

WRITING WALES IN ENGLISH

# RESISTANCE IN THE 'OPPRESSOR'S TONGUE'

*English-Language Welsh Writers and  
Spanish-Language Catalan Writers*



Catriona Coutts

RESISTANCE IN THE  
'OPPRESSOR'S TONGUE'

---

WRITING WALES IN ENGLISH

## CREW series of Critical and Scholarly Studies

General Editors: Kirsti Bohata and Daniel G. Williams (CREW, Swansea University)

This CREW series is dedicated to Emyr Humphreys, a major figure in the literary culture of modern Wales, a founding patron of the *Centre for Research into the English Literature and Language of Wales*. Grateful thanks are due to the late Richard Dynevor for making this series possible.

### Other titles in the series

- Stephen Knight, *A Hundred Years of Fiction* (978-0-7083-1846-1)  
Barbara Prys-Williams, *Twentieth-Century Autobiography* (978-0-7083-1891-1)  
Kirsti Bohata, *Postcolonialism Revisited* (978-0-7083-1892-8)  
Chris Wigginton, *Modernism from the Margins* (978-0-7083-1927-7)  
Linden Peach, *Contemporary Irish and Welsh Women's Fiction* (978-0-7083-1998-7)  
Sarah Prescott, *Eighteenth-Century Writing from Wales: Bards and Britons* (978-0-7083-2053-2)  
Hywel Dix, *After Raymond Williams: Cultural Materialism and the Break-Up of Britain* (978-0-7083-2153-9)  
Matthew Jarvis, *Welsh Environments in Contemporary Welsh Poetry* (978-0-7083-2152-2)  
Harri Garrod Roberts, *Embodying Identity: Representations of the Body in Welsh Literature* (978-0-7083-2169-0)  
Diane Green, *Emyr Humphreys: A Postcolonial Novelist* (978-0-7083-2217-8)  
M. Wynn Thomas, *In the Shadow of the Pulpit: Literature and Nonconformist Wales* (978-0-7083-2225-3)  
Linden Peach, *The Fiction of Emyr Humphreys: Contemporary Critical Perspectives* (978-0-7083-2216-1)  
Daniel Westover, *R. S. Thomas: A Stylistic Biography* (978-0-7083-2413-4)  
Jasmine Donahaye, *Whose People? Wales, Israel, Palestine* (978-0-7083-2483-7)  
Judy Kendall, *Edward Thomas: The Origins of His Poetry* (978-0-7083-2403-5)  
Damian Walford Davies, *Cartographies of Culture: New Geographies of Welsh Writing in English* (978-0-7083-2476-9)  
Daniel G. Williams, *Black Skin, Blue Books: African Americans and Wales 1845–1945* (978-0-7083-1987-1)  
Andrew Webb, *Edward Thomas and World Literary Studies: Wales, Anglocentrism and English Literature* (978-0-7083-2622-0)  
Alyce von Rothkirch, *J. O. Francis, realist drama and ethics: Culture, place and nation* (978-1-7831-6070-9)  
Rhian Barfoot, *Liberating Dylan Thomas: Rescuing a Poet from Psycho-Sexual Servitude* (978-1-7831-6184-3)  
Daniel G. Williams, *Wales Unchained: Literature, Politics and Identity in the American Century* (978-1-7831-6212-3)  
M. Wynn Thomas, *The Nations of Wales 1890–1914* (978-1-78316-837-8)  
Richard McLauchlan, *Saturday's Silence: R. S. Thomas and Paschal Reading* (978-1-7831-6920-7)  
Bethan M. Jenkins, *Between Wales and England: Anglophone Welsh Writing of the Eighteenth Century* (978-1-7868-3029-6)  
M. Wynn Thomas, *All that is Wales: The Collected Essays of M. Wynn Thomas* (978-1-7868-3088-3)  
Laura Wainwright, *New Territories in Modernism: Anglophone Welsh Writing, 1930–1949* (978-1-7868-3217-7)  
Siriol McAvoy, *Locating Lynette Roberts: 'Always Observant and Slightly Obscure'* (978-1-7868-3382-2)  
Linden Peach, *Pacifism, Peace and Modern Welsh Writing* (978-1-7868-3402-7)  
Kieron Smith, *John Ormond's Organic Mosaic* (978-1-7868-3488-1)  
Georgia Burdett and Sarah Morse (eds), *Fight and Flight: Essays on Ron Berry* (978-1-7868-3528-4)  
M. Wynn Thomas, *Eutopia: Studies in Cultural Euro-Welshness, 1850–1980* (978-1-78683-614-4)  
Linden Peach, *Animals, Animality and Controversy in Modern Welsh Literature and Culture* (978-1-78683-937-4)  
Linden Peach, *New Perspectives on Gillian Clarke: Community, Cosmology, Climate and Conflict* (978-1-83772-279-2)

# RESISTANCE IN THE 'OPPRESSOR'S TONGUE'

ENGLISH-LANGUAGE WELSH  
WRITERS AND SPANISH-LANGUAGE  
CATALAN WRITERS

WRITING WALES IN ENGLISH

CATRIONA COUTTS



UNIVERSITY OF WALES PRESS  
2026

© Catriona Coutts, 2026

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any material form (including photocopying or storing it in any medium by electronic means and whether or not transiently or incidentally to some other use of this publication) without the written permission of the copyright owner. Applications for the copyright owner's written permission to reproduce any part of this publication should be addressed to the University of Wales Press, University Registry, King Edward VII Avenue, Cardiff CF10 3NS.

[www.uwp.co.uk](http://www.uwp.co.uk)

*British Library CIP Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: 978-1-83772-342-3

e-ISBN: 978-1-83772-343-0

The right of Catriona Coutts to be identified as author of this work has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 79 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

For GPSR enquiries please contact:  
Easy Access System Europe Oü, 16879218  
Mustamäe tee 50, 10621, Tallinn, Estonia.  
[gpsr.requests@easproject.com](mailto:gpsr.requests@easproject.com)



THE ASSOCIATION FOR  
WELSH WRITING IN ENGLISH  
CYMDEITHAS A'LEN SAESNEG CYMRU



Typeset by Marie Doherty  
Printed by CPI Antony Rowe, Melksham

## CONTENTS

Series Editors' Preface	vii
Acknowledgements	ix
List of Abbreviations	xi
Note on Terminology	xiii
Introduction	1
1 Harri Webb and 'The Saga of Welsh Resistance'	49
2 'The darker our twilight hours, the more blessed will be the dawn of those who will come after us': Catalonia – the Nation that was and the State that will be	89
3 'Armed but not in the old way': The Seeds of Hope in R. S. Thomas	119
4 Recovering History, Recovering Writers – Eduardo Mendoza's <i>La ciudad de los prodigios</i> and Rhys Davies's Rhondda Trilogy	163
Epilogue: A Growing Need for Resistance Literature?	207
Bibliography	217
Index	231

This page intentionally left blank

## SERIES EDITORS' PREFACE

The aim of this series, since its founding in 2004 by Professor M. Wynn Thomas, is to publish scholarly and critical work by established specialists and younger scholars that reflects the richness and variety of the English-language literature of modern Wales. The studies published so far have amply demonstrated that concepts, models and discourses current in the best contemporary studies can illuminate aspects of Welsh culture, and have also foregrounded the potential of the Welsh example to draw attention to themes that are often neglected or marginalised in anglophone cultural studies. The series defines and explores that which distinguishes Wales's anglophone literature, challenges critics to develop methods and approaches adequate to the task of interpreting Welsh culture, and invites its readers to locate the process of writing Wales in English within comparative and transnational contexts.

Professor Kirsti Bohata and Professor Daniel G. Williams

Founding Editor: Professor M. Wynn Thomas (2004–15)

CREW (*Centre for Research into the English  
Literature and Language of Wales*)  
Swansea University



This page intentionally left blank

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book began life as a PhD thesis and I am extremely grateful to my supervisors, Dr Andy Webb and Dr Eva Bru-Domínguez, who provided immense academic and moral support during my research, and have continued to do so. It was their encouragement that provided the motivation to turn my thesis into this monograph.

Enormous thanks to Professor Tony Brown, who read several chapters of the manuscript and was an invaluable source of advice, information and resources, particularly regarding R. S. Thomas, and of constant encouragement.

I am also grateful to the many people who have commented on this project and offered suggestions, particularly those at the Association of Welsh Writing in English and Anglo-Catalan Society conferences, and to Dr Amber Hancock for numerous discussions during our PhDs.

Thank you also to my Spanish teacher, Rubén Chapela-Orri, for teaching me enough Spanish to produce the original thesis and for originally arousing my interest in the situation in Catalonia.

I am very grateful to all the staff at the University of Wales Press who have worked on this volume and have been so supportive, especially to Llion Wigley for responding so promptly to all my questions.

Every effort has been made to trace the copyright holders of the material quoted in this book. I am grateful to the following: Seren Books for permission to quote from *R. S. Thomas: Selected Prose* and *Welsh Airs*; Bloodaxe Books for permission to quote from *R. S. Thomas: Uncollected Poems*; Orion Publishing for permission to quote from *R. S. Thomas: Collected Poems*; and Ruth, Huw and

Heledd Stephens for permission to quote from *Harri Webb: Collected Poems, No Half-Way House: Selected Political Journalism, and A Militant Muse: Selected Literary Journalism 1948–80*.

I am also very grateful to Sonia Hughes at Y Lolfa, who went above and beyond in her efforts to help me trace and contact the copyright holders of the Harri Webb material.

Many thanks to Bangor University, both for my time as a student there, and for allowing me Associate Researcher status and access to library resources which proved invaluable when updating and adapting my thesis.

And finally enormous thanks to my parents, sister and brother-in-law – Jane, Peter, Fiona and Andrew – for their constant support, particularly my mother who proofread the entire manuscript.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AL</i>	<i>An Acre of Land</i>
<i>AMM</i>	<i>A Militant Muse</i>
<i>ATL</i>	<i>A Time to Laugh</i>
EU	European Union
<i>HB</i>	<i>Honey and Bread</i>
<i>HWCP</i>	<i>Harri Webb: Collected Poems</i>
<i>JB</i>	<i>Jubilee Blues</i>
MAC	Mudiad Amddiffyn Cymru
<i>NHH</i>	<i>No Half-Way House</i>
<i>RSTCP</i>	<i>R. S. Thomas: Collected Poems</i>
SNP	Scottish National Party
US	United States of America
<i>WA</i>	<i>Welsh Airs</i>
<i>WIAW?</i>	<i>What is a Welshman?</i>
WRM	Welsh Republican Movement

This page intentionally left blank

## NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

Producing any work that deals with different languages and cultures will inevitably require some choices on terminology to be made. I use the English versions of the names for Wales and Catalonia for comprehensibility. They are referred to thus throughout and their people and language are referred to as Welsh/Catalan, except in the case of quotation or paraphrasing. All quotations have been translated into English. Where existing translations of Welsh, Spanish and Catalan texts are available I have used these, otherwise all translations are mine.

I use the words Spain and Spanish to describe the whole territory of Spain and its major language and culture. In Hispanic studies it is more correct to refer to Spanish as Castilian but this word is similar enough to Catalan to cause confusion for the reader when the two frequently appear side by side. Therefore, I have used Spain and Spanish except in the case of quotations or where they are explicitly referred to otherwise in the texts.

This page intentionally left blank

## INTRODUCTION

In the penultimate chapter of his autobiography *Bydoedd*, the Welsh academic Ned Thomas describes the experience of receiving a prize from the Catalan organisation CIEMEN in 1995.<sup>1</sup> He notes that many aspects of the award ceremony in Barcelona, particularly the homely atmosphere and the references to literature, were similar to events held in Wales.<sup>2</sup> The sense of sympathy between the Welshman and Catalan culture is strengthened by Thomas's warm description of the founder and director of CIEMEN, Aureli Argemí, and his mention of some of the projects relating to minority languages on which the two of them had worked together.<sup>3</sup>

On closer examination, these instances of cooperation and fellow feeling are unsurprising, as Wales and Catalonia have much in common. They are both stateless nations: that is, groups of people with a distinctive culture, who feel themselves to be a nation and who identify themselves as such but do not have a sovereign state of their own; rather they are part of a larger state that has a different dominant culture (the United Kingdom in the case of Wales, Spain in that of Catalonia). The Welsh and Catalan languages are officially recognised by their states, though this has not always been the case, but they are not a priority of the state government. Both Wales and Catalonia have some measure of devolved government with their own parliaments: Y Senedd and the Generalitat. However, both nations are powerless in many important things. Y Senedd has no tax-raising powers, and the central Spanish government, in addition to refusing to negotiate a new Pacte Fiscal that would give the Generalitat the ability to raise taxes, has attempted to interfere with the Catalan

education system in order to reduce the amount of teaching devoted to the Catalan language.<sup>4</sup>

The national language is extremely important in both nations. Both languages have a rich literary tradition, stretching back to the early Middle Ages in the case of Catalan, and earlier in the case of Welsh.<sup>5</sup> This extends to the present day, albeit with periods of decline. Sharing a language and a culture binds people together and frequently gives them the sense of being a nation, particularly if said culture develops in opposition to larger hostile cultures. Both Catalan and Welsh have suffered discrimination and oppression, and both have at times been in danger of dying out. Their very survival is consequently a source of fierce pride for their speakers.<sup>6</sup> Language and culture can be said to have played a large part in Wales and Catalonia's sense of nationhood, particularly as a means of distinguishing themselves from their larger, more powerful neighbours. Stewart King claims that in the view of many nationalists, if Catalonia's difference from other cultures could not be asserted, the nation would cease to exist.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, the Welsh philosopher J. R. Jones saw the importance of the Welsh language as a means for the Welsh to assert their difference as a people.<sup>8</sup>

Equally, though, neither nation's nationalism is wholly dependent upon language; for the 1997 referendum on devolution in Wales to pass, even by the slight margin which it did, a significant number of English-speaking Welsh must have voted in the affirmative. In Catalonia the organisation *Súmate* campaigns for Catalan independence through the medium of Spanish. The language situation is complex in both nations.

In spite of these similarities between Wales and Catalonia, there has been surprisingly little comparison of their literatures and none between the literatures in the *non-national* languages that are widely spoken there (English and Spanish). Paul Birt compared Wales, Catalonia and Québec in general in his book *Cerddi Alltudiaeth* before going on to focus on the works of the Welsh Gwenallt, the Catalan Salvador Espriu and the Québécois Gaston Miron.<sup>9</sup> More recently, Hannah Sams has compared the dramatists Aled Jones Williams and Sergei Belbel.<sup>10</sup> These authors, though (apart from Miron), write completely or primarily in Welsh and Catalan.

Therefore this book will attempt something new: a comparison of Welsh writing in English, and Catalan writing in Spanish. Clearly a comprehensive look at such broad topics is outside the range of any

one book, so this book will focus on selected works by a few authors from each literature. It will take a resistance literature approach and argue that despite the importance of their national language to both nations' nationalisms, works of resistance literature can and have been written in English/Spanish.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF WALES AND CATALONIA

Before embarking upon this history, it may be useful to consider the status of Catalonia and Wales today and, indeed, their claim to be called nations since they lack sovereignty. Generally, scholars consider them to be nations. Julius Friend claims that: 'Yet whatever its political status, Wales is and always has been considered a region distinctively different from England, a nation in the modern sense of the word.'<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, Kenneth McRoberts writes that: 'Indeed, it [Catalonia] does have most of the earmarks of a nation: a language and culture, a long history of distinct institutions, a strong sense of common history, and such symbols of nationhood as a flag and a national anthem.'<sup>12</sup> Most, though not all, of these apply also to Wales.

Moreover, many of the citizens of Catalonia and Wales feel themselves to be part of a nation. This satisfies what is perhaps the most straightforward definition of a nation, by Walker Connor: 'the simplest statement that can be made about a nation is that it is a body of people who feel that they are a nation.'<sup>13</sup> This is a particularly useful approach when considering modes of expression such as literature; if an author feels that the group they are writing about is a nation, then this is arguably more relevant to the discussion of their work than whether their people and/or land tick the boxes of a technical definition of a nation. Therefore, this study will follow the lead of both the scholars cited above and the people of Wales and Catalonia, in considering them nations.

\*\*\*

It is hard to define the origins of any country; there are usually various dates given as to when the country was 'born', and in reality for most countries there is not a single defining moment of coming into being, rather there is a process of becoming and developing into the nation they are today.<sup>14</sup> This is what happened in the case of both Wales and Catalonia. Gradually the territories speaking Welsh and Catalan began to form more cohesive wholes. This process was rather

more erratic in Wales than in Catalonia. What is now called 'Wales' was made up of several kingdoms for much of the early Middle Ages. At times two or more were united through conquest or marriage, and occasionally strong military leaders like Llywelyn Fawr (Llywelyn the Great) (1173–1240) managed to unite most of the country under one rule, but after their deaths Wales usually broke back down into smaller kingdoms. Catalonia, on the other hand, generally kept the territory it gained, first as the County of Barcelona, then as the Principality of Catalonia under the Crown of Aragon with which it united through marriage in 1137. It would later lose some of that territory – the counties of Roussillon and Cerdagne in France were once part of Catalonia – but generally in the Middle Ages it expanded. Its union with the Crown of Aragon did not hamper it unduly; the Catalan language had official status, and Catalonia was a prosperous centre for trade, particularly with North Africa. At its height, the Crown of Aragon ruled the areas of Spain that are now Catalonia, Aragon, Valencia and the Balearic Isles, as well as Naples, Sardinia, Sicily, parts of southern France and the duchies of Athens and Neopatras that had previously been part of the Byzantium empire. Catalonia profited hugely from the trade routes that opened as a result.

Wales, in contrast, suffered heavily in the later Middle Ages. There were several attempts by England to invade, and various waves of Anglo-Norman settlers and nobles gained land there. In 1282, Llywelyn Ein Llyw Olaf (Llywelyn the Last), the last Welsh-born Prince of Wales, who had succeeded in uniting much of the country against the English, was defeated and killed. Edward I of England then took vigorous steps to crush any remaining opposition. He embarked on a castle building project on a large scale, particularly in Gwynedd, the heartland of Welsh resistance to the English crown. A series of edicts were passed against the Welsh, making them effectively second-class citizens in their own country. In 1301, Edward installed his son as Prince of Wales – a position still held by the heir to the British throne today. For some 100 years this state of affairs remained. Then in 1400 there was an uprising led by Owain Glyndŵr, a member of the Welsh gentry who would go on to achieve almost mythical status. The rising began largely because of a personal dispute, but Glyndŵr was soon claiming the title Prince of Wales, and, as John Davies argues, it was, first and foremost, a national revolt.<sup>15</sup> Glyndŵr achieved notable success at first and it was not until 1413 that he was finally defeated. He was never captured or killed in battle and thus

began rumours of his living on or sleeping in some hidden location, to return one day to lead the Welsh to freedom. However the rising was ultimately a failure, and in the aftermath new edicts were passed against the Welsh.

The first real blow to Catalan autonomy was to come some fifty years later with the marriage of Ferdinand of Aragon (whose territory included Catalonia) to Isabella of Castile in 1469, which united their territories and formed the basis of the modern-day Spanish state. Isabella and Ferdinand, known as the Catholic monarchs, began the process of centralisation. As a result of their policies and those of subsequent monarchs, Catalonia lost some of its autonomy, but the Catalan language remained widely spoken despite the increasing dominance of Castilian culture in the new state, and Catalonia's courts (Corts) and Parliament (Generalitat) continued to function. Castilian (hereafter referred to as Spanish), however, was the language of the royal court and came to be seen by many as the language of progress and advancement.<sup>16</sup> This was to become a recurring theme over the years. English was frequently seen in a similar way in Wales; to get on socially and economically, one needed to speak English.<sup>17</sup>

In the next century Wales was officially incorporated into what would become the United Kingdom, though at the time that meant merely being joined with England, through the Acts of Union passed by Henry VIII between 1536 and 1542. In addition to altering the political status of Wales, the text of the Acts of Union specifically forbade advancement to any who spoke Welsh, forcing people to choose between keeping their language, and social advancement. English became the language of business, trade, the law and the court. However, Welsh generally remained the language of the home and, crucially, of religion. Many historians of the Welsh language emphasise the significance of the translation of the Bible into Welsh c. 1580.<sup>18</sup> Later the adoption of Nonconformity in Wales was crucial. The chapel came to be seen as opposite and superior to the Anglican Church where the services were largely conducted in English and which was widely regarded as the imposed church of the foreign invaders.

In Catalonia too, despite a centralising state, the Catalan language continued. However, certain of Catalonia's traditional freedoms were encroached upon and violated, and in 1640 the presence of, and abuses committed by, Spanish troops garrisoned in Catalonia during a war with France sparked the Reapers' War. It was begun by

farm workers and taken up later by the Generalitat who contacted France for support and signed the Pact of C eret with them, which agreed that Catalonia would become a free republic under French protection. With French help, the forces of Barcelona's city guilds managed to hold off the Castilian army and the war dragged on. In 1652, though, after a year-long siege and a plague which decimated the population, Barcelona surrendered. In the subsequent Treaty of the Pyrenees, the Catalan counties of Roussillon and upper Cerdagne were gifted to France; however, the Catalans were allowed to keep their institutions.

The War of Spanish Succession was the real disaster for Catalonia. The Catalans backed the unsuccessful Hapsburg candidate. This was initially in alliance with England, Austria and Holland who did not want to see the French Bourbon candidate take the throne of Spain, as they dreaded the two powerful kingdoms of France and Spain becoming united under one crown. However, the balance of power changed when the Hapsburg candidate inherited the Austrian throne and the other powers decided to make their peace with the Bourbons, allowing the Bourbon candidate to become Philip V of Spain (to assuage previous concerns he renounced any claim to the throne of France for himself and his offspring).<sup>19</sup> This was unacceptable to the Catalans, and they continued fighting long after their allies had withdrawn from the war. The citizens and guild soldiers of Barcelona, completely unused to warfare, held out heroically against a professional army of French and Spanish soldiers but were finally defeated on 11 September 1714, a date that is burned deep in the psyche of the Catalan nation – 11 September is now the National Day of Catalonia. When Barcelona and the rest of Catalonia finally fell to the victorious Philip V's troops, the reprisals were brutal. Catalonia was treated like a conquered country; many were executed or imprisoned. Subsequently, a fortress was built in Barcelona to control the population (a project not dissimilar to Edward I's castle building in Wales just over four centuries earlier) and the Nova Planta decree was passed, which enforced harsh measures against the Catalan language. The Generalitat and Corts were abolished and a new heavy tax was levied.

The remainder of the eighteenth century was a relatively low period for both Wales and Catalonia. However, both nations experienced a cultural revival in the nineteenth century, at a time when many small and stateless nations of Europe were gaining a growing

self-awareness and desire for autonomy/statehood which often started with a cultural revival. Writers were encouraged to be proud of their language and prove it was possible to use it to write 'high' literature. Efforts were also made to standardise the language somewhat, a project which extended into the twentieth century; John Morris-Jones's *Welsh Grammar, Historical and Comparative* was published in 1913, while Pompeu Fabra's *Diccionari General de la Llengua Catalana* (General Dictionary of the Catalan Language) appeared in 1932. Institutions were also formed to support the culture; the National Library of Wales and National Museum of Wales were founded in 1907, as was the Institut d'Estudis Catalans (Institute of Catalan Studies). There was a growing political awareness as well, particularly in Catalonia. In 1901 the right-wing Catalan party Lliga Regionalista (Regionalist League) was formed. In 1914 a provincial government called the Mancomunitat (Commonwealth) was created, uniting the four provinces of Catalonia, before being dissolved in 1925 by the Spanish dictator Primo de Rivera. In 1931, the inaugural year of the Second Spanish Republic, a new left-wing Catalan party, Esquerra Republicana Catalana (Catalan Republican Left), was formed and won the local elections. Their leader, Francesc Macià, became President of the Generalitat. Macià initially declared a Catalan Republic within a Federal Spanish Republic but was forced to retract and settle for a Statute of Autonomy that granted Catalonia certain regional powers. When Macià died in 1934, he was succeeded by Lluís Companys who would subsequently be imprisoned for declaring a Catalan Republic within a Spanish Republic.

Welsh politicians were, on the whole, less forthright, but in 1886 Tom Edward Ellis, the first MP to have self-government for Wales in his manifesto, was elected to Parliament, and the movement Cymru Fydd (Young Wales) was formed. This never had much impact however and, as John Davies has argued, seems to have been envisaged, primarily at least, as a movement aimed at those in exile.<sup>20</sup> Simon Brooks argues that Wales missed the opportunity to develop as a nation at this point due to its adherence to the Liberal Party (to which Ellis and most of the members of Cymru Fydd belonged) and its emphasis on the rights of individuals rather than community rights for language groups.<sup>21</sup> Wales would have to wait until 1925 for its own political party, and even longer for any serious agitation on Home Rule. In John Davies's opinion, many of the talented young Welshmen of the time were more concerned with regaining confidence

in their heritage. Thus, although both nations experienced a cultural and political awakening in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it seems fair to say that Wales's was less political and more purely culturally-based.

In contrast to these cultural revivals, however, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were also the time when the presence of the Spanish and English languages hugely increased. The factors usually given for this increase are education and industrialisation – in particular the massive migration caused by the latter. Catalonia had long been Spain's leading industrial province, along with the Basque country. Consequently, workers poured in from all parts of Spain to find work; this was particularly true in the run up to the 1888 World Fair, a universal exhibition held in Barcelona. In Wales meanwhile, the industrialisation of the south Wales valleys region proceeded quickly in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as rich deposits of first iron and then coal were discovered and, as in Catalonia, workers rushed there to find jobs that offered higher wages than working on the land. At first most of the migrants came from other parts of Wales and were Welsh-speaking, but later many Irish and English also came and by sheer weight of numbers the language of the workplace and of many of the communities became English. This is of necessity a simplistic view and some historians have suggested that the relocation of whole communities from the rural parts of Wales allowed for the formation of Welsh-language communities that actually helped preserve the language and culture.<sup>22</sup> However, it is certainly true that the influx of workers increased the number of English speakers in Wales, whether or not it directly damaged the Welsh language. A similar shift occurred in Catalonia, particularly in the cities.

Another factor was education. In 1870 and 1889 Education Acts that made schooling available to every child in the United Kingdom were passed at Westminster, but generally that schooling was provided in English. This led to a generation of children whose first language was Welsh but whose education and subsequent working life were lived through the medium of English. Many abandoned their mother tongue and forgot or half forgot it. Speaking Welsh was sometimes seen as a badge of shame. Thus English was becoming more and more the professional and educated language of Wales, with Welsh relegated to the hearth, or completely ignored. In Catalonia similar Acts were passed in 1768, 1834, 1838, 1849, 1857 and 1870, making Spanish the language of education, although, as Stewart King points

out, the sheer number of the Acts suggests that they were not very successful.<sup>23</sup>

As well as an increase in the amount of English/Spanish spoken in the country, the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries also saw a rise in protests, many heated and violent, but not necessarily nationalist. In Wales there was frequent unrest in the coalfield, including the Merthyr Rising in 1831, the Newport Rising in 1839, and the Tonypany riots in 1910. However, as we will see in the work of some of the authors in this study, these revolts may have been more Welsh in character than was previously thought. Workers in the mines gradually became more class-conscious and better organised, and strikes against low levels of pay or poor and dangerous working conditions sometimes spilled over into riots and violence. In all the above cases the British army was called in to restore order. In the cities of Catalonia, Barcelona in particular, anarchist ideas developed and spread, inciting resistance among members of the working class, and there was considerable strife in 1909 during the subsequently named *Setmana Tràgica* (Tragic Week).

As already noted, Catalonia was strengthened by the Statute of Autonomy granted by the Second Spanish Republic. Naturally, therefore, when the Spanish Civil War broke out the Generalitat and the majority of Catalans supported the Republic.<sup>24</sup> They were consequently on the losing side and suffered accordingly, as did other defeated regions under Franco's dictatorship. However Catalonia, with its own culture and customs, was an obstacle to Franco's vision of a united (monocultural) Castilian Spain. Most of the Generalitat, along with several prominent Catalan intellectuals and artists, managed to flee across the border into France, but any who remained faced severe punishment and repression. Hernández estimates that some 150,000 Catalans who fought for the Republic were imprisoned and at least 4,000 shot.<sup>25</sup> When the President of the Generalitat, Lluís Companys, was arrested in France by the Gestapo and returned to Spain, he was executed. The Catalan language was banned in public; Spanish was now effectively enforced as the language of school as well as of business and the law. Teachers were imported from other parts of Spain and Catalan teachers in turn were sent to work in other regions to help enforce this. Publishing in Catalan was not permitted; Catalan literature was continued virtually exclusively by writers in exile. Migration from other parts of Spain was encouraged in an effort to further dilute the Catalan language and identity.

Despite all these efforts by the dictatorship, the Catalan language persisted, spoken in the home. The Generalitat also persisted, managing to organise while in exile in Mexico. From 1959 resistance to the dictatorship grew stronger and despite a brutal police response it could not be annihilated. During the latter years of the dictatorship restrictions slackened a little, and in 1962 the Edicions '62 publishing house opened in Barcelona and began publishing Catalan texts. Catalan-language magazines began to emerge under the protection of institutions like the Church, and in 1961 the *Nova Canço* (new song) Catalan music movement began. In 1971, the Assembly of Catalonia was founded in an attempt to provide a united platform for Catalan anti-Franco movements and to coordinate their efforts with democratic struggles elsewhere in Spain.

Wales fortunately has experienced nothing as traumatic as the Civil War and its aftermath. However, the twentieth century was still a difficult time for the Welsh language and Wales as a whole. Increasingly there was felt to be a divide between the Welsh-speaking, mainly rural, north and west and the English-speaking industrial areas of the south-east. The nationalist party *Plaid Cymru* (The Party of Wales) was formed in 1925, but its initial emphasis on the Welsh language as being a crucial component of Welshness alienated many in the south and east who felt themselves to be Welsh despite being unable to speak the language.

Wales was also made to feel increasingly ignored by the British government during the twentieth century. A series of decisions sparked protests in Wales. The first of these was the *Penyberth* incident in 1936. This was aroused by the government's decision to build a bombing school on the *Llyn Peninsula*, despite opposition from nearly every part of Wales on the grounds that the location was a site of extreme importance in Welsh history and culture (the farmhouse that would be destroyed to make way for the bombing school had links with *Owain Glyndŵr*, was a resting place for medieval pilgrims on the way to the holy *Ynys Enlli* (Bardsey Island) and notable poetry had been composed there in the sixteenth century).<sup>26</sup> The government's refusal to change its mind caused great bitterness as it was effectively dismissing Welsh culture as unimportant. This was seen as particularly callous in view of the fact that another possible location in England had had its protest upheld on the grounds of damage to wildlife. So three leading figures of Welsh culture, *Saunders Lewis*, *D. J. Williams* and *Lewis Valentine*, decided to protest by burning

down the bombing school buildings then turning themselves in to the police for the publicity the trial would cause. This trial produced Saunders Lewis's 'Caernarfon Court Speech' – a magnificent defence of their actions and protest at the attitude of the British government.<sup>27</sup> The mainly Welsh jury was unable to reach a decision, and the men had to be retried in England where they were given short prison sentences. They were hailed as heroes and martyrs in Wales by many (though Saunders Lewis did lose his position as lecturer at the University of Wales).

Saunders Lewis would continue to play an important part in the national struggle, particularly with regards to the language. In 1962, he delivered his famous radio broadcast *Tynged yr Iaith* ('The Fate of the Language'), claiming that if the Welsh language was not fought for, it would cease to exist around the beginning of the twenty-first century. Consequently, he called for political action to 'make it impossible for the business of local and central government to continue without using Welsh', that is, to gain full legal status for Welsh.<sup>28</sup> Inspired by this, Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg (The Welsh Language Society) formed at the Plaid Cymru summer school in 1962, though it remained separate from the party. Its members were mostly young, often students. As advocated by Lewis they used methods of civil disobedience: stopping traffic, damaging television masts, painting over English-only road signs. Many members were arrested and served short prison sentences, but they always adhered strictly to a policy of non-violence.

Another series of protests in the late 1950s and 1960s was aroused by the creation of reservoirs in Wales to supply water to big English cities like Liverpool and Birmingham. This often involved the breakup and removal of Welsh-speaking communities, an action that Welsh nationalists claimed was harmful to the culture of Wales, as well as cruel to those forced to leave their homes. Tryweryn is the best known of these cases and the one that brought home to many Welsh people their powerlessness within the British state. In the mid-1950s, Liverpool Corporation announced plans to flood Cwm Tryweryn to create a reservoir. This would involve moving the all-Welsh-speaking village of Capel Celyn. Despite twenty-seven of Wales's thirty-six MPs voting against the Bill and the other nine abstaining, it was passed easily in 1957. Anger was felt all over Wales and in the 1960s there were four separate attempts to sabotage the works at Tryweryn. Many felt such acts were the only recourse left to them as constitutional means

had failed. The first two sabotage attempts were by individuals but the others were organised by Mudiad Amddiffyn Cymru (known as MAC, Movement for the Defence of Wales). Despite all attempts, the work on Tryweryn continued and the reservoir opened in 1965. MAC went quiet for a while then emerged under new leadership to organise bomb attacks, though they never targeted people. They struck at pipelines carrying water from Tryweryn to Liverpool then turned their focus to disrupting the Investiture of Charles, the heir to the British throne, as Prince of Wales in 1969.<sup>29</sup>

The nationalist movement suffered a distinct setback in 1979 when the British Government offered the people of Wales a referendum on devolution; the vote against devolution was virtually four times the affirmative vote. In the wake of this, and with increasing concerns about the growing number of second homes in Wales, the extremist group Meibion Glyndŵr (Sons of Glyndŵr) was formed. Throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s Meibion Glyndŵr would set fire to empty second homes, claiming responsibility for around 200 attacks. Not all nationalists and activists agreed with their actions, some were vehemently against it, but their concerns about second homes were shared by many. Some of these concerns were economic – wealthy buyers from England driving up the cost of housing beyond the reach of local people. Moreover, communities that had many of their houses empty for part of the year struggled to support local facilities like shops and schools and these often had to close, taking the heart out of villages. Others were cultural and linguistic – incomers who only spent part of their time in Wales were unlikely to learn Welsh and involve themselves in the local culture, while lack of housing meant Welsh speakers had to move, further diminishing the number of Welsh speakers in an area.

In 1997, eighteen years after the unsuccessful referendum, a second referendum was held. This time the result was in favour of devolution, albeit by a very small margin. This led to the creation of the Welsh Assembly which, despite fairly limited powers, has managed to change several things. In 2020, the Assembly was recognised as a fully-fledged parliament and its name was changed to Senedd Cymru.<sup>30</sup> Wales is now officially bilingual and Welsh must be taught in all state schools. Numerous books are published in Welsh and all official material must be produced in both English and Welsh.

Catalan has also flourished in the latter part of the twentieth century and the early part of the twenty-first. After Franco's death

in 1975, his successor King Juan Carlos declared Spain to be a democracy and a new constitution was drafted which recognised the existence and rights of the ‘historic nationalities’: Catalonia, Galicia, and the Basque Country. In 1978 Catalonia was granted its Statute of Autonomy which permitted it, among other things, to make Catalan a co-official language in the region. The Generalitat was restored and embarked on a programme of what it entitled ‘linguistic normalisation’, attempting to promote the use of Catalan in every sphere of life. Some people have complained that the intensity of the Catalanisation discriminates against those who do not speak it, in particular migrants from other parts of Spain, and risks the repression of the Spanish language.<sup>31</sup> However, others argue that the emphasis on language as a marker of national identity is a good thing as it creates an open nationality; membership of the nation is granted to all who can speak the language and a language is something that anyone can learn. It does not rely on birth or blood. The long-serving President of the Generalitat, Jordi Pujol, promoted an even more open national identity when he claimed ‘Anyone who lives and works in Catalonia is a Catalan’.<sup>32</sup> (This is similar to the Welsh novelist Glyn Jones’s declaration: ‘To me, anyone can be a Welshman who chooses to be so and is prepared to take the consequences.’)<sup>33</sup> There is no language requirement mentioned here, although incomers are encouraged to learn the language and are provided with plenty of opportunities to attend classes to do so, as they also are in Wales.

Today, the percentage of Catalan speakers in Catalonia is far higher than that of Welsh speakers in Wales. A survey taken by the organisation *Plataforma per la Llengua* (Platform for the Language) in 2021 found that 80.4 per cent of the population of Catalonia speak Catalan, with 94.3 per cent understanding it.<sup>34</sup> The census for the UK in the same year reported an estimated 538,300 Welsh speakers, just 17.8 per cent of the population, although the 2023–4 Annual Population Survey in Wales estimated 854,000 Welsh speakers, 27.8 per cent of the population.<sup>35</sup> This may be partly because Spanish and Catalan are both Romance languages and thus closely related unlike English and Welsh, so it is easier for Spanish speakers to learn Catalan than it is for English speakers to learn Welsh.

Both nations are now officially bilingual but in different ways. In Catalonia, Catalan is dominant in most public areas. In Catalonia, all legislation by the Generalitat is in Catalan only and all children are taught exclusively through the medium of Catalan apart from

when they study Spanish. In Wales, on the other hand, all legislation must be bilingual, and although Welsh is a compulsory subject up to the age of sixteen in all state schools, the teaching of other subjects through the medium of Welsh varies hugely both from school to school and within schools. There are Welsh-only schools in all parts of the country but they are a minority. These differences in the education system may be another reason for the greater percentage of Catalan speakers.

Initially, post-referendum Wales seemed fairly content with its position, and Plaid Cymru focused on representing Wales in Westminster and making the most of the powers that the devolved government possesses rather than campaigning for independence. However, post-Brexit, calls for Welsh independence have been increasing, and gaining this independence was part of Plaid Cymru's manifesto for the 2019 election.<sup>36</sup> The debates around independence rose even more during the Covid pandemic as Wales (and Scotland) held different views to Westminster on how best to handle the crisis. While Wales could and did enforce different regulations within its territory, particularly post-lockdown, it did not have the power to close its borders and there were concerns that the virus would be spread and local resources stretched to breaking point by the influxes of incomers who either wished to spend the lockdown in rural areas or who wanted to take advantage of the countryside post-lockdown. Many of these incomers did not realise that Wales had separate regulations regarding the wearing of masks and therefore did not follow them, causing further resentment.<sup>37</sup> This led to a growth in the desire for independence at least at the grassroots level, but there has been little official talk: Plaid Cymru's 2024 election manifesto contained no references to an independence campaign.<sup>38</sup>

During the last decade and a half in Catalonia desire for independence has been growing in spectacular fashion. Demonstrations in favour of independence have been held on 11 September, the National Day of Catalonia and on other occasions since 2010. Over a million people joined a march for independence in 2010 and around 1.5 million people in 2012. The next year, a human chain that stretched from the northern to the southern borders of Catalonia was formed.<sup>39</sup> Among the factors that have increased this desire for independence are interference in the Catalan education system and economic grievances, exacerbated in recent years by the Spanish government's rejection of a proposed Pacte Fiscal (financial deal) that would give Catalonia

greater control over her finances.<sup>40</sup> The major cause, however, was the revision of the Catalan Statute of Autonomy in 2006. Under the Socialist central government, all regions were given an opportunity to update their statutes if they chose to do so. Catalonia did, and the draft they sent to Madrid for approval contained clauses that were unacceptable to the Spanish government. The statute was finally passed in watered-down form but the right-wing Spanish Partido Popular (in opposition at the time) challenged it as unconstitutional and it was sent to the Supreme Constitutional Tribunal for judgement. Four years later, in 2010, the Tribunal made its judgement, ruling that some of the clauses were indeed unconstitutional. Catalonia could not be termed a nation, Catalan could not be described as the ‘preferred’ language of public administration and the media in Catalonia and certain financial articles were also tweaked.<sup>41</sup> J. H. Elliott notes that this ruling ‘dramatically raised the political temperature’ and that it ‘aroused fury in the Generalitat and in nationalist organizations’.<sup>42</sup>

In 2012, the then President of the Generalitat, Artur Mas, who had previously remained quiet on his opinion of Catalan independence, came out in open support of it and called snap elections in the hope of strengthening his mandate to negotiate with the Spanish government. In fact his party did less well than he had hoped, but pro-independence parties achieved a large majority. Mas began negotiations in the hope of holding a referendum in which Catalans could vote on the independence issue, but the Spanish government declared that such a referendum would be unconstitutional as arranging referenda is a state power, not one devolved to the regions, and refused to negotiate or even discuss the issue. Not surprisingly this aroused the ire of many Catalans and increased their determination to go ahead with the referendum. The designated date was 11 November 2014, some two months after the unsuccessful independence referendum held in Scotland (Elliott notes that the Catalan nationalists were following the Scottish referendum closely).<sup>43</sup> The Spanish government insisted that the referendum was illegal and would not take place. The Generalitat offered a compromise, asking permission to hold a non-binding consultation instead of the referendum, but this too was refused. However the non-binding consultation was carried out anyway on the date originally proposed for the referendum. As it was unofficial and technically illegal, it could not use the state apparatus; instead, volunteers turned out in their thousands to organise the vote. The question on the ballot paper was split into two parts

to accommodate those like the Catalan Socialist Party who wanted a federal system similar to the United States. Voters were thus asked if they wanted Catalonia to be a state and, if yes, whether that state should be independent.<sup>44</sup> The result unsurprisingly was an overwhelming 'yes' vote (80.7 per cent voted in favour of a fully independent Catalonia) as most who were anti-independence did not turn out to vote (turnout was estimated to be 36 per cent), though some did as they were against independence but in favour of the right to decide.<sup>45</sup> Nothing official happened as a result of this consultation, though some Catalans hoped the Generalitat would make a unilateral declaration of independence. There was even some concern that the Spanish army would be sent in. In fact neither of these things happened and the discontent and wrangling continued.

In 2017, the Generalitat declared that a referendum would be held on 1 October – a move the Spanish government immediately declared illegal. The government tried to interfere in the preparations for the referendum but it went ahead due to the determination of the Catalan people who went to extraordinary lengths to ensure its success. The Catalan police force were given orders by the government in Madrid to prevent people voting but refused to do so. The official reason given for this was that they wanted to avoid violence. The Spanish police who were drafted in to help did use force which led to scenes that were broadcast around the world and shocked many.<sup>46</sup> The Generalitat hoped that this would arouse support for Catalonia in other countries and the EU but this did not happen at an official level. Again the voting turnout was not high (43 per cent) and unsurprisingly those who were determined to vote and did so overwhelmingly voted in favour of independence, with around 90 per cent saying yes.<sup>47</sup> Following this, the President of Catalonia, Carles Puigdemont, made a unilateral declaration of independence which was in force only briefly before being suspended to allow talks with the Spanish government. The Spanish government, however, declared the referendum illegal and void and imposed direct rule in Catalonia through the application of Article 155 of the Spanish Constitution which allows the central government to strip a region of its autonomous powers.<sup>48</sup> Puigdemont had to flee Spain to avoid arrest and several of his colleagues were arrested and denied bail, including Vice-President Oriol Junqueras. Most were released soon afterwards but Junqueras and others were held and tried in Madrid in 2019, along with prominent cultural activists. They received gaol sentences of up to thirteen years on charges

like sedition and inciting to riot. This sparked furious protests in Catalonia, including some violence, but again the international community did not intervene.<sup>49</sup>

Soon after the sentencing, however, Catalonia regained some power within Spain as incumbent Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez failed to get a majority in the November 2019 elections. Catalan separatist parties agreed to support Sánchez in return for opening discussions on independence and on pardoning those involved with the referendum. The Covid pandemic inevitably delayed these but in June 2021 Junqueras and eight others sentenced with him were pardoned and released. Two years later, an official amnesty for hundreds who had taken part in organising the referendum was granted but this did not include Puigdemont, who is still living in exile. It is hard to predict what will happen next as there is still desire for and belief in independence among some of the population, and the Catalan parties are beginning to get frustrated with Sánchez, feeling that he has not delivered on election promises regarding the transfer of immigration controls to Catalonia and securing the status of Catalan as an official EU language.<sup>50</sup>

\*\*\*

Despite differences in the strength of feeling regarding independence, it can be seen that Wales and Catalonia have much in common. Both are nations that were once independent but that have been incorporated into larger states and have consequently had to fight for the continued existence of their language and culture. That being the case, it might seem that the most obvious comparison in the case of these two nations is their literature written in Welsh and Catalan. Indeed for many Catalans the only language in which Catalan literature can be written is Catalan. A resolution passed by the Primer Encontre d'Escriptors dels Països Catalans (The First Meeting of the Writers of the Catalan countries) held in 1976, declared that: 'Catalan writers are those who write and/or publish their work in Catalan'.<sup>51</sup> Work written in Spanish even by Catalan authors, is Spanish literature. A similar idea is held by many in Wales. The poet, dramatist and cultural critic, Saunders Lewis, denied that there could be such a thing as an Anglo-Welsh literature and claimed that poets like Dylan Thomas were English not Welsh.<sup>52</sup> In justification it must be said that later in life he modified his views and accepted even Dylan Thomas as a Welsh writer.<sup>53</sup> But his statements both expressed

and influenced the prevailing feeling at the time – Welsh literature was literature written in Welsh. Thus a comparison of the literature of Wales and Catalonia should surely be a comparison of Welsh- and Catalan-language literatures which would certainly be an interesting and valuable study and one that has been begun by a couple of critics (see notes nine and ten).

