Tales of the Tribe: Modern epic, guerrilla-pastoral and utopian yeoman-anarchism in Oswald’s Book of Hours and Englaland


Abstract

Oswald's Book of Hours and Englaland (OBOH&E — Smokestack Books, 2013 & 2015 respectively) are distinctive works in the context of modern and contemporary English language poetry. Although there are affinities between OBOH&E and several modern and contemporary works, OBOH&E’s visionary engagement with concepts of England and English identity, their epic expression and novel post-pastoral dimension combine to make them unique. The works’ address to England and the English emerges from an ecologically committed, broadly socialist position informed by Antonio Gramsci’s theory of hegemony, Benedict Anderson’s concept of the nation as ‘imagined community’ and Patrick Kavanagh’s assertion of the primacy of the ‘parochial’, coalescing into a literary-political position defined by my coinage utopian yeoman-anarchism. The epic dimension of OBOH&E is demonstrated in an exposition based on the theoretical writings of Rudyard Kipling, Ezra Pound and M.M. Bakhtin. OBOH&E’s characteristic dialogical method — defined by the synchronic and synoptic temporal aspect of the works and their deployments of heteroglossia, polyphony and xenoglossia — leads to a characterisation of the books as novelistic ‘modern epics’. Finally, in an analysis informed by Terry Gifford’s influential taxonomy, OBOH&E is identified as a distinctive subgenre of the post-pastoral (another coinage) — the guerrillapastoral. The guerrilla-pastoral arises from the transgressive rural praxis of the author and is reflected and expressed via his personae, narrators and protagonists as they assert their rights in the land, in conflict with representatives of the power that seeks to restrict and deny them.

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The modern language of the Netherlands, formerly called Dutch, and its variant in Belgium, known as the Flemish dialect, are now treated as a single language, Netherlandish. Netherlandish is spoken by almost 20 million people; its northern variety, used in the Netherlands, has a more standardised literary form. About three hundred years ago the Dutch language was brought to South Africa by colonists from Southern Holland. The Germanic tribes invaded Britain in the 5th century. The most powerful Germanic tribes were Angles, Saxons and Jutes. The Anglo-Saxon Period (449-1066). This part of Britain is called Wales now. Other Celts went to the northern part of the country to the land that is known as Scotland. Therefore, the oldest tribe of Celts inhabited Wales and Scotland. That was a long fighting for the land, but gradually new settlers began to feel at home.

The country was divided into seven kingdoms: East Anglia, Mercia, Northumbria, where Angles settled; Essex, Sussex, Wessex with Saxon settlements and Jutes forming kingdom of Kent. Michael Andre Bernstein offers a systematic analysis of the tradition of modern epic poetry—its different structural problems and their diverse but inter-related solutions, and considers issues central to contemporary literary and philosophical theory. Originally published in 1980. These editions preserve the original texts of these important books while presenting them in durable paperback and hardcover editions. The goal of the Princeton Legacy Library is to vastly increase access to the rich scholarly heritage found in the thousands of books published by Princeton University Press since its founding in 1905. ...more. Get A Copy. Amazon.