ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: Postcolonial Welsh Modernisms: Ethnic Performativity in Welsh Writing of the Late 19th and 20th Centuries.

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PAGES: 251

This project explores the ways in which several Welsh writers, and English writers of Welsh descent, respond to and reconstruct the related notions of Britishness and Welshness during the late 19th and 20th centuries. Gerard Manley Hopkins, Saunders Lewis, David Jones, and Kate Roberts each reveal nuances in perspective during this period in which the British Empire reached its peak and required popular justification for doing so. Each author also participates in a form of Modernism, whether mainstream or specific to literary trends in Wales; in each case, such Modernisms are defined by an embracing of Welshness as an alternative to Anglocentric modernity. Through employing Judith Butler’s theory of performativity as it relates to ethnicity, this project contribute to the fields of Postcolonial Theory and Welsh Studies through evaluating how these authors construct and perform identity markers in the late 19th and 20th centuries for political purposes. Applying these critical paradigms to the four authors shows how constructions of ethnic identity serve political ends – particularly in relation to how collective national identity responds, whether through resistance, participation or some combination of the two, to the broader aims of the British Empire.