

Kate Bosse-Griffiths:

“Dy bobl di fydd fy mhobl i”

“Thy people shall be my people”

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I declare that this is all my own unaided work

Abstract

‘Thy people shall be my people’: these were the words of Ruth, the Moabitess, of the Old Testament, the ‘model émigré’ who pledged fidelity to another nation. These, too, were the words used by J. Gwyn Griffiths to describe the experience of his Jewish-German wife, Kate Bosse-Griffiths, who was exiled to Britain from Germany in 1936 and through marriage to a Welsh man, dedicated herself to a new life in Welsh-speaking Wales. In a short space of time, she established herself as a recognised Welsh language author who challenged the society in which she lived. There is much more to this woman than the exchange of one culture or identity for another. This study of her life and published works will attempt to unravel the multiple threads that interweave the identity of a Welsh-German woman. Analysis of her unpublished poems may reveal an unprecedented insight into a seemingly complex and yet fascinating woman, whose role as a member of an ethnic minority in Wales deserves closer attention.

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Notes on Texts

The research of this cross cultural subject, by its very nature, required references in three languages – Welsh, German and English. The primary sources used for this essay have been predominately published Welsh sources. Many of Kate Bosse-Griffiths' articles have been collected and published by her husband in her biography. It was also expedient to use other sources, such as the unpublished collection of German poems by Kate Bosse-Griffiths, acquired from her son, Heini Gruffudd. Other unpublished sources, such as her German diaries and English letters, were accessed during a visit to Kate Bosse-Griffiths' *Cadwgan* home in Swansea. All these sources are referenced appropriately in the footnotes and bibliography.

Both unpublished and published primary sources, as well as secondary sources in Welsh and German, are translated into English. I have opted for a literal translation in the target language in order to retain the detailed meaning and style of the original sources. Longer quotations from the Welsh and German sources appear in the body of the text, whereas shorter quotations are placed in the footnotes. Furthermore, where a term has a particular resonance in Welsh or German that cannot be captured in English, the original term appears in brackets in the main text.

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Introduction

150 Jahre Mabinogion – Deutsch-walisische Kulturbeziehungen

This was the title given to the documentation of the first cultural exchange between Germany and Wales, subsequent to an international colloquium at Friedrich-Willhelms-Universität in Bonn in 1999. This effort to map out Welsh-German relations is evidence of the wealth of cross-cultural relations between the two countries, dating from the 12th Century to the present day.¹ It also reveals that, despite German enthusiasm for Celtic culture, there is room for further investigation in the field of Welsh-German relations. Dr. Bernard Maier claims that Wales is often overshadowed by England in German speaking countries, primarily due to Wales' loss of political independence as early as the 13th Century, and the lack of an exported national stereotype in comparison to Ireland and Scotland.² Nevertheless, notable links between the countries were forged during the Reformation period, when many Welsh Protestants found refuge in Germany during Queen Mary's reign. Despite Wales' political servility to England, the formation of a distinct Welsh entity gained recognition in Germany, contributing to Germany's own search for its national identity. 18th and 19th Century German romantics revelled in the enchanting landscape and poetical heritage of Wales, documenting and conveying their experiences to their German readership.³ In more recent times, the twentieth century witnessed an increase in cultural exchange - the German travel writing of Owen M. Edwards, one of Wales' literary giants, is well known, and John Morris-Jones' translation of Heine into the Welsh language, to name but a few.⁴ Yet, it was the circumstances surrounding the two world wars which resulted in numerous German exiles and refugees settling in Wales, many of whom contributed to the various strata of society. Kate Bosse-Griffiths was one of these contributors.

¹ Bernhard Maier, 'Einleitung zur zweiten Sektion: Deutsch-walisische Kulturbeziehungen. Wales und Deutschland: Neun Jahrhunderte kulturellen Austauschs' in *150 Jahre „Mabinogion“ – Deutsch-walisische Kulturbeziehungen* ed. by Maier and others (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2001), p.131

² *ibid.*

³ Michael Maurer, 'Das Andere des Anderen. Deutsche Reisende entdecken den keltischen Rand Großbritanniens' in *Angermion: Yearbook for Anglo-German Literary Criticism, Intellectual History and Cultural Transfers*, vol. I ed. by Görner (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008)

⁴ Marion Löffler, 'Kate Bosse-Griffiths (1910-1998)' in *150 Jahre „Mabinogion“ – Deutsch-walisische Kulturbeziehungen* ed. by Maier and others (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2001), p.169

Kate Bosse-Griffiths fled Nazi persecution in 1936, occupied various posts in Britain before her marriage and settlement in Wales, and remained there until her death in 1998. An overview of her life yields many comparisons to other Jews seeking refuge during the pre-war years. Yet, the achievements of Kate Bosse-Griffiths demand notable attention and are worthy of a detailed study. The German exile was among the few foreigners to write creatively and have her work published in the Welsh language. Her contribution to the literary culture of the oldest European language is unique and unprecedented, where both her biography and her work reflect multiple identities and multiculturalism. In what has been described as a 'closed' minority culture, Kate Bosse-Griffiths was not only accepted, but acclaimed, for her ingenious writing, providing evidence that a non-conformist Welsh society was receptive to new ideas and change.

How Kate Bosse-Griffiths became a Welsh author is fundamental to understanding her writing and identity. No doubt, her marriage to a Welsh scholar was a determining factor, but a closer study of her life reveals a gifted woman, influenced by her own particular German culture. On a voyage of discovery, through diaries and biographical data of the early academic life of young Dr. Käthe, her formative years in the small town of Wittenberg will be traced, unveiling the importance of her rich background to the literary career that ensued. Although her contact with Celtic history was limited before she came to Wales, her studies in Classics and Egyptology were pivotal to her preparation for a literary life in Wales. To what extent were the conditions and experiences of her German *Heimat* visible in her works? To what extent did the climate of her new homeland inspire her to write and express her views? The answers to these questions will help us shape our views of Kate Bosse-Griffiths.

We could easily fail to grasp the qualities of Kate Bosse-Griffiths' works, since the unconventional views expressed in her literary works fit very well into modern day society. How different was the society of her own time, where her writings caused quite a stir when first published! Her particular background allowed her to treat femininity and sexuality much more openly than her contemporaries. Many of her ideas on religion were new to Welsh literature, as she endeavoured to

communicate alternative approaches to spirituality. Her deeply held convictions went against the grain of the religious traditions of Wales, as she challenged, and attempted to reform, conventional ways of thinking. We also observe the prominence given to ideas, distinguishing her from other Welsh authors and, hence, connecting her to the German literary tradition. Throughout her work, we note her use of personal experience, not in order to impose her opinion or cast judgement, but rather to question her own values as well as those of others.

Even so, her respect for her adopted cultural heritage is evident. She also had a deep affinity with the Welsh tradition of conscientious objectors, due to her own pacifist convictions. Yet, despite the frankness and honesty which marked her work, she rarely approached the question of her own identity. The persecution of her family was seemingly too sensitive an issue to discuss, even with her new found Welsh family. The commitment to Welsh nationalism raises intriguing questions concerning her affiliations. How could she justify her staunch nationalist creeds after her flight from National Socialism? What do these seemingly conflicting tendencies reveal about her identity? An attempt to decode aspects of her identity will be made with reference to her introspective poems, written in her mother tongue. She also reveals something of her own identity in her assessments of the identity of others, as expressed in her various published works. These sources will help us answer the question: who is Kate Bosse-Griffiths?

From Wittenberg to Wales:

The life of Kate Bosse-Griffiths until her arrival in Swansea in 1946

Käthe Julia Gertrud Bosse was born in Wittenberg on July 16th in 1910. The history of this small town, situated in North Germany, officially named Lutherstadt Wittenberg, was connected to the German Reformer, Martin Luther. It was on the famous doors of the Wittenberg *Schlosskirche* that Luther nailed his 95 theses, marking the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. The town was also historically associated with anti-Semitism because of the statue of the *Judensau* carved on the walls of the Wittenberg parish church and Luther's renowned polemic writings, *die Juden und ihre Lügen*.⁵ No doubt, this history played a part in Käthe's upbringing, but more significant to her development were the more recent events in German society. Despite Luther's strong associations with the town, Wittenberg was relatively unknown in the German *Kaiserreich* in which young Käthe grew up. Germany had established itself as a unified and confident nation, which had benefited from economic growth and had prospered significantly in the scholarly and literary departments.⁶ Käthe was born into a privileged German family, where her father, Dr. Paul Bosse, who could trace his ancestry to an old German family⁷, was an eminent gynaecologist in the Paul Gerhard Stift hospital. Not surprisingly, through her father's association with Wittenberg, the family adopted the Lutheran faith. Käthe, who received confirmation in the church, was encouraged, like her siblings, to pursue her interests in the arts, such as piano, violin and drawing.⁸ Her upbringing, therefore, appears typical of a middle class German girl in the post First World War period.

However, evidence of young Käthe's thoughts, which are documented in her unpublished diaries, reveal her independent spirit and inquiring nature. These diaries show that she had, from a young age, a remarkable interest in the political events of her day, and at the same time, they provide

⁵ Ronny Kabus, *Juden der Lutherstadt Wittenberg im III. Reich* (Wittenberg: Luther Zentrum, 2006), p.4-12

⁶ Mary Fullbrook, *A Concise History of Germany*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.137-148

⁷ Heini Gruffudd, *Ein Jude ist kein Mensch Mehr/Nid yw Iddew yn Ddyn Mwyach: Hanes teulu yn yr Almaen adeg yr Ail Ryfel Byd* (not yet published), p.3

⁸ Marion Löffler, 'Kate Bosse-Griffiths (1910-1998)' in *150 Jahre „Mabinogion“ – Deutsch-walisische Kulturbeziehungen*, p.171

evidence of a person dissatisfied with conformity. With French troops attempting to gain control of the left bank of the Rhein, the following extract, later translated and included in one of her Welsh books, shows the thirteen year old girl's frustrations with the political situation, as well as her pacifist tendencies, which were later an integral part of her literary career:

Awst 11, 1923 Heddiw yn yr ysgol yr oeddem yn dathlu dechreuad Cyfansoddiad Weimar bedair blynedd yn ôl. Siaradodd Mr. Meyer yn ein dosbarth ni yn dda iawn[...].Ond nid yw pethau mor hawdd ag y dychmyga M.Poincaré, gan fod yr Almaenwyr yn defnyddio'r arfau peryclaf, hynny yw, nid ydynt yn gwneud dim.[...]Trwy unoliaeth yn unig y gallwn barhau ein gwrthwynebiad goddefol yn erbyn gweithredoedd grym Ffrainc; a thrwy wrthwynebiad goddefol un unig y gorchfygwn.⁹

August 11, 1923 Today in school we were celebrating the four year anniversary of the Weimar Constitution. Mr. Meyer spoke very well in our class[...].But things are not as easy as M.Poincaré imagines, because the Germans are using the most dangerous weapon, that is, they're not doing anything.[...]Only in unity can we continue in our tolerant resistance against the forceful actions of France; and through tolerant resistance alone will we conquer.

Even though her confirmation in the Lutheran church in 1926 was a memorable and impressionable event, Käthe's bold statements about the sermon, which 'could barely move me', manifest her frank and discerning nature.¹⁰ She then refers to the preacher, who 'gave us no more than Bible verses but no words directed to the heart.'¹¹ It was her Uncle Will, at the family celebration later that day, who gave her advice 'that probably spoke to my heart, because I found them so often to be true.'¹² For a teenage girl, such statements show early signs of her independence of thought.

Indeed, Käthe proved to be an able pupil of the prestigious Melanchthon Gymnasium in Wittenberg, where one of her teachers, in a letter to her father, praised Käthe for her academic progress: 'As he wrote to Dad, "May the expectations that are justified, given the development of your daughter to date, fulfil themselves completely."¹³ A notable influence on her development was her Greek tutor, Dr. Kaulbach, with whom she remained in contact for many years and who influenced her views of Classicism, especially the ideal of classical *humanitas*.¹⁴ This influence can be found in her thinking and beliefs that all aspects of life must be valued and considered to their fullest

⁹ Kate Bosse-Griffiths, *Bwlch yn y Llen Haearn* (Swansea: Swansea Printers, 1950), p.38-39

¹⁰ [konnte mich aber nur wenig berühren] Kate Bosse-Griffiths, diary, Wittenberg, 31 March 1926

¹¹ [... gibt uns höchstens Bibelsprüche aber keine zu Herzen gehenden Worte.] *ibid.*

¹² [...die mir wohl deswegen zu Herze gingen, weil ich ihre Wahrheit so oft empfunden habe.'] *ibid.*

¹³ ["Mögen die Erwartungen" so schrieb er an Vati "zu denen die bisherige Entwicklung Ihrer Tochter berechtigt, in vollsten Maße in Erfüllung gehen"!]*ibid.*

¹⁴ Kate Bosse-Griffiths, ed., J. Gwyn Griffiths, *Amarna Studies and other selected papers* (Fribourg: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), p.11

extent, thus, reacting against narrowing habits of mind, and an unwillingness to consider unaccustomed ideas. In Greek philosophy, *humanitas* calls for a balance of action and contemplation: a possessor of *humanitas* is not only a sedentary thinker but also a necessary participant in active life.¹⁵ This proved to be the case in Käthe's later life, confirming that, even before leaving Wittenberg, she had already encountered the multiple traditions and factors that would shape her life.