However, the comparison of English-language works by Welsh authors and Spanish-language work by Catalan authors will provide an equally interesting and valuable study. The importance of the national language and the pride in its survival has led to a kind of 'reverse prejudice' against what are often seen as the 'oppressor's tongues' – English and Spanish. Writers who write in Spanish/English have often been seen as less than truly Catalan/Welsh, their identities at best ambivalent. They are vulnerable to accusations of betraying their nation by portraying their people for the enjoyment of outsiders, or for being motivated purely by financial gain (there is of course a far wider market for English and Spanish texts than for those in Welsh or Catalan). Indeed Maria Aurèlia Capmany went further and claimed that Catalan writers who wrote in Spanish were contributing to the cultural colonisation of Catalonia by the central state.<sup>54</sup> The possibility that there could be genuinely nationalist authors writing in the 'oppressor's tongue' was more or less dismissed.

However in the last thirty to forty years in Wales, the study of Welsh writing in English has developed as an academic discipline and attempted to reclaim English-language work by Welsh authors as an essentially Welsh literature in spite of the language in which it is written. Critics such as M. Wynn Thomas and Tony Conran began to study the English and Welsh-language literatures side by side and discovered similarities of influence, themes and style.<sup>55</sup> This suggested that the English-language literature of Wales was distinct from English literature and had been influenced by the authors' Welsh background. It could thus be considered a legitimate literature of Wales. It is now widely recognised as such and much further study of the English-language writing of Wales has been carried out.

As regards Catalan literature in Spanish there has been less work done, at least work that considers it as Catalan literature as opposed to or as well as Spanish literature. But Stewart King and Kathryn Cramer have both published work on this issue. Cramer compares the Spanish-language authors Juan Goytisolo and Juan Marsé with the Catalan-language writers Biel Mesquida and Monserrat Roig,<sup>56</sup>

while King discusses the issue of language and identity at length in *Escribir la catalanidad*. Félix de Azúa, himself a Catalan who wrote in Spanish, felt that while ‘Spanish’ was the only possible adjective to describe his work, that did not mean that it was not also Catalan; rather, as King explains, he used ‘Spanish’ as a linguistic term to encompass all literatures written through the medium of Spanish, for example those from South and Central America as well as different regions of Spain. Within this definition, King claims, Azúa could consider himself and others like him to be Catalan authors who wrote in Spanish<sup>57</sup> – a parallel situation to Welsh writers in English.

Another important point that arises from the study of English-language Welsh writing and Spanish-language Catalan writing is that many of the authors, particularly in the twentieth century, who write in these languages do *not* do so out of choice. In Wales, as we have seen, a large percentage of the population cannot speak their national language. Glyn Jones explained this by examining his own experience in his book *The Dragon Has Two Tongues*.<sup>58</sup> Even those who *can* speak Welsh, may have been educated solely through the medium of English and studied English-language literature and have little or no knowledge of the rich literary tradition in the Welsh language. As a result they may not feel able to write in their native language. The same is true of some Catalan authors. While they are more likely to speak their native language than their Welsh contemporaries, those who grew up under the dictatorship will have been educated entirely through the medium of Spanish and this will surely affect their writing ability in their own language and the literary models that are available. In an interview Juan Marsé referred to the influence that the Spanish-language books that he had studied at school had had upon him,<sup>59</sup> while Rosa Regàs Pagès had no hesitation in blaming the political circumstances surrounding the dictatorship for her inability to write creatively in Catalan.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, writing in Spanish or English does not necessarily imply hostility towards the national language; Welsh authors like Harri Webb, Emyr Humphreys and R. S. Thomas were fervent supporters of the Welsh language and according to Wendy-Llyn Zaza, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán ‘yearned for the day when Catalan was fully recognised in literary circles’ despite writing primarily in Spanish.<sup>61</sup> Many of the authors under consideration grew up bilingual or became so in later life, and some even produced work in Welsh/Catalan. Therefore a comparison between the Spanish-language writing of Catalonia

and the English-language writing of Wales should prove interesting, particularly from a resistance literature perspective which will mean accepting the works considered as 'national' in spite of the language in which they are written.

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESISTANCE LITERATURE THEORY

The term 'resistance literature' was originally defined by Barbara Harlow in her foundational study *Resistance Literature* (1987) as any literature that was produced as part of an independence movement.<sup>62</sup> Others had used the term 'resistance' previously in relation to literature; Harlow herself attributes the first use of it to the Palestinian writer and critic Ghassan Kanafani in his study *Literature of Resistance in Occupied Palestine: 1948–1966* (p. 2). His focus, however, was the literature of Palestine, whereas Harlow examined literature from all over the world that was written as part of independence and protest movements, and identified various common traits in literatures from places as diverse as Egypt, South Africa and Nicaragua. These traits included an insistence on anchoring the text in its particular historical and material circumstances of production, validation of alternative worldviews to that of the Imperial West, attempts to reclaim the narratives of history for peoples and nations who had been denied them and a conviction that resistance texts had to be more than just works of literature – that they were, rather, vehicles for protest and change. The authors of these texts did not subscribe to ideas of art transcending political and cultural boundaries; every text written in resistance was written with the purpose of asserting the culture from which they came, and the movement of which they were part. Textual aesthetics had to take second place to, or at least be part of, the message of the text.

Although Harlow does not make any link between her work and postcolonial studies or its academic forerunners such as Commonwealth literature and theories of colonial discourse, she makes reference to Edward Said,<sup>63</sup> often considered one of the founding fathers of postcolonial studies. Moreover, many of the features she identifies in resistance literature, and many of the issues she raises, are also ones recognised by postcolonial studies. For example, Harlow claims that reading resistance literature calls for a reassessment of the literary canon which has traditionally ignored these texts; this

is something postcolonial studies, particularly in its early stages of development, also sought to do.

Harlow also discusses the politics of the choice of language:

The very choice of the language in which to compose is itself a political statement on the part of the writer [...] The debate on language is crucial to a discussion of resistance literature, involving as it does questions of writer and background as well as issues of readership and audience.<sup>64</sup>

This is a question common to postcolonial writers and studies, as can be seen by the debate between Chinua Achebe and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o regarding an African writer's choice of language (Achebe argued for writing in English as it would transcend the numerous linguistic divides within Africa while Thiong'o held that an African writer should use their native tongue as they should address the masses in their own language rather than that of the coloniser).<sup>65</sup> Harlow also notes elsewhere the uses resistance writers can make of the coloniser's tongue, quoting the North African writer Abdelkebir Khatibi who talks of 'tak[ing] his own distance on the language by inverting it, destroying it and presenting new structures to the point where the French reader would feel a stranger in his own language'.<sup>66</sup> This is not so different to the theory of abrogation and appropriation expressed in the classic work of postcolonial theory *The Empire Writes Back* (1989).<sup>67</sup>

So it seems that Harlow's conception of resistance literature is not very different to early ideas of postcolonial theory, apart from its focus on independence movements. This is unsurprising given that it was written in 1987, nine years after Said's *Orientalism* was first published,<sup>68</sup> but a few years before major works by Homi Bhabha (*The Location of Culture*) and Gayatri Spivak (*Can the Subaltern Speak?*), which developed postcolonial studies as a discipline and took it in a distinct and highly theoretical direction.<sup>69</sup> This link with postcolonial studies is in some ways reinforced by Said's discussion of resistance in literature in his later work *Culture and Imperialism* (1993).<sup>70</sup> Said discusses authors like Tayeb Salih, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Aimé Césaire, many of whom Harlow also mentions.

However, since the publication of those works by Spivak and Bhabha, postcolonial theory has been criticised for being overly theoretical and unnecessarily complex, making it removed from and irrelevant to the lives of people in the colonies and former colonies

with which it supposedly dealt. Moreover, it risks speaking for and even infantilising those people. E. San Juan Jr heavily criticises Bhabha's overly theoretical approach and argues that activists like the Guatemalan Rigoberta Menchú and the Filipina Maria Lorena Barros, who wrote passionately of their struggles, refute Spivak's claim that the subaltern cannot speak.<sup>71</sup> To make this claim is to ignore their efforts and sufferings.

Critics like San Juan and Benita Parry also argue that postcolonial theory's use of concepts like 'hybridity' and 'ambivalence' threatens to erase the violence and power imbalances inherent in colonial encounters. As Parry explains:

In this late-breaking, revisionary narrative of empire, a historical project of invasion, expropriation, and exploitation has been reconstituted as a symbiotic encounter; the contradictory, volatile, but all the same *structural* positions occupied in analysis by the oppositional conceptual categories of colonizer and colonized have been displaced by categories of complicity, mutuality, and reciprocity; and the conflicting interests and aspirations immanent to colonial situations have been dissolved into a consensus.<sup>72</sup>

She agrees with Simon During, who claimed that postcolonialism's fusion with postmodernism led to a 'rejection of resistance along with any form of binarism, hierarchy or telos' and that '[b]y deploying categories such as hybridity, mimicry, ambivalence [...] all of which laced colonised into colonising cultures, postcolonialism effectively became a reconciliatory rather than a critical, anticolonialist category'.<sup>73</sup> Orthodox postcolonial theory, in Parry's view, has become that which it originally set out to expose and undermine.

So rather than use complex theory and consider the ambivalences and interstices so beloved by critics like Bhabha, resistance literature critics like San Juan take a more straightforward and, indeed, confrontational approach. They aim to read texts as political and as part of a struggle for independence or autonomy. In this they go in the same direction as Harlow but expand their focus from solely struggles for national independence. San Juan considers the struggle of the Philippines to free itself from US neo-colonial control as well as the situations of minority groups like African Americans and Asian Americans. Any group that is struggling against domination can produce resistance literature. It need not be a national group, and full independence need not be its aim.

## RESISTANCE LITERATURE APPROACH

Clearly the expansion of the genre of resistance literature means that it is far harder to define than Harlow's original focus. Indeed while it is possible to draw up a rough list of features that are shared by most works of resistance literature, equally important is the method of reading – one that combines Marxist and postcolonial theory and draws on the work of anti-colonial intellectuals like Frantz Fanon, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Amílcar Cabral. This method seeks to see in texts evidence of the struggle for economic and cultural freedom from colonialist and neo-colonialist states by placing the text firmly in the material and historical circumstances of its production and reading it in the light of theories of economic and cultural dependency. In this way many texts that might not previously have been considered resistance literature can be reconsidered. For example, in discussing the work of José Rizal, San Juan stresses:

the value of the strategic intervention of the reader's will (itself a collective agenda embedded in a specific existential situation) which can map the possibilities of articulating Rizal's texts, in particular the novels, to achieve nationalist, democratic goals.<sup>74</sup>

The way in which a text is read and interpreted by scholars and the wider public is as important as any features the text may have.

This method of reading is influenced and inflected by Marxism. San Juan's approach includes many Marxist concepts including Gramsci's ideas of hegemony and a national-popular culture.<sup>75</sup> Resistance literature theorists see Marxism as crucial in illustrating and explaining the economics underpinning colonialism and neo-colonialism and seeing them as aspects of the global capitalist system, with the imperialist powers deliberately underdeveloping the countries that now comprise the Third World in order to gain profit.<sup>76</sup> These thinkers also imply that Marxism could help reground post-colonialism in the reality of the circumstances of many in the Third World and also recognise the reality of class struggle in their lives where, as Fanon warned, the native bourgeoisie was likely simply to replicate the colonial state and hold power only for themselves.<sup>77</sup> San Juan admits that Marxists sometimes focus on the class struggle to the exclusion of all else,<sup>78</sup> but cites the writings of various Marxist theoreticians including those of Marx himself along with Lenin,

Luxemburg and others, that deal explicitly with issues of nationalism and imperialism.<sup>79</sup>

Seeing colonialism and neo-colonialism as part of the global capitalist system also leads to an understanding that anti-imperialist struggles ultimately oppose the same enemy as the working-class, women's, and cultural, ethnic and racial minorities' movements in First World countries and builds solidarity between struggles – an idea that is important in resistance literature. The Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o saw all struggles against oppression as one: 'This external domination and the resistance to it can be paralleled, in the colonised communities and in the dominating nations with the internal disempowerment and resistance to this.'<sup>80</sup> Resistance texts frequently reflect this sense of struggles being linked.

Despite the emphasis on reading and interpretation, it is possible to discern in the work of these critics certain essential criteria that the texts which they discuss as models of resistance literature have in common. Perhaps the most important of these is the text's commitment to its message and vision. Resistance writing is political; as San Juan argues: 'Writing is "always already," [...] complicit with and immersed in the world.'<sup>81</sup> Harlow writes that:

Resistance literature calls attention to itself, and to literature in general, as a political and politicized activity. The literature of resistance sees itself furthermore as immediately and directly involved in a struggle against ascendant or dominant forms of ideological and cultural production.<sup>82</sup>

The text is an active part of the struggle, whether that be a struggle for independence as in Harlow's original premise or a cultural struggle. The Vietnamese writer Nguyễn Đình Thi wrote, 'For us a book is a weapon,' explaining: 'Insofar as we make clear what is happening within people, show how they are holding firm, what they are accomplishing, we contribute to a strengthening of the power to resist.'<sup>83</sup> San Juan asserts that: 'For the majority of Third World peoples brutalized by the nightmare reality of a colonial past and a neo-colonial present, art is literally a matter of life and death'.<sup>84</sup> The situation may not be as extreme everywhere, and certainly is not in the case of Catalonia and Wales, but the writing produced is still of necessity political, as will be seen most obviously in the first chapter on Harri Webb.

In resistance literature, literary form has only secondary importance to the content unless it contributes to the message. Harlow and San Juan have both commented that resistance literature is likely to be criticised or ignored by the traditional establishment because of this focus on politics and message rather than artistic form. In particular they blame the New Criticism Movement that focused only on a text's linguistic features, excluding all external factors like the author's background and the circumstances of production. Harlow writes that resistance literature

imposes historical demands and responsibilities on a reader from which he or she, especially in the United States which could always afford such self-dispensations, had been excused by various versions of formalist criticism. The value of the New Criticism, for example, has been and continues to be seen by some as a 'god-send for classroom purposes: there was no need for background knowledge; one could concentrate on short and therefore manageable texts with the tacit acceptance of the reader's own background as sufficient context.' Such a 'god-send', however, for the classrooms of the dominant western pedagogical institutions is part of hegemonic cultural practices which deny consequential access to historical development to those parts of the world which the west continues to exploit to its own ends.<sup>85</sup>

San Juan similarly sees New Criticism as a powerful depoliticising ideology that affected generations of those educated both in the U.S. and the Philippines. Critics have been taught to consider that truly great literature should not contain politics.<sup>86</sup> As a result they dismiss those texts that do, or at the very least focus only on aspects other than the politics in those texts.

As well as subsuming the form to the message, resistance literature in general moves away from Western art's preoccupation with the individual and their psychology and focuses instead on the collective, the people/nation. Individuals are generally at least partly representatives of the people, and their issues are those of the nation. Resistance literature is frequently nationalist, seeking to establish an identity for a people and their nation. However, in calling for what he terms a 'national-popular culture' in the Philippines, one that takes up the task of resisting neo-colonialism and oppression and helps define the Philippines people as a nation, San Juan stresses the importance of an inclusive nationality, one that 'inheres in affirming the dignity and worth of workers and peasants who constitute the nation-people

for-itself in the ultimate analysis', rather than one based on 'seeking to reserve ethnic purity or instigate a cult of linguistic uniqueness'.<sup>87</sup> This will be discussed later in the chapter with specific regards to Catalonia and Wales.

The concepts 'national-popular' and 'national-democratic' are deeply important to San Juan. A national-popular culture is a culture that represents the masses of a nation and reflects their will and views, rather than merely that of an elite. He acknowledges that this is difficult, that there are divides within a nation: differences of language, ethnicity, religion and others, but he believes it is both possible and necessary to overcome these in order to forge and express a national identity free from the coloniser's control. Resistance literature attempts to create and express this national-popular culture.

This nationalist project frequently involves recovering the history of a people or peoples who have been ignored by the main historical records, chronicling the history of their oppression and their struggle against it. Thiong'o explains that the absence of these people from the records of history is often more deliberate than simply ignoring them; rather it is another form of oppression:

But it is precisely because history is the result of struggle and tells of change that it is perceived as a threat by all the ruling strata in all the oppressive exploitative systems. Tyrants and their tyrannical systems are terrified at the sound of the wheels of history. History is subversive. And it is because it is actually subversive of the existing tyrannical system that there have been attempts to arrest it. But how can one arrest the wheels of history? So they try to *rewrite* history, make up *official* history; if they can put cottonwool in their ears and in those of the population, maybe *they* and *the people* will not hear the *real* call of history, will not hear the *real* lessons of history.<sup>88</sup>

If oppressive imperialist powers or governments of nation-states attempt to promote a dominant version of history that is to their advantage and justifies their oppression in addition to glossing over resistance to their rule, then those texts that attempt to tell a different story are, consequently, resisting this narrative and the power that seeks to perpetuate it. Harlow stresses that a resistance narrative 'is capable of exposing these structures [of unequal power], even, eventually, of realigning them, of redressing the imbalance'.<sup>89</sup> Thus resistance literature recognises the inequality of the world in which

it is produced, and seeks to represent, and in many cases challenge, these inequalities.

Another aspect of resistance literature that will be important to the discussion of many of the writers in this book, and which takes a slightly different approach to those discussed so far, is what San Juan describes as ‘speaking truth to power’.<sup>90</sup> This concept will be important for many of the authors examined in this study so a brief examination of its origins and what is meant by it here may be helpful, particularly as it is a phrase that is used today by a variety of people. Activists use it as part of their campaigns; politicians have used it when saying things that they know will be unpopular. San Juan offers no background, expecting his readers either to be familiar with the idea or to deduce its meaning through his use of it.

First use of the phrase ‘speak/speaking truth to power’ is often attributed to Bayard Rustin, a Quaker, committed pacifist and Civil Rights activist, although a pamphlet published by the American Friends Service Committee, *Speak Truth to Power: A Quaker Search for an Alternative to Violence*, claims it came from ‘a charge given to Eighteenth Century Friends [Quakers]’.<sup>91</sup> Either way, though, the phrase has its roots in religion, specifically the Quaker faith, and initially it reflects that. Rustin claimed that: ‘The primary function of a religious society is to “speak truth to power.” The truth is that war is wrong. It is then our duty to make war impossible first in us and then in society.’<sup>92</sup> He proceeded to fulfil the first part of this function by refusing to register for the draft that was being brought in at the time to prepare for the United States’s possible entry into the Second World War.

Speaking truth to power here, then, involves an action other than just speaking. One addresses the power of the state, proclaiming that war is wrong, and then one does what one can ‘to make war impossible’. The pamphlet, meanwhile, is more purely word-based; it urges action – the exploration and adoption of an alternative to war – but this action is primarily to be taken by those in power, both the government and the American people ‘who are the final reservoir of power in this country and whose values and expectations set the limits for those who exercise authority’.<sup>93</sup> Thus speaking truth to power can be accompanied by other action, but it does not have to be. The main aim of speaking truth to power is to tell people who are more powerful than you the effects of their actions and beliefs and how these need to change.

In San Juan's use of the phrase, those who do the speaking have even less power than those in the examples mentioned above. They are people from the Third World who have been oppressed and even brutalised by the First World through colonialism and neo-colonialism. His prime example of this is the Guatemalan activist Rigoberta Menchú, whose testamentary autobiography, *Me Llamo Rigoberta Menchú Y Así Me Nació La Conciencia* (My name is *Rigoberta Menchú* and this is how my conscience was born, usually translated as *I, Rigoberta Menchú*), tells the story of the torture and murder of her entire family and the attempted genocide of her people.<sup>94</sup> In her work she addresses a global audience, including those responsible for her people's suffering, attempting to open their eyes to the results of their actions.

This work is similar to a kind of truth telling examined by Michel Foucault in his 1982–3 lectures series *Government of the Self and Others*: a 'speech act by which someone weak, abandoned, and powerless proclaims an injustice to the powerful person who committed it'.<sup>95</sup> (Foucault does not specifically use the phrase 'speak truth to power' but Gary Gutting has used it when discussing these lectures, and the similarities are striking.)<sup>96</sup> His example of this type of speech act is the character Creusa in the Greek tragedy *Ion*, who was seduced by the god Apollo. Later on in the play Creusa cries out against Apollo, proclaiming his crime, using the only power that she has – that of her truth. As Foucault explains: 'In this discourse of injustice proclaimed by the weak against the powerful there is at once a way of emphasizing one's own right, and also a way of challenging the all-powerful with the truth of his injustice, of jousting with him as it were.'<sup>97</sup> It is both a revelation and a confrontation, relying on the power of the truth. In the same way, Menchú addresses those who have wronged her people and attempts to convey the extent of the suffering in Guatemala. However, she moves beyond Creusa in merely reproaching the great powers for being directly involved in or failing to stop the genocide in Guatemala. She hopes to move them to work for change. As San Juan explains, her work attempts 'the provocation of agencies or instrumentalities committed to destroying the system of injustice in Guatemala and the entire hemisphere'.<sup>98</sup> It is important to emphasise that none of the authors in this book have experienced anything nearly as horrific as Menchú (though those who lived through the Spanish Civil War and its aftermath experienced and witnessed severe suffering). However, this study will demonstrate that they too attempt

to speak truth to power by portraying the conditions of their nations and opening up a dialogue with those whom they see as responsible.

Naturally, not every work classified as resistance literature will contain *all* the features mentioned above. Certainly none of the texts examined in this study do. Some attributes are found in almost every text, while others are rarer. But use will be made of this paradigm to argue that every one of the works discussed can be understood as resistance literature.

### RESISTANCE THEORY IN WALES AND CATALONIA

Before adopting a resistance literature model, a very important issue must be considered, that is – is it correct, even ethical, to apply resistance theory to Wales and Catalonia? Critics like Parry and San Juan are writing about nations of the Third World. Clearly, neither Wales nor Catalonia can in any way be described as belonging to the Third World – to do so would be insulting to those countries that do. It must be stressed from the outset that it is not the intention of this study to consider Wales or Catalonia as Third World countries in any way or to suggest that they bear any resemblance to Third World countries in their material circumstances. What is similar is the uneven power relationships between these countries and those that are politically or economically stronger, and some of the issues this imbalance causes, for example cultural oppression and economic inequality (though it is important to emphasise that the scale of the latter differs greatly between the situations of the two nations under consideration, as well as between them and the generally recognised Third World countries).

This study is not the first to use a theory designed for the Third World to examine Wales and Catalonia. Some work has already been done on considering these nations as ‘colonies’ – a term usually restricted to Third World countries. In 2004, Stephen Knight and Kirsti Bohata published seminal works that interpreted Welsh writing in English in postcolonial terms.<sup>99</sup> Bohata’s work in particular contains an excellent summary of the arguments for and against considering Wales as a colony and the potential issues in doing so.<sup>100</sup> She concludes that it is reasonable to use postcolonial theory with regards to Wales. Chris Williams, on the other hand, has argued that Wales was perhaps a colony between 1282 and the Acts of Union but that subsequently it became part of the United Kingdom and its people were full citizens with equal rights and representation to those

of the English. The Welsh took an active part in, and benefited from, the British Empire and therefore could not be considered a colony.<sup>101</sup> However, other writers, including some examined in this study, argue that the central government has treated Wales like a colony: exploiting its resources, undermining its language and culture, ignoring its representatives in cases like Tryweryn.

Catalonia's case is similar. Many Catalans see themselves as colonised, at least culturally, and some literary critics have used a postcolonial approach.<sup>102</sup> Some external experts have taken the same view. In 2014, a Catalan website quoted a letter originally published by the British ex-consul, Geoff Cowling, in which, according to the website, he claimed that Catalonia had been an independent country until 1714, and that it had not joined Spain willingly but had been brutally conquered, thus implying its status as a colony.<sup>103</sup> However, Catalonia also benefited from trade opportunities in the Spanish Empire and is comparatively wealthy compared to many of the other regions of Spain and far more so of course than Third World countries. Therefore, as with Wales, it is difficult and potentially offensive to label it unambiguously as a 'colony'.

Using resistance literature theory simplifies the issues a little, as it is not necessary to establish that Wales and Catalonia can be seen legitimately as colonies in order to use it. Resistance theory is not limited to colonies or former colonies. Rather it is a question of power imbalances. Michel Foucault claimed: 'Where there is power, there is resistance',<sup>104</sup> which suggests that there is the potential for resistance literature to be produced by any group that is dominated by another. While not referring to Foucault in this respect, many resistance theorists align with his premise. San Juan focuses on the Philippines as a former Spanish and US colony and now a neo-colony of the latter, but also looks at the experiences of Asian Americans and African Americans, groups which would not normally be referred to as colonies. While these groups often suffer from discrimination and systemic racism, today the majority are probably better off than the majority of those in traditional colonies, but they still fall within the consideration of resistance theorists. And so, potentially, could Wales and Catalonia who, as we have seen, have been, and are, dominated by the central state.

However, even if Wales and Catalonia do not have to be considered colonies in order to have resistance literature applied to them, the issue of potentially offensive comparisons still remains. The Welsh and

Catalans have not suffered to the extent the groups mentioned above have, particularly in recent years. Therefore care needs to be taken, as Daniel G. Williams notes when comparing the Welsh and the African Americans: 'This resistance to comparison is intensified in cases where the making of connections between Wales and other minority and post-colonial contexts is seen to be little more than an act of "self-aggrandising self victimisation".' However, Williams also argues:

the 'regional peripheries' are not only 'implicated' in the processes of imperialism and racism, but have also developed forms of thought and action that are themselves resistant to the 'dominant forms' of 'national imagining'. The political and cultural forms of acculturation and resistance that were developed by the Welsh and by the African Americans are certainly not identical, but they are analogous.<sup>105</sup>

Thus Williams justifies his comparison and if this justification is accepted then perhaps it can hold true for comparing Wales or Catalonia with more recognised Third World countries. The situations are not in any way *identical* but they can be seen as *analogous* or *congruent*. This also holds true for comparisons between Wales and Catalonia; there are some large differences between them. Wales, fortunately, has not experienced within living memory anything like the Spanish Civil War and its oppressive aftermath. Therefore comparisons between these two nations too must be carefully drawn and it must be emphasised that while they may have similarities, they are not *the same*.

Williams's view is supported by resistance theorists who link struggles all over the world, not only those of the Third World, but also those of oppressed classes and nationalities within industrialised countries, and by some writers from accepted colonies. In *Moving the Centre*, Thiong'o writes:

Over the last four hundred years the developments in the West have not just been the result of internal social dynamics, but also their relationship with Africa, Asia and South America. But both the internal relationships within them and their external relations with Africa, Asia and South America, have not been those of equality but of dominance and domination at the economic, political and cultural levels.<sup>106</sup>

Thiong'o also saw parallels between the linguistic situations in colonies and in stateless nations:

But the Third World was not the only place where English tried to grow on the graveyard of other peoples' languages. Even in Britain I have heard similar complaints from regions whose original languages had been swallowed up by English or in regions where they are putting up a last ditch struggle to prevent their languages from being killed and buried forever.<sup>107</sup>

Thiong'o is clearly talking about languages like Welsh, Gaelic and Manx here, and his words could apply equally well to Spain where Spanish has dominated the country's other languages.<sup>108</sup> He acknowledges that there are parallels in the struggles of oppressed people everywhere even if the magnitude of the oppression and suffering is very different, and recognises that while colonising powers like Britain and Spain have wronged others through colonial exploitation, they have also been guilty of the same offences towards people within their own borders.

Thus, with a little adaptation, resistance theory can be applied to the literatures of Wales and Catalonia. This adaptation will come from considering the work of a Welsh critic and a Catalan author who have discussed similar issues with regards to their respective nations.

### TYPES OF RESISTANCE

There are two main types of national resistance that this study will consider. One is a closed-off conservative type which can be dangerous and risk damaging the nation it seeks to protect. The other is open and inclusive, welcoming all who are prepared to work for the nation which ultimately strengthens the resistance and the nation.

Albert Sánchez Piñol, a Catalan writer whose work will be examined later, claimed that every human group subjected to intensive pressure has two main opposing adaptive strategies. Firstly 'to become a passive object, until their self is gone. To dilute oneself'.<sup>109</sup> For Sánchez Piñol, this is the most frequently taken option. The alternative is 'resistance [which] consists of trying to survive, protecting their own identity by creating watertight enclaves that those recently arrived can never penetrate'.<sup>110</sup>

This second option is perhaps even more likely to occur in the cases of nations like Wales and Catalonia than with those countries more traditionally considered as colonies. Unlike many of these, Wales and Catalonia do not possess a native population several times the size of that of the coloniser. Their numbers are comparatively

few. Moreover they also border the ‘colonising country’ which makes it even easier for cultural influence to affect them. People from the dominant culture can move in to all parts of the country and mingle with the dominated population far more easily than in the case of an overseas culture and members of the minority culture can travel to the centre of the dominant culture with equal ease. As a result of all this, the minority cultural identity comes under a huge amount of direct stress. Consequently, those who manage to resist assimilation will often do so by adopting Sánchez Piñol’s second option. They create cultural ‘enclaves’ that are intent on preserving their culture and securing it from outside influence.

Daniel G. Williams has identified a similar tendency to this ‘enclave production’ in the work of certain English-language Welsh writers, especially in the poems ‘Welcome’ by R. S. Thomas, ‘The Water Diviner’ by Gillian Clarke, and ‘Second Language’ by Christine Evans.<sup>111</sup> These works present Welsh-language culture as somehow closed and inaccessible. Thomas’s poem in particular is addressing incomers to Wales, accepting that he cannot prevent them entering the country but claiming that there is a Wales, specifically a Welsh-language Wales – Cymru – that is hidden or barred from them, beyond their capacity to experience:

You can come in.  
 You can come a long way;  
 We can’t stop you. [...]   
 But you won’t be inside;  
 You must stop at the bar,  
 The old bar of speech.<sup>112</sup>

As Williams explains: ‘Language functions here as a “bar” to entry, an impermeable borderline between external and internal realms. You’re welcome to Wales, but you’ll see nothing of Cymru’. The Welsh language protects the ‘real’ Wales from (anglophone) incomers. Thus, Williams argues, ‘the poem may be read as a rhetorical defensive strategy, an act of “strategic essentialism”, challenging the monolingual complacency of the English tourist and evoking a sense of bravado in the face of potential cultural death’.<sup>113</sup> In other words it is a form of cultural resistance that denies the coloniser’s arrogant assumption of easy access to Welsh culture. The Welsh language and its culture form a ‘watertight enclave’ in Sánchez Piñol’s terms.

This, Williams argues, is understandable and can be seen as praiseworthy: 'The anglophone writer is showing an awareness of, and a respect for, the Welsh language and its culture within his or her work'.<sup>114</sup> However, he goes on to argue that while 'the notion of an internal language or culture is enabling at an aesthetic level,' in the case of minority languages it is 'potentially disastrous' with regards to the future of the language. For if the Welsh language is portrayed as a 'barrier' (or as a 'walled garden' or a 'suppressed water source' as in the other poems he examines) it becomes difficult to see it as a living, developing language.<sup>115</sup> In other words, this type of thinking makes Welsh almost a museum language, one that is spoken by only a remnant and that will one day, probably in the not-too-distant future, die out entirely as it cannot adapt to a changing world and will thus cease to be of use. Moreover, an entity that cannot develop cannot really grow and that is an extremely dangerous situation for a minority language.

Earlier in the chapter Williams discusses Étienne Balibar's 'two great competing routes' to the production of ethnic difference: race and language. Linguistic community, Balibar notes, 'possesses a strange plasticity: it immediately naturalises new acquisitions'.<sup>116</sup> That is to say that linguistic communities are inherently open to outsiders, as languages can be learned by anyone and once the language is learned the incomer can, in theory at least, be fully absorbed into the community. Racial communities, on the other hand, are closed to outsiders as no one can change their ancestors. The national communities of Wales and Catalonia are primarily linguistically-based – the importance of the national language to both nations has already been mentioned and intermarriage and immigration over the centuries make it impossible to identify a Welsh or Catalan 'race'. Thus, both national communities should be open to those outsiders who wish to join them. Williams notes, however, that certain critics of Welsh writing in English like Chris Wigginton and Ian Gregson tend to conflate race and language.<sup>117</sup> He then argues that this is essentially what the English-language poets discussed above are doing, portraying Welsh-language culture as a marker of race rather than an open linguistic community that can absorb any newcomer that makes the effort to learn the language. As a result of this, Welsh becomes a purely symbolic language rather than one used for communication. The major danger in this, Williams argues, is that: 'To conceptualize linguistic difference in this way ultimately denies the possible existence

of a multicultural society expressing itself through the medium of Welsh'.<sup>118</sup> He argues cogently:

But the Welsh-language world cannot be a closed world if it is to survive. Once Welsh-language culture is conceived of in racial terms, as a closed system, and as a constraint on communication between peoples, it becomes easy to wish that it should disappear.<sup>119</sup>

A Welsh language unable to act as a vehicle for a multicultural society will not survive in an age of globalisation and transnationalism; it will die out. All this can equally apply to Catalonia, although generally the Catalan linguistic community is an open one. After discussing the normal strategies adopted by cultural groups under pressure mentioned above, Sánchez Piñol argues that Catalonia has taken a third way:

Facing the choice of vanishing or fortifying itself, Catalan culture instead opts for a way that is sociologically unprecedented, highly original, generous and brilliant: transforming the enemy of the present into an effective friend, opening the cultural doors to include their ranks, and by doing so nourishing and invigorating Catalan culture.<sup>120</sup>

This is an interesting and inspiring idea, although it is not as unique as Sánchez Piñol appears to think, as similar ideas were discussed in Wales over fifty years before. In 1954, Ifor Huw Wilks wrote in *The Welsh Republican*: 'Distinct from this alien society was the Welsh nation proper – no racial entity, but a vigorous and ancient community which absorbed all immigrants so that they became as Welsh as the Welsh themselves.'<sup>121</sup> Here Welsh culture is seen as non-racially-based and inclusive of outsiders. It is an open not a closed system, able to absorb newcomers and remain the stronger for it.

The national language in the case of Wales and Catalonia then, need not be equated with race, and resistance need not mean merely portraying the desperate last stand of a culture under siege, asserting its separateness by making it inaccessible in a way that will ultimately lead to its demise. Williams looks at ways in which various authors use bilingualism as a strategy for bringing Welsh literature to the attention of an international audience and for including those who do not speak Welsh. The poet Menna Elfyn is a good example of this; she publishes her Welsh-language poetry with facing English translations and dedicated her collection *Eucalyptus* 'to the new Welsh speakers'.<sup>122</sup>

While Williams's work has focused on how Welsh-language culture is presented, his ideas can easily be broadened to consider how resistance movements are portrayed by their writers, that is whether they are open to newcomers or whether they attempt to bar them. Some of the writers in this study, like Sánchez Piñol himself and the Welsh writer Harri Webb, manage to produce writing that can certainly be classified as resistance writing but still portray their nation as open and multicultural. Others like R. S. Thomas make their nation appear closed and exclusive.

The open inclusive type of resistance and national identity seems closer to the idea of resistance espoused by Harlow, Parry, San Juan and others. As discussed previously, San Juan warned against nationalism that sought 'to reserve ethnic purity'.<sup>123</sup> In addition, portraying the national culture's last stand is less effective as a means of resistance as there is no hope for the future. In much of the work discussed by Harlow and San Juan on the other hand, there is a vision for the future of the nation and the sense of an ongoing struggle that will make progress eventually despite everything. Equally, a movement that is unable to adopt newcomers will not be able to grow.

### CHOICE OF AUTHORS

Naturally, a study of this length must be selective about the texts and authors included and difficult decisions had to be made. On the Welsh side, it seemed almost imperative to include R. S. Thomas. Thomas is an integral part of the Welsh writing in English canon (recently established though it is, this area has still developed a canon, though academics are constantly attempting to expand it), well-known and studied both in Wales and further afield. He was also a fervent Welsh nationalist. He cared deeply for Wales, writing about it in his poetry, attending demonstrations and protests and never being afraid to speak out either to defend or criticise his country.

Unlike Thomas, Harri Webb has received very little critical attention within Welsh writing in English. He was a highly politicised writer whose works fit very well with the ideas of resistance literature outlined above. He has been included for this reason, and also as part of an attempt to expand the canon and draw attention to a much-neglected writer. It seems likely that Webb has been ignored at least in part because much of his writing is both political and simple. The majority of his work is not as aesthetically pleasing as that

of more recognised poets; indeed some of it could almost be called doggerel. However, by focusing on the aim of the work, resistance theory reveals hitherto ignored strengths. Therefore, Webb seemed the perfect author to include, both as an exemplar of a resistance writer and, perhaps as a result, an author that has received relatively little critical attention.

The final Welsh writer, Rhys Davies, was a less obvious choice. He is a reasonably well-established figure in the Welsh writing in English canon but a very different type of writer to R. S. Thomas both in style (he wrote short stories and novels primarily) and in apparent attitude to Wales and politics. However, it will be argued that his views are not as clear-cut as they appear and that a close examination will reveal the seeds of resistance literature in his work, in particular his assertion of the Welshness of the industrial struggles in the south-east valleys.

On the Catalan side, Albert Sánchez Piñol has been included because his novel *Victus*, in spite of being written in Spanish, is so clearly a pro-Catalan text. As a historical novel, *Victus* provides a fine example of an attempt to recover a nation's history. Moreover, the timing of the novel, written during the growth of the independence movement, the status of the author in Catalonia and the statements he had made in favour of independence, support its claim to be an important resistance text. The novel's depiction of a democratic Catalonia, its Castilian hero and the implicit parallels between the historical period it covers and the present day are also fascinating.

The final author to be included, Eduardo Mendoza, was another fairly clear-cut choice. He is one of the most famous Catalan authors writing in Spanish today. The Catalan sociolinguist Francesc Vallverdú uses him as an example of a Catalan writer who, despite writing in Spanish, supported the Catalan language and culture.<sup>124</sup> The similarities between *La ciudad de los prodigios* and Rhys Davies's 'Rhondda Trilogy' provide the closest direct comparison in the study.

These authors and the chosen texts cover a range of time with some eighty years between the publication of Rhys Davies's work in the 1930s and Sánchez Piñol's novel *Victus* which was published in 2012. However, all the authors are writing at times of great change and uncertainty for their nations, and they are attempting to resist English/Spanish hegemony through their work. Thus, the time difference is not important; by stating that all struggles are linked, resistance theory allows for comparisons across time as well as space.

It will be noticed that all the authors discussed are male. This is in no way trying to suggest that women are incapable of writing resistance literature, much less of participating in acts of resistance; both Harlow and San Juan discuss female resistance writers and activists,<sup>125</sup> while Rohini Hensman claims that: 'It would be hard to deny that women have played a significant role in resistance struggles and national liberation movements.'<sup>126</sup> It is simply that those authors that most suggested themselves for inclusion were all male.

It is also possible to argue that women's approaches to resistance literature may be, in general, a little different to men's. Many commentators have commented on the somewhat problematic position of women with regards to nationalist movements.<sup>127</sup> Nationalisms are often male-dominated discourses with the women being seen as an ideal representation of the nation, a passive rather than active part of the struggle.<sup>128</sup> This has been discussed extensively in the Catalan case by Monserrat Palau among others,<sup>129</sup> and in the Welsh situation by Kirsti Bohata among others.<sup>130</sup> Palau in particular stresses that Catalan female writers have suffered and continue to suffer a double marginalisation – excluded from the centre by both their nationality and their gender.<sup>131</sup> Of course, Welsh women who write in English and Catalan women who write in Spanish would at least be writing in the correct language as far as the centre was concerned but within their own nations they were likely to be marginalised for not writing in the national language.

This can lead to a linking of struggles similar to that espoused by resistance theory. Anne Charlon, noting repeated occurrences of the link between the subordination of women and the colonisation of Catalonia in the works of Catalan female authors like Monserrat Roig, Maria Antònia Oliver, Isabel-Clara Simó and Carme Riera, writes that: 'The most characteristic aspect of narrative prose by Catalan women is the desire to discover a common solution to the Catalan struggle and the feminist struggle.'<sup>132</sup> Here, the gender struggle is linked with the national struggle in true resistance style; gender is one of the areas that Thiong'o saw as crucial.<sup>133</sup>

However, as critics have noted, nations struggling for freedom may still be patriarchal and seek to dominate their women, either during the struggle or afterwards.<sup>134</sup> Thus women may well need a different solution to purely national realisation. Resistance literature with its linking of struggles can offer them that but it is perhaps less straightforward for them to adopt this method of writing, particularly if their

nation does not want their contribution. A search for female resistance writers in the Welsh and Catalan contexts would make for an interesting and important follow up study, as would an examination of the work of writers of other genders. Resistance writing could then be compared across genders with fascinating results.

\*\*\*

This study will show that the authors discussed demonstrate various degrees of resistance. Broadly the chapters are ordered so that those with a greater degree of resistance are considered ahead of those with a lesser. This will allow the earlier chapters to establish that the authors discussed in them are resistance writers and to show how the resistance writing paradigm can be applied in practice. The later chapters will then draw on this and show that there are at least traces of resistance ideas and techniques in the apparently more conservative authors.

The first chapter will focus on Harri Webb, discussing a range of his prose and poetry. It will begin by illustrating and explaining his view that Wales is a colony, before going on to examine his ideas about resistance and his attempts to unite Wales through focus on the nation, then his claim to be a ‘popular’ writer – an important attribute for a resistance author. The final section will consider his efforts to recover a lost Welsh history. Many of the attributes found in Webb’s work are present to a greater or lesser extent in the work of the other authors, so the following chapters will frequently refer back to this one.

The next chapter will focus on Albert Sánchez Piñol’s historical novel *Victus* and consider both its primary aim of attempting to recover a Catalan-sided history as a means of inspiring Catalans of all languages and origins to work for the good of their nation, and its secondary aim of speaking truth to the power of the Spanish state. It will also examine how the novel depicts Catalonia and consider Kathryn Cramer’s argument that *Victus* is attempting to speak subtly of a Catalan state.

The following chapter will consider a range of R. S. Thomas’s poetry and prose, examining his depiction of the relationship between Wales and England and the seeds of hope and resistance that can be found in his often-bleak poetry. It will then argue that his wider audience is not a handicap to his status as a resistance writer; rather it allows him to speak truth to power. Finally, the type of resistance

his work espouses will be considered. For the first time examples of an exclusive resistance reflecting Sánchez Piñol's 'enclaves of resistance' will be seen. Similarities to the work of the Welsh philosopher J. R. Jones will be considered throughout.

The final chapter is a comparative one. It compares a historical novel by Eduardo Mendoza with a historical trilogy by Rhys Davies. As with Sánchez Piñol's *Victus*, this chapter will consider the authors' attempts to recover the history of their nations for their compatriots and to speak truth to power – the Spanish and British states respectively. It will also show that Mendoza's use of humour, while it might at first appear to undermine the message of the text, can actually be seen as a device to make its readers question all facts and history – an important tactic in the resistance against educational hegemony. It will concede that these texts are not as strongly resistant as the ones previously discussed and that the type of resistance proclaimed is generally more racially-based and backward-looking, particularly in the case of Davies. However, it will also demonstrate that traces of many of the ideas and techniques found in the other writers are present. It will also argue, following San Juan, that it is important to read these texts for signs of resistance as to do otherwise is to surrender them to the opposition.

