 he was praised and reviled in equal measure.

As with all first-rate biographies, this study highlights promising areas for future enquiry. Evans's complex affinities with Modernism need proper consideration, as do the dystopian aspects of his fiction. And so does his profound debt to that Welsh oral tradition that had once given rise to the *Mabinogion*. His mother, Mali, was a renowned local gossip and *cyfarwydd*, who attracted marginals and misfits to her hearth, each with a colourful story or two to tell. No wonder that Evans returned home so often for refreshment as a writer. And then there is the fascinating fact that he was a second-language author, whose early stories were composed in Welsh and translated into English. He needs to be considered an immigrant writer, and to be compared with, say, the Jewish writers of early nineteenth-century New York or even Joseph Conrad, his contemporary on the London scene.

Like so many such writers, having acquired that second language laboriously, he became bewitched by its inexhaustibly strange peculiarities, its availability to him as a private lexicon, its pliant and compliant readiness to be tortured and bent to his tyrannical will. It was that will that became evident late in life in his verbally-abusive relationship with

his second wife. There was sadly a lot of the sadist in Evans (and masochist, too), for all his avid exposure of rural abuses. But that he was nevertheless an arrestingly original writer who single-handedly 'altered expression' (in Eliot's terms) and changed the course of literature in Wales, is beyond dispute, as John Harris has definitively demonstrated.

But Evans's relevance extends well beyond Wales, as H. L. Mencken realised a century ago. The best of his work speaks to the unholy alliance of power and religion wherever it may be found, whether in Trump's Evangelical America, the Iran of the Imams, the Afghanistan of the Taliban, or in Putin's Russia, where the Russian Orthodox Church holds such malign power. However surprisingly, therefore, he is indeed very much a writer for our own benighted and barbaric times.

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M. Wynn Thomas, Katie Gramich, Michelle Deininger et al., *Locating Lynette Roberts: 'Always Observant and Slightly Obscure'*, ed. Siriol McAvoy (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2019), pp. 244. £24.99.

Edited by Siriol McAvoy, *Locating Lynette Roberts: 'Always Observant and Slightly Obscure'* locates the poet's creative work along national, cultural and literary intersections. The collection ambitiously places Roberts within new critical frameworks, going beyond such particularities of identity. Siriol McAvoy asserts Roberts's prominent place in literary cultures by bringing together a community of scholars, writers and poets who reflect and examine dominant narratives of British and Anglo-American modernism. McAvoy does this by revisiting the historically marginalised work of Roberts from a collection of fresh perspectives. This is the first collection of its kind dedicated to Lynette Roberts's work and is a valuable contribution to the University of Wales Press series *Writing Wales in English*.

Lynette Roberts published two poetry collections of elliptical and experimental poetry: the first, *Poems*, in 1944 and the second, an epic poem called *Gods with Stainless Ears*, in 1951, along with a published and an unpublished novel. Patrick McGuinness's republication of Roberts's work in *Collected Poems* (Carcanet, 2005) and *Diaries, Letters and Recollections* (2008), created a new appreciation of her work in the twenty-first century. Roberts received literary acclaim during her active

writing years of the 1940s and early 1950s after being published by T. S Eliot. Later, she was subject to recognition from John Pikoulis, Tony Conran and Nigel Wheale for her contribution to Welsh Modernism. She has circulated within literary and cultural conversations since the initial publication of her work. However, in its range, depth and rigour, McAvoy adamantly asserts that there is much left unsaid about the multifaceted nature and particularity of Roberts's heterogeneous vision.

The subtitle of the essay collection is a self-characterisation taken from Roberts's poem 'Lamentation'. The poem recalls her arrival as a 'stranger' in the village of Llanybri during war-time (McGuinness, *Collected Poems*, p. 8). The subtitle concisely frames McAvoy's approach to locating Lynette Roberts in dual modalities. The first modality relates to the observant nature of Roberts's vision, including the visual observance of form, colour, texture of landscape, alongside ethnographic observation. This observation creates living anthropology (McGuinness, *Collected Poems*, p. xv) and a cultural repository of the Welsh village of Llanybri in which she absorbed herself and wrote the majority of her creative work. This is also a responsive position in *Locating Lynette Roberts*. The collection provides traditional and contemporary frameworks for observing Roberts from a twenty-first century perspective.