Hence, Classical literature, coupled with Egyptology, became Käthe's choice of studies at University. From Wittenberg, she went on to study at Munich, Bonn and Berlin, where she had a taste of many different academic backgrounds which nourished her intellect.¹⁶ Perhaps it was during her university years that her pacifist ideals took root, and in Berlin, that the revolutionary socialist and Marxist philosopher Rosa Luxemburg and the work of Käthe Kollwitz were introduced to her. It may well be that she turned to these figures as a result of her own discontentment with political events and the dire economic condition of Germany. Luxemburg upheld the 'real humanism', in what Marx claims 'to be a society in which the full and free development of every individual is the guiding principle.'¹⁷ Both Bosse and Luxemburg shared a passion for truth which made them both recoil from dogmatic thought, preferring to appeal to their audience through reason, rather than through emotion. In Munich, her intimate relationship with Nikolaus von Mossolow, the son of a former Russian Tsar captain, which led to a short term engagement, contributed to Käthe's own sympathies for Communism.¹⁸

In 1935, she was awarded a doctorate for her work, *Die menschliche Figur in der Rundplastik der ägyptischen Spätzeit*, which was published in 1936. Later on that year, she was appointed to her first post in the Berlin State Museums – a prestigious opportunity to start a career. However, that year also brought turmoil to the family home: Hitler's campaign against the Jews was gaining strength. This was a significant development for the young academic, since Käthe Levien, Käthe's mother, was a Jewess. She was the daughter of the lawyer, Max Levien, possibly of the Ledin lineage, who

¹⁵ Karl Rahner, ed., *Encyclopaedia of Theology: a concise Sacramentum mundi* (London: Burns and Oates, 1975), p.665-670

¹⁶ J. Gwyn Griffiths, *Teithiau'r Meddwl* (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 2004), p.11

¹⁷ Tony Cliff, 'Introduction' in Paul Fröhlich, trans. by Joanna Hoornweg, *Rosa Luxemburg, ideas in action* (London: Pluto Press, 1972), p.11

¹⁸ *Teithiau'r Meddwl*, p.12

emigrated from Spain to Germany.¹⁹ Even though his wife and family were not practising Jews, Paul Bosse, aware of the likely problem of the Jewish connection, made use of his role as a doctor in providing aid to those injured by the factory explosion outside Wittenberg in 1935. When Adolf Hitler came to personally congratulate him on his achievements, he gave the impression of being an avid Nazi supporter by covering the hospital with Swastika motifs.²⁰ Despite the Führer's appreciation of his work, the authorities soon took action against the Bosse family, by terminating the work contracts of both Käthe and her father.²¹ Knowing that it was no longer possible to live quietly and ignore the situation, the family, with due urgency, arranged for Käthe's exile to Britain in 1936.²² The young German girl fled to Britain before it was too late.

This new period of her life took her first to Scotland, where her mother had made arrangements for her to take up a secretarial post with the eminent biologist and classical scholar Sir D'Arcy Thompson.²³ Later, she worked at the Petrie Museum in the University of London which opened up opportunities to participate in social life as a member of the Bloomsbury Left Book Club.²⁴ However, it was not until she received a more suitable research post at the Oxford Ashmolean Museum that her life took a different turn, meeting her future husband, a scholar of Welsh and Egyptology, J. Gwyn Griffiths. The love letters exchanged between the two reveal Käthe's vivacity, as well as her resoluteness in the face of the approaching war.²⁵ The relationship was undoubtedly a much needed comfort and support to her. Their shared interests in Egyptology, as well as mutual pacifist views, made a suitable match and were, no doubt, an important ingredient in the German's well being, as she faced life as an exile in a country at war with her homeland. J. Gwyn Griffiths was also a German scholar and, therefore, a bridge was easily forged through his cultural and linguistic understanding of her background. The Welsh patriotism of J. Gwyn Griffiths was, however, a novel feature for Käthe, which undoubtedly added a mysterious and enticing appeal to the relationship:

¹⁹ *ibid.* p.7-8

²⁰ Gruffudd, *Ein Jude ist kein Mensch Mehr/Nid yw Iddew yn Ddyn Mwyach*, p.5

²¹ *Teithiau'r Meddwl*, p.15, 18

²² Heini, Gruffudd, 'Cofio Kate Bosse-Griffiths', *Taliesin*, 102 (1998), p.105

²³ *Teithiau'r Meddwl*, p.18

²⁴ *Ibid.* p.19

²⁵ Kate Bosse-Griffiths' unpublished English letters to J. Gwyn Griffiths, 1939 (See 'Note on Texts')

You know when one's mind is specially occupied with a name or person, one is bound to find it suddenly everywhere. In the same way, I go on hearing and reading about Wales and Welshmen and Swansea and Cardiff.²⁶

During this romantic period, she visited Wales for the first time. Perhaps it is no surprise, because of her affection for J. Gwyn Griffiths, that her visit to Betws-y-Coed produced feelings for the Welsh countryside that reflected those of her fiancé. More notably, she found parallels in Wales to her own *Heimat*: 'the first impression was there is something like a German 'Wald', the Schwarzwald, the Thüringerwald, real aimless nature, the thing I had missed so much in the tidiness of the lovely English countryside.'²⁷ Furthermore, another letter reveals that, even before she moved to Wales, she had the intention of learning the Celtic Welsh language: 'I have an idea that by walking and studying the Welsh books I bought today, I may manage to keep myself out of the 'War-psychosis.'²⁸ Such a statement indicates that her dedication to mastering the Welsh language was indeed a way for her to bear the turmoil of the war years. Thus, we see that Wales for her became synonymous with freedom, a new beginning that would give her opportunity to plant new roots.

While September 1939 marked Britain's declaration of war on Germany, this was also the month of J. Gwyn Griffiths' marriage to Käthe Bosse. On their return from Oxford, the two jumped out of the train at Pontypridd to marry at a registry office, while persuading a layman to be their witness, before arriving in Rhondda as a married couple.²⁹ From now on, the German would bear the name of her future literary titles - Kate Bosse-Griffiths. She was now safe as a British citizen. Yet, for a talented young woman, with a bright future ahead of her, it would certainly not have been an easy decision to sacrifice her independence and career for marriage and life in the Welsh valleys.

These early years proved to be a testing time, as she heard news of her family's fate in Germany. She would hear of the suicide of her aunt, in order to safeguard her husband's position in the army. In 1944, her family, except for one sister, were jailed and her mother was taken away to a

²⁶ Kate Bosse-Griffiths, letter to J. Gwyn Griffiths, 11 July 1939

²⁷ *ibid.* 28 August 1939

²⁸ *ibid.* 24 August 1939

²⁹ Nia Mai Williams, *Cylch Cadwgan* (unpublished master's thesis, University of Bangor, 1994), p.2

concentration camp, where she died within two weeks.³⁰ Her father died in 1946, most likely from a broken heart.³¹ As her son, Heini Gruffudd, remarks:

Fy mam, ohonyn oll, ddihangodd yn fwyaf dianaf, er na all neb fesur anaf i enaid. O hynny ymlaen mesurai bywyd yn ôl graddfa Ravensbrück, a bach iawn oedd ei phwys ar foethau materol.³²

My mother, out of them all, escaped the most unhurt, although no one can measure a wound to a soul. From now on, she measured life according to the scale of Ravensbrück, and she put little weight on material wealth.

When war was declared, as a German, she was officially ‘the enemy’. Furthermore, her ardent pacifism could easily have been misunderstood. It was very likely that she would have had to face some form of persecution. All these circumstances, both on a personal and social level, were significant obstacles in the way of her assimilation, as well as her reception, into Welsh society.

Despite these difficulties, the achievements of her first year are remarkable. Her first notable achievement was her acquisition of the Welsh language which ‘before long she was speaking and writing [Welsh] better than the patriotic Welshmen around her.’³³ There is no doubt that her husband had a fundamental role in her decision to learn Welsh. Yet, in an anglicised Rhondda Valley community in which English could be understood and spoken by the majority, learning Welsh was not imperative. Until then, the English language had been the lingua franca of J. Gwyn Griffiths and Kate Bosse-Griffiths’ relationship. Some may wonder why the German learnt the language of a small minority group. One reason, no doubt, for her dedication to Welsh, was that it provided a form of escapism from the war. As Hicks points out, quoting Marion Löffler:

[...]mae amserau a themâu gwaith llenyddol Kate Bosse-Griffiths yn dangos i’r broses o ysgrifennu fod yn gyfrwng trosesgyn alltudiaeth gan greu cartref newydd ysbrydol.³⁴

[...]the timing and themes of Kate Bosse-Griffiths literary work show that the process of writing was a method of overcoming exile by creating a new spiritual home.

³⁰ Gruffudd, ‘Cofio Kate Bosse-Griffiths’, p.105

³¹ *ibid.*

³² *ibid.*

³³ Rhydwen Williams, ‘Cylch Cadwgan’, *Barddas*, 60 (1982), p.7

³⁴ Bethan, E Hicks, *Astudiaeth o yrfa lenyddol Kate Bosse-Griffiths* (unpublished master’s thesis, University of Wales Swansea, 2001), p.15

The first ten years of her literary career proved to be her most productive period of Welsh language publications, suggesting that her literary compositions were a cathartic experience.

However, Kate Bosse-Griffiths reveals in a letter to her brother, that her convictions were a principal factor in learning the language: ‘Jetzt muss ich Walisisch lernen’ (Now I have to learn Welsh), suggesting that it was sign of respect to her new homeland.³⁵ Already a multi-linguist in both European and classical languages, the prospect of learning a Celtic language would not have been too daunting for her. It should be noted that the climate of the war years brought new challenges to the Welsh language: evacuees from England descended upon the Welsh communities of Wales, raising concerns about the fate of its language and culture.³⁶ Kate Bosse-Griffiths was fully aware of the issues at stake. Perhaps as an Egyptologist and Classical scholar, both her sympathy and understanding of preserving traditions and cultures were in tune with the Welsh fear of losing their identity.

Her second remarkable achievement was the establishment of *Cylch Cadwgan* – the Cadwgan Literary Circle, named after the newlyweds’ home in Rhondda. In forming this group, Kate Bosse-Griffiths not only showed her organisational abilities in inviting writers and ministers to her home, she also revealed her ambition for intellectual development. For one prominent member, Rhydwen Williams, the circle was ‘a shelter from the wind’; he praised both J. Gwyn Griffiths and Kate Bosse-Griffiths for providing a warm welcome and a meeting place for pacifists concerned for the future of Wales.³⁷ The circle emulated literary salons of nineteenth century France and became the most avant garde literary group in Wales of this period. Despite the fact that Kate Bosse-Griffiths’ liberal views created a discord amongst a deeply religious non-conformist society, she bonded with the Welsh pacifist tradition and the many non-conformist Welsh nationalists. Their credo was based on pacifism, nationalism and Christianity - the principles of *Cylch Cadwgan* members. However, far from being conservative in its views, the circle’s programme was drawn up in reaction to traditional Welsh writing. Its aims were to write honestly and realistically about all subjects, and to make Welsh

³⁵ *Teithiau'r Meddwl*, p.15

³⁶ Rhys Evans, *Gwynfor: Rhag Pob Brad* (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 2005), p.58

³⁷ Williams, ‘Cylch Cadwgan’, p.6

literature more European, looking beyond Wales for its inspiration, thus underlining the importance of encompassing all literature, languages and cultures. In short, the aim was to search for truth and to be liberated from conformism.³⁸ Through the frequent debates and exchange of ideas on diverse subjects, Kate Bosse-Griffiths found an outlet for her frustrations with the traditionalist society, which are apparent in her work. She was a great asset with her multilingual skills and firsthand knowledge of classical antiquity, as well as her German literary background. German literary culture was greatly admired by the members: ‘Ben Bowen had to make room for Rilke, Dyfed for Heine...’³⁹

Rhydwen Williams’ novel *Adar y Gwanwyn* (*Birds of the Spring*, 1975) portrays an accurate account of the Cadwgan members and the struggle of the war years - Kate Bosse-Griffiths appears as Elsa in the novel:

Roedd cerdded y stryd yn medru bod yn bererindod drwy Uffern...Amheuaeth! Pa le bynnag yr edrychai [Elsa], beth bynnag a wnelai ac a phwy bynnag y siaradai: amheuaeth. Hyd yn oed wrth gynnig cymwynas.⁴⁰

Walking down the street could be likened to a pilgrimage through hell...Suspicion! Wherever she [Elsa] looked, whatever she did and whoever she spoke to: suspicion! Even when doing a favour.