The concluding chapter will consider the types of resistance discovered in the texts studied and compare any similarities and differences between Catalonia and Wales. It will also consider the importance of resistance literature for both nations in this day and age.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Ned Thomas, *Bydoedd: Cofiant Cyfnod* (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 2010), pp. 171–80. CIEMEN is a human and language rights organisation that focuses in particular on stateless nations and other minorities. <https://www.ciemen.cat/en/>.
- <sup>2</sup> Thomas, *Bydoedd: Cofiant Cyfnod*, p. 172.
- <sup>3</sup> Thomas, *Bydoedd: Cofiant Cyfnod*, p. 171.
- <sup>4</sup> Kathryn Cramer, *Goodbye, Spain?: The Question of Independence for Catalonia* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2014), pp. 24, 46–50, 71.
- <sup>5</sup> Aneurin's epic poem *The Gododdin* is generally accepted to be the earliest literary work written in Welsh and is believed to have been composed in the sixth century AD, although it was not written down until the eleventh century. F. Xavier Hernández meanwhile estimates 1054–76 as the dates for the composition of *Cançó de Santa Fe*, a poem written in ancient Catalan or in Occitan, the language that developed into modern Catalan. F. Xavier

- Hernández Cardona, *The History of Catalonia*, trans. Peter Michael Law (Barcelona: Rafael Dalmau, 2007), p. 165.
- 6 This is encapsulated in the Catalan slogan ‘SOMISEREM’ (‘We are and we will be’), used during the Franco dictatorship, and the Welsh ‘Yma o Hyd’ (‘Still here’), the title of a song by nationalist musician Dafydd Iwan, which is still sung at sporting events and on other occasions.
  - 7 Stewart King, *Escribir la catalanidad: Lengua e identidades culturales en la narrativa contemporánea de Cataluña* (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2005), p. 1.
  - 8 J. R. Jones, *Prydeindod* (Llandybie: Christopher Davies, 1966), p. 32.
  - 9 Paul Birt, *Cerddi Alltudiaeth: Thema yn Llenyddiaethau Québec, Catalunya a Chymru* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1997).
  - 10 Hannah Sams, *Ffarwel i'r Absŵrd?: Agweddau ar y Theatr Gymraeg Gyfoes* (unpublished PhD thesis, Swansea University, 2016); Hannah Sams, ‘Dramodwyr Rhwng Dau Fyd: Aled Jones Williams a Sergi Belbel’, *Llên Cymru*, 42.1 (October 2019), 186–233.
  - 11 Julius W. Friend, *Stateless Nations: Western European Regional Nationalism and the Old Nations* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 45.
  - 12 Kenneth McRoberts, *Catalonia: Nation-building without a State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 1.
  - 13 Walker Connor, quoted in Friend, *Stateless Nations*, p. 2.
  - 14 For a more rigorous and detailed history of Wales see John Davies, *A History of Wales* (London: Penguin Books, 2007). For a shorter but reasonably thorough history of Catalonia see Hernández Cardona, *The History of Catalonia*. John Payne also covers some important events from Catalan history: John Payne, *Catalonia: History and Culture* (Nottingham: Five Leaves, 2004). These are the main sources that have informed the following historical summary.
  - 15 Davies, *The History of Wales*, p. 191.
  - 16 King, *Escribir*, pp. 41–2.
  - 17 See for example, Janet Davies, *The Welsh Language: A History* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2014), pp. 35–6, 42; Kirsti Bohata, *Postcolonialism Revisited* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004), pp. 20–1.
  - 18 See for example Davies, *The Welsh Language*, pp. 39–41; Gwyn A. Williams, *When was Wales?* (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1986), p. 127.
  - 19 W. N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *Spain under the Bourbons: 1700–1833 a collection of documents* (London: Macmillan, 1973), pp. 45–8.
  - 20 Davies, *The History of Wales*, p. 441.
  - 21 Simon Brooks, *Why Wales Never Was* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2018).
  - 22 The main exponent of this argument has been Brinley Thomas. See Brinley Thomas, ‘Wales and the Atlantic Economy’, *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, VI (November 1959), 169–92, and ‘A Cauldron of Rebirth: Population and the Welsh Language in the Nineteenth Century’, *Welsh History Review/Cylchgrawn Hanes Cymru*, 13 (1 January 1986), 418–37. Similarly, Glyn Jones writes of the rich Welsh-language cultural activity that existed in his home town of Merthyr Tydfil at the height of the industrial period in the nineteenth century. Glyn Jones, *The Dragon Has Two Tongues* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001), pp. 11–12. M. Wynn Thomas, meanwhile, drawing on his experiences of growing up in the Rhondda region

in the twentieth century, vehemently rejects the idea that Welsh 'was somehow an "illegitimate" language of Valleys experience'. M. Wynn Thomas, *All That Is Wales: The Collected Essays of M. Wynn Thomas* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2017), p. 6.

<sup>23</sup> King, *Escribir*, p. 43.

<sup>24</sup> Hernández points out that some of the Catalan bourgeoisie did support and even help Franco's nationalists, mainly because of their fear of the Republic-supporting anarchist organisations that were taking over Barcelona (Hernández, *The History of Catalonia*, p. 130).

<sup>25</sup> Hernández, *The History of Catalonia*, p. 135.

<sup>26</sup> Saunders Lewis, 'The Caernarfon Court Speech', in Alun R. Jones and Gwyn Thomas (eds), *Presenting Saunders Lewis* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1983), pp. 115–26 (p. 118).

<sup>27</sup> Lewis, 'The Caernarfon Court Speech'.

<sup>28</sup> 'Saunders Lewis: Fate of the Language', trans. G. Aled Williams, <https://morris.cymru/testun/saunders-lewis-fate-of-the-language.html> (accessed 19 March 2026).

<sup>29</sup> For more information on MAC's campaigns see John Humphries, *Freedom Fighters: Wales's Forgotten 'War', 1963–1993* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008) and Wyn Thomas, *Hands Off Wales: Nationhood and Militancy* (Llandysul: Gomer, 2013).

<sup>30</sup> Senedd Cymru, 'History of devolution'. Online. Available at: <https://senedd.wales/how-we-work/history-of-devolution/> (accessed 3 February 2026).

<sup>31</sup> In the second half of the 1990s a group of prominent Catalans from various professions formed a movement called Foro Babel and claimed they were uneasy about the proposed Law of Linguistic Policy. They wanted citizens of Catalonia to have the free choice of either Catalan or Spanish, rather than being heavily pushed in the direction of Catalan. They argued that this law endangered the peaceful cohabitation that had existed between immigrants and natives and Catalan speakers and Spanish speakers since the death of Franco. These propositions sparked furious responses and fierce debate (King, *Escribir*, p. 161).

<sup>32</sup> Jordi Pujol, quoted in Kathryn Crameri, *Language, the Novelist and National Identity in Post-Franco Catalonia* (Oxford: European Humanities Research Centre, University of Oxford, 2000), p. 36.

<sup>33</sup> Jones, *The Dragon Has Two Tongues*, p. 192.

<sup>34</sup> Plataforma per la Llengua, 'The Catalan Language'. Online. Available at: [https://www.plataforma-llengua.cat/media/upload/pdf/the-catalan-language-en-v7-final\\_29\\_43\\_2445.pdf](https://www.plataforma-llengua.cat/media/upload/pdf/the-catalan-language-en-v7-final_29_43_2445.pdf) (accessed 17 February 2026).

<sup>35</sup> Welsh Government, 'Welsh Language in Wales', 6 December 2022. Online. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/welsh-language-wales-census-2021-html> (accessed 17 February 2026); Welsh Government, Welsh language data from the Annual Population Survey: July 2023 to June 2024, 9 October 2024. Online. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/welsh-language-data-annual-population-survey-july-2023-june-2024-html> (accessed 17 February 2026).

<sup>36</sup> Plaid Cymru, 'General Election Manifesto 2019'. Online. Available at: <https://manifesto-cymru.cavendishconsulting.com/hwp-content/uploads/2021/04/Plaid-Cymru-Manifesto-2019.pdf> (accessed 3 February 2026).

- <sup>37</sup> The situation in Catalonia was not so dissimilar where the regional authorities had control over most health matters but imposition of the mandatory wearing of face coverings was in the hands of the Spanish government. See: ‘Spain’s Catalonia reimposes Covid measures as cases spike’, AFP International Text Wire in English: Washington, 6 July 2021. Online. Available at: <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2548593032?accountid=14874&parentSessionId=z2jAzmpP98woiVNMhVcUcC68RbR%2FQqByzvsPtajKaI3s%3D&pq-origsite=primo&sourcetype=Wire%20Feeds>; ‘Catalonia extends Covid passes to bars, restaurants as Spain cases rise’, AFP International Text Wire in English: Washington, 26 November 2021. Online. Available at: <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2602470630?accountid=14874&parentSessionId=5kdOZCOMvKNwwGDTLmXhgkngrssdGlrh7fWBLR1peIU%3D&pq-origsite=primo&sourcetype=Wire%20Feeds>.
- <sup>38</sup> Plaid Cymru, ‘General Election Manifesto 2024’. Online. Available at: [https://assets.nationbuilder.com/plaid2016/pages/10962/attachments/original/1718214059/Plaid\\_Cymru\\_Manifesto\\_2024\\_ENGLISH.pdf?1718214059](https://assets.nationbuilder.com/plaid2016/pages/10962/attachments/original/1718214059/Plaid_Cymru_Manifesto_2024_ENGLISH.pdf?1718214059) (accessed 17 February 2026).
- <sup>39</sup> Cramer, *Goodbye, Spain?*, pp. 27, 28.
- <sup>40</sup> Cramer, *Goodbye, Spain?*, pp. 46–9.
- <sup>41</sup> J. H. Elliott, *Scots and Catalans: Union and Disunion* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018), pp. 239–41.
- <sup>42</sup> Elliott, *Scots and Catalans: Union and Disunion*, pp. 240, 241.
- <sup>43</sup> Elliott, *Scots and Catalans: Union and Disunion*, p. 247.
- <sup>44</sup> David Martí and Daniel Cetrà, ‘The 2015 Catalan election: a de facto referendum on independence?’, *Regional and Federal Studies*, 26/1 (2017), 107–19 (108).
- <sup>45</sup> Martí and Cetrà, ‘The 2015 Catalan election’, p. 108.
- <sup>46</sup> Isa Soares, Vasco Cotovio and Hilary Clarke, ‘Catalonia referendum result plunges Spain into political crisis’, *CNN*, 2 October 2017. Online. Available at: <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/10/01/europe/catalonia-spain-independence-referendum-result/index.html> (accessed 15 February 2026); ‘Clashes follow Catalan independence referendum’, *BBC News*, 1 October 2017. Online. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-41460085> (accessed 15 February 2026). Elliott claims that some of the images disseminated by the Catalan government were in fact taken from previous occasions that had nothing to do with the referendum (Elliott, *Scots and Catalans: Union and Disunion*, p. 255). However, there is no disputing the fact that force was used.
- <sup>47</sup> Victor Sampedro, F Javier López-Ferrández and Patricia Hidalgo, ‘Digital disintermediation, technical and national sovereignty: The Internet shutdown of Catalonia’s ‘independence referendum’’, *European Journal of Communication*, 37/2 (2022), 127–44 (131).
- <sup>48</sup> Julia König, Paulina Meichelbeck and Miriam Puchta, ‘The Curious Case of Carles Puigdemont – The European Arrest Warrant as an Inadequate Means with Regard to Political Offences’, *German Law Journal*, 22/2 (March 2021), 256–75 (260).
- <sup>49</sup> An EU court did rule subsequently that Junqueras should not have been imprisoned as he had been elected as MEP while in prison awaiting trial, and should therefore have had diplomatic immunity.

- <sup>50</sup> Guy Hedgcock, 'Catalan nationalists threaten government over failed promise claims', *The Irish Times*, 15 January 2025. Online. Available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/world/2025/01/15/catalan-nationalists-threaten-government-over-failed-promise-claims/> (accessed 18 February 2026).
- <sup>51</sup> Quoted in King, *Escribir la catalanidad*, p. 47.
- <sup>52</sup> Saunders Lewis, 'Is there an Anglo-Welsh Literature?' (Cardiff: Cardiff Branch of the Guild of Graduates of the University of Wales, 1939).
- <sup>53</sup> See M. Wynn Thomas, 'Dylanwadau: Dylan Thomas a Llenorion Cymraeg', *Taliesin*, 112 (Haf 2001), 13–29 (19–20); Tudur Hallam, "'Curse, bless, me now": Dylan Thomas and Saunders Lewis', *Journal of the British Academy*, 3 (December 2017), 211–53.
- <sup>54</sup> Maria Aurelia Capmany, quoted in King, *Escribir la catalanidad*, p. 3.
- <sup>55</sup> M. Wynn Thomas, *Internal Difference: Twentieth-Century Writing in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992); *Diffinio Dwy Lenyddiaeth Cymru* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1995); *Corresponding Cultures: The Two Literatures of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999); Tony Conran, *The Cost of Strangeness: Essays on the English Poets of Wales* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1982); *Frontiers in Anglo-Welsh Poetry* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997).
- <sup>56</sup> Crameri, *Language*.
- <sup>57</sup> King, *Escribir*, p. 49.
- <sup>58</sup> Jones, *The Dragon Has Two Tongues*, pp. 5–36.
- <sup>59</sup> Juan Marsé, quoted in Ute Heinemann, *Novel-la entre dues llengües: El dilema català o castellà*, trans. Laura Puigdomènech (Kassel: Edition Reichenberger, 1996), p. 52.
- <sup>60</sup> Wendy-Llyn Zaza, 'Memorias de la infantesa: decadència, desplaçament i desesperança a Luna lunera de Rosa Regàs', in Stewart King (ed.), *La cultura catalana de expresi3n castellana: Estudios de literatura, teatro y cine* (Kassel: Reichenberger, 2005), pp. 85–104 (p. 87).
- <sup>61</sup> Zaza, *La cultura catalana de expresi3n castellana: Estudios de literatura, teatro y cine*, p. 87.
- <sup>62</sup> Barbara Harlow, *Resistance Literature* (London and New York: Methuen, 1987).
- <sup>63</sup> Harlow, *Resistance Literature*, p. 28.
- <sup>64</sup> Harlow, *Resistance Literature*, p. xviii.
- <sup>65</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Morning Yet on Creation Day: Essays* (London: Heinemann, 1975), pp. 58–62; Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Writers in Politics: Essays* (London: Heinemann, 1981). See Bohata, pp. 144–5 for a summary of each author's points.
- <sup>66</sup> Abdelkebir Khatibi, quoted in Harlow, *Resistance Literature*, p. 23.
- <sup>67</sup> Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2002). 'Abrogation is a refusal of the categories of the imperial culture, its aesthetic, its illusory standard of normative or "correct" usage, and its assumption of a traditional and fixed meaning "inscribed" in the words' while appropriation involves 'capturing and remoulding the language to new usages' (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, p. 37).
- <sup>68</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995). Originally published 1978.

- <sup>69</sup> Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004), first published in 1994; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988).
- <sup>70</sup> Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1993).
- <sup>71</sup> E. San Juan Jr., *Beyond Postcolonial Theory* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1998), pp. 21–52.
- <sup>72</sup> Benita Parry, 'The Institutionalization of Postcolonial Studies', in Neil Lazarus (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 66–80 (p. 76).
- <sup>73</sup> Simon During, quoted in Parry, 'The Institutionalization of Postcolonial Studies', p. 76.
- <sup>74</sup> San Juan, *Allegories of Resistance: The Philippines at the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), p. 36. José Rizal was a Filipino writer and nationalist in the second half of the nineteenth century who called for reforms by the Spanish rulers of the Philippines and was consequently executed.
- <sup>75</sup> See for example, San Juan, *Allegories of Resistance*, pp. 86–9.
- <sup>76</sup> The term Third World is a contentious one associated as it is with the time of Communist dominance in the East. Generally the term 'developing' is preferred today. However, the majority of resistance theory critics use Third World and so this work will follow their lead in order to ensure consistency with quotations from theoretical works.
- <sup>77</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. by Constance Farrington (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), pp. 119–25.
- <sup>78</sup> San Juan, *After Postcolonialism* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), p. 174.
- <sup>79</sup> See for example, San Juan, *From the Masses, to the Masses* (Minneapolis: MEP publications, 1994), p. 126, though the subject is treated in many of his works.
- <sup>80</sup> Ngūgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Moving the Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedoms* (London: J. Currey, 1993), pp. 27–8.
- <sup>81</sup> San Juan, *Hegemony and Strategies of Transgression* (Albany: State University Press, 1995), p. 3. In this sense, resistance literature has much in common with the *littérature engagée* formulated by Jean-Paul Sartre and others, during and immediately after the Second World War. Sartre insisted that the writer 'be totally committed to the affairs of his time, politically and socially as well as artistically' (Charles G. Hill, *Jean-Paul Sartre: Freedom and Commitment* (New York: P. Lang, 1992), p. 4). Moreover, he described his play *The Flies*, written and performed during the German Occupation of France, as 'the only form of resistance available to him' (Hill, p. xiii), suggesting a similarity to resistance literature. However, Gary Gutting points out that: 'Such writing is not, Sartre maintains, mere propaganda because it is not the servant of any specific ideology but expresses the "eternal values implicit in social and political debates"' (Gary Gutting, *Foucault: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 20). Resistance literature, on the other hand, is often intended as propaganda, though that is not necessarily all that it is, and it is certainly 'at the service' of a 'specific ideology' – the cause for which it is written. Thus there are differences between the two approaches.

- <sup>82</sup> Harlow, *Resistance Literature*, p. 29.
- <sup>83</sup> Nguyễn Đình Thi, quoted in San Juan, *From the Masses, to the Masses*, p. 89.
- <sup>84</sup> San Juan, *From the Masses*, p. 77.
- <sup>85</sup> Harlow, *Resistance Literature*, pp. 95–6.
- <sup>86</sup> See for example, San Juan, *From the Masses, to the Masses*, p. 23, though this claim is made in much of his work.
- <sup>87</sup> San Juan, *From the Masses*, pp. 63–4.
- <sup>88</sup> Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Moving the Centre*, pp. 96–7.
- <sup>89</sup> Harlow, *Resistance Literature*, p. 85.
- <sup>90</sup> San Juan, *Beyond Postcolonialism*, p. 33.
- <sup>91</sup> American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), *Speak Truth to Power: A Quaker Search for an Alternative to Violence* (Pennsylvania: American Friends Service Committee, 1961), p. iv.
- <sup>92</sup> Bayard Rustin, quoted in Anthony Terrace Wiley, *Angelic Troublemakers: Religion and Anarchism in America* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 113.
- <sup>93</sup> AFSC, *Speak Truth to Power*, p. iv.
- <sup>94</sup> San Juan, *Beyond Postcolonialism*, pp. 31–9.
- <sup>95</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others*, ed. Frédéric Gros, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 133.
- <sup>96</sup> Gary Gutting, *Foucault: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 113.
- <sup>97</sup> Foucault, *Government*, p. 133.
- <sup>98</sup> San Juan, *Beyond Postcolonialism*, p. 37.
- <sup>99</sup> Stephen Knight, *A Hundred Years of Fiction: Writing Wales in English* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004); Kirsti Bohata, *Postcolonialism Revisited* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004).
- <sup>100</sup> Bohata, *Postcolonialism Revisited*, pp. 2–8.
- <sup>101</sup> Chris Williams, 'Problematizing Wales: An Exploration in Historiography and Postcoloniality', in Jane Aaron and Chris Williams (eds), *Postcolonial Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005), pp. 3–22.
- <sup>102</sup> See for example, Irene Boada Montagut in her studies comparing Catalan and Irish women's writing: 'Nationalism and Language in Catalan and Irish Contemporary Short Stories: Feminist and Postcolonial Perspectives', *Catalan Review: International Journal of Catalan Culture*, 12.1 (1998), 9–21; 'Nacionalisme i llengua en el conte contemporani català i irlandès. Algunes perspectives feministes i postcoloniales', *Journal of Catalan Studies / Revista Internacional de Catalanística*, 2 (1999), <http://hwww.uoc.es/jocs/2/ articles/boardal/index>; *Women Write Back: Irish and Catalan Short Stories in Colonial Context* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2003). See also Monserrat Palau Vergés, 'Autoras catalanas: Doble marginación y doble rebelión (género y nacionalismo en Cataluña)', in Ana Bringas López and Belén Martín Lucás (eds), *Identidades multiculturais: Revisión dos discursos teóricos* (Vigo: Universidade de Vigo, 2000), pp. 169–76; Kathryn Cramer, 'Language, the Novelist and National Identity' and Stewart King, 'Orquestando la identidad: Estrategias poscoloniales en *L'opera quotidiana* de Montserrat Roig', in Robert Archer and Emma Martinell Gifre (eds), *Proceedings of the First Symposium on Catalonia in Australia / Actes del primer simposi sobre Catalunya a Austràlia* (La Trobe University, Melbourne, 27–29 September 1996) (Barcelona: PPU,

- 1998), pp. 59–76, and *Escribir la catalanidad: Lengua e identidades culturales en la narrativa contemporánea de Cataluña* (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2005).
- 103 “‘Catalunya no va unir-se voluntàriament a Espanya, va ser brutalment conquerida’”, *Ara*, 27 February 2014. Online. Available at: [https://www.ara.cat/political/dret-decidir-cayetana-PP-cowling-escocia-catalunya\\_0\\_1092490981.html](https://www.ara.cat/political/dret-decidir-cayetana-PP-cowling-escocia-catalunya_0_1092490981.html) (accessed 17 February 2026).
- 104 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (London: Penguin, 1984), p. 95.
- 105 Daniel G. Williams, *Black Skin, Blue Books: African Americans and Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012), pp. 14, 16. It is interesting to note that Williams talks of resistance here, though he is not applying a resistance theory approach.
- 106 Thiong’o, *Moving the Centre*, pp. 27–8.
- 107 Thiong’o, *Moving the Centre*, p. 35.
- 108 Thiong’o’s comment on English having ‘swallowed up’ other languages is also relevant today in a different context. Rather than being spread and enforced by the British Empire, or by states or governments in general, in this day and age English is instead the primary language of globalisation and is consequently encroaching on other languages and cultures in all parts of the world. Thus, in the years to come, we may see a rise in resistance literature aimed not at a single nation state but at globalisation and its largely anglophone culture, a literature that seeks to oppose these forces by asserting the value of other languages and cultures.
- 109 Albert Sánchez Piñol, ‘Prólogo’, in Núria Clotet and Jordi Fexas, *Súmame: Cuando todos contamos* (Barcelona: La Campana, 2014), pp. 7–13 (p. 9). All translations are mine unless stated otherwise.
- 110 Sánchez Piñol, ‘Prólogo’, p. 9.
- 111 Daniel G. Williams, *Wales Unchained: Literature, Politics and Identity in the American Century* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2015), pp. 211–14.
- 112 R. S. Thomas, *Collected Poems* (London: J. M. Dent, 2003), p. 134. This poem will be discussed further in the chapter on R. S. Thomas.
- 113 Williams, *Wales Unchained*, p. 212.
- 114 Williams, *Wales Unchained*, p. 216.
- 115 Williams, *Wales Unchained*, p. 216.
- 116 Balibar, quoted in Williams, *Wales Unchained*, p. 209.
- 117 The works by Wigginton and Gregson that Williams cites are Chris Wigginton, *Modernism from the Margins: The 1930s Poetry of Louis MacNeice and Dylan Thomas* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), p. 104 and Ian Gregson, *The New Poetry in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), pp. 38, 73, 13. For example, Gregson sees the poet Robert Minhinnick’s attempts to speak Welsh in Beddgelert as a ‘racial alter ego’.
- 118 Williams, *Wales Unchained*, p. 216.
- 119 Williams, *Wales Unchained*, p. 217.
- 120 Sánchez Piñol, ‘Prólogo’, pp. 9–10.
- 121 Ifor Huw Wilks, quoted in ‘Gweriniaethwr’, *The Young Republicans: A Record of the Welsh Republican Movement – Mudiad Gweriniaethol Cymru* (Llanrwst: Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, 1996), p. 141.

- <sup>122</sup> Menna Elfyn, quoted in Williams, *Wales Unchained*, p. 150. It is also important to note, however, as Williams does, that bilingual editions of Welsh-language poets' work have been criticised and Elfyn's collections have provided something of a focus for the debate (Williams, *Wales Unchained*, p. 150).
- <sup>123</sup> San Juan, *From the Masses*, pp. 63–4.
- <sup>124</sup> Francesc Vallverdú, 'Pròleg', in Ute Heinemann, *Novel·la entre dues llengües: El dilema català o castellà*, pp. ix–xiii (p. xii).
- <sup>125</sup> Harlow discusses, among others, the prison memoirs of the South African Ruth First and the Egyptian Nawal al-Saadawi in addition to the latter's novel, *Woman at Point Zero*, based on her experience of incarceration. She also discusses the career of the Palestinian commando Leila Khaled at some length. San Juan, meanwhile, discusses the Filipino guerrilla fighter Maria Lorena Barros, the Guatemalan peace activist Rigoberta Menchú, and Native American novelist Leslie Marmon Silko to name just a few. Clearly then women are capable of all types of political and cultural resistance.
- <sup>126</sup> Rohini Hensman, 'The Role of Women in the Resistance to Political Authoritarianism in Latin America', in Haleh Afshar (ed.), *Women and Politics in the Third World* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 48–72 (p. 48).
- <sup>127</sup> See for example, Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation* (London: SAGE, 1997); Graham Day and Andrew Thompson, *Theorizing Nationalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 108–27.
- <sup>128</sup> Day and Thompson, *Theorizing Nationalism*, p. 115; Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation*, p. 47.
- <sup>129</sup> Palau Vergés, 'Autoras catalanas', pp. 169–76.
- <sup>130</sup> Bohata, *Postcolonialism Revisited*, pp. 59–79.
- <sup>131</sup> Palau Vergés, 'Autoras catalanas', p. 169.
- <sup>132</sup> Anne Charlton, quoted in Palau Vergés, 'Autoras catalanas', p. 174.
- <sup>133</sup> Thiong'o, *Moving the Centre*, p. xvii.
- <sup>134</sup> Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation*, p. 113.

## HARRI WEBB AND 'THE SAGA OF WELSH RESISTANCE'

### INTRODUCTION

Of all the writers discussed in this book, Harri Webb is the one who comes closest to producing resistance literature in the sense of Harlow's original definition of a writer who is part of an independence movement. After joining Plaid Cymru in 1948, Webb quickly became '[d]issatisfied with what he saw as the Party's "milk-and-water" stance',<sup>1</sup> and in 1949 he joined the Welsh Republican Movement (WRM), which called for Welsh independence at a time when Plaid Cymru was still uncertain about its exact aims. Webb remained involved with the WRM until its dissolution in the late 1950s. A couple of years after that he rejoined Plaid Cymru, arguing that it had changed (improved in his view); but he was always on the most radical edge of the party.<sup>2</sup> He wrote extensively for both parties' newspapers (*The Welsh Republican* and *Welsh Nation*, Plaid Cymru's English-language publication), including a spell as editor of each. In numerous articles he outlined the parties' views and aims and campaigned for an independent Wales – the Socialist Republic of Wales as he often referred to it, arguing vehemently that it was the only thing that could solve the nation's many problems.<sup>3</sup> The majority of his poetry was written in the same cause.

Webb is also a resistance writer in a wider sense – a committed author who makes no distinction between his art and his politics. Meic Stephens, a longstanding friend of Webb's, stated: 'Harri made hardly

any distinction in his verse and prose between the literary and the political, the two were so closely linked in his mind.<sup>24</sup> Webb himself asserted: 'Not that I have ever been able to make much of a distinction [between political activity and writing] [...] I never wrote anything of worth before I became a political activist.'<sup>25</sup> While not claiming that all literature should be political, Webb knew that because of his commitment to his politics, primarily Welsh Nationalism but also Socialism, there was no other path he could follow. As is the case with all resistance writers, his writing was the main way that he could spread his convictions and was thus of necessity politicised.

Webb has not received much critical attention, even within the field of Welsh writing in English,<sup>6</sup> and this fusion of politics with writing may be one of the reasons. As already mentioned, both Harlow and San Juan note that resistance writers are likely to be ignored or disparaged by mainstream criticism which sees politics, particularly local politics, as an unsuitable subject for art. Nigel Jenkins echoes this view in his analysis of Webb's poetry where he claims caustically that for many 'in its "narrow" and "parochial" obsession with Wales, it fails the test of "universality".'<sup>27</sup> Jenkins dismisses this view, but an earlier review by Belinda Humfrey seems to be heavily influenced by it.<sup>8</sup> Humfrey calls Webb's first poetry collection, *The Green Desert*, a 'higgledy-piggledy' collection unified only by its theme of Wales, and describes him as 'an "easy" poet not just because he writes for every-Welshman but because of his patriotic propagandist purposes'.<sup>9</sup> While acknowledging that '[s]ome of his simplicities are indeed strengths',<sup>10</sup> the overall tone of the review is disparaging, and it closes with the claim:

But such earnestness requires better craft from the poet. At the emergence of *Poetry Wales*, its editor declared, 'our first commitment ... is to the craft. Our second is to the country'. Her poets would serve Wales best by knowing her their second muse.<sup>11</sup>

To read Webb in this way, however, is to do him a disservice, as Chris O'Neill argues cogently in an article that responds to Humfrey's.<sup>12</sup> It is effectively to miss the point of Webb's work. He is not trying to write 'great literature'; he is trying to arouse a national consciousness. As such, commitment to Wales is part of his art – putting Wales second to his craft would be a betrayal of both. This was something that Humfrey did not seem to comprehend fully.

It is also important to note that Webb's style and subject matter was his choice, not his only mode. As Stephens explains:

It should be remembered, too, that if what he wrote was sometimes closer to doggerel than to poetry, or to polemic than to literary criticism, at least it was in a deliberate response by a fully equipped writer who, putting aside purely aesthetic considerations, chose to write in this way. 'Poetry that makes nothing happen,' he wrote, alluding to Auden's elegy for W. B. Yeats, 'is a luxury we just cannot afford.'<sup>13</sup>

This emphasis on choice is crucial. If it is true to say that some of Webb's writing is not particularly good by traditional critical standards, then it is because he *chose* to write in this way, not because he was unable to write in any other. Sally Roberts Jones argues that poems like 'Saraband' show that Webb was capable of far more 'literary' poetry.<sup>14</sup> Clearly, therefore, his use of simple language, satire, at times crude humour and popular forms such as the ballad are a choice. He chooses to write in a way that is both politically engaged and accessible to all. Some writings are meant to stir the blood, others to rouse people through shame or laughter, but all are written 'for *every*-Welshman', as Humfrey acknowledges. While critics like Humfrey may not see the value of this accessibility, the majority of Webb's work fits well with San Juan's ideas of a national-popular culture discussed in the previous chapter. It is effectively 'of the masses, for the masses'.

Writing in the early 1990s, Sally Roberts Jones also argues that Webb's themes may be another reason for his neglect, explaining: 'Nationalism, Welsh history, the fight for the language are no longer fashionable as themes, and those who use them are often seen as naïve'.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, Webb portrays and supports an aspect of Welsh history that many might rather forget – the use of direct action and even violence in the Welsh cause.<sup>16</sup> This goes against the pacifist tradition which governed the mainstream line of Plaid Cymru during Webb's lifetime. During the 1950s and 1960s, particularly in reaction to the drowning of Welsh valleys to provide water for English cities, many nationalists became frustrated with Plaid Cymru's unwaveringly constitutional approach, and joined movements like Mudiad Amddiffyn Cymru (MAC) which advocated the use of direct action, though most stopped short of violence. Indeed part of MAC's original oath was not to take human life and not to injure anyone, even those who might

attempt to prevent them from carrying out the Movement's acts.<sup>17</sup> In numerous writings Webb declares himself in favour of direct action and even of people laying down their lives for the country. He writes about places and independence movements which have used violence such as Ireland, Algeria and Israel – though as Nicholas Jones notes, his attitude is complex and he stops just short of advocating violence in the Welsh case.<sup>18</sup> He had no such ambivalence towards direct action; writing poems and articles in favour of such action and applauding those who undertook it.<sup>19</sup> However, this is not a view shared by much of the rest of Wales. John Humphries notes that at the time there was more support for these actions than might have been expected, but also notes that today there is little recognition of this and that these actions are not something the prevailing view of Welsh history is comfortable with.<sup>20</sup> Webb's enthusiastic support for, and discussion of, events that Wales as a whole wishes to forget, may partially explain why he is not widely discussed today. It is to be hoped that this chapter begins to remedy that neglect, showing the value of Webb's work in the light of ideas of resistance literature.

Webb is also a prime example of a Welsh writer who espouses an open, inclusive Welsh resistance. The Welsh Republican Movement's definition of a Welshman was simply 'a citizen of Wales who – no matter what his race or language or country of origin – contributes to this country's welfare, maintains its best traditions and defends its rights and interests'.<sup>21</sup> This is a view that Webb wholeheartedly endorses in his writings. Neither the English-speaking native of Wales nor the incomer who wanted to become Welsh were barred from Webb's view of Wales.<sup>22</sup>

### WALES AS A COLONY

One of the major factors influencing Webb's work was his view that Wales was a colony of England. He thus felt compelled to resist English dominance and to work for Welsh independence. The image of a dependent, colonised Wales is one his major tropes. Unlike some who claim colonial status for Wales, Webb does attempt to justify his statements. In his 'Letter to Mr. Jones' in the February–March 1951 issue of *The Welsh Republican*,<sup>23</sup> he wrote:

A Colony, surely, is a country that, in the first place, has no Government of its own, or only an inferior Government with not much more power

than, say, a County Council. And as a consequence of not having a proper Government, a Colony is an exploited country, that is to say, its economy is run for the benefit of the country that 'owns' the Colony, not for the welfare of the inhabitants themselves. Wales is a Colony by both these tests, Mr. Jones, and I shall prove it!<sup>24</sup>

Webb's definition of a colony seems reasonable, if basic. While some might claim that colonies are usually overseas from the colonising country, Bohata and Cramerer have argued that this should not be a barrier to considering Wales and Catalonia as colonies.<sup>25</sup> Equally, a colony is usually a territory acquired by military force, though Cramerer has also questioned this, focusing in Catalonia's case on a 'gradual intermixing of people and cultures [...] and the enforced suppression of cultural differences'.<sup>26</sup> This last is important; most accepted definitions of a colony include cultural colonisation – that is, the colonising country sees its own culture as superior and consequently attempts to impose it forcibly upon the colonised. While some of these aspects may be missing from Webb's definition above, all are mentioned at other points in his work. Webb frequently talks of the invasion and conquest of Wales and the effects of the education system that attempted to impose English on the whole of Wales. Thus he is constantly dealing with issues of 'colonisation' in Wales, whether or not he labels them explicitly in this way.

The article cited above continues Webb's argument that Wales is a colony. It is a well-structured argument with clear points and supporting evidence. It claims that, despite sending elected MPs to Parliament, the numerical discrepancy between them and their English counterparts is so great that Wales will never get a fair say in the affairs of the United Kingdom. He points out that the majority of Welsh MPs voted futilely against conscription when the UK reintroduced it in the 1950s: 'But what were their twenty-odd voices among the uproar of the hysterical English in full cry?' He builds on this: 'The fate of your own flesh and blood will answer you soon enough, as the youth of Wales is sacrificed on some far-flung futile battlefield for England's fading Empire,' before asking: 'Do you have to wait until that happens before you will be convinced that Wales is a Colony?'<sup>27</sup> The facts are presented in emotive language. By provoking pathos and anger alongside reasoned argument, he attempts to appeal to his readers on both intellectual and emotional levels.

He goes on to compare the 'Colonial Economy' that he imagines most people think of, 'the poor blacks sweating in the sun to grow groundnuts or some other raw material which is then sent to England to be processed and re-exported, and all the profits going to the guzzling parasites who live in luxury in London', with the wholesale claiming of Welsh resources by the government in England.<sup>28</sup> He argues that the Welsh do the hard and dangerous manual labour to extract the resources while the processing jobs are carried out in England for much better money. He sees little difference between this and the situation in England's other colonies. Wales is simply another English colony to be oppressed and exploited.

There are two other tactics Webb uses in this article that recur constantly in his work. One is the illustration of how Wales has been adversely affected by its colonial status. The second is comparison with other acknowledged colonies. The first shows Webb analysing the uneven power structures between groups, a common feature of resistance writers. Mentioning these negative effects is also more likely to move people to act. The second approach, meanwhile, is the first step towards the resistance theory view that all struggles are linked.

Webb opens his article 'Alien Rule the Road to Ruin' with the claim:

Every day brings fresh evidence of the grievous state to which the economy of Wales is being brought by the ineptitude of England's government.

Every day brings fresh evidence that only by means of her own government can Wales achieve an efficient and equitable economy.<sup>29</sup>

This is a clear and damning statement and it is followed by a list of the issues that Wales faces, beginning with the fact that the Tory government of the time had won very few votes in Wales and that while that government insisted 'that the "United Kingdom" is one and indivisible', 'its financial provision [...] is so niggardly that it has led to widespread protest' (*NHH*, p. 156). Other issues follow: the Welsh Tourist Board's lack of power, poverty in rural Wales, redundancy and automation in the industrial sectors. Moreover, Webb leaves his readers in no doubt as to the reason for this. The Government is labelled 'a government of financiers and imperialists' (*NHH*, p. 155). Phrases such as 'criminal irresponsibility' and 'the sabotage of alien rule' (*NHH*, p. 157) are used to describe its policies towards Wales. These words carry blame as well as criticism, and 'sabotage' implies

a deliberate policy of destruction carried out by the Westminster government. 'Criminal irresponsibility' could be caused by ineptitude or carelessness, but 'sabotage' is intended. Here Webb is doing more than just analysing the uneven power structures between the two nations. This article is intended both to arouse anger in its readers and to construct the 'alien' government as a threat which must be countered. Patrick Hogan has noted the importance of constructing another nation as a threat in order to gain support for action against that nation, and while Hogan is talking primarily about motivating a populace to support a war, his points can apply to any kind of national action.<sup>30</sup> Fear of 'the sabotage of alien rule' will incline the Welsh people to support action against the British state.

Hogan also explains, though, that while fear of a threat will encourage people to support national action, it tends to encourage them to support action being undertaken by other people. In order to rouse individuals to act themselves, it is usually necessary to evoke anger,<sup>31</sup> and this, above all, is what Webb does in this article. By angering his readers, turning them against the government, he hopes to move those readers to act in the interests of Wales rather than just accepting British rule. Therefore this article both seeks to make readers aware of Wales's status as a colony and to rouse them to do something about it. What appears to be a simple rant is actually cleverly constructed to arouse the emotions deemed necessary in his readers. This is not to say that Webb's own emotions are not genuine – they may well be. But it is his attempt to arouse these emotions in others that is important here.

A similar effect is created in his article 'Against Military Conscription', which begins with another blunt and definite statement: 'So long as the Welsh nation is deprived by English Government of its rightful sovereignty, military exploitation of the people and resources of Wales is inevitable.'<sup>32</sup> Like the 'Letter to Mr. Jones' quoted above, the article reminds the readers that Welsh MPs speaking for their people had opposed conscription but that it had been passed overwhelmingly by the Government. It then goes on to speak of the effects of conscription on colonial Wales. The language is again emotive: 'So Welsh Youth has been used indiscriminately for the protection of English imperial interests for generations' and 'the annexation of Welsh land for the training and development of English Armed Forces is a further injury to Welsh honour and interest.'<sup>33</sup> As before, the mention of youth evokes pity, while 'annexation' implies a hostile

takeover.<sup>34</sup> Most striking, though, is the repeated juxtaposition of 'Welsh' and 'English.' The two nations and their people are by their very positioning in the sentence set at odds, with the Welsh always suffering as a result. Once again, this article is carefully constructed to arouse anger.

Alongside military matters and the economy, one of the biggest issues that Webb felt arose from Wales's colonial status was the flooding of Welsh valleys to create reservoirs to supply English cities, with little or no compensation to the Welsh localities involved. This occurred on several occasions in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but the most infamous case, one that is still remembered today, was that of Tryweryn in 1965, where Welsh land was appropriated to serve English purposes and the all-Welsh-speaking village of Capel Celyn was forced to move away to make way for the flooding, dispossessing its inhabitants and breaking up a traditional Welsh community.

Webb was far from alone in seeing this as a demonstration of imperial power and total disregard for Wales. Opposition to Tryweryn united the country as Webb himself notes.<sup>35</sup> However, Webb was unusual in that he seemed to see the theft of the water as a greater outrage than the drowning of the village. In his article 'Tryweryn' he argued:

Under different auspices, Tryweryn Lake would be welcomed as a vast storehouse and as a source of power. Piped water to farmyard and cottage kitchen would alleviate the domestic lot. As one of the basic raw materials of modern industry, the great supply would do much to remedy the deficiencies in the economic pattern of Gwynedd. In fact, if Tryweryn Dam were to be built in the interests of Wales, we would welcome the scheme, as we would welcome the installation of any other valuable item of capital equipment.<sup>36</sup>

While logical, this was a brave line to take in the face of people losing their homes. However, as will be seen repeatedly in this chapter, Webb was unafraid of being controversial, and his articles focus mainly on the theft of water and thus the cost to Wales as a whole economically, rather than the more directly emotive and personal side of people being dispossessed or the cultural issue of breaking up a Welsh-language community. In 'Welsh Water for Wales', he shows the effects of lack of water:

All Wales, from Cardiff with its humiliating memories of drought restrictions among the rainiest hills of Europe, from Ebbw Vale facing shut-down and unemployment at the great steelworks because of water shortage, up through Mid Wales, where the great reservoirs mock the waterless farms and farm-kitchens, to Anglesey, where water riots have not been unknown. (*NHH*, p. 144)

He goes on to dismiss the claim that Liverpool will go without water: 'Let it. For this is not drinking water they are after. It is industrial water. Water is one of the great raw materials of modern industry'. He claims that Liverpool and the Forestry Commission are both exploiting Wales by taking its raw materials, paying little for them and using the locals for the backbreaking work of primary production while 'the lucrative secondary industries are syphoned [*sic*] off to England'. Angrily, he states: 'The contribution which English cities pay into the rates of Brecon and Radnor and Montgomery are hardly a compensation on this wholesale looting', before informing the readers that Birmingham had recently managed to get its rates reduced (*NHH*, p. 145). The tone is both informative and indignant, crafted to evoke an answering indignation in his readers. Throughout, the focus is on the exploitation of resources and the suffering it causes, using Tryweryn as an example to highlight other cases.

In other articles Webb does focus on the cultural effects of the English domination of Wales. In one of his few Welsh-language compositions, 'Colli Iaith' (Losing a Language),<sup>37</sup> he reflects on what Wales and her people have lost – 'a litany of losses' in Meic Stephens's words.<sup>38</sup> Many of these losses are related to culture, beginning with the titular language and progressing through muses, poetry and tunes, to more physical and spiritual entities such as land, faith and soul. While the poem does not explicitly state that these losses are a result of Wales's colonial status, in the context of the rest of Webb's work it is easy to see where he puts the blame.

Loss is woven throughout the first four stanzas of the poem. Including the title, the word 'colli' (to lose/losing) is used seventeen times, starting the first three lines of each stanza. The final stanza changes tone, offering a note of hope as the Welsh people recover their heritage and strength and, as a nation, begin to progress towards the future. This completely changes the mood of the poem, turning what would otherwise have been a eulogy into a call to arms.<sup>39</sup>

This change of tone, however, does not diminish the losses Wales has suffered as a result of its colonial status. Nor does the poem only illustrate what was lost. Each of the final lines of the first three stanzas mentions something that Wales has received in return for its losses: 'base slang', 'birds' chatter', 'mud and mire' (*HWCP*, p. 91). Images of frivolity and pollution abound. Wales is being damaged, culturally and spiritually, by its colonial status – it is being corrupted, and an ancient, valuable cultural tradition is being replaced with banality.

The second tactic that Webb uses to establish Wales as a colony is to compare Wales with other acknowledged colonies. The sharp, pithy four-line 'Feet First' is a prime example. It reads simply:

To lesser breeds his brothers represent  
The far-flung splendour of the British Raj;  
He wears the homely Labour Party badge  
And does the same among the wogs of Gwent. (*HWCP*, p. 46)

This short poem contains many of Webb's most common themes and arguments. The similarity (in Webb's eyes at least) between the subjugation of the natives of the official colonies and the Welsh by the 'British' government is clear, as is the contempt government officials and others of their ilk feel for their subjects in these countries: 'the lesser breeds', 'the wogs of Gwent'.<sup>40</sup> Though there are no quotation marks, it is clear that these are words Webb is putting in officials' mouths. In addition the poem shows the influence Webb believed the Labour Party had in disseminating British imperial ideology in the industrial areas of south Wales, and betraying the needs of Wales as a nation. This is discussed at more length in articles like 'A Free and Independent People', where he claims:

Gradually there has developed in the [Labour] party a difference of opinion which in the course of time will amount to an open schism: the difference between the purblind careerists who wish to maintain the exploitation of Welsh resources and labour by English Imperialism and on the other hand the genuine Socialists and patriots who believe in a Free Wales.<sup>41</sup>

The message here is the same as that implied by the final two lines of 'Feet First', albeit more detailed. This is a common pattern in Webb's work – the articles elaborating upon and justifying issues and opinions hinted at in the poems.