The second modality is obscurity, a term imbued throughout Roberts's self and poetry. Obscurity crystallises in her displaced national identity, conflicting class affiliations and political convictions. But, it also manifests in her eccentric poetic works of 'risk taking exuberance' according to Conran (1982, p. 197) and radical experiments, composed of the uncompromising overlay of diction from chemistry, geology, botany and cadences of local speech forms (McAvoy, p. 8). Roberts creates a highly localised aesthetic that remains informed by a deep understanding of globalism, postmodernity and a cosmopolitan sensibility. More than this, Roberts's 'inconspicuous, little-known' (p. 8) place in the history of twentieth-century British and Welsh literary culture is similarly a site of obscurity. Though tempting, *Locating Lynette Roberts* refutes the suggestion that Roberts's literary obscurity is an unavoidable consequence of her textual obscurity. Rather, Roberts's complexity, intersecting belongings and hovering between identities (McGuinness, 2008, p. i) are all factors that claim her place within anglophone Welsh Modernist History.

McGuinness writes that her poetry and its place in the poetic tradition are eccentric, and Roberts was an 'outsider in all sorts of ways' (*Diaries, Letters and Recollections*, p. vii). She grappled with the conjunction of her eccentric poetry and her multiple national associations that form elements in the collection. Roberts was born in 1909 into an English-speaking community in Buenos Aires, where her father, a railways engineer, had settled. However, her heritage connected her to a wider Welsh ancestry. Roberts spoke Spanish and, as explored in the essay by Wynn Thomas in *Locating Lynette Roberts*, she saw much of the Welsh landscapes in her later life through the perspective of the Argentinian environment of her upbringing. It is after her marriage to Keidrych Rhys, the Welsh writer and literary editor, and their move to a rented cottage in Llanybri, Carmarthenshire, that she identifies her belonging to Wales and flourishes as a writer. Roberts still views herself as an outsider while living in Llanybri. Transposed into a new national and cultural locality, her poetics reflect the admiration and intimacy of Wales and its people while maintaining a sense of the modernist exile.

The multiple and complex national belongings of Roberts and her poetry are rewarding considerations; as previously mentioned, Wynn Thomas considers Roberts's hybrid identity between an Argentinian and a Welsh landscape; Katie Gramich considers Roberts's 'elective belonging' (p. 50) to Welsh identity; Michelle Deininger examines how Roberts's ethnographic writing becomes auto-ethnography through her immersion and identification in Wales; and Andrew Webb locates Roberts's work through Franco Moretti's term of 'semi-peripheral modernity' (p. 85), a space shaped by 'conflicts between a globalizing capitalist modernity, and surviving, or reinvented, indigenous culture' (p. 86). Conversations around the hybridity of national identity, intercultural exchange and adaptability between local and global scales mark the collection's transnational modernist consideration of Roberts's work.

While continuing to have respect for Roberts's national location, another key aim of the research in the book is to locate the social, cultural and literary relationships that show collaboration and exchange between her and other writers. Through this, the essays outline ways that Roberts remained an *insider* in different ways. Despite her critical obscurity, she shares the literary and cultural histories of more nationally recognised writers. Daniel Hughes draws on the

personal and intellectual relationship between Lynette Roberts and David Jones. Siriol McAvoy's essay on Roberts's avant-garde medievalism reveals the formative influence of the medievalism of T. S. Eliot and Robert Graves but also the Welsh nationalist project instigated by Saunders Lewis and the ethos of her husband's journal, *Wales*. Charles Mundye examines Roberts's neglected novel that reimagines Captain Cook's voyage, highlighting the significance that Roberts's correspondence with Edith Sidwell and Robert Graves has for the work. Other writers in the collection may not draw specifically on the relationships of Roberts herself. However, they productively put her work in conversation with other writers. Thus, Katie Gramich's essay finds common ground between Roberts, Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf's impressionism; Michelle Deininger locates the short stories in Roberts's *An Introduction to Village Dialect with Seven Short Stories* (1944) as the start of a new wave of Welsh women writers utilising the form in the second half of the twentieth century; Leo Mellor reveals how Roberts's estuarine writing is part of a larger literary aesthetic of the tide, island and estuary in periods of conflict. In this sense, though Roberts's work may have been critically isolated and underexplored, the collection reasserts her significance to her contemporaries, while also outlining her voice in other literary spaces and histories.