[...]hyd yn oed pan ddywedai ambell gymdoges[...]mai estrones oedd hi [Elsa] ac nad oedd wedi gwneud peth doeth i ddod i fyw i’r gymdogaeth a bod pobl wedi digio’n fwy fyth am fod ei gŵr yn erbyn y rhyfel a hithau wedi sgrifennu ryw ‘hen lyfr brwnt’, nid oedd yr edliw n’ar gwgu’r na’r atgasedd na’r erlid (i bob golwg) yn mennu dim ami.⁴¹

[...]even when the occasional neighbour would say[...]that she was a foreigner and that she [Elsa] had been unwise in coming to live in the neighbourhood and that people were even more angry because her husband was against the war and she had written some ‘dirty old book’, their reproach, their scowls, their hatred and their persecution (to all appearances) did not affect her at all.

Although, as a German, she may have borne the brunt of the animosity, the other Cadwgan members and all conscientious objectors became very unpopular, despite the pacifist tradition in Wales. With the support of fellow Cadwgan members, Kate Bosse-Griffiths boldly published her first novel *Anesmwyth Hoen* (*Uneasy Joy*), in 1940; this was also the first novel published by the circle, bringing the dimension of feminism into the literary circle, one of the multiple identifications of the German woman.

³⁸ Angharad Llinos, ‘Cylch Cadwgan (1)’, *Barn*, 312 (1989), p.32-34

³⁹ [‘bu’n rhaid i Ben Bowen wneud lle i Rilke, Dyfed i Heine...] Nia Mai Williams, *Cylch Cadwgan*, p.12

⁴⁰ Rhydwen Williams, *Adar y Gwanwyn* (Llandybie: Gwasg Merlin, 1972), p.94

⁴¹ *ibid.* p.70

In 1943, the couple moved to the Welsh speaking area of Bala, where their literary connections flourished and where Kate Bosse-Griffiths made regular visits to German prisoner of war camps, before settling down in Swansea with two young sons in 1946. As the severely bombed town of Swansea was marked by the scars of the war, so, too, would the emotional loss of her family in Germany leave its marks on Kate Bosse-Griffiths. Yet, with a will to live and to give, Kate Bosse-Griffiths took part in all spheres of society: she conducted choirs, organised local church concerts, took part in Eisteddfodau and was an active Plaid Cymru campaigner. In this period, Kate Bosse-Griffiths returned to her first love of Egyptology. She was appointed Honorary Curator of the Archaeology Department of Swansea Museum in 1946. She used her privileged position to ensure Welsh had equal status to English in the museum, a testament to the fact that the German woman's new found 'Welshness' never faded. In 1971, she received command of some 300 Egyptian artefacts at Swansea University, which she diligently labelled in both languages. Moreover, she published many bilingual booklets e.g. *Twenty Thousand Years of Local History*, as well as her Welsh publication *Tywysennau'r o'r Aiff* (*Corn Ears from Egypt*, 1970), a description of modern Egypt, based on her experiences during her yearlong visit to Egypt. She also made contributions to *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, as well as *Festschriften*. However, while Egyptologists may admire the German for her research, the Welsh recognise her contribution to their literature.

The remaining elements of her biography, up to her death in 1998, will be incorporated in our study of her literary works. In our analysis of these works, we will consider other layers of identification, in an attempt to place her often undervalued contributions on the literary map of Wales.

A Woman of Many Voices: Kate Bosse-Griffiths as a Welsh language author

An Egyptologist and classical scholar, possessing also the German literary tradition from the eighteenth century to Thomas Mann, who [she] has written novels and short stories and essays in Welsh and has in journalism published her own first-hand impressions in Eastern Germany and in Russia.⁴²

This statement by Saunders Lewis captures the multifaceted contribution of Kate Bosse-Griffiths to Welsh twentieth century literary culture. She may not have made the same mark on the Welsh literary map as Pennar Davies or even her husband, J. Gwyn Griffiths, but she was a pioneering author with an innovative and ingenuous style of writing, who introduced revolutionary concepts through a minority language.

Considering the originality of her work, it is surprising that Kate Bosse-Griffiths did not receive wider recognition. No doubt, this is due to her lack of creative writing. She wrote only two novels: *Anesmwyth Hoen* (*Uneasy Joy*, 1941) and *Mae'r Galon wrth y Llyw* (*The Heart is at the Helm*, 1957). In addition, she wrote a collection of short stories, *Fy Chwaer Efa a Storiâu Eraill* (*My Sister Eva and Other Stories*, 1944), later included with other published short stories in *Cariadau* (*Kinds of Love*, 1995). Apart from her Egyptology writings, she also published several factual books: a pacifist pamphlet, *Mudiadau Heddwch yn yr Almaen* (*Peace Movements in Germany*, 1943), and two travel books, *Bwlch yn y Llen Haearn* (*A Breach in the Iron Curtain*, 1951), about an illegal visit to her hometown in East Germany, and *Trem ar Rwsia a Berlin* (*A View of Russia and Berlin*, 1962). An intriguing book is her exploration of the magical and mystical aspects of Welsh society in *Dyn y Byd Hysbys* (*The World of the Wise Man*, 1977). It was, however, in the sphere of Welsh journalism, that she made her most active contribution. She published numerous articles in the most prominent Welsh journals (*Barn*, *Heddiw*, *Taliesin*, *Y Traethodydd*, *Y Faner*, *Y Fflam*), Welsh language newspapers (*Y Cymro*, *Y Ddraig Goch*), as well as English language newspapers (*Western Mail*, *South Wales Evening Post*). These articles manifest her twofold position: she was both a foreign affairs

⁴² Alun R. Jones & Gwyn Thomas, *Presenting Saunders Lewis* (Cardiff: Cardiff University Press, 1973), p.166

journalist, reporting from a Welsh perspective, and a Welsh affairs journalist, reporting from a foreign perspective. We will find this statement pertinent to our consideration of her identity.

As a non native speaker of Welsh, the literary style of Kate Bosse-Griffiths is not as fluid as most Welsh writing. Although her popularity as an author may have been hindered by her frank language, there were those who appreciated her lack of unnecessary detail and weighty descriptions, which cleared the way for the transmission of her raw ideas. While Welsh readers were accustomed to descriptive scenes of local landscape and character conflicts, Kate Bosse-Griffiths was somewhat of an ‘intellectual novelist’, who introduced her characters to represent ideas.⁴³ Thus, the sparse settings and formal structure, through which she speculates on questions of morality, sexuality and matters of life and death, connect her work to the many different movements of twentieth century German modernism.

Although Kate Bosse-Griffiths’ polymathic tendencies stem from world influences, such as Gandhi, Lao-Tse and Tolstoy, the impact of German literary culture can be seen in her several references to German writers; she was reputed to have quoted Goethe to family and friends, and figures such as Ernst Toller are discussed numerous times in her articles.⁴⁴ The influence of German feminist writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is apparent in the treatment of her themes, whilst Nietzsche was the undercurrent of her challenging of Western morals. For these reasons and more, the literary identity of Kate Bosse-Griffiths can be represented by four different voices: feminism, religion, pacifism and nationalism. The result is a blend of scrupulous realism, stemming from the German and European tradition, with deeper symbolic undertones for a Welsh society.

The Feminist Voice

The recurring theme of women’s lives in her work is evidence of Kate Bosse-Griffiths’ consciousness of being a woman in twentieth century Wales. While the women of her novels are Welsh and the

⁴³ Katie Gramich, *Twentieth Century Women’s Writing in Wales: land, gender, belonging* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), p.111

⁴⁴ Gruffudd, ‘Cofio Kate Bosse-Griffiths’, p.101

backdrop primarily set in Wales, the themes and ideas that she communicates bear more resemblance to those of the German women writers of the *Jahrhundertwende*. This was indeed a period of increased debate on the emancipation of women. Drawing from influences from the Naturalist movement in Germany, as well as Nietzsche's theory on individuality, German women writers appropriated these ideas to their own area of interest: the female subject. Kate Bosse-Griffiths' work bears hallmarks of the German tradition as she portrays truthful accounts of Welsh women in search of a place and an identity in their socially constrained lives.⁴⁵

Her first novel, *Anesmwyth Hoen* (*Uneasy Joy*, 1941), similar to a 'Bildungsroman', follows the ambitious and rebellious Megan's voyage of self-discovery. Not satisfied with fulfilling the conventional female role of a married housewife, she leaves her conservative Welsh upbringing for a student life in London: 'It's as if I have been formed with clay, and everyone is pressing on me from outside: the result is that I take a particular form, and I can't be anything else.'⁴⁶ As in Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* (*The Magic Mountain*, 1924), the protagonist meets, and learns from, a variety of different characters who indicate her potential and point out other paths, ranging from Elsie, the ardent communist to Irina, the Russian-Estonian, who sheds light on the Russian emigrant situation. As a result of these varied encounters, Megan's ideas and emotions mature as she re-evaluates her beliefs: 'I'm realising generally how full of prejudice and old tradition are our ideas.'⁴⁷ The widening geographical distance from her roots in a Welsh village, as she moves from London to Munich, further reflects the distancing from her family and societal influences. It is in wartime Germany that she realises her own strength as a fully liberated woman: 'Here, far from home, after the hurt of a great disappointment, she began to discover her inner wealth.'⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Chris Weedon, 'The struggle for emancipation: German women writers of the *Jahrhundertwende*' in *A History of Women's Writing in Germany, Austria and Switzerland* ed. by Catling, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.114

⁴⁶ [Mae fel pe bawn wedi fy llunio o glai, a chwithau bawb yn gwasgu arnaf o'r tu allan: y canlyniad yw fy mod yn cymryd ffurf arbennig, ac na allaf fod yn ddim arall.] Kate Bosse-Griffiths, *Anesmwyth Hoen* (Llandybie: Llyfrau'r Dryw, 1941), p.8

⁴⁷ [Rwy'n dod i weld mor llawn o ragfarn a hen draddodiad yw ein syniadau ni fel rheol.] *ibid.*

⁴⁸ [Yma, ymhell oddi cartref, ar ôl clwyf siomedigaeth fawr, darganfu ei chyfoeth mewnol ei hun.] *ibid.* p.60

In this respect, her ideas could be traced back to the first German women writers of realism, such as Gabriele Reuter (1859-1941), who in *Aus guter Familie* (*From a Good Family*, 1895) tells the story of Agathe, a lively and intelligent young woman who is smothered by her overprotective parents, who forbid marriage, other than to a wealthy man. Likewise, Franziska Gräfin von Reventlow (1871-1918), who wrote a semi-autobiographical novel *Ellen Olestjerne* (1903), concerning the struggles of a young girl to free herself from a repressive family, may have influenced Kate Bosse-Griffiths. Interestingly, we observe similarities with *Anesmwyth Hoen* (*Uneasy Joy*, 1940), where the protagonist comes to value her personal integrity, abandoning traditional values and finding fulfilment as an unmarried mother, with a Nietzschean confidence in life.⁴⁹

However, while the protagonist of Lou Andreas-Salomé's *Fenitschka* (1898) retains her individuality by choosing her career before marriage, Megan's pursuit for fulfilment is brought to an end when a young doctor asks for her hand in marriage. Kate Bosse-Griffiths' depicts marriage as a crippling force too powerful to withstand, resulting in the loss of freedom:

Y foment honno teimlodd fin eithaf argyfwng tynghedus pob merch. Beth bynnag a wnai, byddai'n rhaid iddi aberthu rhan ohoni ei hun. I'w chyflawni ei hun, yr oedd angen y dyn a'i carai. Ac eto, y dyn hwnnw oedd y perygl mwyaf i'w hannibyniaeth ysbryd[...].Ond plygodd o flaen y tynged.⁵⁰

At that moment, she felt the extreme edge of every woman's predestined crisis. Whatever she did, she would have to sacrifice a part of herself. To fulfil herself, she needed the man who loved her. Then again, it was that man who posed the greatest danger to her independence of mind [...]. But she submitted to her destiny.