Another poem in a similar vein to 'Feet First' is 'An Imperial Hymn', which was prompted by a specific occasion as its epigraph explains: 'on the appointment of Dr Judas Griffiths MP as His Majesty's Secretary of State for all the Colonies – except Wales' (*HWCP*, p. 26). James Griffiths was the Labour MP for Llanelli between 1936 and 1970 and was made Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1950; he later became the first Secretary of State for Wales, which in Webb's view no doubt negated the final two words of the epigraph.<sup>42</sup> This poem reveals Webb's dislike of imperialism in general and his sense of kinship between Wales and more recognised colonies which fuels his disgust at the blindness and treachery of a Welshman accepting such a position. The substitution of 'Judas' for Griffiths's first name is unambiguously calling him a traitor, and this is supported by the last two lines of the first stanza: 'On the old Imperial way that I travel to betray/ My people and my country who believe in what I say' (*HWCP*, p. 26). Not only is the speaker turning his back upon his country and going instead in service to the British Empire, he also admits to abusing his people's trust.

The narrative voice of the poem adds to the severity of the portrayal. Nicholas Jones notes with regards to the poem 'For Franz Fanon' [*sic*]: 'As so often in Webb's work, the political enemy is given a voice which is self-incriminating',<sup>43</sup> and this is also the case here. The first-person narrative of 'An Imperial Hymn' emphasises the deliberateness of the actions: '*I* travel to betray', '*my* people and *my* country'. The speaker is convicted out of his own mouth, and the effect is far more damning than the third person voice of 'Feet First'.

In the first stanza it is made clear that the speaker has no time for Wales:

By the old redundant tinworks staring idle at the sea  
 There's a chilly breeze a-blowing and it's far away I'd be  
 Where the moon shines on the mudhuts and the heathen chant their hymn  
 And I'm far from Llangyfelach and the stink of Ffatri Jim.<sup>44</sup>

(*HWCP*, p. 26)

Having the speaker talk so disparagingly of the areas of south Wales where Labour was strongest emphasises the speaker's treachery and his lack of care for his own country and people. His reference to specifically Welsh names and places has a similar effect. This is not an outsider – this is a native of Wales, betraying his people for the sake

of the British Empire. He feels more responsibility for the Empire's 'heathen' subjects than for his own constituents.

In the vicious third stanza, the speaker reveals that they are rejecting and betraying not just Wales but also Socialism, in addition to carrying out imperial acts:

For I'll lay the White Man's Burden on the brown man and the black  
 And I'll leave my country lying with the Long Knives in her back  
 And there's tear-gas for the natives if they wave a flag of red  
 For my masters must sleep soundly in their soft and splendid beds.

*I was once as red as they, but rebellion doesn't pay*

*And the English are the English, we must all do as they say. (HWCP, p. 26)*

Treachery to his country and to the principles of Socialism are linked here in his acceptance of the imperialist attitude. He will oppress the natives of the overseas colonies, having happily left his own nation 'with the long knives in its back' (a reference to the Saxon treachery against the British that was named the 'Night of the Long Knives').<sup>45</sup> The Anglocentric British imperialist ideology that has indoctrinated the speaker has taught him the inferiority and unimportance of both the Welsh and the natives of the overseas colonies. Socialism, meanwhile, must be brutally repressed in these colonies ('tear-gas for the natives if they wave a flag of red'), lest it lead to nationalist uprisings and independence movements as this would disturb his English 'masters', those same masters that govern Wales. The last line reveals the type of anglophilia that Webb detested and suggests a link between the national and socialist struggles that is common in resistance literature, in addition to the links between different national struggles already established by showing that Wales and other colonies had the same oppressors.

## RESISTANCE

Webb saw all Wales-based resistance, nationalist and socialist, as linked, and essentially Welsh in character. Strikes in the industrial valleys were no less Welsh and no less an act of resistance to English power than Glyndŵr's rebellion or the attempted arson attack at Penyberrth. While the strikes and workers' uprisings of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are often seen as issues of class rather than nation, Webb stresses their national character. If there are class issues,

this is only because of the disparity of wealth and power between England and Wales; the English capitalists were exploiting the Welsh working-class. Nicholas Jones notes that Webb translated 'The Burgos Trials', a text by Sartre that described the Basques as being 'super-exploited' (by capitalism as workers and additionally colonially exploited as Basques). Consequently, Sartre argued: 'it is in colonies that the class struggle and the national struggle merge.' Jones claims that Webb's work expresses similar ideas to Sartre's, seeing the Welsh working-class as 'super-exploited'.<sup>46</sup> However, in Webb's case at least, the emphasis is always on the national element; the Welsh workers were being exploited as a nation rather than as a class. Thus Welsh working-class resistance is an important part of the national struggle. It is here, in the merging of the national and class struggles albeit with the emphasis on the national, that Webb comes closest both to San Juan's vision of a national-popular resistance and to the ideas of anticolonial Marxist thinkers like Fanon and Cabral.

In an article entitled 'The Saga of Welsh Resistance', Webb claims that 'the history of Wales may be written as the saga of one long struggle of the Welsh people against English oppression and exploitation – the longest continuous struggle of any nation against an aggressor.'<sup>47</sup> The article moves from the death of Llywelyn ein Llyw Olaf in 1282 through the Glyndŵr rising in the early fifteenth century to the Battle of Bosworth in 1485, after which the Welsh Henry Tudor ignored Wales's claims. The struggle continued through the following years, as the Nonconformist chapels became 'the focus of resistance to landlord and squire, parson and bishop'. The value of this for Webb was that 'the Welsh people learned democracy and self-respect, decency and discipline, so that when the Industrial Revolution came, the Welsh proletariat were already well-trained and thoughtful, able to resist from the first the new form of English exploitation' (*NHH*, p. 80). Note the English nature of the exploitation. He goes on to mention various small risings that led to the Merthyr Rising of 1831, 'which gave to Wales one of her great heroes and martyrs, Dic Penderyn' (*NHH*, p. 81), and the 1839 Newport Rising. Elsewhere Webb affirms the Welshness of this Rising by claiming that their leader, John Frost, had inspired the participants by invoking Glyndŵr. For Webb:

These rebels who had forged their pikes in the caves of Llangynidr Mountain were the direct descendants of the spearmen of Craig y Dorth;

they were treading the same ground and in the same spirit as their forebears; it was an appropriate invocation.<sup>48</sup>

Whether this is true or not is almost irrelevant. It is a statement designed to appeal to the emotions not the intellect; a link intended to be noted rather than examined.

'The Saga of Welsh Resistance' continues on through the activities of the Scotch Cattle (through the nineteenth century) and the Rebecca Rioters (1840s) to the Tithe Wars (late 1800s) and later strikes. Penyberth is naturally discussed: 'Saunders Lewis and his comrades struck at the English Air Force in 1936, and their burning of the aerodrome marked a new phase in the struggle' (*NHH*, p. 81). The final act of resistance mentioned is the bombing of the Elan pipeline in 1952.<sup>49</sup> The article finishes with the confident prediction: 'Wales has seen the darkest hours before the dawn. To the struggles of the future, Welshmen look forward in the light of a glorious past, and in the full confidence of victory' (*NHH*, p. 82). This strident prophecy is typical of Webb and vividly reveals his belief in Wales and the Welsh people. In the context of this study, however, the most important part of Webb's article is its view of the past not the future, the link it draws between all the struggles mentioned. All these are acts of *Welsh* resistance, though some are not often thought of as such, and all form a tradition of resistance leading to the present day where it should be continued.

Within that tradition of resistance, Webb constantly emphasises the role of the common people, both as the basis of the nation and as the focus of resistance. In one article he wrote, simply: 'The common people *are* Wales'.<sup>50</sup> In another he extends this idea, arguing:

And because it is on these facts we stand, we face the future of Wales with confidence. Because it is the unconquerable soul of the Welsh people that we trust we do not need to tout for the favours of the great. What better off is Wales for the energy and eloquence of Lloyd George or the brilliance and bounce of Aneurin Bevan?

No, it is to the plain people we speak, and from whom we take inspiration: the plain people who marched with John Frost to Newport or rode out with Rebecca against oppression, the country folk who for a generation fought the Tithe wars against Queen Victoria's redcoats, the collier who faced Churchill's bloody bayonets and the women who kept house and family, yes and nation, together while the Christian gentlemen of England garrotted them with the Means Test.<sup>51</sup>

Welsh resistance must be enacted by the Welsh people as a whole, not just by an elite. This is how it has always been done; as the host of examples in the quotation above shows, for Webb the majority of Wales's struggles against the English were based on the common people. This is how it must also be going forwards in order to be effective. In this, he echoes the ideas of many resistance thinkers. As seen in the last chapter, Fanon decried the native bourgeoisie, arguing that they were likely to benefit only themselves after seizing power.<sup>52</sup> Cabral, meanwhile, stressed the difference between the 'masses who preserve their culture', and the 'native elites created by the colonizing process', and is clearly in favour of the former.<sup>53</sup> Following the example of these earlier thinkers, resistance critics like San Juan combine Marxist ideas of the masses being the agents of change with anticolonial ideas of national freedom. For such critics, national freedom must be based on the people as a whole. In recognising the need to base resistance upon the whole people of Wales, Webb is enacting the theory that these thinkers espouse.

It is important to note that despite being influenced by Marxism and Socialism, for both Webb and San Juan the term 'the people' does not necessarily refer to just the proletariat, the peasantry, or any one class of society. San Juan argues that while classical Marxism usually sees the working class as the basis for revolution, 'the concept "people" is what Marx really used in characterizing transitional societies evolving from feudal to capitalist modes of production'.<sup>54</sup> He then extrapolates from Gramsci's term 'national-popular', which puts

stress on the active will and motion of the people which comprises all those classes, groups, sectors and individuals that find a common language in their subaltern condition and so unite in the constantly negotiated project of liberating themselves from their oppressors.<sup>55</sup>

All, in spite of class and other differences, can participate in the struggle for freedom and national self-determination. This sentiment echoes the Welsh Republican Movement's definition of a Welshman quoted in the introduction to this chapter. Class is of secondary importance to the national struggle, or rather it is subsumed within it. Focus on class, indeed, can be dangerous in the case of the nation, San Juan warns, because: 'This brand of class-reductionism instils a corporatist mode of thinking and behaviour that will never lead to mobilizing the broadest number of people'.<sup>56</sup> Instead,

the paramount task of both ideological and political organizations is the forceful articulation of this theoretical principle: the people as a nation with a revolutionary mission [...] The 'democratic' task [...] is subsumed within the national-popular quest for freedom, justice, and self-determination, which are all components of an all-encompassing long-range agenda for socialist reconstruction [...] I think the cardinal point is the focus on "the people," not on classes per se.

In essence, he concludes, 'the people-nation, not the basic masses, serves as the motor force of any profound radical social transformation'.<sup>57</sup>

Webb's writings reflect this view. While he was a firm Socialist and was certainly concerned about the Welsh proletariat, his main interest in them was as the *Welsh* proletariat. They are part of the Welsh nation, an important part certainly – as shown by his celebration of the miners, whom he described as 'the élite of the labour force of the Welsh nation' in his article 'The Strength of Wales'<sup>58</sup> – but still only a part. Moreover this article is primarily about Wales as well as the miners; they are 'the strength of *Wales*', and 'the élite of the labour force of the *Welsh nation*' (my italics). Here Webb calls on all of Wales to support the miners because they all face the same enemy – England.<sup>59</sup> Elsewhere, he vehemently criticises Aneurin Bevan for disregarding the national component of Welsh Socialism.<sup>60</sup> It is English capitalism and exploitation rather than Capitalism as a world-wide movement that Webb blames for the condition of the Welsh proletariat. The class struggle is subsumed within the national movement as San Juan requires.

Webb also states outright in more than one place that all are welcome to join the Welsh struggle. Writing for Plaid Cymru's English-language newspaper *Welsh Nation*, he stated 'Plaid Cymru is a house built foursquare on the rock of nationhood [...] And its doors are always open'.<sup>61</sup> As well as concurring with San Juan's ideal of the nation-people, this also fits well with Daniel Williams's ideas of an open, accepting, multicultural Welsh society, where being Welsh is not a closed ethnicity but an open community, usually, but not of necessity, based on the Welsh language, where people can feel themselves to be citizens of Wales if they live there and work for the good of the nation, no matter what their origins. Webb exemplifies this in his praise of the historical figure John Spherhawke, a Cardiff supporter of Owain Glyndŵr, 'who was executed for declaring, in the heart of that alien garrison town, as it then was, his loyalty to the rightful

ruler of Wales'.<sup>62</sup> Webb points out that Sperhawke's name was not Welsh and claims:

His roots in our land must have been recent and shallow, and his environment as foreign as his forebears. One doubts that he knew much Welsh beyond the jargon of the market-place, and the rich cultural activity then in full flower could have meant little to him. Yet he threw in his lot with his country even though it meant death. (*NHH*, pp. 212–13)

While much of this appears to be conjecture (there seems to be no conclusive evidence that Sperhawke could not have been a third- or fourth-generation incomer and a fluent Welsh speaker) it is the accepting nature of the praise that is important. Sperhawke's possibly foreign origin does not matter to Webb; he has committed to Wales and thus he is part of Welsh resistance.

It is also interesting to note that in the passage about speaking to the common people quoted above, Webb specifically mentions the women as well as the men of Wales. As seen in the previous chapter, women are often excluded from shaping nationalist discourses; if referred to at all they are transformed into pure symbols of the nation. San Juan notes a similar difficulty with women in classic Marxist doctrine: 'And since women and ethnic or tribal minorities can only be classified as either workers, peasants or petty bourgeoisie, there is no room in the classic Marxist paradigm for their autonomous organizations and struggles'.<sup>63</sup> However, in San Juan's view of 'the nation-people' there is room for all who struggle for the nation, whether they are male or female, and for their own personal struggles. This follows the idea of the Marxist anticolonial thinkers and activists, many of whom stressed the importance of women to the success of the struggle.<sup>64</sup> Webb's specific mention of women in the above quotation seems to imply the same thing; women do not just represent the struggle, they are part of it. Similarly, he once altered his letter to Mr Jones to address Mrs Jones instead, writing: 'Because it's you that's having to put up with the consequences of English misgovernment.'<sup>65</sup> He acknowledges that the women as well as the men suffered under English rule and so they too had right and reason to work for the freedom of Wales. While the majority of his discourse is androcentric, these instances suggest that he tried to move beyond that, at least on occasion. He recognised the importance of mobilising the entire Welsh population.

## WALES UNITED

For the entire population of Wales to be successfully mobilised, they had to be united. At times in Wales's history this has been no easy task. As Alys Thomas has noted, there are many potential divisions among the people of Wales:

It is true that Wales is characterized by multiple political identities reflecting its recent history of concentrated industrialization and subsequent Anglicization in linguistic terms, and the persistence of a Welsh-speaking society focused on the rural areas. Moreover, there is a geographical divide between north and south, historically reinforced by lines of communication that ran east-west rather than north-south, and meant that in north Wales Cardiff was perceived as more distant than London.<sup>66</sup>

Webb certainly recognised this diversity and potential for division but did not see it as necessarily problematic. For him, Wales was still one nation. 'The Welsh people is one', he wrote. 'One nation, one achievement, one corporate act of faith in the dignity of man, one voice that will never be silenced, testifying to the eternal values of Justice and Freedom.'<sup>67</sup> Nigel Jenkins notes that '[a]s a political activist, Harri Webb has been conscious of the importance of seeing Wales whole, historically and physically'.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, Webb felt Wales's diversity was a strength, as long as its people could be united and mobilised to work for Wales in spite of their differences. As he explains:

[Wales] consists of seaports and industrial cities, mining valleys and quarrying communities, market towns and a varied countryside. Each of these has its own problems, and every local problem is part of the overall national problem. With every local problem successfully tackled, the nation is strengthened.<sup>69</sup>

Here he lists the different constituent parts of Wales and insists upon their inclusion within the whole. However different they may be, they are inextricably interlinked as parts of the Welsh nation. When each individual community is strong, the whole nation prospers. This quotation gives equal importance to areas of Wales not seen traditionally as Welsh, for example the ports and industrial areas, as to the rural areas which were seen as quintessentially Welsh. Wales is one nation, Webb declares, sharing his vision with his readers. All its areas are equal and it is important to see them as such.

To increase that unity, Webb frequently focuses on a range of issues that affect the entire population of Wales. The most obvious of these is the Welsh economy. Webb sees industry in Wales as having been encouraged to develop along lines that benefit England rather than Wales and argues that, consequently, there would be better-run and more diverse industries and more jobs available in an independent Wales.<sup>70</sup> This is clearly an argument that would appeal to Welsh-speaking and non-Welsh-speaking alike – a country's economy affects all its citizens – and the argument could therefore act as a unifying factor in the desire for independence. Cramer notes a similar trend in the rhetoric of the Catalan independence movement in recent years; growth in support for Catalan independence has coincided with an increased emphasis on the economic benefits of independence as opposed to those based purely on culture and identity.<sup>71</sup>

Perhaps the biggest unifying focus in Webb's work, though, is Tryweryn and the issues that gave rise to it. John Humphries notes how the protests against the drowning of Capel Celyn, and the subsequent sabotage attempts, united the Welsh-language cultural heartlands of the north and west and the English-speaking Republican tradition of the Valleys, with saboteurs like Owain Williams of Pwllheli and Emyr Jones of Aberystwyth coming from the former and others like Dai Pritchard of New Tredegar and Dave Walters of Bargoed coming from the latter.<sup>72</sup> Webb makes a similar point, describing Pritchard and Walters as 'men [...] from an environment so dissimilar economically and culturally from Merioneth as to have made many despair, in the past, of ever welding such unlike communities into a united nation' (*NHH*, p. 212).<sup>73</sup> Indeed, 'people from other, more recognizably "Welsh" parts of Wales [...] will only grudgingly concede that such places [New Tredegar and Bargoed] are Welsh at all, and that in a sense so restricted as to be meaningless.' 'Yet,' he concludes triumphantly, 'it is from shallow-rooted, recent and hastily run-up villages like these, that the men have come who have made us all once again proud to be of the same blood with them' (*NHH*, p. 211). Here Webb acknowledges the differences that exist within Wales but is clearly critical of the attitude of the 'more recognizably "Welsh" parts' towards the industrial valleys. He sees these differences pale as the Welsh people unite: 'But now the nation lives as never before in this generation, united as never before' (*NHH*, p. 212). In discussing an issue that did indeed draw protest from all parts of Wales, Webb hopes to unite the Welsh people further by

reminding them of the common cause they have and proving that such disparate areas can unite.

A further unifying strategy used by Webb is the setting up of a common enemy – England. All groups need an 'Other' against which to define themselves. As Diana Boxer and Florencia Cortés-Conde explain: 'Bonding against others perceived as different allows us to become a unit without having to define what we are for each other. What makes us part of an in-group is having in common an "out group"'.<sup>74</sup> Having an 'out group', then, is an easy method of group identification that can ignore any differences that may exist within the group. Nations are no different to any other type of group in this respect. Hogan claims that as long as nationalism has existed 'it has always followed the cognitive and affective principles of in-group/out-group division'.<sup>75</sup>

England is the natural 'out-group' for Wales; Bernard Crick notes that the British nations other than England have as an aid to identity formation 'a helpfully integrative anti-Englishness; or at least a pleasing consciousness of being different from the English'.<sup>76</sup> For Webb, though, England is more than a country different to Wales, it is an enemy and that is how he portrays it. There is a reason for this beyond merely expressing his feelings. Kenneth Burke argued that one way of creating group cohesion and identity was to refer to an enemy common to the group.<sup>77</sup> This is what Webb does in much of his writing. He sets up England to be a common enemy to all the Welsh, an enemy that they can all unite against, which, following Burke's theory, will help them to identify themselves as a group and thus unite as a people.

One of the most striking instances of this can be found in the article 'The Only Way'. Here Webb blames England for some of the very divisions in Wales that he was trying to heal. Writing about the Labour Party he claims:

Their Gwynedd supporters would be shocked if they could attend an election campaign in the Glamorgan Valleys and hear the insane hatred and contempt with which Labour speakers assault rural Wales and the Welsh language [...] they actively ferment division between different parts of our land.<sup>78</sup>

Webb sees all British political parties as English tools,<sup>79</sup> and therefore when Labour works to divide Wales, consciously or not, it is doing

so on behalf of England and to benefit England. As long as Wales is divided, there can be no serious challenge for self-government. Thus it is in English interests to keep Wales divided.<sup>80</sup> By arguing this Webb sets up England as an enemy common to all Welsh people and hopes to inspire the Welsh to unite in defiance of their enemy's attempts to divide them – a kind of reverse psychology. He gives them both an enemy against which to unite and a strong motive for doing so.

One final unifying strategy is Webb's use of humour. Boxer and Cortés-Conde argue that certain types of conversational joking or teasing can have a bonding effect, particularly joking that is aimed at an absent other. They claim 'that an even more important part of CJ [conversational joking] can be not only the display but also the development of a *relational* identity among participants which leads to a sense of membership in a group'.<sup>81</sup> Indeed, most types of humour can actually perform this function if they are clearly aimed at an outsider group.

Webb's humour features primarily in his poetry and is frequently concerned with criticising an 'absent other': sometimes England, sometimes the Welsh who collaborate with England. An example of the first is his 'Ode to the Severn Bridge':

Two lands at last connected  
 Across the waters wide,  
 And all the tolls collected  
 On the English side. (*HWCP*, p. 87)

This is humorous in various ways. 'Ode' suggests a tribute or homage, while this is anything but. It elevates the notion of what the poem is, linking it to a classical form of 'highbrow' poetry with a long history in much the same way as the mock epic elevates the ordinary and everyday to heroic status for comic effect. It plays with the reader's expectations, leading them to expect a long, eloquent poem and then surprising them with the complete opposite. Meanwhile, the latter half of the poem functions almost like a punchline; it is a twist which makes the reader laugh at the change of direction. The poem also underlines the irony of the fact that this structure which should be uniting two lands is actually highlighting the inequality in their relationship, and perhaps increasing divisions between them. It is also worth noting that it would not be at all funny if it were not true.

As regards the absent other, England cannot be said to be the butt of the joke exactly, but it is certainly the focus of the irony. English people of the time would not have laughed at this poem, at least not in the same way. They would have dismissed it as purely a joke, but it would have struck a chord with the Welsh people – a sense that they were being cheated. As with Webb's more direct approaches, this sets up England as a common enemy for all the people of Wales. Moreover, by making the Welsh people react in the same way to it, the humorous poem unites them on another level, creating the 'bonding' that Boxer and Cortés-Conde mention.

At other times the butt of the joke or the 'enemy' is those Welsh who are so devoted to England that they place its good before that of their own country. An example of this is 'Walter, Walter Lead us by the Halter', supposedly narrated by these anglophilic Welsh. (As Meic Stephens notes, the title echoes the popular music-hall song 'Walter, Walter, lead Me to the Altar'. Many of Webb's audience would have been familiar with that song. 'Walter', meanwhile, refers to Walter Padley, Labour MP for Ogmore between 1950 and 1979 who 'was especially hostile to the principle of self-government for Wales'.)<sup>82</sup> The poem begins with the voices of the anglophilic Welsh repeating the opinions that they have absorbed from the English: 'In Llangynwyd and Blaengarw we think nationalism narrow/ And for Wales we do not give a Fabian damn' (*HWCP*, p. 25). The extremely Welsh names of the first line provide a sharp, almost poignant, contrast to the sentiment of the second that dismisses the importance of the national tradition that produced these names. The second stanza is even more damning:

In Ewenni and Bridgend we will rally to defend  
 The Red flag and the King upon his throne,  
 The Republic makes us smile all along the Golden Mile –  
 We don't *want* to have a country of our own. (*HWCP*, p. 25)

Webb here shows up the lack of national feeling among certain Welsh people and their readiness to fight for what he saw as the alien British Empire and the cause of international labour, but not for their own land. As so often with Webb, the speakers are convicted from their own mouths. They cannot seem to see the contradiction between being Socialist and being imperialist and anti-Welsh-nationalist.

Moreover, they are rendered ridiculous. This begins in the first line where the pompous voice sets the tone for the rest of the poem. Later they are revealed to be childlike: 'In Ogmores by the Sea we never will agree/ To be treated as an adult people should'; naive: 'In Llanharan and Pencoed there will be no unemployed/ And we'll never be depressed again at all', and servile: 'For they're exploiting us for our own good' (*HWCP*, p. 25). The poem's title does not appear as an actual line but emphasises the impression of willing slavery.

Much of the humour of this poem is related to the form; the jaunty rhythm and repetitive rhyme scheme are humorous, especially when the rhyme scheme requires a slightly ludicrous turn of phrase such as: 'In Glamorgan's lovely vale it makes us turn quite pale/ To think that we should govern our own soil'. The turn of phrase is also that of upper-class England, suggesting the imitation in which these people indulge, and creating an incongruity which is also humorous.

By mocking the anglophilic Welsh, Webb again uses humour as a bonding device to unite the rest of Wales against them but there may be a further agenda here. By showing how ridiculous the views these people hold are, he will undermine any faith in their opinions and pronouncements. He may even alter their opinions, though this is unlikely as people who are mocked frequently become defensive and thus more entrenched in their views. It is likely, however, to dissuade others from taking those views.

A different and rather more extended example of humour at the expense of both the English and the anglophilic Welsh is Webb's short verse drama entitled 'The Babes in Milk Wood', originally published in *The Welsh Republican* in 1955. The humour of this work, part satire, part allegory, begins with the title, which is clearly a reference both to Dylan Thomas's play for voices *Under Milk Wood* and to the traditional children's story *The Babes in the Wood*. The latter is a popular pantomime subject and there are definite elements of pantomime in 'The Babes in Milk Wood'.

The cast list continues the humour, featuring characters such as: 'JOHN BULLY: a bankrupt Bandit', 'DAI AND BLOD: two young people whose inheritance he has stolen' and 'SMOG PHILIPS AND CLIFF SMOTHERO: his hired assassins'.<sup>83</sup> Much of the humour comes from the very obvious representative nature of these caricatures: John Bully being England, Dai and Blod the innocent Welsh, Phillips and Smothero the Welsh who collaborate and so forth.

There is no attempt at subtlety here, any more than there would be in a conventional pantomime. Characters are clearly painted from the start.

The main text of the drama is equally unsubtle. It opens with John Bully bemoaning the fact that his enemies are taking back their own possessions, but rejoicing that Wales's wealth is still his:

I've robbed and looted all my days  
 But now I have to mend my ways.  
 My victims all hit back at me,  
 They have no sense of decency!  
 But though my sun is almost set  
 The wealth of Wales shall keep me yet. (*AMM*, p. 16)

This, of course, refers to the ending of the British Empire. At the time of publication (1955) India had been independent for nearly eight years and in the next decade Britain's African colonies would follow (Ghana was the first in 1957). As in much of Webb's work, this speech compares Wales to other colonies, the major difference here being that Wales does not seem to be agitating for independence. Despite the serious topic, the speech is humorous. John Bully's tone is petulant, almost childish, which is at odds with the serious nature of the imperial politics being discussed. Moreover, like other works, it helps set up England as an out group by making the representative character appear risible as well as a bully. It is easy to laugh at and to feel superior to him. In this way the text asserts Wales's moral superiority to England, though it does bemoan the naivety and lack of awareness of the Welsh; John Bully declares: 'I help myself to all they've got/ And they don't seem to care a jot' (*AMM*, p. 16). This reminds the reader that despite the humorous portrayal, John Bully (England) is a threat, and must be resisted.

Bully makes an agreement with Demon Jim (almost certainly representing the Welsh Labour MP James Griffiths) and sends his assassins, Phillips and Smothero, to deal with Dai and Blod. The assassins are portrayed in derogatory terms in the stage directions: 'Their shambling gait and skulking stance betray their antipathy to the light of the day' (*AMM*, p. 16). Their speech is coarse and uneducated; they use words like 'yus', 'guv' and 'bleeders' (*AMM*, pp. 16–17). The assassins' speech makes them figures of fun but could also be read as a result of their degradation; because of their

collaboration with the coloniser they are neither one thing nor the other, and have become associated with the worst qualities of the English. They can almost be seen as cautionary figures – a warning not to collaborate.

Meanwhile, Dai and Blod are wandering lost in the woods (like the children in the original story of *The Babes in the Wood*). The Fairy Megan ('a good effort') appears and shows them a vision of Wales free but is countered by Demon Jim entering and claiming: 'John Bully's claims are paramount/ And British interests only count' (*AMM*, p. 17). This symbolises the failed Parliament for Wales campaign of the early 1950s, in which Lady Megan Lloyd George played a prominent part, providing another 'in-joke' for Welsh readers. King Arthur's champions turn up to aid the Welsh but are heavily outnumbered by Phillips and Smothero leading an army consisting of 'a huge concourse of cosmopolitan degenerates'. Dai finally saves the day by awakening Y Ddraig Goch (The Red Dragon) which burns Phillips and Smothero to ashes and causes Demon Jim to flee, and declares that it will aid all those who fight for Wales.

The overheavy symbolism is almost certainly intentionally comic (as well as suiting the pantomime mood), but like most satire it has a serious message and one the Welsh people would appreciate where others, particularly the English, would not. One of the best examples of this is Demon Jim's claim that he had already killed Y Ddraig Goch:

Myself I killed that useless beast,  
She was not modern in the least.  
Of course I used a humane killer. (*AMM*, p. 19)

The claim that dragons are not modern along with the idea of exterminating one with a humane killer is funny (a far cry from the heroics of St George who is, of course, also associated with England) but again hides a serious point. Wales is seen as backward by the English and thus following England's lead and transforming itself is a praiseworthy thing to do (in England's eyes). An outsider would probably laugh at the hilarity of the image of humane dragon killing, missing the subtext. But the Welsh would see the symbolism of the act and be bonded by their interpretation of it.

Though humorous, the drama ends on a serious note which is perhaps the best example of Webb's belief in the need for unity. Y Ddraig Goch declares:

I am the symbol of our land.  
 My scales are bright, my claws are sharp.  
 Whoever takes the sword in hand  
 Or strikes a warsong on the harp.  
 Shall ride in triumph on my wings  
 And put an end to evil things. (*AMM*, p. 19)

The use of 'whoever' is important. *Y Ddraig Goch* provides no qualification of language, faith, or location. 'Whoever' is prepared to fight for Wales is its citizen. This is Webb's message at its simplest. All people of Wales must fight for Wales and all who fight for Wales are her people. No other qualification is necessary.

The pantomime style is also important. It is a popular and easily accessible form. Whereas poetry might be considered the property of the elite, the pantomime provides entertainment for the majority. The simplicity of the symbolism means that it can be easily understood by anyone. This popular appeal is an important part of Webb's work.

### A POPULAR POET

Of all the Welsh writers discussed in this study, Webb is the one who, during his lifetime, would most qualify as a 'popular' author. In resistance literature, calling an author 'popular' is not the slur that it might be in some other academic disciplines. Being a popular writer, one who speaks for and to the people of the nation, is vital for the cultural struggle.

Webb can be said to have done this in many ways. Firstly, he claimed to speak for the people. In a letter to Gwilym Prys Davies in 1963, Webb takes on the role of their spokesperson, criticising *Plaid Cymru* for being out of touch with the emotions of the Welsh people:

I claim that my point of view has validity not despite the limitations of my temperament but because of them. That is how a lot of the Welsh people think and feel, and I am merely making articulate what thousands have to leave unexpressed [...] That, incidentally, is one of the things that has been and is wrong with the *Blaid* – they are cold-blooded, or at least the people who have set the tone in the *Blaid* do not seem to possess any capacity for judging the emotional reactions of people.<sup>84</sup>

There is an echo here of Fanon's statement that 'in an under-developed country [...] the [nationalist] party should be the direct expression of the masses'.<sup>85</sup> Webb clearly feels Plaid Cymru should similarly reflect the wishes of the Welsh people and, equally clearly, feels that it is failing to do so. The party has lost touch with the common people. In earlier years, the Welsh Republican Movement frequently criticised Plaid Cymru for being elitist and out-of-touch, but by the time Webb joined Plaid for the second time in 1960 he felt it had generally improved. Three years later in this letter, however, he seems to feel the party, or at least its leadership, is relapsing. It is still not fully in touch with how the people of Wales, the people it supposedly represents, feel. Webb, however, feels that he is, and that coming from the people as he does, he is a good spokesperson for them. This is his duty as a people's writer.

As well as speaking for the people of Wales, Webb wrote to and for them. Brian Morris notes that many of his early poems appeared 'almost casually' in newspapers which meant that they would reach a wide audience, and that he made little effort to publish in the more exclusive literary magazines. Instead he wrote poems for his parties' papers and for *The Western Mail* that were 'brief, witty, political, occasional, ephemeral and designed for the particular readership. It was popular, coterie verse'.<sup>86</sup> Popular, coterie verse, however, reaches people and, while it may seem ephemeral, it is often highly memorable and quotable.

Brian Morris, Sally Roberts Jones and Mercer Simpson also note that Webb has much in common with the Welsh tradition of the *bardd gwlad*.<sup>87</sup> Morris defines the *bardd gwlad* as 'a term sometimes applied to a poet without much formal education, whose poems praise his particular locality, and the events, the births, marriages, deaths, scandals, achievements, which take place there',<sup>88</sup> and who is thus a 'poet of the people' – a term applied to Webb by Stephens and by Mario Basini.<sup>89</sup> Morris notes that while Webb differed from the traditional *bardd gwlad* in being highly-educated and well-read, he too celebrates local figures in poems like in 'Not to be Used for Babies'.<sup>90</sup> In this poem, Webb paints an affectionate picture of 'Old Glyn, our milk man'; though he was often 'too drunk / To talk in any language', his produce 'was good / And his measures generous' (*HWCP*, p. 96). This is a tribute to an 'ordinary' man who was much loved in the neighbourhood.

Perhaps the most important characteristic of the *bardd gwlad* for Webb, though, is that he is part of the community rather than a figure apart in the English Romantic tradition of the poet. He has a role within the community. Webb notes

he [Cyril Gwynne, a relative who was a *bardd gwlad*] established in my mind an image of the poet as essentially a social rather than a solitary character, [...] fortunate in his gifts, however humble, and under something of an obligation to spread them around for the pleasure of the people he belongs to.<sup>91</sup>

Webb certainly followed Gwynne's example; his poems were readily available and written for the pleasure, education and inspiration of the people he belonged to, which for him was the whole Welsh people.

Later in his life Webb contributed to the 1972–8 BBC television series *Poems and Pints*, a popular show featuring poems often broadcast from pubs – a trait that surely helped demystify poetry and made it seem less elitist and a more natural part of popular culture. He broadened the appeal of poetry, using verse to speak to the majority of his compatriots, through a medium that gave him a truly public platform. Jenkins points out that Webb appealed to 'the kind of audience that otherwise gives poetry a wide berth'<sup>92</sup> and this is always an important factor to remember when considering Webb's work.

## RECOVERING HISTORY

The attempt to recover an oppressed nation's history, a history that has not been taught due to the dominant power's control of the education system, is an aim that will appear in most of the texts discussed in this study and is a project common to colonies and stateless nations alike. As Wole Soyinka explains regarding his project of 'race retrieval':

It involves, very simply, the conscious activity of recovering what has been hidden, lost, repressed, denigrated, or indeed simply denied by ourselves – yes, by ourselves also – but definitely by the conquerors of our peoples and their Eurocentric bias of thought and relationships ... For a people to develop, they must have constant recourse to their own history. Not uncritical recourse but definitely a recourse. To deny them the existence

of this therefore has a purpose, for it makes them neutered objects on whose tabula rasa, that clean slate of the mind, the text of the master race – cultural, economic, religious, and so on – can be inscribed. A logical resistance counterstrategy therefore develops; true nationalists find themselves [...] confronted with a need to address the recovery of their history and culture.<sup>93</sup>

By regaining their history, oppressed people can become aware of the oppression that they have suffered and begin to fight against it. They will also begin to question the superiority of the oppressors with which they have hitherto been indoctrinated. Consequently, nationalist scholars and activists will devote much time and energy to recovering this history and to disseminating it to the people of the nation.

Webb was especially diligent in this attempt, writing tirelessly about Welsh history and culture in interesting and accessible terms. Ivor Wilks, his predecessor as editor of *The Welsh Republican*, claims that he and Webb were responsible for giving the publication 'its strong historical flavour',<sup>94</sup> and that the paper was founded because: 'Public education had become an issue. We needed a regular way of reaching out to the masses: in short, a paper of our own'.<sup>95</sup> Clearly, education was an important part of Webb's and the Movement's agenda. As M. Wynn Thomas puts it, 'Webb's task was to remind people of what they never knew they never knew'.<sup>96</sup> As with all activists though, he is doing more than simply recovering this lost history; he is using it to enflame and inspire his contemporaries.

One of the best examples of Webb's recovery work is the pamphlet on The Merthyr Rising that he produced in 1956. According to Morris, it is a well-researched and methodical account which has not been greatly altered by later historians.<sup>97</sup> However, the tone is highly biased and the rhetorical style overblown. It is dramatic and emotive: there sounds 'a deeper note, one that is music to the heart of every true Welshman – the hymn of battle',<sup>98</sup> and the ironmasters 'looked over the fair land they had looted and raped and defiled' (p. 10). Even more overdone is the final comparison:

Dic Penderyn received Christian burial in the graveyard of St Mary's Church, and the Mother of God took into her keeping the son of another mother who, like her own, had met his death at the hands of evil men for the great love he bore his people.<sup>99</sup>

This comparison is not only overdone; for many, it would be blasphemous.<sup>100</sup> Taking things to such ridiculous extremes risks devaluing the whole piece. However, Morris cautions:

It is easy to smile, and murmur 'a touch over the top, perhaps', but the writing in this pamphlet is remarkably revealing about Harri Webb's style on political subjects. It is rhetorical, theatrical, highly coloured, and often lurid, but it is self-consciously so [...] Dic's death may legitimately be compared to Christ's, because in Harri Webb's political pronouncements there is no compromise, everything is jet-black or snow-white. His writing is confrontational, adversarial, and his account of the Merthyr Rising is unashamedly a florid and forensic discourse for the defence, which is engaging and persuasive precisely because it is so close to comic exaggeration.<sup>101</sup>

The drama and humour certainly make the text memorable and entertaining; this is no dry account of history but one that could be read and relished by anyone. Webb brings the event to life, engaging his readers' imaginations and emotions. The text has been carefully crafted to provoke a particular reaction: the anger that will, he hopes, stir people to act in the present day. In addition to presenting the Welsh side of the Rising, a side that would not have been taught in schools, as Webb himself notes in the pamphlet,<sup>102</sup> it uses past injustices to stir up the desire to act in the present. Dic Penderyn functions as both example and motive.

Similar language is used for similar purposes in the column in *The Welsh Republican* entitled 'Glorious Figures from our Past... or what they don't allow to be taught in Welsh Schools' – a clear reference to the Republicans' belief in the Anglocentric nature of the education system. Meic Stephens notes that it is impossible to tell which of the contributions Webb wrote personally and which were contributed by others,<sup>103</sup> but some at least would have come from him and he included the others during his time as editor. Therefore even if they were not actually written by him, they were part of his project to re-educate and inspire the Welsh people.

This column covered a range of figures. Some like the Chartist or Rebeccaite leaders are unsurprising: Lewsyn yr Heliwr, Dai'r Cantwr, John Frost. Others like the *bardd* Ieuan Gwynedd and the eccentric Dr William Price might not immediately be thought of as heroes, but the articles stake this claim for them. Still others like Zephaniah

Williams who led men in the 1839 rising are very little known, even by the standards of Welsh history, as their articles note. Each article provides a small amount of biographical information, then takes the form of a eulogy describing the figure's deeds in the service of Wales, whether they were leading armed men (Lewsyn yr Heliwr, John Frost and others), writing poems to the glorification of the country and criticising English imperialism (Ieuan Gwynedd) or campaigning for Home Rule (Emrys ap Iwan). The style is not that of a history textbook, being emotive and clearly biased: 'But he loved Wales with such passion',<sup>104</sup> 'But even the corrupt government of England knew better than to enforce this hideous fate',<sup>105</sup> 'For of this breed were the men who had flung themselves unarmed on the bayonets of the soldiery in the Merthyr Rising'.<sup>106</sup> It resembles the language of the Merthyr Rising pamphlet and like it is intended to kindle emotion, but also to inform albeit in a one-sided manner. The information given is basically accurate and readers are introduced to these figures about whom they would have known very little.

The articles usually recount their subjects' ends, which were often imprisonment, exile or an early death. This is in some ways a strange thing to mention but the emphasis is that, while the figure's personal battle may have ended, the struggle of which they were part goes on. Because of their persistence they have allowed the struggle to continue, the struggle that will one day bring about the changes they sought. Therefore their ultimate defeat is irrelevant; if anything it increases the impression of their courage, strength and commitment, portraying them as fighting against overwhelming odds. What matters is that they fought and that their actions made it possible for Wales to continue to exist and struggle for nationhood. Their role now is to act as an inspiration to the Welsh of the future, urging them to take up the fight. This is emphasised by the fact that each article closes with a mention of a continuing struggle or battle followed by the words 'You are needed for it!' in block capitals, an image vaguely reminiscent of the Kitchener posters from the First World War.

The image of the ultimately unsuccessful hero bequeathing the struggle to future generations is also present in Webb's poem about Owain Glyndŵr, 'By a Mountain Pool'. It begins by depicting Glyndŵr alone, having survived the final defeat of his rebellion. He is worn down: 'An old man's face, seen in a mountain pool,/ And every furrow of age and scar of battle' (*HWCP*, p. 68). Warily he lifts: 'The heavy dragon helmet from my shoulders/ For the last time'

(*HWCP*, p. 67), a deeply symbolic act. There is no hope or fight left. He can only remember that:

It was not always so [...]  
 And when I drove the English from the land [...]  
 Then was the hour of the dragon, my blazing crest. [...]  
 The steadfast men who carried in their swords  
 The soul of Wales kept their eyes on the dragon  
 And held their heads up proudly as they rode  
 With Owain into the mist, where now I wander,  
 An old man, alone by a mountain pool (*HWCP*, p. 68)

Embittered by the contrast between the glory of these images and his present state, he throws his dragon helmet into the pool, declaring:

It is best so. All strife, all hope is drowned.  
 [...]  
 I quench the heraldry of sovereign Wales  
 Here in this pool. So. It is gone. It is done.  
 The dragon's fire is out. (*HWCP*, p. 69)

He appears to have completely given up. He is tired, old, defeated; very different from the glorious leader of a national uprising. However, despite the apparent focus on defeat in the first part of the poem, it quickly becomes clear that as with the figures in 'Glorious Figures from our Past', the important thing is not that the resistance was defeated but that it served as an example and an inspiration for future generations and that it ensured that the nation continued. In 'An Old and Haughty Nation Proud in Arms' Webb writes: 'For it was the Welsh people who took up the sword of their fallen princes [...] it was the Welsh people who kept warm and living the songs that have inspired the longest resistance that history knows.'<sup>107</sup> This is enacted in 'By a Mountain Pool'; Glyndŵr hears the voices of nationalists from the future who assure him: 'Because you made this death the nation lives' (*HWCP*, p. 70). Though his rising was ultimately unsuccessful, the national self-awareness it created and the inspiration it provided allowed the nation to survive to the present day. Those who would fight today use Glyndŵr as a focus and rallying point. The fact that he was defeated makes them more determined to succeed, not less. The speakers from the future draw Glyndŵr's helmet from the pool, expressing their conviction: 'It is a voice that can never be silenced./

It is your voice, Owain'. This change of tone, from despairing to hopeful and determined is similar to that in the final stanza of 'Colli Iaith' and Glyndŵr finally responds, declaring:

I give you my voice again:  
 Fight on. You have kept faith with me, I will  
 Keep faith with you. Wherever you strike in vengeance  
 My strength is in your arm. (*HWCP*, p. 72)

As a result the nationalists of the future, inspired, metaphorically ride off to liberate Wales, carrying Glyndŵr with them in spirit:

Owain, the rivers of Wales are numberless  
 And every river a battle, and every battle a song.  
 Our bards shall string their harps with battles and rivers  
 And you shall ride with us, fording them one by one  
 As we take them, one by one, back into our keeping. (*HWCP*, p. 72)

Unlike the earlier rising, however, they will succeed. Therefore, Glyndŵr can be seen as a hero who can inspire the generations that come after him to fight for Wales as he did. Eventually, those inspired by him will succeed.