Roberts was also an *insider* in the sense that she was deeply embedded in the material processes around her. Her experience of a landscape is accounted as a form of participation in the environment. The ecological sensibility of her positions is explored by Leo Mellor and Zoë Skoulding in the present collection. Mellor argues that the epic *Gods with Stainless Ears* (1951) is shaped by the particularities of the estuarine landscape, around the Afon Taf near her home. Skoulding posits that listening is a central mode of participation and experience in Roberts's poetry as an 'active means of participation' (p. 179) in her environment, as well as animating the non-human, cultural and political factors in such environments. Working against estrangement and distance, Mellor and Skoulding outline intimacy and engagement with the particularities of geographical location and ecological forms. Both essays find multiple cultural interstices encountered through the environments of Roberts's work and call for further explorations of the ecological and environmental underpinnings of her writing.

A further significant contribution that the collection makes to the study of Lynette Roberts is that it lays the groundwork for placing her

work within active contemporary critical frameworks. McAvoy, both as editor and as a contributor, outlines the feminist political project of recovering a marginalised non-canonical writer but also the gendered perspective from which Roberts's work must be understood. McAvoy argues that attention to the intellectual and methodological shifts of new modernist studies is more accommodating to Roberts's creative work than any past modernist readings, notably the change in spatial parameters and her interest in marginalised peoples. Citing Jahan Ramazani's transnational approach to modernist poetics of interacting 'localities and nationalities' in a 'globally imagined space' (*Transnational Poetics*, 2009, p. 19) and the locational feminist modernist methodology of attending to '"multiplicity of heterogeneous" spatial and temporal locations simultaneously' (Susan Stanford Friedman, *Feminism and the Cultural Geographies of Encounter*, 1998, p. 15), the essays acknowledge that place, proximity and position have political and theoretical reverberations. In this respect, *Locating Lynette Roberts* carves out space for Roberts's work in multiple new sites of belonging within literary discourse.

Locating Lynette Roberts responds to critical absences in Lynette Roberts scholarship but, like any good critical study, the book informs the reader that there are further questions to be addressed. The collection forms a community around Roberts's work for the first time, all of whom affirm Roberts's place in Welsh writing in English and modernist history in different ways. Simultaneously, it opens new avenues of critical enquiry by laying the foundations for Roberts's work to be studied from transnational, postcolonial, feminist and ecopoetic perspectives. These perspectives offer glimpses of what the future of scholarship into Roberts's work might look like in spaces yet to be located while contributing to the already active intersecting fields of modernism, women's writing, and Welsh anglophone poetics, this collection is surely a necessary and inspiring addition to both.

All the essays in this volume circulate between the locations of national, cultural and literary positions but also much more, granting yet more questions and pathways into Roberts's observant and obscure work.

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Note

[1] For John Pikoulis's work on Roberts see 'Lynette Roberts and Alun Lewis', in *Poetry Wales*, 19 (1983), 9–29. Tony Conran includes Roberts in his *The Cost of Strangeness* (1982) and in *Frontiers in Anglo-Welsh Poetry* (1997), and Nigel Wheale discusses 'Lynette Roberts: Legends and Form in the 1940s', in *Welsh Writing in English*, 3 (1997), 4–19, and 'Beyond the Trauma Stratus: Lynette Roberts's Gods with Stainless Ears and the Post-War Landscape', *Welsh Writing in English*, 3 (1994), 98–117.

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Laura Wainwright, *New Territories in Modernism: Anglophone Welsh Writing, 1930–1949* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2018), pp. 256. £24.99.