This, too, is the theme of *Mae'r Galon wrth y Llyw* (*The Heart is at the Helm*, 1957), Kate Bosse-Griffiths' second novel, which examines the complexities of love and marriage, in so far as they determine the fate of women. The story has a Welsh setting and revolves around two women who love the same man in very different ways. The relationship of Sian and Arthur is based on commitment – she, a thirty year old small town teacher, has funded her lover's university studies for six years. After Arthur suggests ending their relationship, Sian attempts suicide, and forces Arthur to promise marriage. Doris, a young city nurse, strikes up a passionate affair with him, but ends the

⁴⁹ Ritchie Robertson, 'From Naturalism to National Socialism' in *The Cambridge History of German Literature* ed. by Watanabe-O'Kelly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 338-339

⁵⁰ *Anesmwyth Hoen*, p.78

relationship when she discovers the secret engagement. After marrying a doctor and bearing three children, Doris and Arthur's paths cross again. Unable to resist the force between them, Doris betrays her husband and has two children with Arthur. Having given the second child for adoption to Sian, who was barren, Doris dies in childbirth. Thus, the lives of Doris and Sian are linked by Arthur, who fell in love with one and was unfaithful to the other.

Far from being a sentimental love story, the author pictures these two women as suffering creatures. The female desire for an ideal love, a theme which is conveyed in both novels, ends up in a loveless marriage in the first case, and a broken marriage and adultery in the second. Yet, the women are not the culprits; rather, it is the framework of conventional society which determines their fate and forbids them their true desire. While others condemn and judge Doris' betrayal and immorality, she has an inner conviction that her actions are in line with fate and claims her right to pursue love:

Felly y beiddiodd Doris dorri'r cwlwm a'i cysylltai â moesoldeb ei thad a'i heglwys a'i chymdeithas[...]. Argyhoeddodd ei hun ei bod hi'n byw bywyd normal gan mai Arthur oedd ei gŵr mewn gwirionedd; ef oedd y gŵr a wnaed er ei mwyn gan dynged.⁵¹

So Doris dared to break the knot which connected her morality to that of her father, church and society [...]. She convinced herself that she was living a normal life because Arthur was her husband in truth; he was the husband created for her by fate.

The more Doris suffers, the greater the strength she finds within herself, and so, like a Nietzschean tragic heroine, her will to live allows her to rejoice in pain and suffering.

In view of these feminist themes, Kate Bosse-Griffiths' two novels have been categorised as twentieth century feminist novels.⁵² Although the author's feminism can be observed in *Anesmwyth Hoer* (*Uneasy Joy*, 1940) through Megan's objection to dressing in feminine clothes and wearing make-up, Kate Bosse-Griffiths did not consider herself to be a conventional feminist. Unlike many of the German women writers who used conflict with society as a means to propagate women's social advancement, Kate Bosse-Griffiths, like Lou Andreas-Salomé (1861-1937), used her protagonists to reveal the inner strength and capability of women. She identified much more with the term

⁵¹ Kate Bosse-Griffiths, *Mae'r Galon wrth y Llyw* (Aberystwyth: Gwasg Gomer, 1957), p. 173

⁵² Gramich, *Twentieth Century Women's Writing in Wales: land, gender, belonging*, p.67-69

‘matriachalism’ than feminism i.e. the strength of the mother figure, whose aim is to provide a platform for spiritual wealth and to inspire women to become more intellectual. This belief is uttered in the words of a modern, adventurous girl who Megan meets: ‘I would like girls to be educated in such a way that would make them capable of thinking for themselves, like in the time of matriarchalism.’⁵³

While the concept of the liberated female had taken root in the German tradition, such ideas were rarely mentioned in Welsh literature. Matters of a sexual nature were taboo even in works written by Welsh male writers; it was far more daring for a female to expose sexuality in her work. The purpose, however, behind the references to Megan’s increasing awareness of her body and the opposite sex was to depict the realities of life, her physical and intellectual development. Even though one critic of *Anesmwyth Hoen* (*Uneasy Joy*, 1940) requested, ‘...could I ask the author to moderate and economise on those sections most likely to cause misunderstanding and pain?’⁵⁴, Kate Bosse-Griffiths answered by producing her second, even more daring novel, based on an adulterous relationship. As Löffler comments, not even Saunders Lewis’ *Monica* had prepared Welsh readers for this.⁵⁵

The knowledge that both novels are largely based on the author’s experiences, adds a certain poignancy to her portrayals. According to her son, Heini, the parallel between her sister’s life and Doris’, is believed to be an attempt to understand her sister’s marital difficulties.⁵⁶ Furthermore, comparison can be drawn between Megan’s life in *Anesmwyth Hoen* (*Uneasy Joy*, 1940) and the author’s own experiences and encounters in London. However, there are limitations in juxtaposing the two lives, for Kate Bosse-Griffiths’ journey was from a liberal background to a traditional setting. Even so, by placing herself in the shoes of a traditional Welsh girl, she challenges the introspective views of a tight knit community and implies that her free spirit was also in jeopardy in Welsh society.

⁵³ [Hoffwn i ferched gael eu haddysgu yn y fath fodd a’u gwnâi’n alluog i feddwl drostynt eu hunain, fel yn amser matriarchaeth.] *Anesmwyth Hoen*, p.42

⁵⁴ [...a gawn i ofyn i’r awdur gymedroli a chynilo yn yr adrannau sydd fwyaf tebygol o achosi camddeall a dolurio?] Davies, E. Tegla, ‘Cystadleuaeth Nofel Llyfrau’r Dryw. Beirmiadaeth’, *Y Cymro*, 10 January 1942

⁵⁵ Löffler, ‘Kate Bosse-Griffiths (1910-1998)’ in *150 Jahre „Mabinogion“ – Deutsch-walisische Kulturbeziehungen*, p.180

⁵⁶ Gruffudd, ‘Cofio Kate Bosse-Griffiths’, p.107

The Spiritual Voice

Kate Bosse-Griffiths' notions of spirituality, whether in the form of religion or mysticism, led to thought-provoking concepts on the supernatural. It could be argued that her 'searching' spirit was a product of her exile and her liberal upbringing, thus causing her to rethink her value system, as she put down roots in Welsh non-conformist culture.⁵⁷ However, what appears to be more prominent is the underlying influence of Nietzsche, whose attack on morality and Christianity gave Kate Bosse-Griffiths substance to challenge a nation shaped by almost two centuries of religious movements.

Her ideas on spirituality are explored in her short stories, and connected to her particular form of feminism, where women are portrayed as the source of life, in an attempt to correct the perceived emphasis of female submission in the Christian ethic. Her radical re-interpretation of Christianity is fully developed in the story of *Fy Chwaer Efa (My Sister Eve, 1994)*. Four sisters, Efa, Mair, Martha and Magdalen are reunited through Efa's miscarriage. Like four apostles, the sisters relate their childhood memories of the central figure, Maia, 'God's Daughter, who came to the world to redeem women.'⁵⁸ The sisters recount the life of Maia, starting with her childhood revelations, her vision, her temptation and her final sermon. As a young girl, Maia is troubled by the inconsistencies of life and can't understand why God's creation is corrupt. She questions the Welsh ladies of the Sisterhood ('Seiat y Chwirydd') about life after death, but is not satisfied with their answers. She receives a vision and becomes convinced of 'the idea that the destiny of the world lay in the hands of women, whilst the men brought the disorder that we see, through their selfishness, egoism and rules.'⁵⁹ The female redeemer meets opposition and temptation through 'Him', who pleads with her to join Him in ruling humanity. Yet, the 'Mam Fawr' (Great Mother) rejects the patriarchal view which He proposes, because 'Jesus, as an unmarried man, couldn't understand women properly.'⁶⁰ In this way, she

⁵⁷ Heini Gruffudd, Personal Interview, Swansea, 12 June 2009

⁵⁸ [Merch Duw, a daethai i'r byd i waredu'r marchod.] Kate Bosse-Griffiths, *Fy Chwaer Efa a Storiâu Eraill* (Tenby: Gwasg Gee, 1944), p.11

⁵⁹ [A'r syniad oedd mai yn nwylo'r gwagedd y gorwedd tynged y byd, er mai'r gwŷr, drwy eu hunanoldeb a'r egoïstiaeth a'u rheolau, a barodd yr anrhefn a welid.] *ibid.* p.27

⁶⁰ [...na allai'r Iesu, fel dyn dibriod, ddeall gwagedd yn iawn.] *ibid.* p.11

continues to preach her message - these principles, if observed, would lead to a more fulfilled life for women.

Thus, we see, in Kate Bosse-Griffiths, a pioneering author who contended with the masculine tradition in Christianity, by giving God a female character. As Enid Jones commented in a book review of *Cariadau*:

Y peth anhygoel yw fod Kate Bosse-Griffiths ar ddechrau'r pedwardegau eisoes yn ffemineiddio'r ffydd Gristnogol mewn dull nad ymwreiddiodd yn iawn yn yr Unol Daleithiau, heb sôn am Brydain, tan tua chanol y chwedegau!⁶¹

It is hard to believe that Kate Bosse-Griffiths, in the early nineteen forties, was already feminising the Christian faith in a way which didn't properly take firm root in the United States, not to speak of Britain, until around the mid sixties!

The same concept is found in *Y Bennod Olaf* (*The Last Chapter*, 1944), a winning short story at the National Eisteddfod in 1942, where the young dying girl prays to 'Dduw-Tad-a-Mam' (God-Father-and-Mother) and concludes that the reason for world disorder is that: 'There is no woman there to tidy up after the Heavenly Father has created confusion.'⁶² Such ideas were truly groundbreaking in a society where the Christian faith had for centuries shaped the place of women in society. There was, however, a harmony between the beliefs of Kate Bosse-Griffiths and the liberal theologians of her day, such as the questioning of the divinity of Jesus Christ. Her husband commented that his wife disliked the emphasis on Christ in non-conformist religion, as well as the over-sentimentality of the people.⁶³

Yet, her ideas on religion extend far beyond the realms of Christianity, where we find a focus on a mystic experience ('Y Profiad Mawr') that only some receive. In *Y Stori Gyfrinol* (*The Mystic Story*, 1995), Alun Rabaiotti, half Welsh and half-Italian, who has 'two souls', relates his revelation to his fellow students through religious art. During a visit to his relatives in Italy, he is attracted to the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church and rebels against the non-conformist position, 'which tends to avoid this abstruse subject by concentrating instead on sin, salvation, suffering and the

⁶¹ Enid Jones, 'Ffemineiddio'r ffydd', *Taliesin*, 91 (1995), p.118-120

⁶² [Does dim gwraig i dacluso pethau wedi i'r Tad Nefol wneud annibendod.] *Fy Chwaer Efa a Storiâu Eraill*, p.63

⁶³ *Teithiau'r Meddwl*, p. 237

atonement.⁶⁴ He begins to search for the meaning of life, but neither the Protestant nor Catholic Church leave him satisfied. It is only when he gazes at the murals depicting female initiation rites in the temple of Pompeii that he finally discovers ‘the true nature of the powers that create the world.’⁶⁵ Other mystic experiences are explored in *Lleuad Llawn Uwch Maen Ceti (Full Moon over the Ceti Stone, 1995)*, where two young men travel to Wales in search of pre-Christian heritage. While the minister of Reynoldston, Pembrokeshire assures them that pagan beliefs have been dispelled from Welsh society, they later discover, to the horror of the minister, that his niece has been conducting an age-old rite in search of a lover.⁶⁶ Mysticism is further explored in *Dyn y Byd Hysbys (The World of the Wise Man, 1977)*, a collection of mystical accounts of paganism in Wales. The result is an attempt to dispel the belief that Wales is a Christian land, although, rightly, a spiritual land.⁶⁷

Kate Bosse-Griffiths showed a willingness to debate other world religions. Her article on Salman Rushdie’s *Satanic Verses* (1988) reveals her sympathy for a man who dared challenge the interpretation of the Quran. Her frustrations with those who refuse to question traditions are evident. By quoting Rushdie, she sheds light on her own literary aims: ‘A poet’s work is: to name the unnameable, to point at frauds, to take sides, start arguments, shape the world and stop it from going to sleep.’⁶⁸ However, Kate Bosse-Griffiths does not offer solutions, but rather objectively presents other ways of looking at the world. Her article ‘Doethion o’r Dwyrain; Lao-Tse’ (Wise Men of the East; Lao-Tse, 1942), presents her readership with a relatively objective summary of the Chinese philosopher, who was one of the major influences on Kate Bosse-Griffiths. Only in one sentence do we sense reproof of rigid Christian morality: ‘There is no ‘Thou shall not’ or ‘Thou shall’ in a ten word law to threaten us.’⁶⁹ In a book review of the Welsh translation of Gottfried Keller’s *Kleider machen Leute* we find a more direct appeal by Kate Bosse-Griffiths against unnecessary austerity.