\*\*\*

To conclude, many aspects of resistance literature can be seen in Webb's work. He wrote tirelessly for his nation, calling for resistance and attempted to unite his people as a nation and to educate and inspire them by recovering their history. Moreover, he was accessible and popular and thus able to communicate his ideas and passion on a wide scale. His resistance was open – any who were prepared to work for the good of Wales were welcome. Many of these attributes will be seen in Albert Sánchez Piñol's work considered in the next chapter.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Meic Stephens, 'Introduction', *No Half-Way House: Harri Webb Selected Political Journalism*, ed. Meic Stephens (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 1997), pp. 11–24 (p. 12).
- <sup>2</sup> 'After seven years of vigorous propagandizing in the industrial valleys, the Welsh Republican Movement felt that its mission was largely accomplished within the limitations of its capacities. Plaid Cymru had become much more

- of the left, had learned to communicate with industrial workers, was not so obsessed with the language issue, was altogether more political and realistic. Most Republicans now felt they could join Plaid Cymru with a clear conscience.' Harri Webb, 'Reactions to a Non-Event', in *No Half-Way House*, pp. 300–7 (p. 304).
- <sup>3</sup> See for example, 'Alien Rule the Road to Ruin', in *No Half-Way House*, pp. 155–8; 'The Green Gold of Wales', in *No Half-Way House*, pp.136–40; 'Tory War on Wales', in *No Half-Way House*, pp. 149–51.
- <sup>4</sup> Meic Stephens, 'Introduction', in *A Militant Muse: Harri Webb Selected Literary Journalism 1948–80*, ed. Meic Stephens (Bridgend: Seren, 1998), pp. 7–11 (p. 7).
- <sup>5</sup> Harri Webb, 'Webb's Progress (II)', in *A Militant Muse*, pp. 196–204 (p. 198).
- <sup>6</sup> Apart from the short but informative book by Brian Morris in the Writers of Wales series (Brian Morris, *Harri Webb* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1993)), there are only a handful of articles dealing with Webb's life and work and the majority of these are quite brief. Moreover, with the exception of Meic Stephens's introductions to *No Half-Way House* and *A Militant Muse*, all the critical articles focus on the poetry rather than the prose, though Nicholas Jones does incorporate some of the prose into his examination of the images of struggle and violence in Webb's poetry (Nicholas Jones, 'Supercharging the Struggle: Models of Nationalist Victory in the Poetry of Harri Webb', *Welsh Writing in English: A Yearbook of Critical Essays*, 9 (2004), 102–22). Likewise, Elidir Jones discusses both genres in the chapter of his thesis that compares Webb with the Scottish poet Hugh MacDiarmid (Elidir Jones, 'Nationalism and Welsh Writing in Comparative Contexts, 1925–1966' (unpublished PhD. thesis, Cardiff University, 2011), 110–44) but with the exception of these two works and Morris's book the focus is very much on Webb's poetry.
- <sup>7</sup> Nigel Jenkins, 'The Poetry of Harri Webb', *Planet*, 83 (October/November 1990), 24–8 (25).
- <sup>8</sup> Belinda Humfrey, 'Harri Webb in "The Wrong Language"' *The Anglo-Welsh Review*, 21 (1972), 9–17.
- <sup>9</sup> Humfrey 'The Wrong Language', p. 9.
- <sup>10</sup> Humfrey, 'The Wrong Language', p. 9.
- <sup>11</sup> Humfrey, 'The Wrong Language', p. 17.
- <sup>12</sup> C. B. O'Neill, 'Harri Webb and Nationalist Poetry', *The Anglo-Welsh Review*, 65 (1979), 90–9.
- <sup>13</sup> Meic Stephens, 'Introduction', *A Militant Muse*, p. 11.
- <sup>14</sup> Sally Roberts Jones, 'A Matter of Choices: the Poetry of Harri Webb', *Poetry Wales*, 26.2 (1990), 27–30 (27).
- <sup>15</sup> Roberts Jones, 'A Matter of Choices', p. 27.
- <sup>16</sup> These terms obviously mean different things to different people. 'Direct action' was used by its proponents in Wales like Mudiad Amddiffyn Cymru to mean unconstitutional methods of protest such as vandalism and the use of explosives to damage property but that did not endanger human life. This book will use their term 'direct action' to refer to such methods while violence will mean deliberate violence against human life.
- <sup>17</sup> John Humphries, *Freedom Fighters*, p. 28.

- <sup>18</sup> Nicholas Jones, 'Supercharging the Struggle', 102–22.
- <sup>19</sup> See for example the third verse of his poem 'The Disclaimers': 'When valiant Welshmen had a try / To blow the aqueduct sky-high,' *Harri Webb Collected Poems*, ed. Meic Stephens (Llandysul: Gomer, 1995), p. 40, and the articles 'Emyr Llew Has Gone to Prison', in *No Half-Way House*, pp. 246–51, and 'The Breed of the Sparrowhawk', in *No Half-Way House*, pp. 210–14. After his death it was discovered that he had been involved in direct action himself to some extent – he had provided MAC activists with safe houses, beds and food and acted as the group's contact with Breton nationalists. He also designed the White Eagle badge used by the Free Wales Army. John Humphries, p. 68; Wyn Thomas, *Hands Off Wales*, pp. 31, 193.
- <sup>20</sup> John Humphries, *Freedom Fighters*, pp. vii, 6.
- <sup>21</sup> Gweriniaethwr, *The Young Republicans: A record of the Welsh Republican Movement – Mudiad Gweriniaethol Cymru* (Llanrwst: Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, 1996), p. 44.
- <sup>22</sup> It is true that later in his life Webb became disillusioned with the actions of the majority of Welsh people, and with the Welsh cause, leading him to declare in a 1985 interview with Mario Basini that he would not write another word in English, implying that he was completely fed up with it as a language. Morris, however, opines that not too much should be made of these statements: 'Harri Webb was in very poor health at the time, and it may well be that he said things, for dramatic effect, which he would not otherwise have said' (Morris, *Harri Webb*, p. 102). In any case, all the writing discussed in this chapter precedes that interview. The fact that Webb later became disillusioned with his nationalist project does not mean that he was not fully committed to it at the time; nor does it adversely affect the power of that project.
- <sup>23</sup> These letters to the everyman citizen of Wales appeared regularly in *The Welsh Republican*.
- <sup>24</sup> Harri Webb, 'Letters to Mr. Jones', in *No Half-Way House*, pp. 49–63 (p. 55).
- <sup>25</sup> Bohata, *Postcolonialism Revisited*, p. 7; Crameri, *Language, the Novelist and National Identity*, p. 118.
- <sup>26</sup> Crameri, *Language*, p. 118.
- <sup>27</sup> Webb, *No Half-Way House*, p. 55.
- <sup>28</sup> Webb, *No Half-Way House*, p. 56.
- <sup>29</sup> Webb, 'Alien Rule the Road to Ruin', in *No Half-Way House*, pp. 155–8 (p. 155). Future references in text to *No Half-Way House* (NHH).
- <sup>30</sup> Patrick Colm Hogan, *Understanding Nationalism* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2009), pp. 106–9.
- <sup>31</sup> Hogan, *Understanding Nationalism*, pp. 109–22.
- <sup>32</sup> Harri Webb, 'Against Military Conscription', in *No Half-Way House*, pp. 72–4 (p. 72).
- <sup>33</sup> Webb, 'Against Military Conscription', p. 72.
- <sup>34</sup> Several areas of Wales were compulsorily purchased for military use during the twentieth century. The area around Castlemartin in Pembrokeshire was acquired in the late 1930s and used for tank training until 1945 and then again from 1951 and is still in use today ('Castlemartin Range: How the Army use the training site', *BBC News*, 15 June 2017. Online. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-west-wales-40286831> [accessed 18 February

- 2026]). Mynydd Epynt in Powys was compulsorily purchased at very short notice in 1940, forcing the removal of an estimated 219 people and 54 farms, while another attempt to turn part of the Preseli mountains into a military range was defeated in 1947 (Bohata, pp. 82, 83, 176).
- 35 Harri Webb, 'Welsh Water for Wales', in *No Half-Way House*, pp. 144–6 (p. 144). Future references in text to *NHH*.
- 36 Webb, 'Tryweryn', in *No Half-Way House*, pp. 165–6 (pp. 165–6).
- 37 Harri Webb: *Collected Poems*, ed. Meic Stephens (Llandysul: Gomer, 1995), p. 91. Future references in text as *HWCP*. This is actually one of Webb's best-known works as it became a song that was associated with the nationalist movement.
- 38 Meic Stephens, 'Notes on the Poems', in Webb, *Collected Poems*, pp. 381–467 (p. 408).
- 39 Webb explained that 'Colli Iaith' was written as part of his response to the election of the first Plaid Cymru MP, Gwynfor Evans, in 1966 (Webb, quoted in Stephens 'Notes on the Poems', p. 408). This explains the note of hope; Webb clearly felt the tide was beginning to turn and that this election would be the start of a resurgence in Welsh culture and nationalism.
- 40 'Lesser breeds' may well be a reference to the Rudyard Kipling poem 'Recessional' that contains that phrase. Kipling is often seen as an apologist for the British Empire and 'Recessional' celebrates the British, even as it appears to abase them by praying to God for mercy and asking Him to remain with them: 'Beneath whose awful Hand we hold/ Dominion over palm and pine-/ Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,/ Lest we forget – lest we forget!' (Rudyard Kipling, *Rudyard Kipling: Selected Poems*, ed. Peter Keating (London: Penguin, 2000), pp. 81–2). This reference to Kipling strengthens Webb's sense of similarity and solidarity between Wales and the official colonies of the British Empire.
- 41 Webb, 'A Free and Independent People', in *No Half-Way House*, pp. 95–6 (p. 95).
- 42 Meic Stephens notes that: 'Despite his [Griffiths's] sympathy for the principle of self-government for Wales, he was one of the Republicans' bête-noires; they attacked him for what they saw as his sanctimonious Welsh feeling and ambivalence to the claims of Wales in the context of British politics' (Meic Stephens, 'Notes on the Poems', p. 387).
- 43 Jones, 'Supercharging the Struggle', p. 114.
- 44 Meic Stephens has noted that many of the lines in this poem echo those from another Rudyard Kipling work 'Mandalay' (Stephens, 'Notes on the Poems', p. 387), which features a British former colonial soldier longing to return to the colonies and particularly to a Burmese girl he left there (Kipling, *Selected Poems* pp. 27–9). As with 'Recessional', this strengthens Webb's poem's connection of Wales and the more traditional colonies.
- 45 Stephens, 'Notes on the Poems', p. 387.
- 46 Jones, 'Supercharging the Struggle', p. 103.
- 47 Harri Webb, 'The Saga of Welsh Resistance', in *No Half-Way House*, pp. 79–83 (p. 79). Future references in text to *NHH*.
- 48 Harri Webb, 'Owain Glyndŵr: Profligate Rebel or National Hero?', in *A Militant Muse*, pp. 72–6 (p. 75). Craig y Dorth was a 1404 battle won by

- Glyndŵr's army. Llangynidr Mountain in south Wales is the location of a cave now known as Chartist Cave, where the Chartists involved in the Newport Rising supposedly stored their weapons. The Chartists used homemade pikes among other weapons.
- <sup>49</sup> This was an attempt to blow up a pipeline at Claerwen which was the latest reservoir built by Birmingham in its Elan Valley Complex. The reservoir was opened by Queen Elizabeth II, an act that would have further infuriated Welsh nationalists. Responsibility for the attack was claimed by an organisation called Y Gweriniaethwyr/The Republicans (Humphries, *Freedom Fighters*, p. 69).
- <sup>50</sup> Harri Webb, 'We Believe in the Welsh People', in *No Half-Way House*, pp. 64–6 (p. 64).
- <sup>51</sup> Harri Webb, 'We Speak in the Name of Wales', in *No Half-Way House*, pp. 83–4 (pp. 83–4).
- <sup>52</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 27–84.
- <sup>53</sup> Amílcar Cabral, quoted in Benita Parry, 'Edward Said and Third-World Marxism', *College Literature*, 40.4 (2013), 105–26, (115–6).
- <sup>54</sup> San Juan, *Allegories of Resistance*, p. 87.
- <sup>55</sup> San Juan, *Allegories*, p. 87.
- <sup>56</sup> San Juan, *Allegories*, p. 85.
- <sup>57</sup> San Juan, *Allegories*, p. 88.
- <sup>58</sup> Harri Webb, 'The Strength of Wales', in *No Half-Way House*, pp. 134–5 (p. 135).
- <sup>59</sup> While the focus here is on the nation, it is also worth noting that this stance bears some resemblance to the resistance theory idea that all struggles are linked. It also fills, at least partially, a gap that Jane Aaron has noted in Welsh literature in both languages in the twentieth century. Aaron explains that while nineteenth-century Welsh writers, primarily in Welsh, equated abandoning the Welsh language and becoming a capitalist, in the twentieth-century there were poets who criticised the Welsh for abandoning Socialism (Idris Davies) or the Welsh language (R. S. Thomas) but not both in tandem. Aaron, 'Bardic Anti-colonialism', in Jane Aaron and Chris Williams (eds), *Postcolonial Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005), pp. 137–58 (pp. 150–1). Webb, however, frequently criticises any Welsh person who abandons either Wales (including the language – he does not require that people speak Welsh but he does expect them to respect it) or Socialism, as for him Wales is inherently Socialist. Aaron does mention Webb briefly later in the essay but focuses on his 'transnational' voice, citing his poem 'For Franz Fanon' [*sic*]. Aaron, 'Bardic Anti-colonialism', p. 155.
- <sup>60</sup> Harri Webb, 'Against Imperialism', in *No Half-Way House*, pp. 97–9 (p. 98).
- <sup>61</sup> Harri Webb, 'The Gathering Storm', in *No Half-Way House*, pp. 280–6 (p. 286).
- <sup>62</sup> Harri Webb, 'The Breed of the Sparrowhawk', in *No Half-Way House*, pp. 210–14 (p. 212). Future references in text to *NHH*.
- <sup>63</sup> San Juan, *Allegories*, p. 84.
- <sup>64</sup> See in particular Thomas Sankara, *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* (Lulu.com, 2020). This topic and Sankara's views will be discussed in more detail in the chapter on Rhys Davies and Eduardo Mendoza.

This idea is also perhaps closer to Marx's original work as Mary-Alice Walters argues that Marx was 'one of the most intransigent defenders of the fight for women's equality the world has known,' and, 'was among the first to point to the social status of women as a measure of the degree of progress of any society.' Mary-Alice Walters, 'Preface', in Sankara, *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle*, pp. 11–14 (p. 12). Therefore, the custom of ignoring women's struggles may have come in after Marx's death. Either way, the women's struggle is an important part of resistance theory.

- <sup>65</sup> Harri Webb, 'Letter to Mrs. Jones', *The Welsh Republican*, April–May 1951, p. 4.
- <sup>66</sup> Alys Thomas, "Maitres chez nous"? Awaiting the Quiet Revolution in Wales', in Jane Aaron and Chris Williams (eds), *Postcolonial Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005), pp. 85–99 (pp. 94–5).
- <sup>67</sup> Harri Webb, 'We Speak in the Name of Wales', in *No Half-Way House*, pp. 83–4 (p. 84).
- <sup>68</sup> Jenkins, 'The Poetry of Harri Webb', p. 27.
- <sup>69</sup> Harri Webb, 'The Joys of Battle', in *No Half-Way House*, pp. 189–92 (p. 190).
- <sup>70</sup> See for example Webb, 'The Green Gold of Wales', in *No Half-Way House*, p. 139.
- <sup>71</sup> Crameri, *Goodbye, Spain?*, pp. 54–60.
- <sup>72</sup> Humphries, *Freedom Fighters*, pp. 23–4.
- <sup>73</sup> Harri Webb, 'The Breed of the Sparrowhawk', in *No Half-Way House*, pp. 210–14 (p. 212). Future references in text to *No Half-Way House* (NHH).
- <sup>74</sup> Diana Boxer and Florencia Cortés-Conde, 'From bonding to biting: Conversational joking and identity display', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 27.3 (1997), 275–94 (283).
- <sup>75</sup> Hogan, *Understanding Nationalism*, p. 5.
- <sup>76</sup> Bernard Crick, 'The English and the British', in Bernard Crick (ed.), *National Identities: The Constitution of the United Kingdom* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), pp. 90–104 (p. 91).
- <sup>77</sup> Kenneth Burke cited in Peter Suwarno, 'Depiction of Common Enemies in Religious Speech: The Role of the Rhetoric of Identification and Purification in Indonesian Religious Conflicts', *Walisongo: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan*, 21.1 (2014), 1–18 (1).
- <sup>78</sup> Webb, 'The Only Way', in *No Half-Way House*, pp. 273–9 (p. 278).
- <sup>79</sup> 'There is just one party, when it comes down to essentials, the English party. It calls itself by different names, Conservative, Labour, Liberal, but it stands for the same thing in the end.' Webb, 'The Future of Wales is in Our Hands', in *No Half-Way House*, p. 346.
- <sup>80</sup> Interestingly, in *Decolonising the Mind*, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o accused the European colonising powers of operating a 'divide-and-rule' policy in Africa. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (London: J. Currey, 1986), pp. 1, 66. The articles quoted above pre-date this book so Webb cannot have used it as a direct source but the similarity of the idea links him to other, better known, resistance writers.
- <sup>81</sup> Boxer and Cortés-Conde, 'From bonding to boxing', p. 276.
- <sup>82</sup> Stephens, 'Notes on the Poems', p. 386.

- <sup>83</sup> Harri Webb, 'The Babes in Milk Wood', in *A Militant Muse*, pp. 15–20 (p. 15). Future references in text to *A Militant Muse* (*AMM*).
- <sup>84</sup> Webb, 'Letter to Gwilym Prys Davies', in *No Half-Way House*, pp. 225–45 (p. 227).
- <sup>85</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 151.
- <sup>86</sup> Morris, *Harri Webb*, p. 48.
- <sup>87</sup> Morris, *Harri Webb*, p. 57; Roberts Jones, p. 28; Mercer Simpson, 'Harri Webb, Poetic Canvasser or Rebel Joker?', *Welsh Review*, 23.2–3 (1988), 37–40 (p. 37).
- <sup>88</sup> Morris, *Harri Webb*, p. 57.
- <sup>89</sup> Meic Stephens, 'The Garth Newydd Years', *Planet*, 83 (October/November 1990), 18–23 (23); Mario Basini, *Real Merthyr* (Bridgend: Seren, 2008), p. 147. Technically Basini calls him, 'a people's poet' as well as 'the people's bard', but the meaning in all three cases is the same.
- <sup>90</sup> Morris, *Harri Webb*, p. 58.
- <sup>91</sup> Harri Webb, 'Webb's Progress (*I*)', in *A Militant Muse*, pp. 162–71 (p. 165).
- <sup>92</sup> Jenkins, 'The Poetry of Harri Webb', p. 24.
- <sup>93</sup> Wole Soyinka, quoted in San Juan, *Hegemony and Strategies of Transgression*, p. 209.
- <sup>94</sup> Ivor Huw Wilks, 'Harri's Web', *Planet*, 83 (October/November 1990), 13–17 (15).
- <sup>95</sup> Wilks, 'Harri's Web', p. 14.
- <sup>96</sup> M. Wynn Thomas, *Corresponding Cultures*, p. 55.
- <sup>97</sup> Morris, *Harri Webb*, pp. 32–3.
- <sup>98</sup> Harri Webb, *Dic Penderyn and the Merthyr Rising of 1831* (Swansea: Gwasg Penderyn, 1956), p. 3.
- <sup>99</sup> Webb, *Dic Penderyn*, p. 13.
- <sup>100</sup> There is an interesting similarity here with the language and imagery of a poem by Pádraic Pearse written in prison shortly before his execution for his part in the Easter Rising. The poem is entitled 'A Mother Speaks' and begins: 'Dear Mary, that didst see thy first-born Son/ Go forth to die amid the scorn of men/ For whom he died,/ Receive my first-born son into thy arms,/ Who also hath gone out to die for men'. Pádraic Pearse, quoted in Tim Pat Coogan, *1916: The Easter Rising* (London: Phoenix, 2005), p. 163. It is known that Webb admired the Irish revolutionaries of 1916 and was familiar with Pearse's doctrine of 'blood sacrifice' so this may be a conscious or semi-conscious echoing.
- <sup>101</sup> Morris, *Harri Webb*, p. 34.
- <sup>102</sup> Webb, *Dic Penderyn*, p. 3.
- <sup>103</sup> Stephens, 'Introduction', *No Half-Way House*, p. 15.
- <sup>104</sup> Webb, 'Glorious Figures from our Past – Ieuan Gwynedd', quoted in *The Young Republicans*, p. 165.
- <sup>105</sup> Webb, 'Glorious Figures from our Past – Zephaniah Williams', quoted in *The Young Republicans*, p. 167.
- <sup>106</sup> Webb, 'Glorious Figures from our Past – George Shell', *The Welsh Republican*, February–March 1956, p. 4.
- <sup>107</sup> Webb, 'An Old and Haughty Nation Proud in Arms', in *No Half-Way House*, pp. 87–9 (p. 88).

This page intentionally left blank

‘THE DARKER OUR TWILIGHT HOURS,  
THE MORE BLESSED WILL BE THE DAWN OF  
THOSE WHO WILL COME AFTER US’:  
CATALONIA, THE NATION THAT WAS  
AND THE STATE THAT WILL BE

INTRODUCTION

The Catalan author Albert Sánchez Piñol has already been introduced briefly in a theoretical context. We will now turn our attention to his historical novel *Victus*, which provides an interesting case study with regards to the language issues of Catalonia. Sánchez Piñol had already produced several successful works in Catalan, when, in 2012, he published *Victus*, a historical novel about the fall of Barcelona and the subsequent oppression of the Catalans and their national identity at the end of the War of Spanish Succession in 1714. *Victus* recounts these events from a distinctly pro-Catalan point of view. However, it is written not in Catalan, the language of the nation that it celebrates, but in Spanish, the language of the state, indeed empire, that it frequently denounces. This point is worth reiterating – a successful Catalan-language novelist switched to writing in Spanish to produce a novel about possibly the most evocative moment in Catalan history, a moment that is still commemorated today in Catalonia’s national day.<sup>1</sup>

Authors who change their writing language from Catalan to Spanish are usually heavily criticised, and frequently shunned, by the Catalan literary establishment and media. They are accused of

treachery and of mercenary behaviour – there is of course a much wider readership for Spanish books than Catalan texts. Thus any Catalan writer switching to Spanish is likely to be accused of betraying the Catalan tradition for selfish gain. They cannot even argue, as some of those who have always written in Spanish have, that they do not possess sufficient command of the language to write in it,<sup>2</sup> as their earlier work disproves this.

Kathryn Crameri notes that, compared to many other writers who have made this switch, 'Sánchez Piñol seems to have got away remarkably unscathed'.<sup>3</sup> However, an interview with the book's editor, Isabel Martí, where she defends Sánchez Piñol's choice, suggests that these issues were at least raised. The introduction to the interview notes that '[t]he fact that it has been written in Spanish has created a fuss',<sup>4</sup> and explains that this is why they are talking to the editor. In the interview Martí fervently defends her author. She admits that she was extremely surprised when he informed her that he was writing in Spanish, and claims that she does not entirely understand his reasons, but asserts that his motivation will not be financial: 'If Albert has written a book about 1714 in Spanish then it is not for reasons of advancement or financial gain. One can like it or not, but to look for reasons of personal interest or gain is wrong and unjust.'<sup>5</sup> The fact that she felt the need to say this suggests that accusations of self-interest were being made. Sánchez Piñol may not have remained completely 'unscathed'. However it is certainly true that he does not seem to have been vilified in the same way writers like Terenci Moix (who also switched from Catalan to Spanish) were. Inge Heeringa's study of the press coverage surrounding the release of *Victus* finds several articles where the language choice is mentioned and some where it is puzzled over, but none that are really condemnatory.<sup>6</sup> Crameri suggests:

This could be partly because, as the author himself puts it, 'It's not about preaching to the converted: this novel might make Spain aware of facts of which it is ignorant' [...] Since translations from Catalan to Spanish often fare poorly [...] writing the novel directly in Spanish might be seen as a legitimate way of reaching a broader audience.<sup>7</sup>

By revealing a Catalan perspective to modern-day Spaniards, *Victus* as a Spanish-language text can be said to be performing something of an ambassadorial role for Catalonia and thus to justify the language of its writing.<sup>8</sup>

This broader audience need not be limited to Spain. *Victus* could be seen as presenting Catalonia's historic struggles to the wider world. The author stated that international readers would read the novel 'from the historical perspective of the Catalan side'.<sup>9</sup> Thus *Victus* can be seen as addressing a global audience and trying to counter the more dominant Spanish perspective by establishing the Catalans as a distinct people, separate from the rest of Spain.<sup>10</sup> *Victus* could be considered, therefore, as an attempt to perform the function that San Juan describes as 'speaking truth to power'; that is, recounting the sufferings of the oppressed to their oppressor, and to a wider audience, in a search for justice and/or dialogue.

However, it appears that Sánchez Piñol's primary audience is Catalan, although not necessarily Catalan-speaking. While Catalan is widely spoken in Catalonia, it is not universal. At the same time as 'making Spain aware' of certain facts, then, *Victus* brings the heroism of the 1714 resistance to non-Catalan-speaking Catalans. In an interview given just after the publication of the book, Sánchez Piñol pointed out that: 'The demonstration on September 11th [in favour of independence] was full of Spanish speakers'.<sup>11</sup> This tallies with his work for *Súmate* – the organisation that campaigns for Catalan independence through the medium of Spanish. He would thus seem to be committed to spreading Catalan ideals in Spanish as well as Catalan,<sup>12</sup> for there is no doubt that *Victus* can be seen as a text of Catalan resistance.<sup>13</sup> It could even be argued that it fits Harlow's original definition of resistance literature – a text produced as part of an independence movement. Written in 2012 when the independence movement in Catalonia was gathering force, and two years before the unofficial independence vote in the tricentennial year of the fall of Barcelona, *Victus*, it could be argued, was created not just in the context of that independence movement, but as a part of it, seeking to mobilise the Catalan people to work for independence. It therefore has two aims: to recover the Catalan side of a history told normally by Spain, and to inspire support for independence.

If Sánchez Piñol is writing to educate – to inform the Catalan people of their heroic past and the Spanish people of past injustices and atrocities committed by their state – then *Victus* is clearly an alternative history, one that resists the established Castilian Spanish order by showing all of Spain's inhabitants a different version of historical events. As discussed in the previous chapter, recovering the lost history of a people and producing an alternative narrative to that

of the dominant culture is a vital part of resistance to hegemony. Due to the varying possibilities and limitations inherent in different forms, a novel will do this in different ways to Webb's articles and poems. However, many similarities with Webb's work can be found in *Victus*, with Sánchez Piñol hinting at or illustrating the claims that Webb makes outright.

A historical novel would seem to be an ideal way of producing an alternative history. The novel is a popular form and likely to be widely read. Finnish author Väinö Linna points out that: 'The so-called general public does not read actual history to any significant extent, but instead, draws more of its knowledge and understanding of it via other historical writings, such as fiction and other similar publications'.<sup>14</sup> Accessibility and popular appeal are important when it comes to informing the public. In addition to its other features, *Victus* is a very readable text with an engrossing narrative and interesting characters. The fact that it has been translated into thirty-seven different languages and has sold millions of copies worldwide emphasises its popularity. Moreover, a well-written novel does not appear didactic in the way that polemical journalism can and is therefore perhaps more likely to find a wider receptive audience.

The historical novel, particularly in recent times, has often sought to recount untold histories. As Jerome de Groot explains, 'historical fiction has been used to quarrel with particular historical narratives' and 'can report from places made marginal and present a dissident or dissenting account of the past', relating narratives that counter those of mainstream history.<sup>15</sup> Moreover: 'Historical novels have often been used to reinsert communities into the past, rescuing them from the marginal positions to which they have consciously been consigned'.<sup>16</sup> *Victus* certainly does this. It recounts the resistance and fall of Barcelona, events often given very little coverage in mainstream Spanish history, showing the heroism of the Catalan people, their betrayal by the other Allied powers, and the cruelties inflicted upon them in defeat. The novel thus 'quarrels' with established historical accounts and 'reinserts' the Catalan people and their history 'into the past'.

In addition to quarrelling with established narratives and retelling those that are less known, Harlow claims that many resistance works 'seek different historical endings'.<sup>17</sup> This suggestion fits well with Kathryn Crameri's argument that *Victus* is an attempt to speak of a Catalan state, albeit subtly, to its twenty-first century audience.

She claims that while the Catalans did not participate in the War of Spanish Succession in order to obtain a state, *Victus* is nevertheless hinting at the possibility of a Catalan state. Using Max Weber's definition of the state as the sole legitimate wielder of force, she argues that the gradual channelling of the violent actions of individuals like the protagonist Martí Zuviría and the bandit-like guerrilla Miquelets into the service of a collective suggests preparation for the formation of a state.<sup>18</sup> If *Victus* can be seen as speaking, however subtly, of a Catalan state then it is certainly seeking a different historical ending and one that has crucial overtones for the present day. Rather than continue to be subjugated by Castile/Spain, the Catalans can win independence and form their own state. The chance that was lost with the defeat of 1714 has returned and can now be taken. In an interview prior to the 2014 independence vote, Sánchez Piñol appeared to support this interpretation saying: '1714 is the great turning point in the narrative of the history of Catalonia [...] now, precisely, we are about to arrive at the second turning point in the narrative [...] and I hope it turns out well this time.'<sup>19</sup> Consequently, *Victus* can be seen as a subtle but highly radical resistance text. By speaking of a Catalan state, however indirectly, it is aligning itself with the independence movement and committing what many Spaniards would see as treason.

Before beginning a closer examination of the text, a summary of the plot may be useful. *Victus*'s protagonist is the young Catalan Martí Zuviría, son of a wealthy citizen of Barcelona. Zuviría was a real historical character about whom little is known. In accounts of the war he is described as an *aide-de-camp* to the leader of the Catalan forces defending Barcelona, Antonio de Villarroya, and he escaped to Vienna after the fall of Barcelona.<sup>20</sup> The novel's narrator is the elderly Zuviría, dictating his memories of the war to an Austrian scribe.

The young Zuviría is sent by his father to study in France. Having been expelled from school he does not dare return home, instead going to study military engineering under the French royal engineer, Vauban. Despite a shaky start he becomes a talented pupil, and adores Vauban. He is devastated when his master sickens and on his deathbed sets Martí a final test – asking him to sum up the optimum defence of a fortress in one word – which he is unable to pass. Martí spends the rest of the novel searching for this word.

He gains a commission in the French king's army and fights in support of the French Philip's claim to the Spanish throne, against the majority of his fellow Catalans. He is disturbed by the effects the war

has on the Catalan countryside and people but continues to regard his role as that of a paid professional. He does an occasional good deed; he shelters a girl named Amelis from rape and attempts to protect Anfán and Nan – the strange pair of orphaned child and dwarf who run wild in the army camp. He finally leaves the army and returns to Barcelona to discover that his father has died and relatives have taken over his house. He is forced to live with Peret, his father's old servant, and is soon joined there by Anfán, Nan and Amelis. Gradually the unlikely group becomes a family.

Martí leaves Barcelona briefly to fight, now on the side of the Austrian Charles (the other contender for the Spanish throne). He reaches Madrid where he encounters General Antonio de Villarroya, the Castilian who is to become his mentor and who will later lead the forces defending Barcelona. Though unimpressed with Martí's cowardice and self-interest, Villarroya in a way adopts him, challenging him in order to develop his character. Martí comes to see Villarroya as almost a replacement for Vauban, and hopes Villarroya may be able to teach him the answer he so desperately seeks. On the way back to Barcelona, Villarroya is captured when he refuses to leave his injured men but, seeing Martí's fear, gives him an honourable way out by sending him ahead with a message. Later, Villarroya is released and arrives in Barcelona where he is employed by the Generalitat to lead the defence of the city. Martí offers his services, which Villarroya initially turns down, but Martí insists on being allowed to defend his home and, seeing this change of attitude, Villarroya relents. The rest of the novel recounts the preparations for the siege and the siege itself, focusing on the collective heroism and resistance of the people of Barcelona and Martí's growing understanding of why people are fighting, as his bond with his adopted family deepens. The novel ends on 11 September, the day of the fall of Barcelona. Martí loses his entire family and is gravely injured in the last assault, but finally realises what the word is and what he has to do in defence of his city – 'You must give your whole self' (*Victus*, p. 530) (in Spanish this is one word: 'Dese'). Despite the defeat, the novel ends on a note of hope and defiance.

As may be gleaned from the above summary, Martí is far removed from the archetypal hero, being self-interested and cowardly. He appears to have little feeling for either Barcelona or Catalonia. Although he always refers to himself as a Catalan, he is ready to make jokes and disparaging remarks about his countrymen. After

the death of his mentor Vauban he enlists in the Bourbon army and fights against his fellow Catalans. He is distressed by the ravages of war he sees in parts of the country but has no desire to switch sides; indeed, as Crameri points out, ‘Martí spends most of his time trying to avoid the fighting and have an easy life’<sup>21</sup> – though of course he does not succeed. He seems happy to place his own good above that of others and of his nation. Even by ordinary standards he could not be regarded as a particularly moral person and certainly he is no noble hero. So why does *Victus*, an apparently revolutionary pro-Catalan text, have such a figure as its protagonist?

Despite first appearances, the nature of the protagonist is an effective choice by Sánchez Piñol; one that, far from adversely effecting *Victus*’s project as a text of Catalan resistance, actually enhances it. Martí is an everyman character, far easier for the majority of readers to identify with than an archetypal hero. Martí’s development, from self-interested coward to reluctant but still-valiant defender of Barcelona, will resonate far more than the heroic actions of some remote, noble, knight errant figure who has never been anything other than perfect. In addition to the normal literary benefits of having an identifiable protagonist, this has the potential to inspire the book’s Catalan readers, to show them that they too, if called upon, could rise to the occasion and fight for their nation. *Victus* is in many ways the story of how ordinary people are driven to do such things. Anyone can and will sacrifice for their country. This was of great relevance at the time of the novel’s publication with the independence movement needing to mobilise the Catalan people. They may not have had to physically fight to keep the enemy out, but the independence movement was (and is) still a struggle, requiring people to support it and work for it, even to suffer for it. Five years later, several people would be injured on the day of the referendum in 2017 as they fought their way to the polling stations, insisting on their right to vote. Some would be imprisoned for organising peaceful protests and cultural events in favour of independence. Martí’s story is an inspiration to modern-day Catalans, showing that even those who believe themselves to be cowardly can overcome this.

### CATALAN NATIONAL TRADITIONS

At the time of the War of Spanish Succession the crowns of Castile and Aragon (which included Catalonia) had been united for over two

hundred years, though they continued to operate independently, pursuing their own policies and maintaining their own economies, until the end of the sixteenth century. Thus, during the period depicted in *Victus* the majority of people inside and outside of Spain would have considered Catalonia as part of Spain, and, consequently, Catalans fighting against the Castilian-backed candidate to the throne, particularly after the Treaty of Utrecht had supposedly ended the war and placed Philip on the throne, would be seen as rebels. Indeed, at one point reference is made to a Castilian document that describes the Catalans as 'rebels'. However, *Victus* represents them as fighting in defence of their nation, which is separate from Castile, and their traditional rights and freedoms. One of the ways in which it does this is by inserting particular Catalan customs into the text to indicate Catalan national distinctness. Catalonia's customs are used to validate the national character of the region to those who would deny it, as well as to show what the Catalans were fighting for.

One of the most important of the Catalan traditions mentioned in the novel is its Parliament. This comes to prominence in the scenes dealing with the debate as to whether to surrender or to continue to resist. These debates are held in front of spectators watching and heckling, though only actual members of the Parliament can vote. However, the spectators can sway the actions of the Parliament, as in the scene where Martí has an accidental role in tipping the balance towards resistance. His demands for personal justice are interpreted as demands for justice for Catalonia. The spectators rise up in support of him, demanding that the Parliament publish the *Crida* – the Catalan call to arms – and ultimately the Parliament is forced to accede to their request. This is an example of democracy in action, the government being swayed by the will of the people, and democracy is integral to Catalan ideas about their nation. It is important to note that the Parliament is not idealised in *Victus*. There is corruption within its ranks; Peret is paid by one member to support his opinions from the floor. But it is at least a fledgling democracy; representatives of the people decide together what should be done rather than follow the orders of a king. Thus, Catalonia is established as a traditionally democratic nation; this both differentiates it from Castile and suggests the possibility of a modern-day Catalan state that would be equally democratic.

Many of the Catalan traditions described in *Victus* are related to the military and defence. Even those that were not so originally like

the masía, the traditional Catalan farmhouse, have become so. Martí describes these houses as ‘miniature fortresses’ and explains how they could defend their surroundings (*Victus*, p. 191). This suggests a people frequently under attack, but also one capable of defending itself and fighting back. Indeed, Martí and his companions do set up to defend themselves against a band of the guerrilla Miquelot fighters, though in the end they are not attacked. This short description of the farmhouses can be seen to reveal quite a lot about Catalonia and the Catalans of the time. They also carry an echo of Webb’s depictions of the Welsh constantly resisting English dominance. Here is one example of the Catalan novelist illustrating what the Welsh journalist states – their nations have had to struggle constantly for their existence.

More central to the novel, and more definitely martial, is the Crida. The Crida is, as Martí explains, ‘the legal call to arms. Only the *Crida* had the sacrosanct power to call up Catalan adults in defense of the country’ (*Victus*, p. 276). This carries echoes of Weber’s definition of the state as the sole legitimate wielder of violence. Here, the Catalan Parliament must publish the Crida in order for violence to be legal, the control of legitimised violence is thus in the hands of the Parliament. Following Weber’s theory this would suggest that they were the government of a state not just a region and so this can be seen as another of Sánchez Piñol’s attempts to speak subtly of a Catalan state.

The Crida is crucial in other ways. The debates in Parliament about whether to submit or resist focus on its publishing or otherwise. People waiting outside the Parliament call for it. And when the Parliament tips in favour of resisting, a nobleman demands that the Crida is written out and published on the spot. The man who carries the paper on which it is written is borne out shoulder-high into the street and cheered. It becomes an almost sacred object which bonds the Catalan people. Even the cowardly and cynical Martí is moved by the language of the Crida:

I remember that there were just two sentences. The first of them, to my mind, being the most exquisite, limpid, and beautiful yet written in the Catalan language.

Having on this sixth day of the present month advised this city council to resolve to defend the Liberties, Privileges and Prerogatives of the Catalan people, which our ancestors gloriously achieved at the cost of their own blood, we shall on the ninth day of the present month make order of the public proclamation for our defence. (*Victus*, pp. 286–7)

Through its links to the past, to the rights of the Catalan people, and through the very language in which it is written (in the original Spanish novel, this extract from the *Crida* is written in Catalan), this short act expresses the will of a nation to fight and to continue as a nation. It is thus central to the status of Catalonia as a nation.

The Catalan language itself is probably the most important Catalan tradition and this makes repeated appearances in the novel. At one point Martí is reading a book in order to fill in the gaps in his Spanish. This is a stark reminder that although the text recounts his words in Spanish, that is not his native language. Despite speaking French, Latin and possibly other languages in addition to his native Catalan, Martí does not have complete command of the language of the kingdom in which he supposedly lives. To some Spaniards this might seem both inconceivable and disgraceful. This fact establishes Catalonia as a nation in its own right that has its own language – a nation where knowledge of Spanish is secondary and, for many people, unnecessary.

The language can also be used to mark Catalonia's difference in the presence of representatives of other nations, and even allows for subterfuge. When the Bourbon forces take the village of Beceite, they need Martí to translate for the captured prisoner they want to interrogate, which allows Martí to try to help the prisoner, suggesting he give false information in order to prolong his life. The language both marks Catalan difference and provides them with a means to resist the dominant power.

### CATALONIA VERSUS CASTILE

Catalonia is not constructed merely as a separate nation to Castile. Throughout the novel, Catalonia and Castile are set up as complete opposites, very different in character and frequently clashing with each other. In doing this, Sánchez Piñol is displaying the 'binarism' that During claimed was rejected by orthodox postcolonial theory, and revealing that encounters between the two nations were very much 'antagonistic' rather than 'agonistic'. Castile is seen as a foreign land, as demonstrated by a reference to the survivors of a defeated town being 'deported to Castile' (*Victus*, p. 120). Deported definitely implies removal to a foreign land, one alien to the deportee, rather than movement within the same land. Thus, this short phrase reveals that the narrator thinks of Castile as another country. Castile and

Aragon (including Catalonia) may have been officially united for over two hundred years, but it is clear that many in Catalonia do not feel part of the same land as Castile.

Moreover, *Victus* presents the Catalans as not merely separate from but very different to the Castilians. This is stated outright during Martí's summary of the war: 'Catalonia and Castile had opposed mentalities' (*Victus*, p. 101). Consequently they are not merely separate and different, but at war.<sup>22</sup> This reality, though, is not understood by outsiders:

They're all the same, these foreign generals, they never get it. They didn't want to acknowledge that Castile and Catalonia were at war in just the same way as France and England; that Spain was a name that hid a reality more powerful than politics, trade, and even, if I may say so, common sense. A pitched battle between two opposing ways of understanding the world, life, everything.

[...]

The English might come to accept a French dynasty reigning in London, or the French an English dynasty in Paris. The Madrileños would never put up with Charles as their king, never, and not because he was Austrian but because he was king of the Catalans. (*Victus*, p. 222)

This passage does several things. Firstly, by comparing the situation between Catalonia and Castile to that between England and France, the narrator is placing all the nations mentioned on the same level, implying Catalonia and Castile are separate nations in the same way that England and France are. However, as he goes on to explain, they are grouped together in the minds of foreigners under the heading of the umbrella term 'Spain'. This could perhaps be directed not just at eighteenth-century foreigners but also at certain inhabitants of twenty-first century Spain who consider Castilian/Spanish the country's sole and natural culture and mode of expression, and are either unaware of, or choose to ignore, the existence of different nationalities and cultures within the borders of the state.

Secondly, the passage shows that the war between Catalonia and Castile is more than just a matter of supporting rival candidates for the throne. The two peoples look at everything very differently even though it may at times seem illogical. Finally, the passage stresses the depth of feeling surrounding these differences and their apparently irreconcilable nature. Saying that the English were more likely to accept French rulers and vice versa, which though it had happened in

the past would have been unpopular at the time, shows just how fierce the mutual hatred of Catalonia and Castile was. This is also emphasised by the repetition of 'never', reinforcing not just the strength of the feeling but the unlikelihood of it ending. Catalonia and Castile are two different kingdoms and two different ways of life and therefore it is not surprising that they support different candidates to the throne of Spain.

These different ways of life are depicted at various points in the novel. At the beginning of the second part, the protagonist returns to Barcelona and describes it, ostensibly for the benefit of readers who do not know the city. This description, however, is full of comparisons with Castile. For example, while describing Barcelona's frequent festivals and carnivals, Martí notes:

Barcelona's festivals and carnivals were spoken of the world over. Those carnivals! The Castilian aristocrats, all so chaste, would return from their visits scandalized. Rich and poor out on the streets, men and women all together in a throng and dancing till the early hours. Just appalling. To a Castilian nobleman, clothing had to be one colour only: the severest black. [...] It was the opposite in Barcelona [...] the more money you had, the more colors you would flaunt in your attire and at the dances. (*Victus*, p. 171)

Catalonia and Castile are shown to be polar opposites. Castile is represented as dull and drab; Catalonia is colourful and unrestricted by rigid proprieties. The latter is certainly portrayed as the more attractive place to live. Most interesting though is the aspect of the festivities that seems to most scandalise Castilians – the mingling of the sexes and of rich and poor that occurs during these times. Barcelona's festivities are democratic and inclusive; everyone takes part and, for that time at least, is considered equal. The fact that this is scandalous to Castilians implies that their land is one of rigid hierarchy and division between classes and sexes. Catalonia, on the other hand, is democratic. The narrator recounts an anecdote from medieval times of a Castilian princess who, coming to live in Catalonia after marriage, is horrified to find her servants talking back to her. When she complains to her husband, he tells her there is nothing he can do as the people of Catalonia are free (*Victus*, pp. 101–2). The narrator admits this may be apocryphal but sees it as useful in depicting the differences between Catalan and Castilian society.

The highlighting of this difference helps Catalonia to appear both different to Castile and more attractive. Moreover, it is based on historical fact to some extent. According to Lourdes Gabikagojeaskoa, Castile was known throughout the rest of Spain and Europe in medieval times for being a rigidly feudal society, though it became a little more flexible as a result of repopulation following the Reconquista. In Catalonia on the other hand, society developed differently and the status of the ordinary people was enhanced, moving towards a more democratic form of representation than in Castile.<sup>23</sup>

Perhaps the passage that shows most clearly the difference in the Catalan and Castilian outlooks is the argument Martí has with his former friend Diego Zúñiga. While in Madrid Martí discovers that Zúñiga has been distributing pamphlets that tell lies about atrocities committed by Catalans. Their subsequent argument is intense and lays out the opposing priorities and world-views held by Catalans and Castilians respectively. Zúñiga extols the glories of the Castilian empire. Martí, on the other hand, decries it:

Oh empire, empire... What have you gained by conquering a world? The American Indians hate you; your European neighbors don't envy you, just hold you in contempt, and maintaining that myriad of possessions overseas has ruined Castile's exchequer. (*Victus*, p. 227)

Here, the Castilian is shown to be a greedy imperialist, while the Catalan is shown as almost dismissive of empire. This is not exactly an anticolonial position as Martí is arguing as much that empire is harmful for Castile as that it is morally wrong, but certainly his viewpoint is completely opposed to Zúñiga's. He also mentions the 'American Indians', perhaps suggesting a link between them and the Catalans as peoples that have been oppressed by Castile. Zúñiga does not even address this part of Martí's argument, which may imply that he and Castile consider the views of the 'American Indians' irrelevant, displaying an arrogance typical of a coloniser.