Is there some Hegelian Spirit of Modernism (capital M) that manifests or unfolds itself through a dizzying array of versions and variants but is ultimately a singular phenomenon? Or should we regard modernism (lower case) as radically multiple, a rhizomatic assemblage of literary and artistic practices that cannot be reduced to a unity, however complex?

On the whole, Laura Wainwright's timely and illuminating study of anglophone Welsh Modernism leans towards the former position, tracing the ways in which a wider modernist 'crisis of language' (p. 5), which arises first in the work of the French Symbolists (Stephane Mallarmé, Arthur Rimbaud, Paul Verlaine), is given distinctive expression in the work of anglophone Welsh writers, many of whom have ambivalent links to Welsh-language culture. In early twentieth-century Wales, these writers were profoundly aware of the disjunction between

the dominance of English in everyday social life and the priority of the Welsh-language literary tradition, which stretches back to the seventh century. Consequently, anglophone Welsh modernists developed a simultaneously enabling and anxious self-consciousness about the language in which they wrote, and this painful self-consciousness is the source of their formal and linguistic experiments. As Wainwright observes, many of the writers she discusses came from backgrounds where English was newly adopted, grafted onto a much older stock of Welsh usage in their families. Consequently, their texts manifest 'a creatively empowered delight in this linguistic novelty but also, relatedly, a kind of alienation, a strong feeling of the uncanny strangeness of language and of their own linguistic situation' (p. 11). In Wainwright's account, this tension between creative power and alienation means that anglophone Welsh Modernism is best understood as an instance of what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari call 'minor literature': the literature that is created by a minority within a major language (the Czech writer Franz Kafka's fiction in German, for instance, or James Joyce in English and Samuel Beckett in French). In this way, she consistently argues against the assimilation of anglophone Welsh Modernism to 'British Modernism', a concept that tends to elide crucial differences of context and style by foregrounding paradigms that are chiefly applicable to English writers.

The book's title promises a survey of those 'new territories' – both literal and metaphorical – that anglophone Welsh writers have opened up in the ramifying cultural 'space' of modernism. One of the salient effects of the 'transnational turn' in modernist studies over the past two decades has been a thoroughgoing reappraisal of the geographies of modernism, particularly its local, regional and national expressions. At the same time, these variously situated modernisms are understood to be affected by international cultural exchanges and, ultimately, integrated in the fractured unity of the capitalist world system. Wainwright's study is a valuable contribution to the collective scholarly endeavour of mapping and describing the geographies of modernism, though its engagements with relevant recent work in literary and cultural geography are rather limited. Her initial description of the key features of anglophone Welsh Modernism notes its spatio-temporal peculiarity: it is a phenomenon that flourishes 'after the high Modernist period, between 1930 and 1949' and that tends 'to be concerned with rural and industrialised locations', by contrast with the metropolitan milieux

typically associated with modernist writing (pp. 2–3). These are suggestive and useful parameters but they are never thoroughly justified in the course of the argument and so remain open to question. For instance, when she observes that Lynette Roberts's poetry is best understood as 'chiefly a rural Modernism' (p. 63), this (apparently oxymoronic) phrase calls for some further unpacking and theorisation. Similar queries might be directed at the period boundaries that Wainwright draws, for, as she admits, Caradoc Evans's *My People* (1915) has some claim to being an ur-text for anglophone Welsh Modernism. Moreover, it is difficult to see why this literary phenomenon should be understood as ending (or even declining) in 1949, as several of the texts discussed here – Lynette Roberts's *Gods with Stainless Ears* (1951), David Jones's *The Anathémata* (1952) and *The Sleeping Lord* (1974), and Glyn Jones's *The Valley, the City, the Village* (1956), for instance – are published after that date. As Anthony Mellors and Julia Jordan have both shown, major late modernist works were still being written and published in the 1960s and 1970s, and there is a good case for pursuing a similar line of argument with regard to Welsh Modernism.