⁶⁴ [...sy’n tueddu i anwybyddu’r pwnc dyrws hwn gan ganolbwytio yn lle hynny ar bechod ac iachadwriaeth a dioddefaint a’r Iawn.] Kate Bosse-Griffiths, *Cariadau* (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 1995), p.13

⁶⁵ [[g]wir natur y pwerau sy’n creu’r byd.] *ibid* p.18

⁶⁶ *ibid* p.125-137

⁶⁷ Kate Bosse-Griffiths, *Dyn y Byd Hysbys Swyngyfaredd yng Nghymru* (Y Lolfa: Talybont, 1977)

⁶⁸ Kate Bosse-Griffiths, ‘Salman Rushdie a’r Qurân’, *Taliesin*, 84 (1998), p.59

⁶⁹ [Nid oes ‘Na wna’ a ‘Gwna’ mewn deng air deddf i’n bygwth.’] *Teithiau’r Meddwl*, p.39

Although she praises the translator for rendering the fake homerian style of the novel, she objects to the translator's censorship of sections deemed improper for a Welsh readership:

Ond pam na chawn ni ond argraffiad puredig o stori sydd yn ddigon diniwed i blant yr Almaen gael ei ddarllen? A yw Mr. Williams yn meddwl bod y darllenydd Cymraeg yn rhy llednais i allu edrych ar arwr yn sefyll yn y tŷ-bach ac yn ocheneidio am ei anffawd?⁷⁰

But why do we only have a purified version of a story which is innocent enough for the children of Germany to read? Does Mr. Williams think that the Welsh reader is too delicate to be able to look at a hero standing in the toilet sighing about his misfortune?

As a result, she claims that the novel, which is supposedly too much for the 'nerfau hen-ferchetaidd' (old wives' nerves) of the Welsh, loses its satirical edge.⁷¹

Her own personal views on religion are harder to decipher. Her husband comments that her difficult experiences during the war and the miscarriage of her first child caused her to change her perceptions about God.⁷² Despite being confirmed in the Lutheran church and baptised in Moreia Baptist Church in the Rhondda, it is doubtful whether she ever accepted Christianity. To a large extent, her ideas reflect modernist perceptions of a 'lost' human nature, searching for its 'centre' that would restore the world to wholeness again.⁷³ For Kate Bosse-Griffiths, her search was both personal and global. Like many German thinkers, she was critical of how conventional moral values had limited freedom in society and distanced human nature from its natural and original state:

Wrth ystyried pa mor bell yw'r ffordd a droediodd dynoliaeth o gyflwr Natur Wyllt hyd at ddiwylliant cymhleth ein hoes ni, mae'n syfrdanol pa mor gul o hyd yw'r cylch lle gall unigolyn weithredu yn ôl ei argyhoeddiadau personol.⁷⁴

While pondering on how far humanity has distanced itself from its Natural Wild state to the complex culture of our age, it's shocking how narrow society still is, in which the individual is able to act according to his own personal convictions.

In true Nietzschean style, Christian morality is portrayed as an easy option in life, which shelters the individual from facing the true questions of life, thus hindering intellectual progress.

⁷⁰ Kate Bosse-Griffiths, 'Y Dillad sy'n Gwneud y Dyn', rev. of T.H. Parry Williams' Welsh translation of *Kleider machen Leute*, by Gottfried Keller, *Y Fflam*, 7 (1949), p.49

⁷¹ *ibid.*

⁷² *Teithiau'r Meddwl*, p.236

⁷³ Ingo Roland Stoehr, *German Literature of the Twentieth Century: from Aestheticism to Postmodernism* (Rochester/New York: Camden House, 2001), p.5-9

⁷⁴ *Mae'r Galon wrth y Llyw*, p.164

Allured by this form of morality, Arthur, in *Mae'r Galon wrth y Llyw* (*The Heart is at the Helm*, 1957), contemplates yielding to the power of his will:

[...]“fe rof i fyny yr ymdrech i weithredu yn erbyn fy natur. Fe ddilynaf reddf[...]Does dim rhaid imi bellach geisio dangos nerth moesol drwy wrthwynebu.”⁷⁵

[...]“I will give up my effort to act against my nature. I will follow my instinct[...]I won't have to show any moral strength by resisting anymore.”

It would seem that Kate Bosse-Griffiths was also influenced by the idea that derived from the 18th Century pantheism controversy, and later adopted by many German thinkers, where God is known through the sensual appreciation of nature, as well as through reason. As Ifor, the ‘alternative’ minister, from the same novel, expresses it: ‘...I have found God by following the lead of my senses and mind.’⁷⁶ We see an extension of this approach with Arthur’s commentary on art: ‘Religion is the thing left wanting in the majority of these paintings.’ He believes the art to be confined to conventionalism: ‘But I can’t see any soul.’⁷⁷ Perhaps these are the issues that troubled Kate Bosse-Griffiths in post-war Wales: religion according to the letter of the law rather than the spirit of the law. Yet, the lack of clarity in her religious views reveals a woman on a spiritual journey, raising questions about humanity. Neither could she, or would she, give explanations for human existence.

The Pacifist Voice

Even though Kate Bosse-Griffiths could be viewed as a lone voice in Welsh society, as a pacifist, she formed an alliance with the conscientious objectors. Her own pacifist convictions, as we have seen, were derived from socialist and communist influences. Furthermore, Kate Bosse-Griffiths acknowledges the influence of German literature on her pacifist views in her quotation of Siegmund Schultze: ‘Latterly, infiltrating deeper into the classical literature of Germany became a method, it seems, to draw me nearer to thoughts on peace.’⁷⁸

⁷⁵ *ibid.* p.80

⁷⁶ [...]’rwyf wedi darganfod Duw drwy dilyn arweiniad fy synhwyrau a’ m meddwl] *ibid.* p. 160

⁷⁷ [Crefydd yw’r peth sy’n eisiau yn y rhan fwyaf o’r darluniau yma.] [Ond rwy’n methu gweld dim enaid.] *ibid.* p.76

⁷⁸ [Yn ddiweddarach, yr oedd ymreiddio’n ddyfnach i lenyddiaeth glasurol yr Almaen yn gyfrwng, mae’n debyg, i’ m dwyn yn nes at feddyliau am heddwch.] *Teithiau’r Meddwl*, p.135

Nevertheless, her deeply felt pacifism is the most intriguing quality of Kate Bosse-Griffiths' work. As a Jewish German, who experienced the upheaval of exile and grieved for the persecution of her family, and especially for her mother's fate in Ravensbrück, Kate Bosse-Griffiths continued, both during and after the war, to seek reconciliation. Consistent with her refusal to retaliate, she refused to accept remuneration from the German government for the atrocities committed against the Jews. She also refused to profit from her father's inheritance, donating her father's clinic to the *Caritas* Catholic charity.⁷⁹ When war produces genocidal terrors, says J. Gwyn Griffiths, the challenge to pacifist's faith is severe. Kate Bosse-Griffiths, he adds, showed no desire for revenge or retaliation.⁸⁰

It was a brave act of hers to produce a pamphlet on the peace movements in Germany at the height of World War Two, which was published in a series of pamphlets, *Pamffledi Heddychwyr Cymru (Welsh Pacifists Pamphlets)*, edited by Gwynfor Evans. Through her assessment of key pacifist figures, which range from Immanuel Kant, Berta von Suttner and Ernst Toller to Stefan Zweig, she asserts that German pacifism is founded on reason and not on religion. It is interesting to note the extract by A.H. Fried, founder of *Der Deutsche Friedensbund*, who claims, 'Pacifism doesn't preach a brotherly nor a controlling love. It simply preaches common sense.'⁸¹ This is in stark contrast to the religious pacifism in Wales, expressed by Iorwerth C. Peate, author of the first pamphlet in the series:

Eithr fe ddywed Crist wrtho mai Cariad yw sylfaen y berthynas rhwng dynion, ac mai Cariad yn unig sydd goruwch Rhyddid a Rheswm. Fe ofyn y Cariad hwn iddo anghofio Rhyddid, Rheswm, Cyfiawnder a Chenedl, ac wynebu'r Groes gan wybod mai trwy aberth yn unig y creir y gymdeithas well.⁸²

But Christ said that Love is the foundation of the relationship between man, and only Love is higher than Freedom and Reason. This Love asks us to forget Freedom, Reason, Justice and Nation, and face the Cross knowing that only sacrifice alone can create a better society.

However, rather than set these pacifist traditions at variance with each other, her objective account establishes a mutual cultural link between the two countries and presents the German people

⁷⁹ *ibid.* p.110

⁸⁰ *Amarna Studies and other selected papers*, p.11

⁸¹ [Nid yw pasiffistiaeth yn pregethu brawdgarwch ac arglwyddiaeth cariad. Y cyfan a bregetha ydyw synnwyr cyffredin.] *Teithiau'r meddwl*, p.116

⁸² Iorwerth C. Peate, 'Y Traddodiad Heddwch yng Nghymru', *Pamffledi Heddychwyr Cymru*, ser.1 no.1 (Tenby: Gwasg Gee, 1941), p.8

in a different light to the domineering image of Nazism. But even more daring is a short story published in 1944, *Rhosynnau (Roses)*, concerning some women who leave roses on the grave of a German pilot, whose plane was shot down over England. Their experience enables them to love the Germans as fellow members of mankind. Subsequently, the fictional story is used to propagate the author's criticism of war:

Nid oes gennym nerth dychmygol. Pe bai gennym ychydig o ffantasi yn ein cyfansoddiad, ni fyddem yn gallu lladd: ni fyddem yn gallu edrych ar ein cyd-ddynion gyda gwawd, na chwerthin am eu pen: ni fyddem byw wedyn mewn gwyl di-feddwl.⁸³

We don't have imaginary power. If we had a little fantasy in our composition, we wouldn't be able to kill: we wouldn't be able to look at fellow men with scorn, nor laugh at them: we wouldn't then live in a senseless darkness.

The plight of Germany after the war prompted Kate Bosse-Griffiths to write an article on peace strategies between Britain and Germany. In *Cymod a Chasineb (Reconciliation and Antipathy, 1945)*, the author sympathises with Germany, having had experience of the guilt laid upon the younger generation after the First World War, and warns of being too severe to Germany. She builds her argument on Kant's belief that a certain amount of humanity should be preserved, even after defeat in war. Thus, she challenges Christian and Greek-Roman ideas of 'justice' and 'victory' which exalt allied war criminals whilst condemning German war criminals. Her plea is that, 'we should seek to put away the old measuring tapes, and create new ones that are suitable for the age of the bomber planes.'⁸⁴ This reasoning is followed by an interjection - she refers only to relations between Germany and England: 'Germany fights against England' and not Wales, she claims.⁸⁵ Although she does not specify the nature of Welsh-German relations, a Welsh sympathy for Germany is implied.

Kate Bosse-Griffiths continued her interest in German affairs through receiving periodicals from the four military sectors of Germany. *Trwy Bedair Spectol (Through Four Spectacles, 1949)* is an article which attempts to break through the wall of propaganda erected by East and West. Not satisfied with newspaper reports, she set out the following summer to discover the situation in

⁸³ *Fy Chwaer Efa a Storiâu Eraill*, p.39

⁸⁴[Dylem geisio rhoi'r gorau i lynnau mesur sydd wedi mynd yn hen, a chreu rhai newydd sydd yn addas i oes yr awyrennau bomio.] *Teithiau'r Meddwl*, p.114

⁸⁵[Mae'r Almaen yn rhyfela yn erbyn Lloegr...] *ibid.*

Germany for herself. *Bwlch yn y Llen Haearn* (*Breach in the Iron Curtain*, 1951) records the illegal visit she made to Wittenberg, her hometown in the Eastern Block. Without a permit to enter the Russian zone, she breaches the iron curtain by simply slipping through a ticket gate in Berlin. The reader is plunged into the poignant reality of a divided Germany, as the author presents voices of confusion and concern about communism, which has resulted in the erection of a mental ‘iron curtain’:

Ym mhen bythefnos yr oeddwn yn ôl yng Nghymru yn darllen yn y papurau dyddiol am yr anghydfod rhwng Gorllewin a Dwyrain yn yr Almaen. Roeddwn wedi gweld yn glir yng ngolau profiad byr mai prif achos yr elyniaeth hon yw OFN.⁸⁶

Within a fortnight I was back in Wales and reading in the daily papers about the discord between East and West Germany. I had seen very clearly, in the light of a brief experience, that the main cause of this animosity is FEAR.