Later in the passage, Martí tries to get Zúñiga to see the futility of war and the hollowness of the ideas of martial glory:

Maybe what's incomprehensible is measuring honor in terms of a hunger for war. That road has led you to nothing but defeat and bankruptcy. Every prosperous nation flows with money and sweat, not weapons and gunpowder. [...] Every ship that is filled with cannons instead of barrels is one more ship lost to trade; every regiment trained and armed,

an industry wasted. At least that is what my own fellow citizens feel. (*Victus*, p. 228)

There is something of the stereotypical money-loving Catalan in this argument, as Zúñiga is quick to point out: 'I understand now [...] Greatness doesn't move you, only riches' (*Victus*, p. 228). While stereotypes of both nations are underlined here, the Catalan way of pragmatism and trade appears more attractive and sensible than the Castilian hunger for glory, particularly to modern readers.

The argument also underlines the fact that the two worldviews are not merely different but mutually incomprehensible and irreconcilable. Both men use the word incomprehensible and are clearly talking at cross purposes most of the time. In the course of the argument, Martí attempts to make Zúñiga see the extent of Castilian imposition upon Catalonia by asking him to imagine the situation reversed:

Because what you people call unity is in truth oppression! Tell me: Would you move the court to Barcelona? Would you allow Castile to be ruled by Catalan kings? Your ministers to be chosen from among Catalan government ministers alone? Would you like the idea of your villages and towns occupied by Catalan troops, having to bear them, take them into your homes, offer them up your wives? (*Victus*, p. 227)

Zúñiga, however, is unmoved. He expresses the typical imperial philosophy: 'Natural law dictates that big will consume small, the weak yield to the strong', before insisting: 'Despite everything, that is not Castile's position. You could be a privileged part of a whole, and instead you choose to be less than nothing' (*Victus*, pp. 227–8). Zúñiga cannot understand the Catalans' desire to be separate, for him it makes sense for the smaller Catalonia to join willingly with the larger, more powerful Castile. Both could benefit from this union. What Martí does not point out, though he could, is that such a union would always be on Castile's terms and that it would be a far-from-equal partnership. Catalonia would be benefited only indirectly and only when it suited Castile – if their interests were to clash it would always be Castile that was favoured. This indirect argument for Catalan freedom and separatism resonates today as pro-independence parties argue that Catalonia would fare better outside of Spain.

A more subtle and less heated comparison of Catalonia and Castile's contrasting worldviews can be found in Martí's comment on the number of families of foreign origin in Barcelona:

They came, they settled, and their origins melted into the crowd. The day they decided to stay, they'd Catalanize their family names as a disguise, so nobody might know whether their birthplace had been in Italy, France, Castile, or somewhere more exotic still. As for the rest, and in contrast to the Castilian obsession with keeping the blood pure of Moors or Jews, the Catalans didn't care a fig for their neighbors' origins. If they had money to spend, if they were pleasant enough, and if they didn't try and impose religious ideas, new arrivals were left to get on with it. (*Victus*, p. 170)

This is an important passage, particularly in the light of Cramer's claims that the novel speaks indirectly of a Catalan state, one that would be inclusive and based on a civic, not an ethnic, nationalism. Here the Catalans are shown as being receptive to newcomers as long as they contribute to society and are prepared to assimilate. Even Castilians are welcome under these conditions. It suggests an early form of a civic nationalism, based on common purpose rather than blood ties. Castilians, on the other hand, have an 'obsession' with blood purity, a common characteristic of certain ethnic nationalisms. Catalonia's 'proto-state' is thus depicted as very different to the Castile of the time.

This is extremely relevant today with Catalonia receiving immigrants from all over the world. This passage speaks to immigrants' fears about not being accepted, reassuring them. It also cautions those who would bar or discriminate against these immigrants, by promoting Catalonia as a welcoming society and one that sees the value in incomers. In his prologue for Sùmate's book, Sánchez Piñol stresses that Catalonia has always been a nation of immigrants and has responded by welcoming them and making Catalan culture accessible to them. While admitting that Catalan society is not perfect, and that there are issues, he argues that Catalans can be justly proud of the inclusive society they have created.<sup>24</sup> By showing Catalonia as inclusive in the past in *Victus*, Sánchez Piñol could also be seen to be promoting the possibility of a Catalan state in the present day that includes everyone: immigrants and native-born. This idea of an accepting society, based on civic not ethnic lines, is also important for explaining two apparent oddities in a pro-Catalan text: the use of a Castilian hero and the negative portrayal of many of the Catalan officials.

Although, as already discussed, Martí is not a typical hero, this does not mean that *Victus* lacks such a figure. As Cramer points out, the truly heroic figure in the novel is Villarroel.<sup>25</sup> Although

certain Catalan figures are briefly singled out for their courage and commitment, Villarroel is the only main character whose conduct is consistently drawn as noble and heroic. He refuses to abandon his injured men despite the risk of captivity and even death. He throws his whole heart into the defence of Barcelona, leading charges from the front, continually putting himself at risk, and even after resigning from his post in an attempt to prevent slaughter, returns to fight alongside the people he has commanded in the final battle. He is presented as brave, noble, loyal and almost entirely selfless.

However, Villarroel is a Castilian and *Victus* makes no attempt to hide this. Indeed it is constantly emphasised. Villarroel's nationality is frequently referred to: 'his booming Castilian voice'; 'a son of Castile' (*Victus*, pp. 250, 527). This might seem surprising in a novel that has so vehemently set up Catalonia and Castile as oppositional, warring entities. However, the case of Villarroel exemplifies Sánchez Piñol's attempt to present Catalan nationalism as civic. For Crameri, Villarroel's status as hero is 'the ultimate endorsement of civic nationalism'.<sup>26</sup> Ethnicity and blood descent are not important; what matters is voluntary and whole-hearted identification with the nation. In *Súmate*, Sánchez Piñol wrote: 'We are interested less in people's origins than in their destination',<sup>27</sup> and Villarroel personifies this. Despite his Castilian origin, he commits wholly to the defence of Barcelona and the Catalan people, and thus his status as a Catalan hero is legitimate and assured, indeed Martí remarks that Villarroel's men come to see him as 'another Barcelonan' (*Victus*, p. 505). He is completely accepted by Catalan society and he is not the only one. Martí stresses the number of people born outside Barcelona and indeed Catalonia who fought so bravely in its defence. Through their courage and sacrifice they become part of the Catalan nation. Villarroel is simply the most prominent of these people in the novel.

Again there is a modern-day dimension to this symbolism. The message is that people of all origins are welcome in Catalonia if they are prepared to work for the benefit of the nation. As Crameri explains 'his [Villarroel's] ethnic origins are wholly irrelevant to the kind of nation-state envisaged for a future Catalonia'.<sup>28</sup> The modern-day Catalan nation, and the Catalan state that will be created if the independence movement succeeds, will be based on civic not ethnic grounds and all who wish to be part of it will be included. In an interview Sánchez Piñol emphasised this, explaining one of the

reasons that he may have written in Spanish: ‘Possibly there was the underlying idea in the book that 1714 is everyone’s inheritance, and that one of the great heroes was General Villarroel, a Castilian soldier who fought and died to protect Catalan liberties and to defend their capital.’<sup>29</sup> Both through his use of Spanish and his elevating of a Castilian to the supreme status of hero, the author is ensuring that Spanish speakers and indeed immigrants from everywhere feel that they can be part of Catalonia. *Victus* can thus be seen as espousing the same kind of open and inclusive resistance that the majority of Webb’s work does.

In the case of the Catalan officials, the same is true but in reverse. Certain Generalitat officials are presented as at best cowardly and incompetent, and at worst bordering on treasonous. This includes Rafael Casanova, who has traditionally been the heroic representative of 1714 and the focus of its commemoration for over a century. In *Victus* however, he is depicted as cowardly and incompetent, particularly when compared with Villarroel.

His colleagues are, if anything, even worse. From their first appearance in the novel, the bulk of the Generalitat officials are presented negatively. During the siege they consistently obstruct Villarroel and refuse to listen to his expertise. They attach more value to the lives of well-born Catalans who support the enemy and have fled the city than to those of the common people who support the city’s resistance. On one notable occasion they refuse to allow a strategically valuable attack on a French army outpost in the town of Mataró because they fear harm may come to the many Catalans from good families who have fled Barcelona sheltering there. They are hidebound and inflexible to the point of outright idiocy; they send an elderly unwell deputy to lead an important recruiting mission because he is the only person allowed to bear the sacred Catalan mace. This deputy refuses to allow the attack on Mataró mentioned above and, more treacherously still, gives the order to abandon the people that have agreed to follow them, forcing his retinue to sail back to Barcelona, leaving the recruits watching on the shore.

This criticism in a clearly pro-Catalan book is surprising. Sánchez Piñol claims that he was trying to challenge certain of the myths surrounding the siege of 1714 and that the role of the Catalan ruling classes in these events ‘was very unfortunate, including actions that might almost be seen as treason’.<sup>30</sup> This may be the case, but drawing attention to it would seem to undermine any sense of Catalan unity

that the work might otherwise create and call into question its status as a resistance text.

However it is not uncommon for anticolonial theorists and resistance writers to criticise elements of their nations' populations (usually the elite or upper classes).<sup>31</sup> This is therefore an accepted part of resistance writing. Additionally, in *Victus* it reveals something about the nature of the nation. Drawing on the work of Steven J. Mock, Cramerí notes the importance of the recurring internal traitor figure in nationalist narratives. The idea of the traitor,

is also a pointer to the need for a modern civic nation in contrast to a previous reliance on shared ethnicity. If blood ties alone are not enough to ensure loyalty (and that the capacity of the individual is directed towards legitimate goals), then something else must take their place [...] It is this that we see in *Victus* – in the shape of the thoroughly Catalan 'felpudos rojos' [red doormats, Cramerí's translation] and their 'false and vacuous patriotism' – rather than one individual who betrays another.<sup>32</sup>

If we accept this argument, then the highlighting of the incompetence and even treachery of the Generalitat officials in *Victus* can be seen to reinforce the novel's status as a resistance text rather than undermining it. The treachery of the old ruling classes emphasises the need for a wholly civic nation based on ties of mutual attachment rather than those of blood. Thus, the Generalitat officials are not unquestionably Catalan simply by blood and birth. They have to prove themselves to their nation and in this instance they fail to do so. On the other hand, this promotion of the civic opens the nation up to incomers who can voluntarily become part of the whole if they wish to, as Villarroel does, rather than being excluded on the grounds of different descent.

### OPPRESSION OF CATALANS

One of the ways in which historical novels can present a dissident history according to de Groot is by revealing previously 'untold atrocities'<sup>33</sup> and *Victus* certainly does this. Throughout the narrative, references are made to the abuse and oppression of Catalans before, during and after the War of Succession. This could certainly be seen as 'making Spain aware of facts of which it is ignorant',<sup>34</sup> and thus speaking truth to power, in addition to producing an alternative history to counter the official histories and school textbooks which,

particularly under Franco, revised history and ‘left many ignorant of these dimensions of the War of Succession, even in Catalonia itself’.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, at one point the narrator says: ‘For until now, only the victor’s version has been told’ (*Victus*, p. 342). In contrast, *Victus* recounts the events from the perspective of the losing side in order to redress the imbalance and educate the Catalan people about their past sufferings and struggles. This will hopefully inspire them to work for their independence. In this it is similar to Webb’s descriptions of Wales’s sufferings and his attempts to recover history.

As a much-translated text *Victus* also brings this different version of events to a global audience, revealing the historical injustices visited upon Catalonia and, perhaps, winning sympathy and support for the nation in its current-day bid for independence. It is notable that at one point the narrator expresses the belief that: ‘If Barcelona’s cries were heard in the rest of Europe, sooner or later, someone would have to do something’ (*Victus*, p. 337). This can be interpreted in the modern day as a hope for European Union support for Catalan independence.

It is made clear that even before the War, Catalonia was far from settled. Martí describes the nation as having been ‘in an almost perpetual state of war for decades’ (*Victus*, p. 140). The human cost of this constant war is shown starkly. Anfán, the young boy who will later become part of Martí’s adopted family, is an orphan, one of many, forced to survive alone as best he can. He lives by following the passing army and living off their scraps, including, at times, providing sexual services to the soldiers. His very name is merely a corruption of the French enfant, child, which is obviously what the soldiers call him. He looks bewildered when Martí asks him where his father is – not only does he no longer have a father, he seems not to even understand the concept. Anfán is hardly a paragon of childhood innocence; he steals, lies, and almost gets Martí hanged by claiming falsely that the latter abused him. But it is made abundantly clear that Anfán is this way because of what he has been forced to do to survive at such a young age; Martí reckons that when they first meet he can only be six or seven years old. Anfán, and his dwarf friend Nan, are living symbols of the turmoil visited upon Catalonia, and the further abuse they experience at the hands of the Bourbon army can easily be seen as symbolic of the damage wreaked upon the whole Catalan nation.

A natural result of Anfán’s traumatic childhood but one that is telling symbolically is his language. On his first appearance the reader

is told that: 'His Catalan was mixed together with a little Castilian Spanish and much French' (*Victus*, p. 140). Anfán is clearly Catalan, but his very language, one of the most important symbols of Catalan identity and integral to the Catalan identity of many, has been damaged and corrupted by the armies invading Catalonia. As his language is affected, so is his identity. This may not be as a result of conscious intent by the invading armies but it is still a form of oppression, as by their very presence they are damaging the Catalan nation's identity.

If the unintentional results of the military presence are bad, then the intended are often catastrophic. The treatment the French and Castilian Bourbon forces mete out to any who oppose them is cruel and vindictive. Riding with the Bourbon force, Martí describes a harrowing sight:

As soon as we crossed into Catalonia, we began to see people hanged from the branches of trees. [...] On the larger trees, there were sometimes five, six, seven cadavers swinging from the branches, some higher, some lower, feet stirred by the wind. Most were men of all ages, but I did see a woman hanged from one solitary oak. They had not even bothered to tie her hands behind her. Beneath her on the ground were a little girl and a dog; its snout thrust in the air, the animal let out heartrending yowls, snorting through its nostrils like a bellows. The dog knew the woman was dead, but most harrowing of all, the child did not. (*Victus*, p. 121)

Even the cynical Martí is disturbed by this appalling scene. The fact that one of the victims was a woman and others were men 'of all ages' suggests that those hanged here are not only combatants. Even those who could not have been any threat to an army have been executed as punishment or vengeance.

Martí is also confused and distressed by the complete destruction of the town of Játiva:

I spoke very little in the ensuing days. I had been educated to believe in a certain basic idea, that a king fights to defend or win territories – never to destroy them. Such an absurdity could make sense only in the mind of a madman. What use could there be in taking control of a place that has been flattened? Játiva, the city of a thousand wells, wiped from the face of the earth because a king had pointed his finger at a map. (*Victus*, p. 120)

The realities of war are clashing with Martí's rational theoretical education and he is struggling to reconcile the two. The Bourbon

force's actions are oppressive to the point of being ridiculous; they are depriving themselves of a potentially useful city just to enact revenge upon the defeated. Their cruelty is beyond reason and shows the effect that the war had on the ordinary people of Catalonia. The citizens of Játiva have not merely suffered an invasion and a change of ruler; their city has been completely destroyed due to being in the wrong place and backing the wrong side. The fact that this war is depicted as having no noncombatants is both a warning and an encouragement to the Catalans of today. None of them can afford to stand aside; all must work for Catalan independence.

A different kind of abuse of the Catalan nation by Castile is the lies told in the pamphlets that are spread around Madrid by Martí's supposed friend Zúñiga. On first reading one of these Martí laughs, as the claims appear ridiculous. The blame for the occupation of Madrid is placed firmly on the Catalans and the plotting they engaged in. There is no mention of the other participants of the Allied Forces: Austria, England, or Portugal, which leads to an unjust and unbalanced argument. The pamphlet then goes on to use scaremongering tactics:

All I have retained are the main charges against us. When the war ended, we would rape all the women in Castile and murder their husbands or send them off to the galleys. According to this pamphlet, the Catalans were behind a plot to take power and monopolize the trade with America (from which Catalonia had always been strictly excluded, being from a separate kingdom). Taxes on the Castilians would be not merely extortionate but would make slaves of them, with all the money ending up in Barcelona's coffers for the rebels to enjoy. Natives of Catalonia would supplant the whole of the army's high command, and all Castile's judges and jurists. To be certain of maintaining a hold over Madrid, a fortress would be erected, which would keep its inhabitants enchained until the end of time. (*Victus*, pp. 224–5)

To Martí this is clearly ridiculous. However, as he reads it again and the consequences of such lies begin to occur to him, he becomes enraged and tears up the pamphlet, before storming off: 'I had seen the outrages of the Spanish forces at Beceite, Catalan forests full of nooses and hanged men. Now I could see the source of their soldiers' and officers' murderous bile' (*Victus*, p. 225). A few pages later when he confronts Zúñiga, he tries to make him comprehend the damage these lies cause: 'A pile of falsehoods like this gets written down, and

the next day, people who have nothing to do with writing have their throats slit and their bodies thrown off cliffs' (*Victus*, p. 228). Zúñiga, however, is completely unmoved.

This misrepresentation of the Catalans by the Castilians is interesting on two levels. Firstly, by revealing this misrepresentation, *Victus* performs its function as an alternative history, challenging official Spanish accounts. Secondly, if *Victus* is drawing comparisons between the events of the War of Succession and the current day, then it could be suggesting that this misrepresentation is continuing today. When *Victus* was published in 2012, the independence movement in Catalonia was gathering force and beginning to come to the attention of the rest of the world. Portrayal in the media is an extremely important way of gaining national and international sympathy in the modern world. Spain with its larger and more powerful media has a distinct advantage in this area and Catalonia had not succeeded in getting the support of the European Union that it had hoped for. The Spanish media is even more powerful within Spain. A majority of Spaniards outside Catalonia from across the political spectrum are against Catalan independence, and the media has surely played a role in bringing this about. In showing that Castile once used lies as propaganda, Sánchez Piñol is subtly suggesting that this may be the case again and thus encourages his readers, especially those outside of Catalonia, to question the images provided by the media.

The worst oppression of the Catalan nation, though, came after the fall of Barcelona. As the action of the novel ends on that day, this oppression is not discussed in detail, but references are made to it at various points in the novel as Martí looks back on events that occurred after 11 September 1714. When recounting how he found the pamphlets discussed above, hindsight increases his outrage as he explains:

What was so diabolical was that only a few years later, this little scrap of paper would be transformed into a reality, but applied to Catalonia, and on a biblical scale. [...] After September 11, 1714, the legal framework of Catalan order was pulled down and Castile's installed in its place. For decades Catalonia would be considered a land under military occupation. All of its rulers came from Castile. The once rich country was ruined by taxes, and the majority of its population reduced to penury. Finally, to keep Barcelona under control, they erected the Ciutadela, the most perfidious Vauban fortress ever conceived. (*Victus*, p. 225)

The Bourbons thus enact what they had accused the Catalans of doing, ruthlessly oppressing the Catalan people. The injustice of the situation makes the oppression seem even worse.

Right at the end of the novel, during the final assault, more of Martí's memories of the aftermath of the defeat are inserted, mainly focusing this time on the fates of individuals. He mentions Josep Moragues, the guerrilla captain, who was dragged the length of the city on a cart before being executed and having his head displayed in a cage hanging from one of the city gates for twelve years. Worse still, in Martí's opinion, was the fate of Manuel Desvalls, who was exiled and lived to be a hundred without ever seeing his native land again. Most of the officers that avoided execution were imprisoned. The sacred symbol of Barcelona, the flag of Santa Eulalia, was taken to a shrine in Madrid in perhaps the most symbolic of gestures made by the victors (*Victus*, pp. 526–7). This late stream of images shows all too clearly the oppression of the Catalans by the victorious Bourbon forces.

Tellingly, Martí also remembers thinking at the time: 'When we lost and all of us perished, all our children would be educated by the victors' (*Victus*, p. 527). This heralds a new type of oppression, one by control rather than violence. The victors will deny the children of the vanquished knowledge of the ways and deeds of their forefathers and teach them Castilian traditions in place of Catalan ones. In turn, *Victus* is trying to reverse this process of state-sanctioned education, bringing the Catalan perspective of 1714 to the contemporary reader and showing the horrors perpetrated upon the Catalan people that might otherwise have been written out of history. Catalan readers in particular will be given, in Wole Soyinka's words, 'recourse to their own history',<sup>36</sup> so that they can make their own decisions about what is best for them and for their nation. An informed populace is one that is in a position to act and resist.

### A PEOPLE'S RESISTANCE

From its very beginning, *Victus* sets itself up as a novel about resistance. The text opens with these words from the now elderly protagonist:

If man is the only being with a geometrical, rational mind, why is it that the poor and defenceless take up arms against the powerful and well

equipped? Why do the few oppose the many, and the small resist the great? (*Victus*, p. 3)

Resistance will clearly be a theme in the novel and the nature of that resistance, as the reader gradually discovers, is popular, enacted by the common people. Cramerí has argued that while *Victus* claims heroic status for Villarroel, the novel is also about the courage of the collective Catalan people as opposed to individual heroes: 'The myth of the single national hero is dismissed in favour of a community heroism epitomised by the will to stick together against injustice'.<sup>37</sup> As demonstrated in the previous chapter, resistance by a people rather than an individual or an elite is crucial to resistance theorists like San Juan, following as he does Gramsci's idea of the national-popular. Only the people united across class, linguistic, religious and other differences can hope to effect the radical transformation of their nation. Webb calls on the Welsh people to unite in this way; *Victus* demonstrates the Catalan people doing just that. This is unsurprising considering that both writers depict their respective nations as traditionally democratic and thus any resistance in their work is likely to be a mass popular movement. While there are clear class distinctions in *Victus*'s Catalonia, representatives of all classes fight for their nation. The upper classes have a higher rate of traitors and deserters, but many representatives of these classes also fought bravely during the siege of Barcelona.

*Victus* contains numerous examples of the Catalan people fighting together, bravely resisting, despite almost certain defeat. Fairly early in the novel, when the protagonist is fighting in the Bourbon army, he sees the civilians of Tortosa fighting alongside the professional troops on the other side, while the women and children of the town bring them water and tend their wounds. Martí does not yet understand what drives them to do this, what is at stake:

I was dumbfounded. Why didn't they hole up at home and wait for the storm to pass? Why would these simple peasants, to whom dynastic affairs were neither here nor there, risk taking part in a battle, as well as the reprisals in the case of defeat? Fool that I was, I was yet to realize that this was going to be the war at the end of the world – the end of the Catalan world, at least. (*Victus*, p. 135)

These 'simple peasants' have realised or known instinctively what Martí, for all his education, has not, that this struggle is not simply

about which monarch will sit on the distant throne in Madrid. It is about the continuation of their way of life as Catalans and the defence of their homes. To Martí, at this point, war is still a profession at which he works, something that he has studied and been trained for. He is only just being initiated into the true horrors and cost of war. To the inhabitants of Tortosa though, it is their way of life, and even their lives that are being threatened.

Later in the novel, similar examples of heroic collective resistance will be recounted during the siege of Barcelona. One passage that evokes admiration, pity and amusement in almost equal measure is that listing the battalions of the Coronela – the civilian militia. Traditionally each trade in the city formed its own company. Martí lists some of them (with certain choice comments of his own):

First company: attorneys-at-law. (And they didn't even know how to take care of my case! How could we expect them to fire a rifle or man a bastion?)

[...]

Fourth company: potters, upholsterers, and makers of pots and pans. (At least these latter are easier to understand: When the hunger sets in, there will be empty pots and pans aplenty.)

Fifth company: belt-makers.

Sixth company: butchers. (Another group who'll be out of work before long.)

[...]

Ninth company: students of theology, medicine, and philosophy. (A fine graduation awaits them.) (*Victus*, p. 302)

With Martí's comments, this list seems almost amusing. But the severity and pathos of the situation is underlined by his next words: 'And with this, we had to face dragoons and grenadiers trained through experience in a thousand battles'. The humour of the unusual roster fades to be replaced with pity and a certain admiration. This admiration is reinforced later in the siege when a company of law students, enraged by the death of their beloved professor, charge a company of French grenadiers and manage to drive them back. These ordinary Barcelonans, with no military training, take on the superior forces of France and Castile and win at least a temporary victory.

This is only the most dramatic example of the resistance of the ordinary people. The civilian soldiers fight against troops with vastly superior numbers, equipment and training and manage to hold them off on many occasions. Many citizens, men, women and children, willingly pull down their own houses to aid the war effort, they suffer incredible hardships as the siege drags on and when the end comes, citizens, including children and the elderly, join the militia in a last desperate attack. They make sacrifices and act for the good of the nation.

But *Victus* also features resistance by some of the upper classes, if not all of them. Sebastià Dalmau, a nobleman by birth, puts his entire fortune into financing the war, including raising and outfitting his own regiment. Dalmau is presented as honest, good-natured and thoroughly likeable with no trace of snobbishness. Like Martí he is disgusted with the inefficiency and downright treachery of the Generalitat's representative on a trip to raise resistance in the Catalan countryside. Then there are those nobles who, while they voted against resistance after the Allies withdrew from the war, remained in the city and bravely fought in its defence when the majority voted in favour of resisting. Martí remarks, movingly,

there were noblemen like Francesc Alemany, Baldiri Batlle, Lluís Roger, or Antoni València, whose consciences led them to vote for submission, and so they did. Later, things would take a turn. And they fought. They followed the will of the majority, setting aside their personal opinions in favor of the general good. [...] They acted in support of other people's ideas, even those people who were opposed to them. And at dawn on September 11, 1714, they sacrificed their lives. All of them. (*Victus*, pp. 280–1)

These men make the ultimate sacrifice for their people, putting aside their personal beliefs and desires for the good of the community. They act in support of ideas with which they disagree because they know it is their duty as leaders of the people to carry out the people's wishes, despite the cost to themselves. Not only is this heroic, it reinforces the Catalan vision of itself as naturally democratic and thus very different to Castile. With the exception of Villarroel, Castilians are generally portrayed as autocratic, the aristocrats ruling the people rather than serving them. The Catalan nobles mentioned above are completely different; governed by the will of the people, they will seek to carry out that will, whatever the cost to themselves.

The Catalans of 1714 serve as an example of what can be achieved by popular resistance. Despite ultimately losing, they held out longer than would have been thought possible, and in doing so gained a heroic status that continues to inspire to this day. As with Webb's historic figures examined in the previous chapter, the important thing about the resistance in *Victus* is not that it was defeated but that it existed in the first place. Through their heroic struggles, they have inspired their descendants and made it possible for Catalan resistance to continue to the present day, albeit in different forms. In an interview Sánchez Piñol stated that: 'If there exists today anything that resembles a Catalan identity then it is because of the sacrifice those people made',<sup>38</sup> while elsewhere he claimed 'without the resistance of the siege of 1714 we Catalans would not exist'.<sup>39</sup> This belief is clearly demonstrated in the novel's closing words: 'the darker our twilight hours, the more blessed will be the dawn of those who will come after us' (*Victus*, p. 532). Though the current resistance has failed and dark times are coming upon the nation, brighter times will come as a result of those sufferings. The spirit of this line carries echoes of Webb's declaration: 'You are needed for it [the struggle for Welsh independence]!' though Sánchez Piñol's words are a less active and more metaphorical call to arms. The brighter dawn is written as merely happening rather than being brought about by the Catalan people but if *Victus* is read as a resistance text, then the implicit 'call to arms' is clear. The means of fighting may have changed but not the need for every citizen to act on behalf of Catalonia.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The Catalan national day (11 September) is the anniversary of the fall of Barcelona at the end of the War of Spanish Succession.
- <sup>2</sup> See, for example, the case of Eduardo Mendoza who will be discussed in the final chapter.
- <sup>3</sup> Cramer, *Goodbye, Spain?*, p. 83.
- <sup>4</sup> Isabel Martí, quoted in Montserrat Serra, 'Amb "Victus" l'Albert Sánchez Piñol ens ha incomedat', *Vilaweb*, 25 September 2012. Online. Available at: <https://www.vilaweb.cat/noticia/4042483/20120925/victus-lalbert-sanchez-pinol-ens-incomedat.html> (accessed 16 February 2026).
- <sup>5</sup> Isabel Martí, quoted in Montserrat Serra.
- <sup>6</sup> Inge Heeringa, 'Política, Prensa, Piñol: Un Análisis Discursivo del Catalanismo en el Lanzamiento y la Recepción de *Victus*' (unpublished Bachelor thesis, Radboud University, 2015–16).
- <sup>7</sup> Cramer, *Goodbye, Spain?*, p. 83.

- <sup>8</sup> Marc Sogues has suggested that *Victus* could be aimed at a very specific target audience – the readers of Arturo Pérez-Reverte's hugely popular historical adventure novels. These novels, written in Spanish, are set during Spain's Golden Age and appear to celebrate that period and the Spanish Empire. Sogues suggests that Sánchez Piñol could be using Pérez-Reverte's language and style subversively to present a very different view of Spain, one that celebrates Catalonia rather than Castile and that attacks the concept of empire (Marc Sogues, 'Conversation with the author', 10 November 2024). There is no space here to explore this further but it is an intriguing suggestion and one that would merit further study.
- <sup>9</sup> Sánchez Piñol, quoted in Heeringa, 'Política, Prensa, Piñol', p. 22.
- <sup>10</sup> If this is the case then *Victus* earned at least one convert as one of the book's early readers, French editor Alzira Martins, claimed that it had completely changed her view of Barcelona. Heeringa, 'Política, Prensa, Piñol', p. 17.
- <sup>11</sup> Sánchez Piñol, quoted in Valèria Gaillard, 'Estic molt fart del conflicte amb Espanya', *El Punt Avui*, 10 October 2012. Online. Available at: <http://www.elpuntavui.cat/article/5-cultural/19-cultural/583101-estic-molt-fart-del-conflicte-amb-espanya.html> (accessed 16 February 2026). Sánchez Piñol is presumably speaking about the demonstration that year (2012), though this is not made clear.
- <sup>12</sup> It is also true, however, that Sánchez Piñol has said various different things about his choice of language, claiming on one occasion that he tried writing it in Catalan but could not make it work (Sánchez Piñol quoted in Crameri, *Goodbye, Spain?*, p. 83). Therefore, the full reasons for his choice of language are unclear and can only be speculated upon. However, when considered in combination with his work for *Súmate*, a desire to speak to Spanish-speaking citizens of Catalonia seems highly likely.
- <sup>13</sup> There was a risk that Catalan speakers would ignore, on principle or through lack of interest, a novel written in Spanish. Equally, the publicity surrounding the language choice may have intrigued them. *Victus* was also later translated into Catalan so that it could reach the people of Catalonia in both languages.
- <sup>14</sup> Väinö Linna, quoted in Susan C. Brantly, *The Historical Novel, Transnationalism, and the Postmodern Era* (New York: Routledge, 2017), p. 53.
- <sup>15</sup> Jerome de Groot, *The Historical Novel* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 148, 140.
- <sup>16</sup> De Groot, *The Historical Novel*, p. 148.
- <sup>17</sup> Harlow, *Resistance Literature*, p. 85.
- <sup>18</sup> Crameri, *Goodbye, Spain?*, p. 90.
- <sup>19</sup> Sánchez Piñol, quoted in Crameri, *Goodbye, Spain?*, p. 90.
- <sup>20</sup> Sánchez Piñol gives this information in the Historical Notes provided at the back of *Victus*. Albert Sánchez Piñol, *Victus*, trans. Thomas Bunstead and Daniel Hahn (New York: HarperCollins 2014), p. 533. All references are to this translated version.
- <sup>21</sup> Crameri, *Goodbye, Spain?*, pp. 84–5.
- <sup>22</sup> Interestingly, Heeringa has noted in her study of the articles about *Victus* in the Catalan newspapers that many of these articles also present the Catalan dimension of the War of Succession as a battle between Castile/Spain and Catalonia. This includes articles that followed the announcement of the book

but preceded publication, so it suggests that Sánchez Piñol is reflecting common feeling within Catalonia in his presentation of Castile and Catalonia as being at loggerheads. He underlined his personal view in an interview, stating that in the War of Succession, ‘two completely irreconcilable groups confronted each other: the Castilians who had an idea of the king as almost divine, and the Catalans, who had an English parliamentary style.’ Sánchez Piñol, quoted in Gaillard.

- <sup>23</sup> Lourdes Gabikagojeaskoa, *Eran soñadores de paraísos: Nostalgia y resistencia cultural en la obra de Juan Marsé* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2013), p. 31.
- <sup>24</sup> Sánchez Piñol, ‘Prólogo’, p. 10.
- <sup>25</sup> Cramer, *Goodbye, Spain?*, p. 86.
- <sup>26</sup> Cramer, *Goodbye, Spain?*, p. 93.
- <sup>27</sup> Sánchez Piñol, ‘Prólogo’, p. 11.
- <sup>28</sup> Cramer, *Goodbye, Spain?*, p. 93.
- <sup>29</sup> Sánchez Piñol, quoted in Gaillard, ‘Estic molt fart del conflicte amb Espanya’.
- <sup>30</sup> Sánchez Piñol, quoted in Cramer, *Goodbye, Spain?*, p. 91. Elsewhere he is a little kinder to Casanova, saying that he himself did not necessarily share the protagonist’s wartime-shaped view: ‘I have to say that my opinion does not correspond with the protagonist, who is fiercely critical [...] Casanova had a perfectly reasonable attitude, but he was surrounded by heroes!’ He does not feel, however, that Casanova is worthy of his hero status, as he survived the siege and was able to return to practising law in Barcelona a few years later. Sánchez Piñol, quoted in Gaillard, ‘Estic molt fart del conflicte amb Espanya’.
- <sup>31</sup> See Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 27–84 and San Juan’s discussion of the corrupt regimes in the Philippines in most of his works.
- <sup>32</sup> Cramer, *Goodbye, Spain?*, p. 91.
- <sup>33</sup> de Groot, *The Historical Novel*, p. 140.
- <sup>34</sup> Sánchez Piñol, quoted in Cramer, *Goodbye, Spain?*, p. 83.
- <sup>35</sup> Cramer, *Goodbye, Spain?*, p. 76.
- <sup>36</sup> Wole Soyinka, quoted in San Juan, *Hegemony*, p. 209.
- <sup>37</sup> Cramer, *Goodbye, Spain?*, p. 87.
- <sup>38</sup> Sánchez Piñol, quoted in Gaillard, ‘Estic molt fart del conflicte amb Espanya’.
- <sup>39</sup> Sánchez Piñol, quoted in Heeringa, ‘Política, Prensa, Piñol’, p. 16.

This page intentionally left blank

## ‘ARMED BUT NOT IN THE OLD WAY’: THE SEEDS OF HOPE IN R. S. THOMAS

### INTRODUCTION

Of all the Welsh writers discussed in this study, R. S. Thomas is the best known. He is one of the few Welsh writers in English who has achieved recognition outside of Wales, and even outside of Britain. His work has been translated into various languages, including many European languages and Chinese, and he was nominated for the 1996 Nobel Prize for Literature. For all this, though, he remains an essentially Welsh poet, writing in both poetry and prose about the Welsh landscape, culture and people. He is not as exclusive a writer as Webb – in addition to his engagement with Wales, Thomas is a major religious poet – but Wales and his complicated relationship to it and to his own Welshness are integral to both his character and his poetry.

Like Webb, Thomas was raised and educated through the medium of English but learned Welsh as an adult, working hard in his effort to acquire what he considered an essential aspect of true Welshness. From the 1940s onwards he became fluent enough in Welsh to write prose and lecture in that language but he never felt able to compose poetry in anything other than English, a fact that caused him great anguish.<sup>1</sup> Instead he was forced to settle for immersing himself in the Welsh-language literary tradition and using it in his English-language poetry – something he did ingeniously and in multiple ways, as Jason Walford Davies has shown.<sup>2</sup>

Although many of the writers discussed in this study have written in more than one language, our focus is on their work in English or

Spanish. However, an exception will be made in the case of Thomas and some of his Welsh-language prose will be considered alongside his English-language work. This is because some aspects of his worldview and attitudes to Wales that are crucial to the points made in this chapter are outlined in the Welsh texts. As W. Moelwyn Merchant explains:

his [Thomas's] prose works are a necessary supplement to our understanding of his verse; they provide not so much a corrective to the argument of ideas conducted in his volumes of poetry as a delicate re-orientation of those ideas and an adjustment of their tone.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore Thomas's prose in both languages will be considered here alongside his poetry.

The question as to what extent R. S. Thomas can be regarded as a resistance writer is an interesting one. On the one hand, critics frequently use the word 'resistance' when discussing Thomas. Tony Brown for example talks about Thomas's 'assertion of the need for stubborn resistance to the intrusive world of consumerism and market values'<sup>4</sup> – a world he associates with English tourists and incomers to Wales – meaning that he saw a need for resistance that is in a way both nationalist and anti-capitalist, though not socialist, not so different to the ideas of both San Juan and Webb.<sup>5</sup> With regards to Thomas's work, Webb himself in a 1972 letter to *Poetry Wales* claims that 'his [Thomas's] work acquires a relevance that transcends purely literary merit',<sup>6</sup> suggesting perhaps a political edge. Merchant, meanwhile, asserts that:

If there can be such a literary phenomenon as 'pure poetry', then R. S. Thomas's 'purity' as a poet seems compromised by his dual role as priest and self-conscious Welshman within a particular historical context; he assumes – demands – the old and honourable role of 'unacknowledged legislator' for the poet. This is of course no compromise but the source and strength of his content and of his peculiarly personal tone.<sup>7</sup>

Merchant accepts that Thomas's poetry cannot be seen as 'pure', that is separate from politics, but argues, as do resistance theorists, that this is a strength not a weakness.

In a 1964 lecture, Thomas appears to agree with Merchant's claim, stating:

I think, when I examine my own position, that I have never been a pure poet in that way [a craftsman who focuses purely on words]. To make a

poetic artifact out of words has never, or rarely ever been my first aim or satisfaction. There is always lurking in the back of my poetry a kind of moralistic or propagandist intention. It is as though, having found that I had a slight gift for putting words together to make poems, I used that gift as the best way I knew for getting a particular message across. [...] Consequently I am tempted to preach this sermon in verse.<sup>8</sup>

Here Thomas expresses no concern or reserve about this ‘moralistic or propagandist intention’, but earlier his views appear somewhat different. In his 1946 article ‘Some Contemporary Scottish Writing’, despite admiring nationalist writers in Welsh, Scots and Gaelic, he claims: ‘The muse is not to be browbeaten into singing an accompaniment to an ideology’ and continues:

We must beware of lauding work merely because it has a national flavour. Poetry can still be bad poetry for all its tang. Whatever we mean by good poetry, we are agreed that it always possesses the ‘richt, authentic tone’, and until we have cleared away a great deal of the rubbish in which we are as a generation bogged fast [...] and rid our ears of the continual monotonous drone of modern propaganda, we shall continue in our aimless cacophony.<sup>9</sup>

Here, Thomas seems to be aligning himself with the traditional critical view that there is such a thing as ‘good’ poetry, though he does not say what qualities a poem would have to possess in order to be considered ‘good’ apart from ‘the richt, authentic tone’, a quality that is not defined further beyond a short quotation from Hugh MacDiarmid. His dismissal of nationalistic work that does not fit his ideas of ‘good poetry’ is contrary to resistance theory, as is his claim that the muse should not be forced to include ideology. On the other hand, in the same essay he specifically praises writers like MacDiarmid (whom San Juan highlights as an exemplary resistance writer)<sup>10</sup> and holds them up as examples for the Welsh to emulate. Therefore, this article is somewhat contradictory. This is unsurprising as it is early in his career (it appeared in the same year that his first collection of poetry was published) and therefore he is still working out his thoughts on these issues.

Thomas’s idea of the writer’s role in politics and activism is also mixed. In his autobiography *Neb* (1985) he quotes Saunders Lewis as saying that creative writers could not be expected to *act* politically; rather, Thomas states, they should find their own way to contribute.<sup>11</sup>

However, Saunders Lewis did of course act politically, most notably at Penyberth, and Thomas himself was at times politically-active, particularly after his retirement, as Brown has noted.<sup>12</sup> He became an organiser of his local CND branch and took part in public demonstrations, was part of a Trust that was set up in an effort to purchase Bardsey Island, and founded Cyfeillion Llŷn (the friends of Llŷn) to protect his local area's wildlife and Welshness. He also, in public statements, verbally supported the law-breaking campaigns of Cymdeithas yr Iaith and the more radical Meibion Glyndŵr, though he did not take part in them, nor deal much with them in his creative writing.

Thomas also has an interesting perspective on the idea of all resistance struggles being linked. In some places he seems to subscribe to it; as we shall see in the next section, he saw parallels between the Welsh situation and that of many other minority and subjugated peoples: the Irish, the Native Americans, the Czechs and Hungarians under Soviet rule, in a manner not too dissimilar to Webb's comparison of Wales to the colonies. However, unlike Webb, Thomas does not seem to see the class struggle and the national struggle as one. In 'He lives here', the opening poem in his 1974 nationalist collection *What is a Welshman?*, the speaker visits the industrialised valleys of the south and taunts the inhabitants 'with the abandonment/ of the national for the class struggle'.<sup>13</sup> While it is always necessary to be cautious about identifying the speaker too closely with the poet, this view is echoed in a letter to Raymond Garlick, where Thomas states bluntly: 'I can't forgive the miners for their lack of interest in Welsh' and claims: 'I have always blamed them for setting the class struggle before the national one. If they had identified with the Welsh cause instead of the workers in England and the Labour party, we would have self-government by now'.<sup>14</sup> He clearly does not see the link between the miners' struggle and the national struggle in the way Webb does, though in a backhanded way he does acknowledge the importance of the miners' support (or lack thereof) to the Welsh cause. However, unlike Webb, he does not consider why the miners might not have felt able to identify with the Welsh cause that had put so much emphasis, at least initially, on a *rural* Welsh-speaking identity. (Plaid Cymru's early policy called for the deindustrialisation of south Wales and Saunders Lewis, the party's founder, depicted the inhabitants of the southern valleys as almost subhuman in his poem 'Y Dilyw 1939' (The Deluge 1939).)<sup>15</sup> This highlights one of the major differences between Webb and Thomas; Thomas blames the miners

for their lack of identification with the Welsh cause; Webb, in general, blames the way the Welsh cause was presented to them.

Thomas's ideas about the relationship between England and Wales and the failure of large numbers of Welsh people to support the Welsh cause, particularly the language, were not uncommon, and alongside him it is interesting to consider the Welsh philosopher J. R. Jones, a near contemporary of his. In attempting to explain what he and many others considered to be the 'anti-Welshness' of many of his compatriots, including some Welsh speakers, and their lack of pride in their language and culture (similar things for which Thomas reproached the Welsh), Jones developed his theory of the ideology of Prydeindod (Britishness).<sup>16</sup> This ideology was the false idea that Wales was or could be part of the British nation. In Jones's view this was impossible because the Welsh are a separate people, not a full nation but a people. They have been formed by their own land and language and the interpenetration (Jones's own translation of his term *cydymdrei-ddiad*) of the two. Speaking their own language in their own land for hundreds of years, with the language naming and describing the land, has formed them on a spiritual level.

Jones's definition of a nation is a community that shares three ties: a common territory, a common language and a common government. Communities that lack the third tie, as Wales does, are a people rather than a nation. The English, on the other hand, are a full nation, as the British state government has interpenetrated with their land and language. It has not done the same in Wales because of the Welsh language. For Jones the British state is also the nation of the English people but not of the Welsh. Britain could only be the nation of the Welsh people if the Welsh language and all echo and memory of it died out so that it was no longer shaping the Welsh people.

