



Ritual and the Idea of Europe in Interwar Writing

Patrick R. Query

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While most critical studies of interwar literary politics have focused on nationalism, Patrick Query makes a case that the idea of Europe intervenes in instances when the individual and the nation negotiate identity. He examines the ways interwar writers use three European ritual forms—verse drama, bullfighting, and Roman Catholic rite—to articulate ideas of European cultural identity. Within the growing discourse of globalization, Query argues, Europe presents a special, though often overlooked, case because it adds a mediating term between local and global. His book is divided into three sections: the first treats the verse dramas of T.S. Eliot, W.B. Yeats, and W.H. Auden; the second discusses the uses of the Spanish bullfight in works by D.H. Lawrence, Stephen Spender, Jack Lindsay, George Barker, Cecil Day Lewis, and others; and the third explores the cross-cultural impact of Catholic ritual in Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh, and David Jones. While all three ritual forms were frequently associated with the most conservative tendencies of the age, Query shows that each had a remarkable political flexibility in the hands of interwar writers concerned with the idea of Europe.

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