Her work, originally commissioned as a radio play, was never broadcast. As Löffler comments, ‘The frankness with which Kate Bosse-Griffiths discussed and criticised both East *and* West proved too much for the BBC in London.’⁸⁷

On Welsh soil, she showed her humanitarian spirit through regular visits to German prisoners of war. After their return to Germany, she received many letters of gratitude, thanking her for her encouragement and gifts, and often referring to her as their guardian angel. In her article *Atgofion am Euros Cyn y Gaeaf Caled* (*Memories of Euros before the Harsh Winter*, 1988), she reflects on the visits she made to prison camps with the Reverend Euros Bowen:

Roedd y rhan fwyaf ohonynt mewn tymer o anobaith a digalondid...Wrth rheswm, yr oeddent yn byw o dan straen poenus heb wybod beth yn union oedd cyflwr y wlad a oedd yn disgwyl amdanynt, dim ond ei bod wedi ei rhannu ac o dan reolaeth filwrol Ffrainc a Lloegr a'r Unol Daleithiau a Rwsia. Nid oedd ganddynt grefydd na balchder gwleidyddol na hyd yn oed ffydd yn onestrwydd eu cyfeillion.⁸⁸

The majority of them were in a state of hopelessness and depression ... Of course they were living under a painful burden of not knowing exactly what was the condition of the country that was awaiting their return, only that it was divided and under occupation by soldiers from France, England, the United States and Russia. They had neither religion nor political pride, nor even faith in the honesty of their own friends.

⁸⁶ *Bwlch yn y Llen Haearn*, p. 34

⁸⁷ Löffler, ‘Kate Bosse-Griffiths (1910-1998)’ in *150 Jahre „Mabinogion“ – Deutsch-walisische Kulturbeziehungen*, p.173

⁸⁸ Kate Bosse-Griffiths, ‘Atgofion am Euros Bowen cyn y gaeaf Caled’, *Taliesin*, 63 (1988), p.71

These visits shed light on the relatively harmonious relationship between the Welsh civilians and the German prisoners. When one prisoner, Elmar Bötcher, wrote to his mother that he had befriended Reverend Euros Bowen, ‘a Welsh nationalist and religious speaker’, the mother’s replied fretfully, in the fear that her son may be punished for conversing with the inhabitants.⁸⁹ All this suggests that nationalism and pacifism could coexist. It was all part of the tolerant and inclusive Welsh nationalist community in which Kate Bosse-Griffiths had made her home.

The Nationalist Voice

Beth yw cnewyllyn diwylliant Groegaidd y Gorllewin? Diwylliant rhyfelwyr ydy e, diwylliant y meistri a’r arglwyddi. Eich awydd cyson ydy concro. Rydych yn edrych ar Natur fel gelyn [...]. Rydych yn adeiladu muriau o gylch eich dinasoedd, a muriau o gylch eich eneidiau. Rydych yn coedi rhagfuriau rhwng cenedl a chenedl, rhwng gwyddor a gwyddor, rhwng dyn a Natur. Rydych yn amharod i adael i unrhyw beth ddod i mewn o’r tu allan, os nad *ymladd* ei ffordd drwodd y bydd.⁹⁰

What is the core of Greek Western Civilisation? It is a soldiers’ civilisation, the masters’ and lords’ culture. Your constant desire is to conquer. You look at Nature as the enemy [...]. You build walls around your cities, and walls around your souls. You erect dividing walls between nation and nation, between science and science, between man and Nature. You are unwilling to let anything come in from outside unless it *fight*s its way in.

This excerpt from Kate Bosse-Griffiths’ short story *Y Crwban* (*The Tortoise*, 1944) refers not only to the author’s anti-war beliefs, but more poignantly implies her aversion to political and cultural imperialism. Through the embracement of cultural diversity, she was able to adopt, rather than refute, Welsh nationalism. So, too, could she say with Ernst Toller in his striving for a higher consciousness in his German homeland: ‘Our goal is not aggrandisement, but cultural development; it is spiritual not material development.’⁹¹

In *Fy Chwaer Efa* (*My Sister Eve*, 1944), we note her preference for a minority representation: ‘And then we came to the decision that God’s Daughter should come from a country which is small and oppressed like Palestine.’⁹² This sympathy extended to the Welsh minority group, as she used her literary abilities to bring them closer to other ethnic and linguistic minorities. In the article *Mrs Pandit yng Nghymru* (*Mrs Pandit in Wales*, 1956), she states that India and Wales are

⁸⁹ *ibid.* p.72

⁹⁰ *Fy Chwaer Efa a Storiâu Eraill*, p.48

⁹¹ Ernst Toller, trans. by Krankshaw, *I was a German: An Autobiography* (London: John Lane, 1934), p.96

⁹² [Ac yna daethom i’r penderfyniad y dylai Merch Duw ddod o wlad a fyddai’n fach a gorthrymedig fel Palesteina.] *Fy Chwaer Efa a Storiâu Eraill*, p.11

bound together by a shared 'religious empathy' (naws grefyddol), as two nations 'that suffered and gave everything for a worthy cause', implying that Wales stands in somewhat of a colonial relationship to England.⁹³ Moreover, she compares the linguistic challenges they both face, English being the official language of both countries:

Onid yr un math o wrthdaro rhwng yr iaith swyddogol a iaith y galon a deimlir gan gynifer o Gymry ifanc? A digwyddodd hynny mewn gwlad sydd gymaint yn fwy ei maint na Chymru a mwy hyd yn oed na Phrydain Fawr.⁹⁴

Is not this the same conflict between the official language and the language of the heart that is felt by so many young Welsh people? And this happened in a country much larger than Wales and even larger than Great Britain.

What is more prominent, however, is the interest of the archaeological enthusiast to connect Wales to its ancestral origins. This became a pattern for her travels abroad: 'Every time I go to the continent, I also search for Celtic roots there, and not in vain.'⁹⁵ On her trip to Vienna, she traces the name 'Vienna' back to its original 9th Century 'Venia', which, she claims, originates from the Welsh for white - 'Gwyn/Gwen'.⁹⁶ Also, in *Y Celtiaid yn Stuttgart (The Celts in Stuttgart, 1990)* she brings attention to the treasure found in the tomb of the Celtic prince Hohenheim in Baden-Württemberg and urges the Welsh to visit their 'relation' at the Stuttgart museum.⁹⁷ What is perhaps more revealing is her discussion of the epic Hungarian poem named *A Walesi Bárdok (The Bards of Wales, 1857)*, by János Arany, which concerns the campaign of Edward I to subjugate the Welsh and trample over their culture. The Bards of Wales, by refusing to sing the praise of their conqueror, as they would do to their own princes, consequently face torture and death. Originally meant for Emperor Franz Joseph, this poem draws parallels with Austria's treatment of Hungary and the Hungarians - the bravery of the bards was encouragement for their efforts against the oppression.⁹⁸

Her anti-imperialistic views come through in her travel book, *Trem ar Rwsia a Berlin (A View of Russia and Berlin, 1962)*. At first, we observe a dislike for the Russian influence in Germany, but

⁹³ [...a ddiodeffodd ac a fentrodd bopeth dros achos teilwng] *Teithiau'r Meddwl*, p.147

⁹⁴ *ibid* p. 148

⁹⁵ [Bob tro yr af i'r cyfandir, byddaf yn chwilio hefyd am wreiddiau Celtaidd yno, ac nid yn ofer.] Kate Bosse-Griffiths, 'Darganfod 'Beirdd Cymru' yn Hwngari' in *Teithiau'r Meddwl*, p.161

⁹⁶ 'Y Pasg yn Vienna', *ibid.* p.157

⁹⁷ 'Y Celtiaid yn Stuttgart', *ibid.* p.165-168

⁹⁸ 'Darganfod 'Beirdd Cymru' yn Hwngari', *ibid* p.162

as she prepares for the journey to Moscow and Leningrad via Berlin, she confesses her feelings of resentment, knowing that a street in Wittenberg of particular childhood significance had been renamed Puschkin-Strasse, ‘proof that the Russian culture [...] claimed the place for itself.’⁹⁹ Although she compares herself to a dove with a passion to ‘differentiate between fact and fiction and compare rumour and truth’¹⁰⁰, she confesses her own childhood prejudices against the Russians:

Heb i ni sylweddoli’r peth, dysgwyd i ni, fel gwers babanod cynnar, ofni a dirmygu’r bobol Slafonaidd. Pan fyddai popeth yn ein stafell chwarae yn blith draphlith, dywedai Mam: “Mae hi’n edrych yma fel ym Mhwyl y Rwsiaid”. (‘Hier sieht’s aus wie in Russisch-Polen’).¹⁰¹

Without realising it, we were taught, as an early childhood lesson, to fear and despise the Slavonic people. When everything in our play room was upside-down, Mam would say: ‘It looks like Russian-Poland in here. (‘Hier sieht’s aus wie in Russisch-Polen).

Once again, we see her identification with Wales and its language on a visit abroad, as she speaks almost prophetically, given the recent developments of a bilingual National Assembly in Cardiff:

Esboniodd y swyddog wrthym yn gwrtais, ond ychydig yn nerfus, fod yno drefniant technegol arbennig sy’n ei gwneud yn bosibl i glywed yr un araith ar yr un pryd mewn chwe iaith (beth am ddefnyddio trefniant o’r fath ar gyfer y Senedd-dy yng Nghaerdydd, pan ddaw?).¹⁰²

The official explained to us politely, but nervously, there were technical methods of making it possible for people to hear the one speech in six languages at the same time (what about using a method like this for the Assembly in Cardiff, when it comes?).

This statement, as Löffler claims, leaves the reader without any doubt about Kate Bosse-Griffiths’ conviction that Wales would have a government in the future.¹⁰³

The confident Welsh author did not hesitate to offer an opinion on other Welsh writings. An example of this is her review of Saunders Lewis’ drama *Brad (Treachery, 1958)*, based on an attempted assassination of Hitler on 20 July 1944. Although she reviews the play with the authority of a German native, she is deeply affected by the accuracy, and therefore sees it as ‘a bridge to carry me to the land of Germany which I have avoided for too long’. She remembers that her family members

⁹⁹ [...]prawf mai diwylliant Rwsia [...]a hawliodd y lle yn eiddo iddo’i hun.] Kate Bosse-Griffiths, *Trem ar Rwsia a Berlin* (Llandysul: Gwasg Gomer, 1962), p.13

¹⁰⁰ [...]golomen a oedd yn[...]gwahaniaethu rhwng ffug a ffaith a chymharu achlust â’r gwir. *ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *ibid.* p.12

¹⁰² *ibid.* p.83

¹⁰³ Löffler, ‘Kate Bosse-Griffiths (1910-1998)’ in *150 Jahre „Mabinogion“ – Deutsch-walisische Kulturbeziehungen*, p.174

were taken to concentration camps on July 21, 1944 and the son of an acquaintance had been hanged for his participation in the scheme.¹⁰⁴ Yet, her focus is soon upon Wales again: ‘And what is the message of the play?[...] Is it to exhort the Welsh nation to continue her battle – until death? Or maybe advice for the soldiers to restore Western culture?’¹⁰⁵ She decides the message is twofold: ‘It’s not to whom the future belongs that is important but to whom the past belongs,’ adding, ‘a human world, not a scientific world, is what is needed today. Maybe this is the last chance for us to try and restore human standards in Europe.’¹⁰⁶ It is as if Saunders Lewis, she claims, is showing the Welsh, the way to accomplish a special task, for the sake of Wales, Europe and humanity.¹⁰⁷

Kate Bosse-Griffiths’ identification with Wales and ‘Welshness’ is best perceived in interplay with other cultures and nations. However, the suggestion that the ‘goal for Wales’, especially that of the Welsh speaking inhabitants, is in tune with a world view of human rights, puts Kate Bosse-Griffiths’ line of thought in opposition to prevailing opinion in the current postcolonial debate on Wales. On the one hand, postmodern critics argue that Wales has deluded itself into thinking of itself as a non-racist country. Claims that the Welsh are an oppressed subaltern group are refuted by the fact that the Welsh played a part, albeit peripheral, in British imperialism, and despite the long history of migration into Wales, attitudes towards ethnic minorities have been predominantly racially discriminative.¹⁰⁸ On the other hand, Kate Bosse-Griffiths, the German exile, who fled a perverted nationalism to adopt another form of nationalism, provides a different perspective on this debate. Firstly, her views on Wales suggest that Welsh nationalism is not ethnocentric, based on linguistic or cultural hegemony, it is rather the postulation of its own minority cultural rights. Secondly, her inclusion into Welsh speaking Wales indicates that affiliation to the people and culture is not based exclusively on race and origin, but rather on a willingness to identify with its language and traditions.