Wainwright often uses 'territory' and 'territoriality' in a more metaphorical sense, borrowed from Deleuze and Guattari, to denote the condition of social and cultural ambivalence in which anglophone Welsh modernists write, where 'a conflicting sense of both "belonging" and "exile"' (p. 35) infuses their work. In Chapter 1, for instance, she examines texts by Gwyn Thomas, Glyn Jones, Idris Davies, and David Jones and shows how such ambivalence is present not only through their allusions to the Welsh-language tradition but also, more subtly, in their idiosyncratic versions of English, where the bones of Welsh grammar can often be perceived beneath the muscles and sinews of their language. Chapter 2 pursues a similar strategy in more detail by focusing upon the extraordinary poetry of Lynette Roberts, who was born in Buenos Aires in 1909 but – like the London-born David Jones – elected to inhabit the 'territory' of the anglophone Welsh writer, both literally and metaphorically. Fusing a recondite vocabulary in English with borrowings from the Welsh poetic tradition and experiments with typography, Roberts's texts are at once deliberately eccentric and ground-breaking instances of Modernist Art. They exemplify Wainwright's argument that Wales should be recognised as 'a rich and important site of modernist innovation' (p. 73).

On first acquaintance, the poetry of Vernon Watkins is less abrasively experimental and not obviously modernist; though Wainwright does a good job in Chapter 3 of documenting the influence of German and French modernists (Rainer Maria Rilke, Stefan George, Rimbaud, Paul Valéry) on his work, as well as that of T. S. Eliot. Nonetheless, of all the writers considered in this study, Watkins seems both the most alienated from Wales – though he lived and worked for most of his life near Swansea – and the least revolutionary as a writer. The same can hardly be said of Watkins's friend and fellow Kardomah boy, Dylan Thomas, whose poetry and short stories are the focus of Chapter 4. Here, Wainwright demonstrates her originality as a critic by considering Thomas's texts alongside the visual art of Salvador Dalí, a comparative reading that convincingly identifies parallels between their geographically particular versions of surrealism – or 'surregionalism' (p. 106) – where formal experiment is linked to regional places and spaces far from the metropolitan centre. Finally, in Chapter 5, she explores the uses of the grotesque in the fiction of Gwyn Thomas and Rhys Davies in order to argue that anglophone Welsh Modernism is at once creatively generative and acutely responsive to influences from beyond Wales. For instance, Wainwright convincingly shows that Thomas's grim depictions of life in the Rhondda Valley during the Depression years share some of the key features of both German Expressionism and Spanish *esperpento* theatre.

New Territories in Modernism is the first book-length study of anglophone Welsh Modernism as a distinctive literary phenomenon and, as such, an important intervention not only in the field of Welsh writing in English but also the new modernist studies. Wainwright acknowledges the pioneering work of scholars such as John Goodby, Katie Gramich, Wynn Thomas, and Daniel Williams, synthesising their insights where possible but also developing a distinctive thesis of her own. Indeed, the book's greatest strength lies in its ability both to identify the defining features of Welsh Modernism, through meticulous close readings of a diverse body of texts, and to situate this national cultural phenomenon persuasively within its wider European contexts, especially via comparative analysis. As Wainwright acknowledges, though, hers is by no means an exhaustive study but rather one that should stimulate and lay the groundwork for future critical work on the topic. For instance, as noted above, there is further scope for adjusting and extending the period boundaries for anglophone Welsh

Modernism, identifying earlier proto-modernist texts and also tracing its persistence into the second half of the twentieth century. In this regard, it will be important for subsequent critics to think through the relationship between Welsh Modernism and the still-protean category of late modernism, and also – drawing on John Goodby and Lyndon Davies's recent anthology, *The Edge of Necessary* (2018) – to examine the neo-modernist work of poets such as Peter Finch, Wendy Mulford, Zoë Skoulding and Chris Torrance. In her brief conclusion, Wainwright identifies two further projects: a thorough study of 'the role of women writers in the creation of a Welsh Modernism' and another that would chart 'the nature and significance of Modernism in the Welsh language and its relationship with its anglophone counterpart' (p.158). Certainly, the comparative readings pursued in this study offer a model for the latter task, an appraisal of the two literatures of Wales that would be capable of bringing, say, Margiad Evans and Kate Roberts, Dylan Thomas and T. H. Parry-Williams, Lynette Roberts and Gwenallt into dialogue with one another, in order to trace their disparate or intersecting paths to modernism.

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