

Canons and canon-building: framing the literatures of Wales

March 26-28, 2010 at Gregynog Hall

Description

Do we need a canon of Welsh writing in English? What might be at stake in the choices made during the establishment of such a canon? The business, meanings and politics of post-devolution canon-formation will be the focus of the twenty-second annual conference of the Association for Welsh Writing in English at Gregynog Hall in Powys, Wales, UK from March 26-28, 2010. This conference will examine the question of canonicity and its complex connections with issues of nationality, gender, class, race and sexuality in a Welsh context. The establishment of Welsh writing in English as an area of serious literary critical study, itself barely a generation old, has coincided with the recovery of other bodies of neglected writing by marginalised writers. Such recovery work, however, has involved the radical questioning of literary value judgements and the recognition of the social, economic, political and cultural influences which make any canon a fabricated construct. Now just over a decade after Welsh devolution, the republication of out-of-print texts can still be seen as a political necessity in making available a literary heritage which has been neglected and forgotten and which contributes to a sense of national identity. Such republication offers exciting possibilities to literary criticism. But who should be included and on what grounds? What are the risks and tensions involved in the enterprise of canon-building and how might we negotiate them?

CALL FOR PAPERS

Papers are invited on any aspect of the theme 'Canons and canon-building: framing the literatures of Wales'.

Possible topics may include, but are not limited to:

- The history of Welsh canon-building
- Post-devolution nationalism and Welsh writing in English
- Comparative canons: Scotland, Ireland, England, Brittany, the US
- Theorising the canon: postcolonialism, Marxism, feminism, cultural materialism, poststructuralism, psychoanalysis, historicism

- The Welsh 'classic' and the canon
- Taking Welsh writing in English out of Wales
- Gendering, classing and/or queering the canon
- Ethnicities and the canon
- The place of the 'popular'
- Genre fictions: detective fiction, romance, historical fiction, science fiction
- The literary economics of canonicity: print culture, publishing and the canon
- The 'Great Tradition' and 'Individual Talent': reading English literary traditions in Wales?
- Raymond Williams and cultural theory
- Education and the canon
- Industrial vs. rural contexts
- Anthologising Wales

Both short papers (c.20 minutes) or longer ones (c. 50 minutes) will be considered. Please send a brief abstract to the organisers at awwe2010@glam.ac.uk by the deadline of January 15th 2010. Organisers: Dr Alice Entwistle and Dr Diana Wallace, HaSS, University of Glamorgan, and Dr Jeni Williams, Trinity University College, Carmarthen.