¹⁰⁴ [Erbyn hyn nid ffuglen oedd ddrama ond pont i’r cludo at dir yr Almaen yr oeddwn i wedi ei osgoi’n rhy hir.] Kate Bosse-Griffiths, ‘Brad (Saunders Lewis)’ in *Teithiau’r Meddwl*, p. 216

¹⁰⁵ [A beth yw neges y ddrama?] gofynnwyd. “Ai anogaeth i’r genedl Gymraeg i barhau yn ei brwydr – hyd at angau? Neu ynteu yngor i adael i filwyr arbed diwylliant y gorllewin?”] *ibid.* p.213

¹⁰⁶ [“nid pwy biau’r dyfodol sy’n bwysig ond pwy biau’r gorffennol”; gan ychwanegu “byd dynol, nid byd gwyddonol yw angen heddiw. Efallai mai dyma’r siawns olaf i ni geisio adfer safonau dynol yn Ewrop.”] *ibid.* p.220

¹⁰⁷ [Yma mae S.L, fel petai, yn dangos y ffordd i’r Cymry sut y gallant gyflawni gorchwyl arbennig er mwyn Cymru, er mwyn Ewrop ac er mwyn dynoliaeth.] *ibid.* p.220

¹⁰⁸ Jane Aaron, & Chris Williams, *Postcolonial Wales* (Llandybie: Gwasg Dinefwr, 2005) and Charlotte Williams, Neil Evans, & Paul O’Leary, *A Tolerant Nation?* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 2003)

Such a view is supported by a Zionist, Lily Tobias, raised in Wales by Polish parents and who later became a Welsh author in the English language. For Tobias, a clear demarcation between the attitudes of the Anglicised and non Anglicised Welsh towards the Jews can be identified: ‘In contrast to the antisemitism expressed by the Anglicised Welsh, among the Welsh-speaking Welsh the Jews are welcomed.’¹⁰⁹ Despite being a secular Jew, the philosemitic sentiments of the Welsh towards the Jews, a sympathy that can be traced to her religious heritage, may have facilitated Kate Bosse-Griffiths inclusion into Welsh society.

We have seen the breadth of Kate Bosse-Griffiths’ literary works, which I have described as four literary ‘voices’. Although these four literary voices are delivered through the medium of Welsh, we have discovered that the main body of her ideas is derived from her native German context. Her knowledge of German literature undoubtedly had an impact on her views on spirituality and feminism, as well as pacifism, although she did not publicly acknowledge the German influence; this may have been because she was, to some degree, unaware of it. Whilst her bold ideas on religion and the female may have caused some controversy in post war Welsh society, her own ideas on pacifism would have been more readily accepted amongst the Welsh pacifists of her circle. It may be that her pacifism, more than her nationalism, was her *entrée billet* into Welsh culture. These matters bring us nearer to the question of who Kate Bosse-Griffiths really was. If she truly was embraced by Welsh language society, as we have suggested, did she fully accept her identity as a Welsh civilian? The multiple identities that we have uncovered in her literary work suggest that her psychological identity was not clear cut. The next chapter will further develop these issues and consider whether her German poems, accessible to none other than herself and her family, reveal any conflictive or problematic issues as to her public and private identities. Stefan Zweig identified himself ‘as an Austrian, a Jew, a writer, a humanist and a pacifist’;¹¹⁰ Is it possible to belong to both Welsh and German communities, as well as to possess a harmonious individual existence as a secular Jew, pacifist and feminist?

¹⁰⁹ Jasmin Donahaye, “The link of common aspirations”: Wales in the Work of Lily Tobias’ in *“In the Open”: Jewish Women Writers and British Culture* ed. by Claire M. Tylee (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006), p.156

¹¹⁰[als Österreicher, als Jude, als Schriftsteller, als Humanist und Pazifist.] Stefan Zweig, *Die Welt von gestern* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 1978), p.7

“Hello Stranger!”

The question of Kate Bosse-Griffiths’ identity

Croeso Capel¹¹¹

(Profiad chwaer o Gapel Gomer, Abertawe, wrth fynychu oedfa’r hwyr ar nos Sul, wedi cyfnod o anffyddlondeb)

Cyrraedd yn brydlon, ac anelu at sedd yn y cefn.
Llais yn ei chyfarch:
HELLO, STRANGER!
Fel hyn y teimlai’r chwaer a gyfarchwyd
ystyr geiriau’r chwaer arall:
Siomedig yw cyfarchiad Saesneg
*mewn capel Cymraeg –
yn enwedig i un a daer ymdrechodd
i ddysgu’r iaith a’i defnyddio
ar aelwyd ac mewn llên.*

*A beth yw ystyr STRANGER?
Yn sicr Dieithryn wyf fi.
Almaenes esgymun wyf, a gwaeth na hynny,
nid Almaenes bur, ond Almaenes Iddewig,
fy Mam yn Iddewes,
a’ m meibion yn fwngreliaid
er mai Ariad oedd fy Nhad.
Broc môr y Diaspora dieflig ydwyf,
un o roddion Adolf Hitler i Gymru fach.*

Bûm yn dadlau’n hir â hi
a llwyddo yn y diwedd i’w darbwyllo:
nid oedd STRANGER yn golygu dim
ond un a fu’n anffyddlon,
a hanner joclyd oedd y sen.

J. Gwyn Griffiths

A Church Welcome

(The experience of a sister of Gomer Chapel, Swansea, in attending the evening service, after a period of unfaithfulness *in church attendance*¹¹²)

Arriving on time, and aiming for the back seat.
A voice greets her:
HELLO STRANGER!
This is what the sister who was greeted believed
to be the meaning of the other sister:
*An English greeting is disappointing
in a Welsh chapel –
especially to one who had tried so earnestly
to learn the language and use it
in the home and in literature.*

*And what is the meaning of STRANGER?
I am most certainly a stranger.
I am an exiled German, and worse than that,
not a pure German, but a Jewish German,
My mother, a Jewess,
and my sons are mongrels
although my father was an Arian.
I am the driftwood of the devilish Diaspora,
one of Adolf Hitler’s gifts to little Wales.*

I reasoned for long with her
and eventually succeeded in convincing her:
that STRANGER meant nothing
more than one who was unfaithful,
and the rebuke was half in jest.

J. Gwyn Griffiths

A remark in jest by a local church member drew out from Kate Bosse-Griffiths a revealing response. This response, put into verse by her husband, exposes inward insecurities within Kate Bosse-Griffiths which lead us to speculate on tensions between her public and private identities. To what extent was her response to this remark, a sign of Welsh unease within a German heart? Did she still feel herself to be a foreigner, despite all her efforts? Were the multiple codes of identification a source of pain and dislocation rather than a fountain of joy and fulfilment? To answer these questions, it would be

¹¹¹ J. Gwyn Griffiths, ed. by. Heini Gruffudd, ‘Croeso Capel’ in *Cerddi Abertawe* (Aberystwyth: Gwasg Gomer, 2002), p.58

¹¹² (my italics)

helpful to identify both the social and private elements of Kate Bosse-Griffiths' identity, and consider whether her identity was a fragmented identity as opposed to a cohesive identity.

We could argue that the predominant marker of Kate Bosse-Griffiths' public face or public identity was Welsh; as a member of the Welsh community, she was an active supporter of the Welsh nationalist party, Plaid Cymru, and also took part in the wave of Welsh language protests that resulted in a court appearance for refusing to pay a parking ticket, issued only in English.¹¹³

To further this point, we could consider Kate Bosse-Griffiths' own evaluations concerning the identity of Rainer Maria Rilke. In *Einsamkeit a Chenedl (Einsamkeit and Nation, 1999)*, J. Gwyn Griffiths draws attention to the argument between Kate Bosse-Griffiths and Ben Morse over the nationality of this poet, sparked off by Morse's claim in *The Listener* that Rilke was undoubtedly a Czech poet.¹¹⁴ For Kate Bosse-Griffiths, the matter was clear: 'In my opinion, national classification in literature should be based on language and not on legal or racial or territorial facts.'¹¹⁵ She concludes that Rilke, despite being born and bred in the former Czechoslovakia, was a German poet, simply because of the fact that he wrote in German. Could it be, that by categorizing Rilke as a German, she is also proposing that her own nationality is Welsh? Morse fiercely debates her claim, even accusing her of 'having pro-German sympathies' and adding, 'she is obviously a German at heart!'¹¹⁶ However, Pennar Davies, fellow member of Cylch Cadwgan, does not see the issue as being so clear cut:

Fy agwedd innau yw bod pwnc cenedligrwydd awdur yn ddyrys. Ni allaf dderbyn nac iaith na gwaed na chysylltiadau fel prawf o genedligrwydd. Yr unig brawf i mi yw ymwybyddiaeth genedlaethol, ac y mae honno'n ymddangos yn gliriach yn yr ateb i'r cwestiwn: 'I bwy y mae awdur yn sgrifennu – yn y lle cyntaf?' Gellir dweud i RILKE sgrifennu i'r byd neu i Ewrop, ond yn y lle cyntaf fe sgrifennodd yn bennaf i'r Almaenywyr. Gan hynny awdur Almaenaidd ydyw yn bennaf.¹¹⁷

My approach is that the subject of nationalism is complex. I cannot accept that language, blood or connections are a proof of nationality. The only proof for me is national awareness, and that becomes clearer in answering the question: 'To whom is the author writing - in the first place?' One could say that RILKE wrote to the world or Europe, but in the first place, he primarily wrote to Germans. He was therefore, primarily, a German author.

¹¹³ *Teithiau'r Meddwl*, p.224 - 242

¹¹⁴ J. Gwyn Griffiths, 'Rilke: *Einsamkeit a Chenedl*' in *Ysgrifau Beirniadol*. 25 ed. by J.E. Caerwyn Williams (Tenby: Gwasg Gee, 1999), p. 121

¹¹⁵ *ibid.* 122

¹¹⁶ *ibid.* 124

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*

In line with Pennar Davies' ideas on nationality, Kate Bosse-Griffiths' decision to write predominantly in Welsh evidently shows that she wrote for the Welsh. Still, the issue of language as a determiner of identity is disputable when we compare her case to Elizabeth Augustin, one of the few Jewish-German exiles who ventured to write in another language, other than her native German. Her exile to the Netherlands in 1933 led her to write in both Dutch and German, but as Heiko Stern points out, she was treated like a 'Gast-Autorin' (guest author) and her German *Heimat* remained her single reference point, suggesting that one's native tongue gives expression to the core of one's identity:¹¹⁸

The mother tongue[...]passes on the cultural tradition of the group and thereby gives the individual an identity which ties her to the in-group, and at the same time sets her apart from other possible groups of reference (the language acting as a preserver of boundaries.)¹¹⁹

Having made this comparison, we see very different conclusions to the lives of the two exiles. Augustin was exiled to the Netherlands with her husband (who was captured and killed in a Nazi concentration camp in 1943) and envisaged returning to Germany after the war. Kate Bosse-Griffiths, on the other hand, embraced her adopted nation through marriage and literature. She was not a 'guest' - she was a 'citizen'.

Yet, to speak of an exchange of *Heimat*, from her German to her Welsh contexts, is equally misleading. It is not unreasonable to speak of more than one *Heimat*. We discovered this in the previous chapter, where we noted that Kate Bosse-Griffiths' writings originate from both Welsh and German contexts: her German influenced ideas on spirituality and feminism were transposed into a Welsh context and her travel writings on Germany and elsewhere imply an affiliation, or even a *Sehnsucht* (or, more appropriately, the equivalent Welsh *hiraeth*) for Wales. This leads us to think of Kate Bosse-Griffiths' as bicultural. An expression of this biculturalism is found in one of her Welsh poems, published in her biography by her husband, which conveys a sense of dual identity - a convergence of German and Welsh identities:

¹¹⁸ Heiko Stern, 'Sprache zwischen Exil und Identität. Die Konstitution von Heimat durch Sprache bei Elizabeth Augustin' in *Jews in German literature since 1945: German-Jewish literature?* ed. by Pól O'Dochartaigh (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), p. 77-93

¹¹⁹ *ibid.* p.87

Hedyn¹²⁰

(I ateb y cwestiwn, sut y gallwn fod berchen gwreiddiau mewn dwy wlad.)

Hedyn wyf o wlad bell
Wedi ei lyncu gan aderyn treigl
Wedi ei gludo dros y mor gan wennol;
Disgynnodd ar dir newydd ei aredig
A thaflu gwreiddiau

Glaswelltyn wyf ar borfa las
Wedi fy mhlygu gan garn defaid
Wedi fy nghnoi gan ddant bustach
Tyfais yn gnawd byw
Tyfais yn rhan o Gymru

A seed

(To answer the question of how one can have roots in two countries.)

I am a seed from a distant land
Swallowed by a migratory bird,
And carried across the sea by a swallow.
I fell in freshly ploughed land,
I took root.

