



Liberating Dylan Thomas: Rescuing a Poet from Psycho-Sexual Servitude (Writing Wales in English)

By Rhian Barfoot

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Throughout the history of Thomas's critical reception, psychoanalytic interpretations have been applied that have privileged the psychosexual over the psycho-linguistic elements of his work. The wealth of sexual and pseudo-sexual imagery has acquired a negative charge, and has been used to evidence claims that Thomas was the epiphany of his own disturbed psyche, thus reducing the poetry to the expression of the poet's schizoid neuroses. Avoiding the biography-based approaches that have dominated hitherto, *Liberating Dylan Thomas* rescues his early poetry from the position of servitude to the discursive mastery of psychoanalysis. Placing the poetry and psychoanalysis together in a mutually illuminating dialogue, this book clearly demonstrates the ways in which the vital connection between post-Freudian psychoanalysis and Thomas's early poetry can be articulated without reductive simplification.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Rhian Barfoot's ground-breaking study is a timely reminder of the burning relevance of Dylan Thomas, both to a fuller understanding of Anglo-Welsh and British twentieth-century poetry, and to literary studies more generally. Barfoot is the first scholar to bring psychoanalytic theory to bear on Thomas's early poetry in a way that does not reduce it to social or personal pathology, and the result is a series of brilliantly insightful readings that do justice to its serious play; the reading of 'To-day, this insect', for example, is the best I have ever read. By scrupulously attending to the interaction of mind and language, Barfoot's account reveals the inner workings of Thomas's 'revolution of the word' and marks an important step towards understanding how Thomas's 'intricate images' truly work, to liberate both the reader and Thomas himself." (John Goodby, Editor of The Collected Poems of Dylan Thomas)

About the Author

Rhian Barfoot teaches English at Swansea University.

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