However, Jones claims, the false belief that the Welsh people could be part of the British nation is widely, if sometimes unconsciously, held, and it is deeply damaging for the Welsh people's psyche. Those Welsh people who attempt to become part of the British nation will come up against an apparently insurmountable obstacle: their formation as part of the Welsh people by the interpenetration of Welsh land and language. This will prevent them from becoming part of the British nation. In their disappointment, they are likely to turn against the symbols of their difference, in particular the Welsh language, which in Jones's view explains anti-Welshness among Welsh people. Moreover, they will spread the false view that the Welsh people can

partake in 'Britishness' and for that reason Jones labels the belief as ideology. As a result of this ideology, increasing numbers of Welsh people will become alienated from their language because of their desire to conform to English/British norms. But for Jones, the Welsh language is the very thing that will sustain the Welsh as a separate people, will maintain their difference and identity. Moreover, if Wales is ever to become a nation in its own right, which Jones believes it has the potential to do, it is necessary to awake in people the will to become a nation and to do this a people must become aware of and aligned with 'a furious sense of their difference'.<sup>17</sup> Thus, rousing people to this awareness, in particular of the role of the Welsh language, could be seen as a means of resistance, a move to form a Welsh nation.

It is, however, a conservative and potentially problematic form of resistance because of the definitions of nation and people on which it is based. While Jones is careful to stress that there is no racial element in his concept of a people, he sees the Welsh people as distinct from others because they have been formed by the interpenetration of land and language over the ages. Where, then, does this leave newcomers, those who move to Wales as adults and want to become part of Wales, who even learn the language in many cases? Are they to be excluded from the people and potential nation because they have not been formed in this way? As we have seen, exclusion of incomers who are prepared to integrate is not a healthy position for a minority culture to take.

There is also the question of where Jones's ideas leave those Welsh people who do not speak Welsh. This is covered in *Prydeindod*, where he admits it is a difficult question. His conclusion is that there are degrees of Welsh identity and thus that those who do not speak Welsh do not cease to be Welsh but do not possess a full Welsh identity either. This is an improvement on the suggestion that the English-speaking Welsh are not Welsh at all and indeed Jones chastises those Welsh-speakers who refer to the English-speaking Welsh as English.<sup>18</sup> However, the suggestion that they do not possess a complete Welsh identity effectively presents them as second-class citizens, which is problematic and unlikely to encourage them to support his cause or vision.

As we shall see, several similarities to Jones's ideas can be found in the work of R. S. Thomas. This is unsurprising as *Prydeindod* was first published in 1966, when Thomas was in his most nationalist phase,

and it is likely that he was aware of Jones's work. Both stress the importance of the Welsh language to the Welsh identity and thus that it must be protected and worked for. Consequently, both heavily criticise those Welsh people who do not support their language and who abandon their culture, though they differ on the main reasons for this abandonment. As we shall see, Thomas frequently cites the desire to make money while Jones blames the Prydeindod ideology, though he also criticises those who take advantage of their Welshness to secure their own advancement without really caring about the continuation of the language. Both have a somewhat ambiguous attitude towards those Welsh people who do not speak Welsh, though Jones is far more conciliatory. And both insist that the Welsh should not consider themselves to be a part of Britain in the same way as the English are, and bemoan that many of their people fail to see that and are attracted by the English/British culture. Thomas does not theorise in the way that Jones does, and he does refer to Wales as a nation, but they are united in their insistence on the importance of Wales remaining separate. As a result, it will be interesting to consider Jones's ideas alongside a discussion of Thomas's resistance potential, particularly as many of the limits of Jones's resistance are also true of Thomas's.<sup>19</sup>

Thomas's career as a poet spanned over five decades and therefore, unsurprisingly, his style, themes and focus change. His earliest poetry and prose was written while he was the priest at Manafon in Montgomeryshire (1942–54) and much of it deals with the hill farmers whose land surrounds the village. There are also some poems like 'Welsh History', 'Welsh Landscape' and 'The Tree' that engage with wider national themes, as he begins to work out his feelings about Wales in writing. The bulk of his nationalist poetry, however, was produced in the 1960s while he was vicar at Eglwys-fach just outside Aberystwyth (1954–67). Much of this was prompted by specific events like Tryweryn, in addition to Thomas's dismay at discovering that his parish in the heart of Wales was predominantly English-speaking. In 1967, he moved to Aberdaron at the tip of the Llŷn Peninsula and Wales became less present in his poetry, though he did produce the vitriolic collection *What is a Welshman?* in 1974 and *Welsh Airs* in 1987. The latter collected many of his previously-published nationalist poems but also contained several new, bitter ones. (Interestingly, these two collections are Thomas's only ones published in Wales, apart from his very early work from the 1940s and early 1950s. All his other work, including the nationalist poems of the 1960s, were first published

in England.) However, as Tony Brown notes, after Thomas's arrival in Aberdaron 'most of his interventions on the political situation were now expressed in prose, and primarily in Welsh'.<sup>20</sup> He was thus addressing the Welsh-speaking Welsh directly, on matters that affected them. The poetry became more religious and mystical.

Unlike most of the writers examined in this work, Thomas has received a considerable amount of critical attention and there are a significant number of book-length studies discussing his work, life and opinions. However, this chapter will seek to evaluate Thomas's status as a resistance writer, something that has not been considered directly and that will, consequently, read his work from a new angle.

### WALES AND ENGLAND IN R. S. THOMAS'S WORK

Like Webb, Thomas presents Wales as a nation subjugated by England and blames England for many of Wales's ills. The English are repeatedly presented as invaders, whether as soldiers in the past or as tourists and second-home buyers in the present. In his autobiographies Thomas complains several times about the influx of English tourists into the Llŷn. For example in *Blwyddyn yn Llŷn* (1990), he writes:

They tell me that it was a better, more cultured, type that used to come here years ago, but it is some *Dic Siôn Dafydd* that I see now, roaming the streets of Pwllheli, or sitting in his car with a newspaper between him and the views, killing time before opening-time at the pubs, or the start of evening entertainment at Butlin's. This sounds snobbish, I know, but I have little sympathy with them because these are the people who, in their millions, are busy killing off the Welsh language, with the Welsh welcoming them because they have money.<sup>21</sup>

Thomas saw the stream of English incomers as damaging to the Welsh language and the Welshness of the area, inexorably shifting the language of the Llŷn to English. Moreover, there was no way of stemming this influx while England and Wales were part of the same country. In the age of nuclear threat he was also concerned that Wales would be dragged into England's wars after the central government had disregarded the wishes of the county councils of Wales that had declared their areas nuclear-free zones.<sup>22</sup>

Like Webb, Thomas also made comparisons between Wales and other subjugated countries and cultures and this sees him taking the

first step towards the idea that all resistance struggles are one. In *Blwyddyn yn Llŷn*, he writes about the upheaval in Eastern Europe following the coming down of the Berlin Wall and the gradual breakup of the Soviet Empire, resulting in the liberation and independence of many small nations. While he is careful to stress that these nations have suffered more than Wales, he sees the parallels with them and regrets that Wales is not making a similar bid for self-government:

East Germany and Czechoslovakia rebelled and the Berlin Wall, which had stood for so long between East and West, came down. And instead of shooting the protestors, the armed forces and the police held back. All this is good, but it made me ashamed of my own nation. Even granting that the nations of Europe have suffered more, or more conspicuously, isn't the Welsh nation actually dying under oppression? On hearing of fifty million turning out to protest in Prague, isn't it shameful to think of the number that would turn out in Wales to demand even equality with the English and their language? England has been far more cunning than the Communists. Instead of crushing us with an iron fist, what she has done is erode our identity inch by inch, sugaring the pill at the same time.<sup>23</sup>

Here Thomas laments the erosion of Welsh identity and blames England for it (though the Welsh are also implicitly blamed). He recognises the strength of the pull of English culture and an English/British identity as J. R. Jones did, and while he does not go as far as Jones in identifying these attractions and the 'anti-Welshness' they can create as caused by the Prydeindod ideology, there is a distinct echo there. Britain/England has and is seducing the Welsh away from their true identity. This statement attempts to make the Welsh aware of that, to open their eyes so that they can resist the pull. (The autobiographies were originally written in Welsh so it might seem that Thomas was preaching to the converted but, as he and Jones both recognised, it was not only non-Welsh-speakers who could be attracted by the lure of British identity and culture.) In *Neb* meanwhile, Thomas comments that England has oppressed countries other than Wales and not always so softly: 'The English are old hands at dealing with subjugated nations; they have had centuries of experience. Consider the violence in Ireland'.<sup>24</sup>

The most striking comparison between Wales and a subjugated people, though, comes earlier in his 1974 Welsh-language review of *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*. Here Thomas comments favourably on Dee Brown's book which portrays the Native Americans

sympathetically and chronicles their struggles to keep their native territories. Unsurprisingly, Thomas sees parallels with Wales, though again he stresses that the Native Americans have suffered more: 'The sufferings of the Welsh are not to be compared with those of the Indians, although the decline of the Welsh has been going on for centuries. But there are comparisons to be made between them, and contrasts, each extremely significant.'<sup>25</sup> Earlier in the review he describes how the Native Americans were legally cheated as well as driven from their lands; they could not understand 'the tricks of the white lawyers who drew up complicated deeds and documents to prove that the Indians had transferred part of their lands to the Americans'.<sup>26</sup> Turning to the Welsh he writes,

Wales was conquered by the English and our best land taken. Nowadays of course, it won't do to talk about violence. Our land today is being taken over by the English completely legally, according to English law, namely by means of money, and most of our fellow Welshmen do not care at all, so long as they make a profit.<sup>27</sup>

The parallels with the Native Americans are made explicitly and clearly and through them the state of contemporary Wales as a result of its subordinate position. Thomas highlights the uneven structures of power that exist between Wales and England, stressing the financial and legal power that England has and how it abuses this. Both subordinate groups, Native Americans and Welsh, have been forced to abide by laws that are foreign to them, that they may not fully understand and that are not written for their benefit. Welsh land is being taken over by the English, as Native American land was taken over by pioneers and, even worse, many Welsh people are happy to acquiesce in this as long as they make a profit.

This last point is important as, far more than Webb, Thomas also blames the Welsh people for colluding with England. Whereas Webb tends to direct his ire at certain public figures in Wales, Thomas is far less discriminating. He sees the majority of his compatriots as either colluding with English rule for profit or too spineless to stand up for themselves and their country. He can be scathing about Welsh public figures too – in the comparison of Wales with Eastern Europe he laments both that very few Welsh people would turn out to protest the fate of the language compared to the fifty million who turned out to demand freedom in Prague, and that:

they [the Eastern European nations] had leaders who were politically mature and wise. Our own unmentionable leaders are politically naïve or dishonest if they think that we can keep our identity while speaking English as our main language and making bosom friends of the English.<sup>28</sup>

(J. R. Jones would surely agree with the second part of the statement, that the Welsh language is vital to Wales's identity.) Here the blame is spread fairly evenly between politicians and electorate, but elsewhere ordinary citizens bear the full brunt of Thomas's condemnation. Writing in the third person in his autobiography *Neb* of his previous description of the remoteness and poverty of the farmhouses in the Montgomeryshire hills and the gradual loss of the cultured Welsh-language community that had once existed there, he claims 'a political element came into his poetry, together with a great deal of bitterness because of the English oppression that caused these things to happen'.<sup>29</sup> However he then adds: 'But with the honesty of a poet he also saw the failings of his fellow-Welshmen, who had not sufficient backbone to rise and demand the right to govern themselves'.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, in the well-known poem 'Reservoirs' the English may be 'elbowing our language' but they are doing so 'Into the grave that we have dug for it'.<sup>31</sup> The English are the oppressors but the Welsh are complicit. This is very far from Webb's ringing declaration: 'We believe in the Welsh people.'<sup>32</sup>

These comments hint at another aspect of Thomas's views about Wales that is revealed both in his writing and in public comments. He was passionately attached to the Welsh language that he began to learn at the age of thirty. With what was perhaps the zeal of the convert, he worked to protect and promote it, seeing in it the key to true Welshness (note again the similarity to Jones's ideas). In contrast, he saw English as a foreign language in Wales. This view had two potentially damaging results, however. Firstly, it meant that Thomas always struggled with the fact that he was a Welsh writer who had to compose in English, especially as he could not really accept the idea of a truly Welsh literature in English. As M. Wynn Thomas has shown, this may have largely been as a result of the influence of Saunders Lewis,<sup>33</sup> who in 1939 denied that there could be such a thing as an Anglo-Welsh literature.<sup>34</sup> Thomas admired Lewis greatly and after being inspired by Lewis's series of essays 'Cwrs y Byd', published in *Y Faner*, actually went to meet him at Lewis's home in Llanfarian near Aberystwyth in 1945. This visit has the feel of

a disciple searching for a master. In *Neb*, Thomas describes being warmly welcomed and receiving Lewis's blessing to write in English for Wales, but this seems to have been of only limited or at least short-term comfort to him. As Ned Thomas notes, R. S. Thomas's view on using English to write for and about Wales develops over the course of his career, becoming ever more uncompromising. Early on in his career it seemed to be less of an issue for him and in his 1946 essay 'Some Contemporary Scottish Writing' he is able to see the possibility of young English-language writers like himself taking up the 'mantle' of the previous generation of great Welsh-language writers.<sup>35</sup> Later, however, he appeared to change his mind and to lament even more his inability to compose poetry in his national language.<sup>36</sup>

The second result of this idealising of the Welsh language was a tendency to see those parts of Wales where Welsh was not spoken as somehow less Welsh. He describes the inhabitants of his curacies on the Welsh border as 'Welshmen with English accents and attitudes'.<sup>37</sup> They are Welshmen but, in Jones's terms, their Welsh identity is only partial. In both 'Y Llwybrau Gynt' and *Neb*, meanwhile, Thomas mentions looking west towards the mountains of north Wales from these curacies and deciding to learn Welsh 'in order to be able to return to the true Wales'.<sup>38</sup> In 'Y Llwybrau Gynt' he does add 'of my imagination',<sup>39</sup> acknowledging that this Wales is one of his construction, but it is still very clear that for him 'Wales' meant the Welsh language. His decision to learn Welsh is part of an attempt to remake his own identity, to reimagine himself as a Welshman and identify himself with his 'true Wales'. A number of critics have written about his movement westwards in search of Welsh-speaking Wales and his disillusionment in the parishes of Manafon and Eglwys-fach when he found that English predominated there.<sup>40</sup> He was even more dismissive of the industrialised valleys of the south, seeing industrialisation as alien to Wales and as inextricably linked with Anglicisation; it was, after all, the industrialisation of south Wales that had brought an English-speaking workforce to Wales in vast numbers in the nineteenth century.<sup>41</sup> In a 1984 letter to Raymond Garlick he wrote 'I have little sympathy with the "Good a Welshman as you, mun" attitude of the south'.<sup>42</sup> For Thomas the true Wales was rural as well as Welsh-speaking. In his autobiography he talks of beginning to get 'a unified picture of Wales, her mountains, her moorland and her foaming streams'<sup>43</sup> during his time at Manafon. As Justin Wintle notes, however, there

are some notable absences from this view: 'Then as later, large areas of the country will remain off-limits: the north-east and the southern counties of Gwent, Glamorgan and Pembrokeshire.'<sup>44</sup> This is in complete contrast to Webb who, as we have seen, insisted on the importance of seeing Wales as a whole and proclaimed the Welshness of the valleys. Thomas's view could be extremely damaging and divisive. By portraying the industrial and border areas and their inhabitants as somehow less than truly Welsh, Thomas risks alienating these inhabitants from his notion of Wales and actually damages the cause of Welsh nationhood and national unity. In *Neb* Thomas bemoans the fact that the Welsh do not unite, but does not stop to think about why they might not, or what contribution, if any, his own attitude might make to that lack of unity.<sup>45</sup>

It is important to note, as Brown does, that Thomas's view of Wales is 'a deeply personal one, born of his own emotional and imaginative needs'<sup>46</sup> and has much to do with his own temperament and taste. In his autobiographies he mentions having loved nature since he was very small, enjoying the fields that were near his home as a child and the mountains of Snowdonia as a student in Bangor, while his zeal for the Welsh language may stem from having been denied access to it as a child (his decision to learn Welsh is arguably a rejection of his completely-English upbringing in Holyhead).<sup>47</sup> Thomas's 'Wales' is as much imagined as it is real, and Thomas is aware of that to some extent, as the phrase from 'Y Llwybrau Gynt' quoted above demonstrates. There is frequently more than a touch of the utopian about it. This in itself is not unusual in resistance writing; many resistance writers have visions of how their nations should be. Webb's longed-for 'Socialist Republic of Wales' is one such example. However, this vision must be one the majority of their compatriots can share, otherwise it will fail to inspire and mobilise them and, as we have seen, it is unlikely that large portions of the Welsh people would desire to bring about Thomas's Wales as there would seem to be no place for them in it.

### A LIVING NATION?

Resistance writers must be able to move people through their work. It is therefore vital that, however dark the subject matter under discussion, there remains an element of hope. Portraying a cause as lost is not the way to inspire people to join it.

In a 1972 article, Dafydd Elis-Thomas argues that the view of Wales and her people presented in Thomas's poetry is negative and unhelpful.<sup>48</sup> He claims that Thomas's nationalism is almost entirely historically-based and thus precludes the possibility of dealing with the issues of the present. As Elis-Thomas explains, the 'wounds' mentioned in 'The Patriot' are not those of 'unemployment, migration, non-democratic government, lack of economic development, linguistic injustice etc. which the patriot opens, but "the concealed wounds/ Of history in the comfortable flesh"<sup>49</sup> (It should be noted that Elis-Thomas is writing from a political position, as a left-wing member of Plaid Cymru who would become an MP two years later. It is therefore understandable that he focuses on the social and political issues of the Wales of his time and wants R. S. Thomas to do the same.) It is common and natural, even necessary, for nationalist writers to be aware of and use the past, but to do so to the extent that Thomas does precludes the possibility for development and change built on that history, and therefore the history becomes almost worthless. As Thomas himself writes in the early poem 'Welsh Landscape':

There is no present in Wales,  
And no future;  
There is only the past (*RSTCP*, p. 37)

This is not a healthy or helpful vision of the nation. The past is important but not more so than the present and future.

Elis-Thomas also highlights the frequent images of death that appear in Thomas's poetry from his earliest work to the 1960s: the 'carcase of an old song' in 'Welsh Landscape', the 'putrefying of a dead/ Nation' and the Welsh language's 'grave' in 'Reservoirs' and the invitation to come and die in Wales in 'Welcome to Wales'. He contrasts this with the work of slightly younger poets like Harri Webb and the Welsh-language Euros Bowen who offer some form of hope. Webb's image of the centre of Wales as a 'green desert' may appear bleak but, Elis-Thomas argues, it contains 'both the positive and negative elements in the Welsh situation. Wales is certainly a desert, but it is a desert which can be turned green'.<sup>50</sup> Bowen, meanwhile, praises the Cymdeithas yr Iaith activists, seeing them as working successfully for the future. Elis-Thomas concludes that in this work 'the poetics of despair is replaced by a poetics of revolutionary hope', something, he implies, that does not happen in Thomas's work. Thomas's view

‘does not correspond with the exciting *living* reality which we are experiencing now in Wales [in 1972]’.<sup>51</sup> It could thus be considered almost obsolete and certainly it is not useful to a nation that is trying to move forwards towards some sort of sovereignty. San Juan writes:

Ultimately, the struggle hinges on the drawing power of the principles and visions articulating a popular consensus for long-range transformation of social power which I think can be found most vividly in the site of cultural production; in those practices which express the feelings, sentiments, hopes, institutions, dreams, and aspirations of the masses.<sup>52</sup>

An effective struggle needs to be supported by creative work portraying long term aims and expressing hope for the future. According to Elis-Thomas, R. S. Thomas’s work does not do this, and if this is the case then that would seriously hamper his work’s resistance potential. However, there *is* resistance in his work, especially in his earlier poetry, and even some seeds of hope that Elis-Thomas does not seem to have noted.

One aspect of Thomas’s historical focus that Elis-Thomas does not consider but that adds significantly to the negative feelings his poetry can arouse is the prevalence of defeat. There are few apparent victories in Thomas’s poetry. The Welsh do fight constantly, desperately, bravely, they resist and do not yield, but ultimately they are defeated or at least driven back. The most striking case of this is the poem that began life as ‘Welsh Nation’ before being published as ‘Welsh History’ in Thomas’s second collection *An Acre of Land* (1952), and collected in the subsequent volumes *Song at the Year’s Turning* (1955) and *Welsh Airs* (1987). In this poem Thomas writes: ‘We fought, and were always in retreat’ but he does add

and yet the stranger  
Never found our ultimate stand  
In the thick woods, declaiming verse  
To the sharp prompting of the harp.<sup>53</sup>

Clearly there is resistance here. The Welsh are fighting after all, and Thomas is showing that. Defeat is not total. But they are being driven back further and further. Andrew Webb argues that the people depicted in this poem are shown to be

falling back to an ‘ultimate stand’ of ‘verse’ and ‘harp’, a set of traditions – bound up with the Welsh language – that remain impenetrable

to a 'stranger'. The role of the poet, it would seem, is that of 'declaiming verse' to the gathered tribe: making culture's last stand.<sup>54</sup>

'Culture's last stand' would normally suggest its end. However, the 'stranger' never succeeds in finding their 'ultimate stand'. There is therefore some small unconquered corner of Wales that protects its culture and that culture still exists in the present day, showing that the Welsh of the past were never completely vanquished. Moreover, the last stanza changes tone – much as the final verse in Webb's 'Colli Iaitth' discussed earlier does – and carries a note of hope. It begins: 'We were a people, and are so yet' (*AL*, p. 23), signalling that change of tone and sounding similar to Webb's declaration 'The Welsh people are and the Welsh people will be'.<sup>55</sup> More interesting still is the rest of the stanza:

When we have finished quarrelling for crumbs  
Under the table, or gnawing the bones  
Of a dead culture, we will arise  
And greet each other in a new dawn. (*AL*, p. 23)

This stanza suggests that Thomas is in fact aware of the dangers of focusing too much on the past. Far from promoting the idea of fixating on a stagnating culture, he promises a positive vision of the future. The image of 'a new dawn' finds an echo in Sánchez Piñol's 'brighter dawn' in the closing sentence of *Victus*, and in many other nationalist discourses. It is a symbol of hope and definitely looks to the future. Moreover the poem does not say 'if' but 'when' – it is a prophecy not just a hope and that, more than anything, gives the poem a positive close.

In *Song at the Year's Turning*, the last line of this poem was in fact changed to read 'Armed, but not in the old way'.<sup>56</sup> As M. Wynn Thomas argues, this version of the line is less ambiguous than its predecessor, seeming to allow for some sort of action, a 'militant, if not military, struggle in the Welsh present'.<sup>57</sup> Military action seems unlikely as that is what has been depicted in the rest of the poem. 'Not in the old way' suggests that a new way of fighting is needed for the current times – protest, direct action, and, perhaps, writing. The world has changed, and Wales and the Welsh must change with it or be left behind. In both versions, the last stanza speaks of hope for the future. Whether the Welsh are 'armed' in a new way or greeting each

other in a 'new dawn', things have changed for the better. This is a far more hopeful and radical form of resistance, closer to the work of Webb and Sánchez Piñol.

Elis-Thomas cites R. S. Thomas's use of Owain Glyndŵr as part of his historically-focused nationalism, noting that in *Song at the Year's Turning* there is a whole poem – 'The Tree' – devoted to Glyndŵr<sup>58</sup> (though in actual fact the poem originally appeared in *An Acre of Land*, 1952). Indeed the poem is subtitled 'Owain Glyn Dŵr speaks'. It uses the image of a tree to symbolise how Glyndŵr, inspired by the bards of his day (thus emphasising the role poets had played in Welsh resistance), rose up to lead his people. It is true that most of the poem focuses on Glyndŵr's historical rising and its ultimate defeat with symbolic lines like: 'The music ceased' and 'It is winter still in the bare tree' but this is unavoidable as, historically, the rising ultimately failed. However, as with 'Welsh History', there is a note of hope in the final stanza – Glyndŵr still stands:

But here at its roots I watch and wait  
For the new spring so long delayed;  
And he who stands in the light above  
And sets his ear to the scarred bole,  
Shall hear me tell from the deep tomb  
How sorrow may bud the tree with tears,  
But only his blood can make it bloom. (*RSTCP*, p. 32)

In a way not dissimilar to Webb's 'By a Mountain Pool', Glyndŵr is still waiting to inspire nationalists of the future. Unlike in Webb's version he does not accomplish this within the poem – he is still waiting. But, as in 'By a Mountain Pool', Glyndŵr will inspire the modern-day Welsh; though as Brown has noted, 'to make the tree flourish again will involve effort on their own behalf by the Welsh people, and perhaps sacrifice'.<sup>59</sup> Sorrow alone is not enough. Crying for the past may refresh the tree somewhat but only action – and blood – can 'make it bloom'. Glyndŵr, heroic though he is, cannot save Wales alone – the nationalists of the present must join him, as they do in 'By a Mountain Pool'. There is thus a link between past and present that Elis-Thomas does not note. The Welsh past is not being invoked for its own sake, but to inspire the Welsh of the present time. This allows for the possibility of change and improvement, as in 'Welsh History', and therefore these poems, both mentioned by Elis-Thomas, cannot be dismissed as merely a 'poetics of despair'.

Ironically, however, Thomas's poetry from the 1960s when he was writing more often about Wales and nationalist issues frequently lacks this sense of hope. In the 1961 collection *Tares*, the poem 'Hyddgen' looks back 500 years to Glyndŵr's battle there and states: 'He beat the English./ Does it matter now/ In the rain?' and describes the victory as 'barren' (*RSTCP*, p. 113). There is none of the hope found in 'The Tree'. The poem ends:

History goes on;  
On the rock the lichen  
Records it: no mention  
Of them, of us. (*RSTCP*, p. 113)

The Welsh will be written out of history and thus Glyndŵr's revolt will have truly failed as it has not saved the Welsh from oblivion. M. Wynn Thomas calls 'Reservoirs' 'a bitter elegy',<sup>60</sup> and the same can be said for 'Hyddgen' and for many other of Thomas's poems, particularly in the 1960s.

Some of the new poems in *Welsh Airs* (1987) can also be seen as elegies. In 'Drowning' the speaker mourns the

irreplaceable and forgettable,  
inhabitants of the parish and speakers  
of the Welsh tongue.<sup>61</sup>

and fears that Wales will be like

other places where on as deep a sea  
men have clung to the last spars of their language  
and gone down with it, unremembered but uncomplaining. (*WA*, p. 38)

The end of these people and the Welsh language seems nigh. In 'Gwalia', meanwhile,

the Welshman's last cry  
has shrunk to an echo indistinguishable  
from silence: Stranger, go home. (*WA*, p. 39)

The ability of the Welsh to resist the English incomers has completely gone. Their rebuttal cannot be heard. The phrase 'last cry' evokes language and is reminiscent of last breath, suggesting the end of the

Welsh language and the death of the Welsh people rather than just an end to their resistance. As in *Prydeindod*, the end of the Welsh language marks the end of the Welsh as a people, or at least the beginning of that end, and thus their metaphorical death. There is no note of hope here to counter the despair.

Hope is found in some of Thomas's later writing, but it is in the prose not the poetry; unsurprisingly since, as we have seen, after his move to Aberdaron he mainly dealt with nationalist issues in his (predominantly-Welsh-language) prose. In the 1974 review of *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, Thomas declares:

The Welsh nation is not finished yet. The language is still alive. We have not yet been put into a reservation to scrape a living there. There are intelligent, sensible people among us. Our air and our streams have not yet been polluted. Right is on our side. Rise up, you Welsh, demand leaders of your own choosing to govern you in your own country, to help you make a future in keeping with your own best traditions, before it is too late.<sup>62</sup>

Here, the sense of hope is far more obvious. There is a sense of urgency certainly, but the reason for this is that the Welsh people *can* still do something to change their circumstances. Thomas urges action rather than despair in a rallying cry not dissimilar to Webb.

### SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

An important aspect of resistance writing, mentioned in the previous chapter, is the idea of speaking truth to power: that is, announcing the injustices one's people have suffered to the world, including the power(s) responsible. Indeed, it could be argued that this is a major justification for writing in a world language like English or Spanish and so is particularly important to the writers in this study. Furthermore, it could be argued that Thomas, with his English publishers and an audience outside Wales, had more opportunity to do so than most.

Thomas recognised the importance of speaking truth to power (though he did not call it that) early in his career. In the poem 'Commission,' addressed to his friend Raymond Garlick and published in the latter's journal *Dock Leaves* in 1955, Thomas congratulated the English-born Garlick for choosing to live in Wales,

learn Welsh and work on behalf of his adopted nation. Thomas goes on to outline Garlick's especial role as he sees it:

You know our grievance, know the bitter poison,  
 Black as despair, seeping from the wound  
 Your country dealt us; plead our rightful case  
 To those who come to us for what we give,  
 Who take and leave us ruined by their taking,  
 Since we must give in ways they understand.  
 They cannot see, the stale prerogative  
 Of history foists them on our luckless land;  
 Open their eyes, show them the heart that's breaking.<sup>63</sup>

Thomas charges Garlick with recounting Wales's woes to England and with showing them the effects their actions have had, even if these effects were not intended. Thomas can be seen as undertaking a similar project in much of his English-language writing, in particular those poems of the 1960s that seem to lack hope.

San Juan's focus when discussing speaking truth to power is the Guatemalan activist and writer Rigoberta Menchú whose testimonio, *Me Llamo Rigoberta Menchú*, describes her coming to activism as a result of the torture and murder of her family and the attempted genocide of her people. Again, it is important to stress that this study is in no way suggesting that the experiences of the Welsh people are comparable in scale or horror to those of the Guatemalans, merely that San Juan's commentary may provide some interesting insights when applied to R. S. Thomas. One salient point that emerges from San Juan's examination of the testimonio is that Menchú is trying to open up a dialogue. San Juan stresses that 'the basis for egalitarian communicative exchange is lacking' but argues that Menchú does at least make an attempt at starting a dialogue with her persecutors and the wider world.<sup>64</sup> Thomas, with his audience outside Wales, may be attempting to do the same thing. He raises awareness of issues within Wales, bringing them to the attention of the wider reader.

Many of Thomas's poems deal with specific injustices inflicted upon the Welsh people by the English-dominated British government, though, as seen earlier, he was quick to admit to Welsh culpability as well. Thomas registers this in 'Reservoirs', as we have noted, but this poem still shows him speaking truth to power. In it he baldly describes

the physical, psychological and cultural effects the reservoirs have had on Wales, reservoirs that have displaced Welsh communities in order to supply English cities. The poem was first published in 1967, two years after Tryweryn was opened and began supplying water to Liverpool, and just a year after MAC set off an explosion at the Clywedog Dam in protest at the construction of yet another reservoir in Wales to supply an English city (Birmingham in this instance). The creation of reservoirs and the related issues, particularly the breakup of Welsh-language communities like Capel Celyn, were therefore extremely topical and a hot political issue.

The poem begins by grounding its topic firmly in Wales, declaring: ‘There are places in Wales I don’t go:/ Reservoirs’. These reservoirs are ‘the subconscious/ Of a people, troubled far down’, emphasising the psychological effects the flooding of these valleys has caused. The reservoirs have displaced people and destroyed communities, usually Welsh-speaking ones, damaging the Welsh culture and the national psyche. The difference between:

The serenity of their expression  
[...] it is a pose  
For strangers, a watercolour’s appeal  
To the mass (*RSTCP*, p. 194)

and ‘the poem’s/ Harsher conditions’ – the poet’s reality – is striking. He is revealing what lies beneath the surface of these reservoirs to people who would not otherwise be aware of it: ‘strangers’. As the reservoirs are in Wales, and are ‘the subconscious of a people’, the suggestion is that the strangers are from outside of Wales, presumably English. The ‘watercolour’ suggests an image created for tourists, commodifying Wales for the pleasure of (probably English) outsiders – a parallel to the reservoirs supplying water for the benefit of English cities. Thomas then can be seen as speaking to these tourists here, trying to reveal to them the human cost of the creation of the reservoirs that seem so beautiful and useful to them. Equally, this could be a lament for his own people who already know the circumstances. The words evoke pathos; it is difficult to read them and remain unmoved. In this first part of the poem there is no anger, no blame, just sorrow, and this is why it is most effective at speaking to Thomas’s audience. The second half has a more bitter tone and some of the death-related imagery which Dafydd Elis-Thomas condemned:

Where can I go, then, from the smell  
 Of decay, from the putrefying of a dead  
 Nation? (*RSTCP*, p. 194)

The sense of decay and putrefaction is repellent. Moreover, the English are described as: 'Scavenging among the remains/ Of our culture', like vultures or other carrion-eaters, an image that is not likely to endear Thomas to his readers in England. Here, Thomas's bitterness risks alienating his English readers and thus the second part of the poem is less effective than the first at speaking truth to power.

Another of Thomas's poems that deals with a specific abuse of Welsh land is 'Afforestation'. Kirsti Bohata has shown that many Welsh writers in the 1950s and 1960s chose to write (in both languages) about the appropriation of Welsh land, whether that was for military purposes, reservoirs or afforestation.<sup>65</sup> The last is particularly common and Bohata explains that the Forestry Commission that was responsible for afforestation is constructed 'as an alien, colonizing force'<sup>66</sup> in the work of these writers and that the tree plantations are seen as erasing the place that was there before, a place that is portrayed as being essentially Welsh. Bohata notes that the communities displaced by the trees were considered 'the "last outposts", or, in less fatalistic language, the vibrant, if threatened, heartlands of Wales'.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, almost invariably in the writings she examines, afforestation and the creation of reservoirs are explicitly linked to the death of the Welsh language, as in 'Reservoirs' where the English are 'elbowing our language/ Into the grave that we have dug for it'.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, Thomas is part of a movement of sorts when producing both 'Reservoirs' and 'Afforestation', though he is less explicit about the death of the language in the latter. Nor is this poem a direct call to resist in the way that some of the other works on the same subject are, particularly Waldo Williams's Welsh-language poem 'Preseli'. In 'Preseli', written to celebrate one occasion where the Welsh successfully resisted another attempted takeover, this time by the military, Williams declares: 'Keep the wall from the brute, keep the spring clear of filth'.<sup>69</sup> Thomas's 'Afforestation' has no such call to arms; the poet acts more as witness of the damage being done to the land and, potentially, speaks truth to power by revealing that damage to outsiders.

That damage is extensive. The trees are portrayed as invaders: 'Colonising the old/ Haunts of men' (*RSTCP*, p. 130). The choice of the word 'colonising' is marked; the invaders want to take over

and exploit the land. As Bohata explains, in this poem ‘Forestry Commission plantations are explicitly presented as yet another colonial instrument designed to usurp traditional Welsh life’.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, these plantations that are usurping the Welsh way of life are useless in Thomas’s view:

The grass feeds the sheep;  
The sheep give the wool  
For warm clothing, but these – ?  
[...]  
Thin houses for dupes,  
Pages of pale trash, (*RSTCP*, p. 130)

The natural, traditional, communal process of sheep farming where the sheep are raised to provide wool for clothing is sharply contrasted with the apparently worthless trees that can only produce ‘thin houses’. The adjective ‘thin’ could be a reference to a Welsh expression for the English language, ‘*yr iaith fain*’ (the thin language), suggesting that these ‘dupes’ may be English speakers, either from England or, perhaps more likely given the use of ‘dupes’, Welsh people who have blindly abandoned the Welsh language. Moreover, in the context of Thomas’s other work, it is reasonable to take sheep-farming as representative of what Thomas sees as the traditional Welsh rural way of life, and he is not alone in this; Bohata notes that the way of life supposedly threatened by afforestation was ‘epitomized by the almost biblical figure of the shepherd, who stood for the struggling tenant farmers and other minor landowners’.<sup>71</sup> The trees have damaged – indeed uprooted – that way of life and replaced it with something that

won’t take the weight  
Of any of the strong bodies  
For which the wind sighs. (*RSTCP*, p. 130)

The alien English way of life that replaces the Welsh is both of less value and less enduring than the culture it has supplanted. There is also an anti-capitalist and anti-mass-culture strand to this stance; in addition to being an arm of the British government, the Forestry Commission is, in Thomas’s eyes, part of the capitalist economy, exploiting Welsh resources and producing paper for ‘[p]ages of pale trash’, commercialised popular literature that he sees as rubbish.

Although there is resentment here, it is heavily overlaid by a wistful sadness for what has been lost. As we have seen, M. Wynn Thomas notes that 'Reservoirs' is in many ways 'a bitter elegy' rather than a protest,<sup>72</sup> and the same is true of 'Afforestation'. The poet does not attempt to intervene in the process in either case, nor does he encourage others to do so; he merely records, and laments it, bearing witness to the dissolution of a culture. Compared to other forms of resistance writing, this can seem a little passive. However, the muted tone works in the poem's favour as part of Thomas's project to speak truth to power. Anger in the poem would be more likely to alienate his English readers, as it does in the second part of 'Reservoirs', and therefore undermine his efforts. H. J. Savill claims that many of Thomas's nationalist poems 'show an acidity that critics and readers alike find distasteful'<sup>73</sup> and this is likely to be heightened in the case of the people attacked in the poems. Therefore, the milder and more oblique poems and parts of poems are actually more effective in this particular case.

#### *WHAT IS A WELSHMAN?* – RESISTANCE OR MERE INVECTIVE?

In 1974, Thomas's short collection *What is a Welshman?* was published. This contained twelve poems, all but one of which were new, and, unusually for him, was published in Wales, suggesting that he was attempting to speak specifically to his fellow countrymen. In other words, these poems were intended for home consumption. This could signal a change of intention on Thomas's part from merely raising awareness and speaking truth to power to engaging his compatriots, and to a certain extent *What is a Welshman?* does do this. As the title suggests, the poems are all to do with the Welsh people. Moreover, these poems are angry and bitter to the extent of being vitriolic, making them unsuitable for speaking truth to power; as we have seen with 'Reservoirs', angering or repelling your audience is not an effective way to engage with them. Consequently, if they are to function as resistance poems, they must instead chronicle the past resistance of the Welsh people and/or inspire them to act in the present day.

However, there is ultimately no more hope or suggestion of progress in this collection than there is in the majority of the 1960s poetry. The poet does chronicle the oppressions Wales has suffered but does not mention resistance to that oppression. The Welsh either

collude or are powerless to resist. In the final poem ‘It hurts him to think’, ‘The nursing future/ saw the tightening lips/ of the English drawn on the hard sky’, suggesting that Welsh parents are culpable for seeing English as the language of the future and consequently not passing Welsh on to their children.<sup>74</sup> Thus the Welsh may be considered partly to blame for not having fought for their language, though it is clear that the pressure is coming from the English. They insist the Welsh must learn to speak English if they are to acquire certain jobs: “‘You can have the job,/ if you ask for it in the right/ words”” (*WIAW?*, p. 12). As a result, though, Welsh is abandoned in favour of English. In ‘He lies down to be counted’ the speaker mentions the past heroes of Wales ‘who gave their lives for the freedom/ to make money’ (*WIAW?*, p. 6), suggesting, as Thomas does in many other places, that the Welsh are more interested in taking English money than in preserving their heritage. Similarly, in ‘If you can call it living’, the tourist asks the native: ‘Anything to/ sell?’ while the native is ‘rummaging among/ the remnants of his self-respect’ (*WIAW?*, p. 2).

It is possible to argue that these poems might work to arouse shame in the Welsh and thus move them to act. But the bleakness, venom and sense of despair work against that, as does the register of the poems. The best example is the last part of ‘It hurts him to think’:

I was  
born into the squalor of  
their feeding and sucked their speech  
in with my mother’s  
infected milk, so that whatever  
I throw up now is still theirs. (*WIAW?*, p. 12)

M. Wynn Thomas has remarked upon the colloquial crudity of the expression ‘throwing up’ – a colloquialism unusual in Thomas’s work.<sup>75</sup> While it clearly reveals the bitterness the speaker feels, it is scatological and repellent, as are the words ‘squalor’ and ‘infected milk’. Readers will feel revolted and disinclined to dwell on the poem. Even more than in the second part of ‘Reservoirs’, Thomas’s vehemence has taken over the poetry, making it propaganda rather than verse. This in itself is not an issue in resistance writing, as we have seen resistance theorists argue against traditional definitions of what ‘good literature’ should be, and much resistance writing is effectively propaganda. The issue in the case of *What is a Welshman?* is that it

is not *effective* propaganda. The pervasive bitterness with no counter of hope or action, the derogatory portrayal of the Welsh people, the unpleasant and occasionally crude language all militate against the resistance potential of the collection. 'It hurts him to think' in particular is really a personal rant, a stream of invective, rather than a call to arms. Thomas's regret that he could not write poetry in Welsh because he acquired the language too late in life has already been mentioned. As Brown has noted, he blamed his mother for this lack of Welsh<sup>76</sup> and this is reflected here with the 'infected milk'; the child gains the foreign language from the English people through his mother. If this poem were to strike any chords with its contemporary audience, it would surely be with those who already thought as Thomas did; that Welsh is the only 'true' language of Wales and that industrialisation and supine Welsh parents had robbed many of that language. He is preaching to the converted. Likewise, the opening poem of the collection, 'He lives here', would appeal to those who agreed with Thomas that the true Wales was Welsh-speaking and rural, but not to many others. As we have seen, this poem portrays the valleys in denigrating terms, criticising the landscape: 'bleak hills/ black with the dust of coal', the inhabitants: 'the lost souls/ of the coal-face', and their speech: 'a language/ filched from the dictionary/ of the tribes we await' (*WIAW?*, p. 1).<sup>77</sup> This depiction would alienate the people of the valleys which then, as now, constituted a large percentage of the population of Wales, and is thus divisive and harmful to the cause of Welsh nationhood.

The poems of *What is a Welshman?* are therefore not likely to persuade anyone who is not already of the same mind as Thomas. Much the same can be said about the 1987 volume *Welsh Airs* (also published in Wales), although this is slightly mitigated by the inclusion of earlier poems like 'Welsh History' which do show some hope and potential for resistance. Many of the new poems, though, contain the same bitterness. One of the darkest, 'Toast', begins:

I look at Wales now forty  
years on. Was there a chance,  
as some hoped, that maggots,  
burrowing in its carcase, would grow  
wings and take themselves off,  
leaving at least the bones to acquire  
a finish? The opposite happened. (*WA*, p. 37)

The despair, contempt and repellent register are all familiar from *What is a Welshman?* Other poems like 'Drowning' which have already been discussed are more muted in register but no more hopeful.

Thus, Thomas's later poems dealing with Wales are not effective resistance poems. They were published in Wales, suggesting an attempt to speak directly to the Welsh people, and certainly they are too bitter and harsh to be effective at speaking truth to power. But they are also too bitter and despairing to inspire the Welsh people to act. Rather, as Dafydd Elis-Thomas points out with regards to some of the earlier poetry, they promulgate a sense of hopelessness, with none of the seeds of resistance found in that earlier poetry.

### ENCLAVES OF RESISTANCE

So far the authors examined have mainly espoused an open resistance. R. S. Thomas, however, is different. He is one of the poets Daniel Williams cites as constructing the idea of a Welsh Wales beyond the reach and comprehension of any incomer and thus closed. The poem 'Welcome', quoted in the first chapter, certainly seems to suggest this, declaring as it does to visitors that they can come to Wales but that they won't ever experience the 'real' Wales; the Welsh language will act as a barrier. This is not too dissimilar to J. R. Jones's idea of the Welsh language preserving Welsh difference, though here the language is more active; rather than passively existing as a marker of identity, it actively forms a barrier. (This cannot be a direct influence from Jones's work as 'Welcome' (1963) appeared before the publication of *Prydeindod* (1966). While Jones was discussing his ideas in articles in the journal *Barn* in the years prior to publication, Thomas's image of the Welsh language as a barrier dates back to at least 1958, as we shall see. Therefore, it is likely that both men are reflecting some of the ideas that were circulating in nationalist circles at the time or manifesting a common response to the crisis which the Welsh language was experiencing.) As Williams explains:

Language is the key to an inner sanctum that lies beyond the tourist's gaze, a barrier to the incomer's integration. Though the poem's narrator is unable to stem the tide of incomers, he can compensate for that by suggesting that there's a unique experience that lies beyond the visitor's comprehension, and beyond the poem's implied anglophone reader.<sup>78</sup>

For Williams, therefore, 'Welcome' functions as a resistance poem by implying that there is some part of Wales that cannot be seen and understood, and thus obtained, by incomers.<sup>79</sup> The barrier protecting that part of Wales is the Welsh language. The Welsh language prevents Wales from being completely absorbed by these incomers, but it also appears as a closed system, an attribute which is impossible to acquire, whereas in reality, as Thomas knew, languages can be learned by both incomers and members of the nation who were raised without that language. As we have seen, Williams argues that this view of the Welsh language is harmful and thus Thomas's work in 'Welcome' can be seen as damaging to the language, which was surely not his intent.