I am a blade of grass in a green field,
I have been bent by the hoof of a sheep,
I have been chewed by the teeth of a cow.
I became living flesh.
I became a part of Wales

Despite this celebration of her double nationality, our previous examination of her work indicates other public identity markers such as feminism, spiritualism, pacifism and nationalism alongside her German-Welsh nationality, which point in the direction of a more complex and fragmented internal existence. To what extent did these voices rise from inner struggles for recognition and liberation? In answer to this question, her literary identity must be differentiated from a speculative psychological identity, in the same way that her Welsh public voice should be separated from the voice of her mother tongue, communicated through her unpublished poems, made available to me by kind permission of her sons.¹²¹ It is through the introspective thoughts expressed in these poems that we become more intimately acquainted with Kate Bosse-Griffiths.

Although there may be at times some ambiguity as to the exact meaning of 'ich', the following arguments, drawn from her poems, bring to light certain issues about her identity, which allow a better understanding of the complexities of her exile. What we see in these poems is not someone who possesses an harmonious patchwork of identities, but rather someone who lives 'between' cultures. In this respect, the cultural theory on hybridity supports the concept that identity goes beyond clearly demarcated identities, and accordingly, the individual, who moves from one culture to another, can form a liminal or 'in-between' state.¹²² I would propose that this is the position that Kate Bosse-Griffiths inhabits.

¹²⁰ *Teithiau'r Meddwl*, p.235

¹²¹ It is not known when the majority of these poems were written. Those which are dated range from 1949 - 1956

¹²² Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004)

We note first of all that these poems bring her consciousness of being an exiled Jew to the forefront. No more do we see her public preoccupation with political and social issues; rather, the reader is drawn into the psychic sphere of Kate Bosse-Griffiths where her past infiltrates the present. This haunting voice and infiltration of the past finds expression in ‘Das Wiedersehen’. In this poem, she struggles to connect with this voice, and is not the spirited young girl we were acquainted with, but rather she is a woman trapped within the boundaries of her life and mind. Only in a dream, does she feel a sensation of what could be the ‘du’ of her past:

Das Wiedersehen

Du sahst mich an
 Nicht mehr der kühne Spieler
 Nein, nur der qualvoll stumme
 Block des Tieres,
 Des Hundes, der an seiner Laut zerrt.
 Da war kein Laut.
 Wie wusst ich doch dass Deine
 Mir wahlverwandte Seele
 fern mich grüsste?
 „Erkennst Du Mich?
 So sprich und wecke mich!“

The Reunion

You looked at me
 No longer the bold player
 No, only the painful dumb
 confine of the animal,
 of the dog, tugging at its leash.
 There was no sound
 How did I know that your soul
 with which I had such an affinity
 was greeting me from afar?
 “Do you recognise me?”
 Then speak and wake me up!

Vergebner Kampf
 Die Hülle zu durchdringen.
 Ich fand das Wort nicht.
 Doch des Nachts im Traume
 Erschien Dein Blick:
 ganz du, ganz warm, ganz nah.

A fight in vain
 to penetrate the shell
 I didn’t find the word
 Yet in a night’s dream
 your face appeared
 completely you, completely warm, completely near.

In reading the poems, a prominent and recurring theme of disorientation and disenchantment is brought to the surface, which Homi Bhabha suggests, is the result of the *unheimlich* experience of the migrant: ‘In that displacement, the borders between home and the world become confused; and, uncannily, the private and public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorientating.’¹²³ ‘Velorenes Beten’ mirrors the frustrations of the female and spiritual voices in her novels. It would seem that she presents herself through the female figures in her novels, suggesting that she, too, is trapped within the confines of a conventional life and aspires for another existence. Could it be Kate Bosse-Griffiths that we see here, escaping her monotony and expressing her spirituality, where, alone at night, she seeks guidance and fulfilment?:

¹²³ *The Location of Culture*, p.13

Velorenes Beten

Kranker Kinder Schreie fordern gellend
Alte Frau beklagt sich schrill
Binsenflechten
Eicheltassen leeren
Pfeifchen rauchen
Und am Abend Stube räumen
Essen kochen
Alles dies bin ich, und doch nicht ich.

Mitternacht und Stille

Ich will beten
Harre, suche, taste nach dem Wort:
Kinderschreie in mir
Weiberkeifen
Eichelpfeifchen
Aber wo bist Du
Und wo bin ich?

Lost Prayer

Piercing screams of sick children make demands
Old woman complains shrilly
weaving the rushes
emptying acorn cups
smoking a little pipe
and in the evening cleaning up the room
cooking the meal
All this is me, and yet not me.

Midnight and quiet

I want to pray
wait, search, feel for the word:
children's screams within me
woman's bickering
acorn pipes
But where are you
And where am I?

The idea of dislocation and alienation continues in the following two poems, the first of which seems to be, written by an elderly Kate Bosse-Griffiths. What unfolds is not her fear of death, rather her fear of a living state of 'nothingness'. Her alienation isn't caused by social rejection; rather, the problem lies within - she is a stranger to herself. We see a desire for a higher existence – to be like God, no longer at the mercy of her circumstances. Thus, 'Beim Abschied' reveals, despite the lack of satisfaction with her maternal role and the death of a friend that weighs heavily upon her, a self-determination and a tenebrous sense of survival against all the odds:

1.

Nicht das fürcht ich
Dass man die alte Frau
Bald übersehen wir[d]
Und lächeln
Wo man einst
Verlangt, geliebt.

Nicht einmal Schmerzen fürcht ich
Nähe des Nicht-seins
Das lähmend niedersinkt
Ein Alpdruck Hund
Auf eine Brust die tonlos Hilfe schrei

Doch Grauen fasst mich vor der Seele
Tod
im tätigen Körper
Vor Selbst-Losigkeit
Die alles andren gebend
Sich selbst ganz verliert
Und Statt des Lebens bleibt die Tätigkeit
Gut sein, Geliebt von Kindern, Freunden
-Und mir selbst ganz fremd

I'm not afraid
that one will fail to see
the old woman
and smile
where one once was
needed, loved.

I don't even fear pain
the nearness of not being
which paralyses as it sinks down
A nightmare dog
on to a breast which cries for help soundlessly

Yet the horror grasps me before the death of the
soul
in an active body
before selflessness
which loses itself completely
in giving everything to others.
And instead of life the activity remains
to be good, to be loved by children, friends
-and to be a stranger to myself

2.

Den Apfel will ICH kosten
ICH! ICH! ICH!

I want to taste the apple
I! I! I!

Beim Abschied

On leaving

Wolkenberge blieben unbestiegen
Sonnenwärme hab ich nur erträumt
Halbe Seele selbst beim Kinderwiegen
Tod des Freundes Mahnt: Soviel versäumt.

Mountains of clouds remained unclimbed
I have only dreamt of the sun's warmth
A half soul even by rocking the child
A friend's death reminds me: so much was lost.

Weiter-stossend drängen andre Hände
Selbst beim Lesen füllt mich fremder Schein
Ja, wenn auf dem Weg ich mich dann fände!
Doch ICH gehe – und das ICH will SEIN.

Other hands pushing and urging on
Even whilst reading a strange light fills me
Yes, if I then found myself on the way!
Yet, it is I who is going – and I want to BE.

Thus, her preoccupation with her 'half existence', and search for the 'other', ties in with the idea of a fragmented identity. The metaphorical description suggests her awareness of the fluid and ambiguous nature of her identity, such as we see in another poem, which describes her as 'nur ein Blatt am Baum' (only a leaf on a tree). In the poem below, she uses the metaphor of 'a little broken twig' to describe herself as being disconnected from the tree, as she splits and fragments into pieces, and is carried away by the current of the river. It would appear that the author of these poems questioned the concept of the rootedness of the individual, and put forward in its place the concept of someone who did not have a sure footing in either culture:

Die Tage schieben ohne drum und dran
Etwas geschieht wohl
Und dann anderes
Doch was hab ich damit zu tun?
Zerbrochenes Zweiglein,
Das die Welle aufnimmt.
Nur das Sehnen bleibt
Das gleiche wie in meiner Mädchenzeit.

The days move along without fuss or bother
something does happen
and then something else
Yet what have I got to do with this?
A little broken twig,
which the wave picks up.
Only the longing remains
The same as in my youth.

Ich lieb Dich Leben
Doch Du liebst mich nicht
Mit gleicher Gier und Inbrunst.

Life I love you
Yet you don't love me
with the same lust and fervour

Zeigst Dich zuweilen spöttisch
Tausendfach
Der kleinen- einen Seele
Die sich streckend teilt
Und stürzt ins graue, ungewisse Wasser
Das das Zweiglein trägt
Wohin? Hinaus und fort
Von Dir der Tausendfachen.
Es ist, als hätt ich nie gelebt¹²⁴

You show yourself sometimes to be mocking
in a thousand of ways
to the little and only soul
which stretches, splits
and plunges into the grey, unknown water
which carries the little twig
Where to? Out and away
From you the one of a thousand manifestations
It's as though I never lived

¹²⁴ Date of poem 25 July 1948

Although there is no clear proof of her own embodiment in the poems, it is difficult to ignore a deeper layer in the already complex character of Kate Bosse-Griffiths. The voices of her poems, which are echoed to some extent in her diaries, suggest that she was a victim, not of racial discrimination and of rejection from society, but of conflict within herself, generated by the demands of multiple identities, unable to be fully part of any one society. Yet, her multiple codes of identification, while perhaps contributing to the conflicting tensions within her, paradoxically gave her reference points in an unknown culture. On the one hand, her female and spiritual identity markers, although not contributing to public acceptance, gave her a sense of personal satisfaction, and a belief, that by challenging traditionalist views, she was pointing to the path of a higher existence. On the other hand, her pacifism and nationalism, although not expressed in her poems, remain strong public markers of identity which helped her process of acculturation into Welsh society. Yet, despite imbibing a wealth of traditions from the Welsh and German worlds, from the Egyptian and Classical worlds and from pacifism and feminist sources, it could be argued that her ‘soul’ found no true home – simply because she felt like a stranger to herself. Nonetheless, Kristeva, reading Freud, shows that such trying experiences can be an advantage:

With Freud [...] foreignness, an uncanny one, creeps into the tranquillity of reason itself, and without being restricted to madness, beauty, or faith any more than to ethnicity or race, irrigates our speaking-being, estranged by other logics, including the heterogeneity of biology [...] Henceforth, we know that we are foreigners to ourselves, and it is with the help of that sole support that we can attempt to live with others.¹²⁵

We see, in Freud’s concept, that, rather than dissociating herself from society, Kate Bosse-Griffiths was able to live with others and for others, and therefore can be ‘celebrated and privileged as a kind of superior cultural intelligence owing to the advantage of the ‘in-betweenness’, the straddling of two cultures and the consequent ability to negotiate the difference.’¹²⁶ Thus, it would seem that this ‘in-between’ consciousness was equally liberating as it was oppressive. It gave her the power to see the world transparently, to judge, discern and to supplant old for new ideas and traditions. Wales for

¹²⁵ Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* (London: Harvester Wheateaf, 1991) p.170

¹²⁶ Although this reference is applied to a globalised economy context, the author has extracted this concept from postcolonial theory on hybridity and, in turn, encapsulates the discussion on migrant hybridity. Ankie, M.M. Hoogvelt, *Globalization and the Postcolonial World* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997) p.158 See also David Huddart, *Homi K. Bhabha* (London/New York: Routledge, 2006) p.77-86

her was ‘a larger echo in a small world...’¹²⁷, a voice full of contradictions and complexities but also of clarity and conviction. Despite judging the traditions and morality of Wales, the voice of the Welsh struck a chord in her being: the battle for survival.

¹²⁷ [Das grössere Echo in der kleinen Welt, sogar die Unvollkommenheit, eine vollkommene Welt würde für mich kein Platz haben...] Kate Bosse-Griffiths, diary, 15 May 1954

Conclusion

Kate Bosse-Griffiths' husband affectionately compared his wife to Ruth of the Old Testament, who said to her Jewish mother-in-law, Naomi: 'Thy people shall be my people' (Ruth 1:16). It is a fascinating parallel, for like Ruth, she chose to identify and assimilate with a people other than her own. In our efforts to uncover the identity of a German woman in twentieth century Welsh-speaking Wales, we embarked on a journey, by first mapping out the details of her biography. Then, the study of her multifaceted literary work took us further, until finally we made our attempt to complete the journey through an assessment of the identity of Kate Bosse-Griffiths. We discovered that, although Wales welcomed her membership and provided a platform for her work as an author, it was her rich and diverse upbringing in the German tradition which proved to be the driving force of her literary work. She saw herself as an individual and a citizen of the world in search of knowledge, truth and the meaning of life. In her searching and self-determination, like Ruth the Moabitess, she laid hold of the right to belong. Kate Bosse-Griffiths is, indeed, an example of how multiple identities are a positive advantage in an ever increasing mobile and complex world.

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