Unlike many of the nationalist poems of the 1960s, 'Welcome' is not despairing. A sense of action and resistance is produced through its defiant tone, its refusal to yield. However, this is not necessarily a constructive resistance. It is easy to see it, in the same way Andrew Webb sees 'Welsh History,' as 'culture's last stand'.<sup>80</sup> At least in 'Welcome' the Welsh language appears to be holding its ground by acting as a barrier to incomers rather than being 'always in retreat' like the people of 'Welsh History' (*AL*, p. 23). But it is only holding its ground; there is no sense of progress or development, only a sense of stubborn resistance and exclusion. Moreover, M. Wynn Thomas has argued that 'the cold bud of water' in the penultimate line of the poem, in addition to being a reference to Tryweryn, is a symbol of the Welsh language as 'a pristine linguistic source, forever preserved from corruption by Welsh speakers, as well as from invasion by English speakers.'<sup>81</sup> While the desire to protect and preserve a language under threat is natural, a language preserved from all use and contact cannot develop and will thus cease to exist as a means of communication, as Daniel Williams has argued.<sup>82</sup> It will become purely symbolic, unable to be used or learned. 'Welcome', therefore, forms one of Sánchez Piñol's 'watertight enclaves' of resistance, and much of Thomas's other work can be seen as doing something similar (including 'Welsh History', though as we have seen there is a change of tone in the last stanza).

Thomas creates two main types of enclaves of resistance in his work. From the late 1950s onwards, the Welsh-language enclave implied in 'Welcome' is predominant. Prior to that, however, he creates another type of enclave in his writings about the Welsh hill

farmers, where he implies that they are the true Welsh who are holding on to their traditions against the rising tide of anglicisation and modernisation. This type of enclave is even more exclusive than the Welsh-language type as it appears to be racially-based and is certainly presented as incomprehensible and impermeable to outsiders.

It could be argued that this enclave is based on location and occupation rather than race, but some of Thomas's poems about the hill farmers contain words and phrases that imply a racial view of the subject, the prime example being the 'sallow skull' of the unnamed hill dweller in 'Out of the Hills' (*RSTCP*, p. 1). Moreover, M. Wynn Thomas has pointed out that the idea that the hill dwellers were racially different to those who lived in the valleys was generally accepted at the time. H. J. Fleure, Professor of Geography at Aberystwyth, was at that time conducting a wide and systematic study of the different racial elements that could be found in the population of Wales and his findings appeared to support this view with a greater prevalence of his racial type B, 'the little dark Welshmen occurring everywhere, short or medium in height, with oval faces and long, rather than extremely long heads',<sup>83</sup> in the uplands, particularly as one went west. M. Wynn Thomas cautions that identifying Thomas's main hill farmer character, Iago Prytherch, with this type B is too simplistic, but argues that the idea 'that the "aboriginal" Welsh could still be found stubbornly surviving in the western hills above Manafon, proved attractive to an R. S. Thomas who had been so disturbed at Hanmer by modern images of violent invasion'.<sup>84</sup> Thus Thomas's depiction of the hill farmers is at least partially racially-based.

Much has already been written about Thomas's hill country poems, particularly those featuring Iago Prytherch.<sup>85</sup> Supposedly a representative farmer of the hill country around Manafon in Montgomeryshire, Prytherch appears in some nineteen poems in all, spread across seven collections of Thomas's poetry. He is an unprepossessing figure in many ways with 'his spittled mirth', 'his clothes, sour with years of sweat/ And animal contact' and his 'half-witted grin' (*RSTCP*, p. 4). This appears to be a denigrating portrayal of a working man by a poet from an educated bourgeois background. However, in the last six lines the tone of the poem changes, becoming almost celebratory. Prytherch's stoicism and determination are praised; 'he, too, is a winner of wars' because he

season by season  
 Against siege of rain and the wind's attrition,  
 Preserves his stock, an impregnable fortress  
 Not to be stormed even in death's confusion. (*RSTCP*, p. 4)

The image of him as 'an impregnable fortress' implies that he cannot be defeated but it is also a closed-up and closed-off image, reminiscent of Sánchez Piñol's watertight enclaves. However, it is Prytherch's resilience that is most apparent here. The final line describes him as 'enduring like a tree' (*RSTCP*, p. 4). As M. Wynn Thomas notes, 'implicit in that praise is Thomas's commendation of Iago for his exemplary Welshness – his stubborn adherence to a way of life that had survived innumerable centuries and their transient conflicts'.<sup>86</sup> Given that the poem was written during the Second World War, 'winner of wars' could also refer to the important contribution made by the British farmers in feeding the nation during the conflict. Iago's courage and strength is not of a flamboyant or typically heroic sort but rather a stubborn refusal to yield to the external pressures of nature and poverty, 'a symbol of endurance' as Thomas himself described him.<sup>87</sup> He is a figure of dogged resistance.

This resilience and continuity is celebrated in another poem, 'The Welsh Hill Country', which, although not one of the Iago Prytherch poems, has much in common with them. Here too the dirtier and harsher side of farming is evoked, in this case adding a slight dig at those (perhaps including the poet himself) who would romanticise the life of the hill farmer:

Too far for you to see  
 The fluke and the foot-rot and the fat maggot  
 Gnawing the skin from the small bones,  
 The sheep are grazing at Bwlch-y-Fedwen,  
 Arranged romantically in the usual manner  
 On a bleak background of bald stone. (*RSTCP*, p. 22)

The 'romantic' arrangement of the sheep as the flock appears from a distance is sharply contrasted with the unpleasant reality of the diseases the sheep suffer. Thomas is strongly suggesting here that while the life of the hill farmer may appear romantic from a detached perspective, in reality it is harsh, and onlookers from a distance cannot recognise this – this life is impenetrable to the outsider. Thomas is acting as an intermediary between the distant reader and the farmer

and is able to portray the latter's way of life to some extent, but that way of life is still remote and inaccessible.

The second stanza continues to depict the increasing ruin of the area with 'the moss and mould on the cold chimneys', 'the nettles growing through the cracked doors' and the empty cottages with holes in the roofs. The third, however, switches its focus to a single solitary figure – 'a man still farming at Ty'n-y-Fawnog'. The hardships of his life have clearly taken their toll on him as can be seen by the 'slow pthisis/ Wasting his frame'. Like Prytherch he is not an attractive figure, but also like him this unnamed farmer is still battling on: 'Contributing grimly to the accepted pattern' (*RSTCP*, p. 22). 'Accepted pattern' suggests doing things in the way that they have always been done. Tradition was very important to Thomas who was extremely wary of technological advances; in several works he expressed his dislike of the ugliness and soullessness of modern technology. Here is another figure of resistance, a Welshman fighting to maintain his way of life against the forces of modernity and capitalism that seek to destroy him.

It is true that there is little in the hill farmer poems apart from names like 'Iago Prytherch' and 'Bwlch-y-Fedwen' to suggest Wales or a Welsh enclave. Indeed some critics have argued that it is likely that Prytherch is a monoglot English speaker.<sup>88</sup> However, some of Thomas's prose works might suggest otherwise. In *Neb* he explained: 'Although Welsh was not spoken in this parish [Manafon], it was in the hills and within reach of places such as Yr Adfa and Llanfair Caereinion'.<sup>89</sup> Therefore, if Iago Prytherch was indeed a hill farmer he may well have spoken Welsh. Moreover, in his prose, Thomas makes it clear that he considers the hill country as one of the last bastions of essentially Welsh life. In 'The Depopulation of the Welsh Hill Country', Thomas described the inhabitants of the country surrounding Manafon as 'the true Welsh peasantry'.<sup>90</sup> Three decades later, in a lecture given at Lampeter, he admitted that he had tended to see Wales as an old man and mentioned Iago Prytherch as 'varying between being a symbol of endurance and of the dumb and tragic suffering of a people destined to disappear from history'.<sup>91</sup> Welsh-speaking or not, it is clear that Thomas sees the Welsh uplands and their inhabitants as essentially Welsh and uses them to symbolise the whole of Wales, whether they be enduring or vanishing from history. In the earlier poems, though, the endurance, and thus resistance, is more marked than the vanishing. Others may have vanished but not those

figures on which the poems focus. Thomas portrays these figures as grimly hanging on against all odds and depicts their way of life as one that no outsider can truly understand or permeate. It is therefore an enclave of resistance.

Iago Prytherch and his fellow hill farmers feature most prominently in R. S. Thomas's early poetry from the 1940s and 1950s (though the final Prytherch poem, significantly titled 'Gone?', was not published until 1978). From the later 1950s onwards, prompted perhaps by his move from Manafon in 1954, Thomas begins to focus instead on the Welsh language as being the essence of the 'true Wales'. Though different, the two types of enclave are linked, a natural progression of Thomas's developing thoughts and feelings about Wales.

As we saw in 'Welcome', without knowledge of the Welsh language the visitor to Wales will not be able to experience the country completely; they will be stopped at and by 'The old bar of speech'. And this is not the first example of Thomas voicing such views. In a 1958 review of certain travel guides to Wales in *The Listener* he writes:

But without the key of the Welsh language one and all must needs pass by the door that opens on the real Wales, [... The Welsh] are a homely people; they live in their kitchens. They have their front parlour, of course, and without the language the traveller will never get beyond it, however comfortable or uncomfortable he may feel. Nor is this to say that the kitchen is always the best place. But it is there that the Welsh are at home.<sup>92</sup>

Without the Welsh language, people can only ever be guests in the homes of the Welsh, limited to the formality of the parlour rather than the familial warmth of the kitchen hearth. The hearth is the 'true Wales', the 'inner sanctum'.<sup>93</sup> The same sentiment is echoed in the poem 'The Parlour' in *Welsh Airs*. Here, the addressee is told:

You knock with the wrong  
tongue. Between you  
and our kitchen, the front room (*WA*, p. 40)

Again, English speakers are relegated to the parlour, where they are handed 'the iced cake of translation.' Tellingly, the closing line reads 'It is not what we mean' (*WA*, p. 40). (Interestingly, the same line appears in 'Welcome' where the Welsh 'have learnt your own/ Language, but don't/ Let it take you in/ It's not what we mean',

forming a direct link between the two poems.) Once again English is not sufficient to interpret Wales and her people. The Welsh language is a barrier that protects the 'real Wales'. This does not necessarily imply that Welsh is a closed system as Williams claims that 'Welcome' does, people can learn Welsh after all as Thomas himself did, but it does give the impression of a remote and forbidding culture and is thus an enclave of resistance.

In 1976, Thomas delivered a lecture entitled 'Abercuawg' at the Eisteddfod, discussing what was effectively his Welsh utopia, though the lecture is in many ways about the search for it, as is the companion poem 'Abercuawg'.<sup>94</sup> Unlike the life of the Welsh hill farmers, Abercuawg has very little basis in reality. The name comes from a medieval Welsh poem speaking of a place that no longer exists.<sup>95</sup> Indeed, Thomas describes how he went in search of Abercuawg's actual physical location and, though he found the spot, felt nothing there. Thomas's Abercuawg is both an ideal and a search for that ideal. In the lecture he describes it as 'the process of becoming'.<sup>96</sup> It is an ideal that, like all ideals, is unlikely to be realised, but by doing the right thing people can become closer to it: 'If Wales knows those things which pertain to her peace, Abercuawg may come nearer'.<sup>97</sup> This has a quasi-religious image of building or aspiring to heaven on earth. And the image of Abercuawg presented in the lecture is certainly paradise-like, at least in Thomas's mind.<sup>98</sup> It is rural: 'whatever Abercuawg might be, it is a place of trees and fields and flowers and bright unpolluted streams', with technology kept to a minimum – 'it will not be a forest of poles and pylons, but a leafy wood. And the poles will be tastefully placed out of sight'.<sup>99</sup> And, of course, it will be Welsh-speaking. Towards the end of the lecture, Thomas claims that 'it is not through compromise that we shall arrive at Abercuawg. And bilingualism (since we are speaking of language) is compromise'. He scornfully adds: 'If the proponents of bilingualism get their way, we shall have to have an English version on the signpost which points to Abercuawg, and that will have to be above the Welsh of course!'.<sup>100</sup> A Welsh utopia, for Thomas, would be monolingually Welsh. As with the 'Welsh Parlour' review, the lecture does not say that Welsh cannot be learned (and Thomas himself is in fact proof that it could be, as the lecture was delivered in Welsh) but the overall image given of the Welsh language is forbidding and exclusive, used to define this vision of perfection and to exclude those who are not worthy. As in 'Welcome', the Welsh language moves beyond being

a marker of identity and difference, and actively works to exclude. And Abercuawg as a place is definitely portrayed as exclusive; early on in the lecture, Thomas asks: 'Who deserves to live in Abercuawg? Not John and Mary and William and Margaret, but, most certainly, Gwydion and Lleucu and Rheinallt and Rhiannon'.<sup>101</sup> While this division is based on names not languages, it reinforces the idea that Abercuawg is exclusive and only for the deserving – as is heaven, of course, in many religious views.

Given the emphasis on the Welsh language, it is interesting to contrast the ideal Wales of 'Abercuawg' with that of a Welsh-language novel that Thomas mentions in the lecture – Islwyn Ffowc Elis's *Wythnos yng Nghymru Fydd* (A Week in Future Wales). The novel, published by Plaid Cymru and 'unashamedly political', as Ffowc Elis himself later admitted,<sup>102</sup> appeared in 1957. It tells the story of a man, Ifan Powel, who is given the opportunity to travel eighty years into the future. Having found an ideal independent Wales there, he goes back to his own time. In his second trip to the future, however, he finds a nightmarish regime where Wales is simply a province called West England, ruled by an oppressive government, covered in forestry, and with the last Welsh speaker on the brink of death. Jason Walford Davies argues that Thomas makes considerable use of the Welsh text in 'Abercuawg' and has noted various echoes of the ideal Wales of *Wythnos yng Nghymru Fydd* in Thomas's text.<sup>103</sup> Some examples include the idea of protecting and celebrating the beauty of the Welsh countryside by blending necessary technology with the landscape, the use of traditional Welsh names and the centrality of the Welsh language. On this last though they differ slightly as Davies notes; in 'Abercuawg' Thomas, as we have seen, rails against bilingualism and the idea of a bilingual signpost to Abercuawg. However, in the ideal Wales of *Wythnos yng Nghymru Fydd*, there are bilingual signposts, though the Welsh comes first.<sup>104</sup> This suggests a Wales that is open to visitors and incomers. Moreover, in *Wythnos yng Nghymru Fydd* virtually all citizens of this ideal Wales appear to be bilingual, speaking Welsh and English fluently. Powel is at first disappointed to hear two people speaking English in this Welsh utopia, but his guide urges him to greet them in Welsh and when he does so he finds that they immediately switch to perfect Welsh. His guide explains that people from English-language families may choose to speak English with each other, but they all learn to speak Welsh as well.<sup>105</sup> While Thomas does not actually say that English would not be spoken at all in Abercuawg,

it is heavily implied. It is striking that the Welsh-language writer from a Welsh-language background can find room in his ideal Wales for the English language while the predominantly English-language Thomas brought up in an English-speaking home cannot. This may be the zeal of the convert, it may be his well-documented resentment at his background,<sup>106</sup> or it may be for other reasons, but this comparison does serve to show just how extreme Thomas's views on the link between the Welsh language and the true, ideal Wales were.<sup>107</sup>

Equally, though, Grahame Davies has argued that Thomas's whole nationalist project was in fact fundamentally an anti-modern one rather than simply a specifically Welsh one; Wales may have been where he chose to make his stand and the Welsh traditional way of life the culture he chose to defend, but modernity was the true enemy that he was facing and attempting to resist.<sup>108</sup> The 'Abercuawg' lecture, Davies claims, is the clearest expression of this attitude, citing the passage that reads:

Because whatever Abercuawg might be, it is a place of trees and fields and flowers and bright unpolluted streams, where the cuckoos continue to sing. For such a place I am ready to make sacrifices, maybe even to die. But what of a place which is overcrowded with people, that has endless streets of modern, characterless houses, each with its garage and television aerial, a place from where the trees and the birds and the flowers have fled before the yearly extension of concrete and tarmacadam; where the people do the same kind of soul-less, monotonous work to provide for still more and more of their kind? And even if Welsh should be the language of these people; even if they should coin a Welsh word for every gadget and tool of the technical and plastic age they live in, will this be a place worth bringing into existence, worth making sacrifices for?<sup>109</sup>

Davies argues that 'Abercuawg' makes no secret that its priority is the traditional way of life rather than the Welsh language per se, but notes that many nationalists have missed or ignored this,<sup>110</sup> and reading the above passage it is hard to disagree with him. It is undeniable that the main concern in 'Abercuawg' is that it should be a traditional, rural Wales. It should be Welsh-speaking certainly, this is vital, but the other conditions are also paramount. A future Wales that was completely Welsh-speaking but primarily urban and technologically advanced would not satisfy Thomas.

In other works, Thomas does seem to prioritise the Welsh language above everything. In his lecture 'Unity' (1988) he claims: 'I see

no other way to unity in Wales except through the Welsh language. We must start and finish with that, or all our other efforts will be of no use. What is Wales without its native tongue?'.<sup>111</sup> In an earlier lecture, 'Patriotism and Poetry', he similarly stresses the importance of the Welsh language, appealing to his audience:

You have been about Wales. You must have felt as I in the Anglicised areas a deadness, a soul-lessness. Take Radnor, the Black Mountains; fine scenery, even Welsh names to its villages, if mispronounced by the locals! But there is something missing. What is it that brings similar places to life in Meirionydd, in Ceredigion? [...] What is it but the Welsh language, the presence of people whose speech matches the waterfalls and the cloud-capped hills?<sup>112</sup>

The last line comes close to Jones's concept of interpenetration; Welsh land and Welsh language 'match'. However, it is notable that in both cases the Welsh language is still linked to the rural. 'Unity' continues: 'If anyone believes he could find a taste of Welshness without the language, he's fooling himself. Every mountain and stream, every farm and little lane announces to the world that landscape is something different in Wales'.<sup>113</sup> There is no mention of Welsh street names in towns and cities, or indeed the bilingual road signs which were widespread in Wales by this point (and of which Thomas was clearly aware judging by his comment about the bilingual signpost to Abercuawg), announcing that something is different in Wales, even though, for many incomers, the road signs would be the first sign of difference they would notice. For Thomas there is an indissoluble link between the Welsh language and the Welsh countryside and thus it is not surprising that Abercuawg should be rural as well as Welsh-speaking.

The link between the Welsh language and the rural may well be the result of Saunders Lewis's influence (Grahame Davies discusses Lewis in the same vein as Thomas).<sup>114</sup> It is certainly reminiscent of the Plaid Cymru policy from when Lewis was President which called for the 'de-industrialization of South Wales', and the establishment of light industry throughout the country'.<sup>115</sup> In 'Abercuawg' Thomas, if anything, takes the idea even further, seeing his ideal Wales as completely rural with the barest minimum of necessary technology. This vision, however, is problematic as it is simply not practical in this day and age. No country can afford to make a complete return to the

rural and therefore this ideal does not represent a true future possibility for Wales. Nor does it intend to. The image of Abercuawg is a personal form of resistance, an ideal vision that Thomas sets up as a mental and spiritual redoubt against the forces he detests: modernity, urbanisation, industrialisation, as well as anglicisation. Faith in Abercuawg provides a needed contrast to what he sees as the ugliness of the modern world. While this is a form of resistance, though, it is not the communal and revolutionary type advocated by resistance theorists and anticolonial activists. It is instead an individual and spiritual goal and therefore it is not a vision his compatriots can share in and work towards, particularly as no real guidance is given as to how to bring it about beyond the vague: 'If Wales knows those things which pertain to her peace, Abercuawg may come nearer'<sup>116</sup> and an approving comment on those who, in the past, had stood their ground and stated: 'No, this is not Abercuawg. We must have something better than this'.<sup>117</sup> No more detail is given, even about what exactly these people refuted and how others might emulate them in the present. 'Abercuawg' is not intended as a blueprint for society; it is a spiritual search, one which, as Brown has noted, runs through much of Thomas's poetry, from 'The Tree' (1952) through 'Again' (1968) to 'Arrival' (1983), a 'search for a place where people may attain their essential freedom and dignity, where they may gain intimations of the eternal'.<sup>118</sup> This place is always depicted as rural and often as outside of time; in 'Arrival': A bird chimes/ [...] the hour that is no hour/ you know' (*RSTCP*, p. 427), while Abercuawg is described as a concept that is 'above time, and yet, which is ever on the verge of being'.<sup>119</sup>

The language here is oblique and mystical. In contrast, while Harri Webb's visions of the Socialist Republic of Wales were often optimistic in the extreme, he did espouse practical ways of bringing them about.

Thus, in addition to forming a Welsh-language enclave, 'Abercuawg' espouses a resistance which is conservative, impractical and based on the individual rather than the people as a whole. Moreover, through its anti-modernism, it perpetuates the stereotype of Wales being backward and therefore irrelevant to the modern age. Thomas's resistance is therefore very conservative and exclusive and a far cry from the more radical resistance of writers like Webb and Sánchez Piñol.

## Notes

- 1 R. S. Thomas, 'The Creative Writer's Suicide', in *R. S. Thomas: Autobiographies*, ed. and trans. Jason Walford Davies (London: Phoenix, 1998), p. 23. All references are to this translation. The title in the original Welsh is 'Hunanladdiad y Llenor' and it was published in 1977.
- 2 Jason Walford Davies, *Gororau'r Iaith: R. S. Thomas a'r Traddodiad Llenyddol Cymraeg* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 2003).
- 3 W. Moelwyn Merchant, *R. S. Thomas* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1979), p. 5.
- 4 Tony Brown, *R. S. Thomas* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006), p. 2.
- 5 Thomas cannot really be considered a Socialist. As Tony Brown has argued, Thomas was heavily influenced by Saunders Lewis who was right-wing and had much in common with the 'distributism' of English writers like Hilaire Belloc and G. K. Chesterton. Tony Brown, "'On the Screen of Eternity": Some Aspects of R. S. Thomas's Prose', *The Powys Review*, 21 (1987–8), 5–15 (12).
- 6 Harri Webb, 'Letter to the Editor', *Poetry Wales*, 7.2 (Spring 1972), 121–3 (123).
- 7 Merchant, *R. S. Thomas*, p. 35.
- 8 R. S. Thomas, 'Words and the Poet', in *R. S. Thomas: Selected Prose*, ed. Sandra Anstey (Bridgend: Seren, 1995), pp. 51–67 (p. 64).
- 9 R. S. Thomas, 'Some Contemporary Scottish Writing', in *Selected Prose*, pp. 24–35 (p. 29).
- 10 San Juan, *Hegemony*, pp. 121–42.
- 11 R. S. Thomas, 'No-One', in *R. S. Thomas: Autobiographies*, pp. 27–109 (p. 104). All references are to this translation. The title in the original Welsh is *Neb*.
- 12 Brown, *R. S. Thomas*, pp. 91–3.
- 13 R. S. Thomas, *What is a Welshman?* (Swansea: Christopher Davies, 1974), p. 1.
- 14 R. S. Thomas, *R. S. Thomas: Letters to Raymond Garlick 1951–1999*, ed. Jason Walford Davies (Llandysul: Gomer, 2009), p. 124.
- 15 See Dafydd Glyn Jones, 'His Politics', in Alun R. Jones and Gwyn Thomas (eds), *Presenting Saunders Lewis* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1983), pp. 23–78 for Saunders Lewis's politics and Plaid Cymru's early policy. Saunders Lewis, 'Y Dilyw 1939' translated as 'The Deluge 1939' by Gwyn Thomas in *Presenting Saunders Lewis*, p. 177.
- 16 J. R. Jones, *Prydeindod*.
- 17 Jones, *Prydeindod*, p. 16. Translated by Dylan Philips in Dylan Phillips, 'A New Beginning or the Beginning of the End? The Welsh Language in Postcolonial Wales', in Jane Aaron and Chris Williams (eds), *Postcolonial Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005), pp. 100–13 (p. 105).
- 18 J. R. Jones, *Prydeindod*, pp. 15–17.
- 19 Thomas does not refer to Jones much in his work, though he gave the J. R. Jones Memorial Lecture at Swansea in 1985 which naturally referenced the thinker. However, they are writing at similar times and have some influences in common which may account for the similarity in some of their ideas.

- <sup>20</sup> Brown, *R. S. Thomas*, p. 71.
- <sup>21</sup> R. S. Thomas, 'A Year in Llŷn', in *R. S. Thomas: Autobiographies*, pp. 111–71 (p. 150). All translations are from this version. The original title was *Bhwyddyn yn Llŷn*. Dic Siôn Dafydd is 'a name applied to a person who has stifled his Welshness and parades an "English" identity.' Jason Walford Davies, 'Notes and References', in *R. S. Thomas: Autobiographies*, pp. 175–92 (p. 191). Here though it seems to be a more of a class reference to one who enjoys popular entertainments as the majority of the tourists to the Llŷn are English.
- <sup>22</sup> Thomas, *Autobiographies*, p. 98.
- <sup>23</sup> Thomas, *Autobiographies*, p. 166.
- <sup>24</sup> Thomas, *Autobiographies*, p. 94.
- <sup>25</sup> R. S. Thomas, '[Review of] Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee', trans. John Phillips, Tony Bianchi and Catherine Thomas, in *Selected Prose* pp. 114–18 (p. 116). All translations are from this version. It is also interesting to note other implicit comparisons from this review. The Welsh are being compared to a people who lived simply and in harmony with nature, very similar to Thomas's ideal 'Wales', while the English are being compared to the greedy pioneers and settlers who attacked and cheated the Native Americans, though Thomas does admit that the English are not so inhumane (p. 116). It is no surprise that early on in the review Thomas admits to a secret admiration for and identity with the 'Indians' (Thomas's term) from a young age, despite the cowboys always being the heroes of the popular films of his childhood (p. 114).
- <sup>26</sup> Thomas, *Selected Prose*, p. 115.
- <sup>27</sup> Thomas, *Selected Prose*, p. 116.
- <sup>28</sup> Thomas, *Autobiographies*, p. 170.
- <sup>29</sup> Thomas, *Autobiographies*, pp. 58–9.
- <sup>30</sup> Thomas, *Autobiographies*, p. 59.
- <sup>31</sup> R. S. Thomas, *Collected Poems* (London: J. M. Dent, 2003), p. 194. Future references in text as *RSTCP*.
- <sup>32</sup> Harri Webb, 'We Believe in the Welsh People', in *No Half-Way House*, pp. 64–6 (p. 64).
- <sup>33</sup> M. Wynn Thomas, *Serial Obsessive* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2013), pp. 95–9.
- <sup>34</sup> Saunders Lewis, 'Is there an Anglo-Welsh Literature?' (Cardiff: Cardiff Branch of the Guild of Graduates of the University of Wales, 1939).
- <sup>35</sup> Thomas, *Selected Prose*, p. 26.
- <sup>36</sup> Ned Thomas, 'Introduction', in *R. S. Thomas: Selected Prose*, pp. 7–16 (pp. 13–4). The greatest expression of Thomas's frustration and pain at his lack of ability to compose poetry in Welsh is found in his essay 'The Creative Writer's Suicide', cited above.
- <sup>37</sup> R. S. Thomas, 'Former Paths', in *R. S. Thomas: Autobiographies*, pp. 1–16 (p. 10). All references are to this version. The original Welsh title was 'Y Llwybrau Gynt'.
- <sup>38</sup> Thomas, *Autobiographies* p. 10. In *Neb* he phrases it slightly differently, 'as a means of enabling him to return to the true Wales', p. 50, but the sentiment is the same.
- <sup>39</sup> Thomas, *Autobiographies*, p. 10.

- <sup>40</sup> See for example, Ned Thomas, 'R. S. Thomas and Wales', in M. Wynn Thomas (ed.), *The Page's Drift: R. S. Thomas at eighty* (Bridgend: Seren, 1993), pp. 211–20; Jason Walford Davies, 'Introduction', in *R. S. Thomas: Autobiographies*, pp. ix–xxxv (pp. xviii–xx); Byron Rogers, *The Man Who Went into the West* (London: Aurum, 2006).
- <sup>41</sup> In a 1977 piece in *Y Faner*, Thomas wrote that: 'Even though it's convenient to consider the large countries as responsible [for damaging the beauty of Wales], it is true to a great extent. South Wales suffered because of the industrialists' desire to gain profit quickly.' R. S. Thomas, 'O'n Cwmpas', *Y Faner*, 4 March 1977, p. 9. In the context of Wales, England is surely the most prominent of the 'large countries'.
- <sup>42</sup> Thomas, *Letters to Raymond Garlick*, p. 128.
- <sup>43</sup> Thomas, *Autobiographies*, p. 58.
- <sup>44</sup> Justin Wintle, *Furious Interiors* (London: HarperCollins, 1996), p. 196.
- <sup>45</sup> It should be said in justification to Thomas that in his lecture 'Unity', he did note the divisions in Wales which, like Webb, he saw as being caused by English/British rule and argues the need to unite across differences of language and even origin: 'No one from outside can rule over a united nation, so the traditional policy of tyrannical states since Roman times has been: *divide et impera*. It has succeeded all too well in Wales. So the first task of the concerned people within our nation is to unite Welsh-speaking Welshmen by virtue of their common tongue. Then let us try to attract the others in our midst and to wean them from the British milk which is by now old and sour. First, we have to win over the English-Welshmen, who have Welsh blood in their veins [...] Then we must turn to the immigrants, the newcomers, convincing them politely but proudly of the existence of an identity that perhaps they were not too conscious of when they moved to live here.' R. S. Thomas, 'Unity', trans. Katie Gramich, in *Selected Prose*, pp. 143–58 (p. 157). All further references are to this translated version. The initial Welsh title was 'Undod'. Here Thomas does acknowledge the importance of involving all inhabitants of the nation in the struggle for Wales but this piece is very much the exception and it is noticeable that there is still a hierarchy: first, the Welsh-speaking Welsh need to be involved, then the English-speaking Welsh and then, finally, incomers. Unlike Webb and the Welsh Republicans who saw everyone who lived in and worked for Wales as equally Welsh, there appear to be degrees of Welshness here, whether that is intentional or not.
- <sup>46</sup> Brown, *R. S. Thomas*, p. 5.
- <sup>47</sup> See Brown, *R. S. Thomas*, pp. 8–9 and M. Wynn Thomas, *Serial Obsessive*, p. 147 for comments on this.
- <sup>48</sup> Dafydd Elis-Thomas, 'The Image of Wales in R. S. Thomas's Poetry', *Poetry Wales*, 7.2 (Spring 1972), 59–66.
- <sup>49</sup> Elis-Thomas, 'The Image of Wales', p. 60.
- <sup>50</sup> Elis-Thomas, 'The Image of Wales', p. 65.
- <sup>51</sup> Elis-Thomas, 'The Image of Wales', pp. 64, 65, 66.
- <sup>52</sup> San Juan, *Writing and National Liberation* p. 4.
- <sup>53</sup> R. S. Thomas, *An Acre of Land* (Newtown: Montgomeryshire Print. Co., 1952), p. 23. Future references in text as *AL*.

- <sup>54</sup> Andrew Webb, 'R. S. Thomas, Emyr Humphreys and the Possibility of a Bilingual Culture', in Geraint Evans and Helen Fulton (eds), *The Cambridge History of Welsh Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 529–56 (p. 530).
- <sup>55</sup> Harri Webb, 'An Old and Haughty Nation Proud in Arms', in *No Half-Way House*, p. 87.
- <sup>56</sup> R. S. Thomas, *Song at the Year's Turning* (London: Hart Davies, 1955), p. 61.
- <sup>57</sup> M. Wynn Thomas, *Serial Obsessive*, p. 150. M. Wynn Thomas claims that 'Armed, but not in the old way' is the original and that it was later changed to 'we will arise/ And greet each other in a new dawn' in *Collected Poems*. However, *Collected Poems* uses the original poem from *An Acre of Land* and the 'new dawn' version of the line is thus the original. It was changed to 'Armed, but not in the old way' in *Song at the Year's Turning* and remained this way in *Welsh Airs*.
- <sup>58</sup> Elis-Thomas, 'The Image of Wales', p. 61.
- <sup>59</sup> Brown, *R. S. Thomas*, p. 34.
- <sup>60</sup> Thomas, *Serial Obsessive*, p. 103.
- <sup>61</sup> R. S. Thomas, *Welsh Airs* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press, 1987), p. 38. Future references in text as *WA*.
- <sup>62</sup> Thomas, *Selected Prose*, p. 117.
- <sup>63</sup> R. S. Thomas, *R. S. Thomas: Uncollected Poems*, ed. Tony Brown and Jason Walford Davies (Tarsset: Bloodaxe, 2013), p. 43. The final line is interesting as it is a reference to a Welsh folk song with the line 'The sound of the little heart breaking'. Thomas used this line as an epigraph for his long poem *The Minister* (1953). It is unsurprising that Thomas knew of this song given his interest in Welsh-language literature and culture but his use of it in this poem suggests that he expected Garlick would know it too, emphasising the latter's credentials in the field of Welsh culture.
- <sup>64</sup> San Juan, *Beyond Postcolonialism*, p. 33.
- <sup>65</sup> Kirsti Bohata, *Postcolonialism Revisited*, pp. 80–103.
- <sup>66</sup> Bohata, *Postcolonialism Revisited*, p. 81.
- <sup>67</sup> Bohata, *Postcolonialism Revisited*, p. 85.
- <sup>68</sup> Bohata, *Postcolonialism Revisited*, p. 97.
- <sup>69</sup> Quoted in Bohata, *Postcolonialism Revisited*, p. 95. Translated by Tony Conran.
- <sup>70</sup> Bohata, *Postcolonialism Revisited*, p. 94.
- <sup>71</sup> Bohata, *Postcolonialism Revisited*, p. 83.
- <sup>72</sup> Thomas, *Serial Obsessive*, p. 103.
- <sup>73</sup> H. J. Savill, 'The Iago Prytherch Poems of R. S. Thomas', in Sandra Anstey (ed.), *Critical Writings on R. S. Thomas* (Bridgend: Seren, 1992), pp. 30–45 (p. 42).
- <sup>74</sup> Thomas, *What is a Welshman?*, p. 12. Future references in text as *WIAW?*
- <sup>75</sup> Thomas, *Serial Obsessive*, p. 101.
- <sup>76</sup> Brown, *R. S. Thomas*, pp. 8–9.
- <sup>77</sup> This is reminiscent of Saunders Lewis's poem 'Y Dilyw 1939' mentioned earlier.
- <sup>78</sup> Daniel G. Williams, *Wales Unchained*, p. 212.

- <sup>79</sup> Williams is not using resistance theory but some of his ideas fit well with such an approach.
- <sup>80</sup> Webb, 'R. S. Thomas, Emyr Humphreys and the Possibility of a Bilingual Culture', p. 530.
- <sup>81</sup> M. Wynn Thomas, *Internal Difference*, p. 126.
- <sup>82</sup> See the introductory chapter for a summary of Williams's arguments.
- <sup>83</sup> H. J. Fleure, quoted in *Serial Obsessive*, p. 24.
- <sup>84</sup> Thomas, *Serial Obsessive*, p. 24.
- <sup>85</sup> See for example, H. J. Savill, 'The Iago Prytherch Poems of R. S. Thomas', pp. 30–45; Anne Stevenson, 'The Uses of Prytherch', in *The Page's Drift: R. S. Thomas at eighty*, pp. 36–55; Patrick Crotty, 'Extraordinary Man of the Bald Welsh Hills: The Iago Prytherch Poems', in Damian Walford Davies (ed.), *Echoes to the Amen: Essays After R. S. Thomas* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), pp. 13–43.
- <sup>86</sup> Thomas, *Serial Obsessive*, pp. 158–9.
- <sup>87</sup> R. S. Thomas, 'Patriotism and Poetry' (unpublished lecture, Lampeter, late 1970s), p. 4.
- <sup>88</sup> Savill, 'The Iago Prytherch Poems of R. S. Thomas', p. 33; Stevenson, 'The Uses of Prytherch', p. 40.
- <sup>89</sup> Thomas, *Autobiographies*, p. 50.
- <sup>90</sup> R. S. Thomas, 'The Depopulation of the Welsh Hill Country', in *Selected Prose*, pp. 19–25 (p. 19).
- <sup>91</sup> Thomas, 'Patriotism and Poetry', p. 4.
- <sup>92</sup> R. S. Thomas, 'The Welsh Parlour', *The Listener*, 16 January 1958, p. 119.
- <sup>93</sup> This term is used by both M. Wynn Thomas and Daniel Williams to describe R. S. Thomas's view of Welsh-language Wales. M. Wynn Thomas, *Serial Obsessive*, p. 85; Daniel Williams, *Wales Unchained*, pp. 142–3.
- <sup>94</sup> R. S. Thomas, 'Abercuawg', trans. John Phillips, Tony Bianchi and Catherine Thomas, in *Selected Prose*, pp. 122–33. All references are to this translation. The poem 'Abercuawg' is from the 1978 collection *Frequencies* and is on page 340 of *Collected Poems*.
- <sup>95</sup> Thomas believed that the poem in question was part of the *Canu Llywarch Hen* sequence though some scholars have now disputed that. He also assumed that Llywarch Hen was the author of the poems that took his name, something scholars are now certain is untrue. See M. Wynn Thomas, *Serial Obsessive*, p. 151 for details. M. Wynn Thomas also discusses the significance of this poem for Thomas in *Serial Obsessive*, pp. 147–70.
- <sup>96</sup> Thomas, *Selected Prose*, p. 129.
- <sup>97</sup> Thomas, *Selected Prose*, p. 130.
- <sup>98</sup> In his Welsh-language essay 'Nefoedd' (Heavens) Thomas wrote that 'if the heavens are not somewhat similar to a cwm in Meirionydd in May, with birds singing and a stream cascading down across the rocks under a blue sky with a few white clouds in it, then I don't long to go there.' R. S. Thomas, 'Nefoedd', in *ABC Neb*, ed. Jason Walford Davies (Caernarfon: Gwasg Gwynedd, 1995), pp. 59–63 (p. 62).
- <sup>99</sup> Thomas, *Selected Prose*, pp. 125, 132.
- <sup>100</sup> Thomas, *Selected Prose*, p. 132.
- <sup>101</sup> Thomas, *Selected Prose*, p. 124.

- <sup>102</sup> T. Robin Chapman, *Islwyn Ffowc Elis* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), p. 44.
- <sup>103</sup> Davies, *Gororau'r Iaith*, pp. 226–8.
- <sup>104</sup> Davies, *Gororau'r Iaith*, pp. 226, 227–8.
- <sup>105</sup> Islwyn Ffowc Elis, *Wythnos yng Nghymru Fydd* (Caerdydd: Plaid Cymru, 1957), p. 39.
- <sup>106</sup> See, for example, Brown, *R. S. Thomas*, pp. 8–9; M. Wynn Thomas, *Serial Obsessive*, p. 147.
- <sup>107</sup> This complete refusal of English in Wales was also found in the organisation Mudiad Adfer (Reconstruction Movement). Formed in the 1970s, Mudiad Adfer aimed to construct a self-sufficient monolingual Welsh society based in 'Y Fro Gymraeg', the Welsh-speaking heartlands of the north and west (see Gwyn A. Williams, pp. 299–300). This too can be seen as a type of enclave, one intended to preserve the Welsh language but which, had it been achieved, might actually have hastened Welsh's decline by largely severing it from contact with the rest of Wales and thus restricting its ability to grow and acquire new speakers.
- <sup>108</sup> Grahame Davies, *Sefyll yn y Bwlch* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1999), pp. 135–90.
- <sup>109</sup> Thomas, *Selected Prose*, p. 125.
- <sup>110</sup> Davies, *Sefyll yn y Bwlch*, p. 170.
- <sup>111</sup> Thomas, *Selected Prose*, p. 156. J. R. Jones made a similar argument in his lecture 'A Raid i'r Iaith ein Gwahanu?' (Need the Language Divide Us?) delivered over twenty years before 'Undod' in 1967. He claimed that the Welsh language could bridge the divide between Welsh-speakers and non-Welsh-speakers as a people's connection to their language did not cease when they stopped speaking it. It still acted as a marker of their identity as a separate people. J. R. Jones, 'A Raid i'r Iaith ein Gwahanu?' (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 1978). This similarity is unsurprising as 'Undod' was originally the J. R. Jones Memorial Lecture.
- <sup>112</sup> R. S. Thomas, 'Patriotism and Poetry', p. 3. This lecture was actually delivered in English and Thomas makes his displeasure at this fact known, beginning: 'Since this lecture is in English for reasons best known to yourselves' (p. 1).
- <sup>113</sup> Thomas, *Selected Prose*, p. 156.
- <sup>114</sup> The first chapter in *Sefyll yn y Bwlch* deals with Saunders Lewis and argues that he too was as much if not more of an anti-modernist as a Welsh nationalist. M. Wynn Thomas, meanwhile, has noted that 'Abercuawg' in general reveals that R. S. Thomas had an affinity with conservative Welsh-language intellectuals like Lewis and Iorwerth Peate (M. Wynn Thomas, *Internal Difference*, p. 123).
- <sup>115</sup> Dafydd Glyn Jones, 'His Politics', p. 37.
- <sup>116</sup> Thomas, *Selected Prose*, p. 130.
- <sup>117</sup> Thomas, *Selected Prose*, p. 132.
- <sup>118</sup> Brown, "'On the Screen of Eternity'", p. 10.
- <sup>119</sup> Thomas, *Selected Prose*, p. 130.

This page intentionally left blank

RECOVERING HISTORY, RECOVERING  
 WRITERS – EDUARDO MENDOZA’S  
*LA CIUDAD DE LOS PRODIGIOS* AND  
 RHYS DAVIES’S RHONDDA TRILOGY

INTRODUCTION

This final chapter returns to the historical novel. Rediscovering and recounting their nation’s past, particularly through an account that defies the official version told by the dominant power, has been important for most of the authors discussed, though not all of them have used the historical novel as a medium for this retelling. It is, however, a natural form to use; Albert Sánchez Piñol’s *Victus* provides an excellent example. Neither of the authors discussed in this chapter produce such radical work; there is no suggestion that they are attempting to speak of an independent state for their nations, but both Eduardo Mendoza’s *La ciudad de los prodigios* (published 1986) and Rhys Davies’s Rhondda Trilogy (published between 1935 and 1938) attempt to depict their nations’ history in a way that is different to the dominant narrative, using a mixture of ‘real’ history and invented facts.<sup>1</sup> Both works contain traces of some of the ideas that appear in the work of more radical writers. As a result of the authors’ popularity in Spain and England they also speak truth to power in a similar way to R. S. Thomas.

There are also many similarities between the texts. They are set in similar time periods; *La ciudad de los prodigios* primarily takes place between the two World Fairs held in Barcelona in 1888 and 1929,<sup>2</sup>

though it contains passages dealing with earlier events. Davies's work, being a trilogy, naturally covers a greater period, roughly a century, beginning with the industrialisation of Glamorganshire in the first part of the nineteenth century and ending with the Great Depression of the 1930s.<sup>3</sup> Both writers cover a time of great change for their homelands: the coming of industry and modernity. However, as will be seen, Davies is generally against industrialisation, while Mendoza, though critical of the exploitation it entails, is in favour of progress, praising the ingenuity of the people of Barcelona. The novel has been translated with the title *The City of Marvels*, and it can be seen as depicting the development of a modern Catalan identity; one based on industrialisation, wealth and progress rather than on traditions and the rural, with Barcelona as the heart and symbol of that development. This could be interpreted as an act of opposition to the central state and thus a type of resistance, though it is not clear that Mendoza is presenting it as such. In Wales, on the other hand, industrialisation never really became associated with a Welsh nationalist identity. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the industrialised regions of Wales were often regarded as 'less Welsh', and industrialisation was seen as an alien, anglicising force. It was responsible for the rapid growth and development of Cardiff, which housed institutions like the National Museum (opened in 1907), but the city did not really become associated with Welsh language, literature and culture at this time in the way that Barcelona did with Catalan-language culture. Therefore, it is unsurprising that Davies sees industrialisation as anti-Welsh while Mendoza sees the drive for progress and invention as a typically Catalan trait; they are reflecting ideas that were common within their respective nations. Both works, though, show the disorientation the characters feel in a time of rapid change.

Another similarity between the two works is the use of an individual or family to stand, at least in part, for their nation. *La ciudad de los prodigios* follows the story of Onofre Bouvila, a young boy from rural Catalonia, as he comes to Barcelona seeking employment. He works for a while distributing pamphlets for the local anarchists, then develops an entrepreneurial streak, comes to the attention of the powerful gangs that run the city and rises within their organisation, becoming rich and respected, though never quite accepted despite the fact that his actions and finances are a vital part of Barcelona's growth and modernisation. Onofre can be seen as representing Catalonia because of his roots in rural Catalan soil and because of the work he does

for Barcelona, a city that is often taken as symbolic of Catalonia as a whole. He is also, in some ways, the embodiment of many of the values of the developing modern Catalan identity: ingenuity, progress, financial acumen. It is important to note, however, that Onofre is not an idealised figure. He is selfish, unscrupulous, manipulative and ruthless. While he never kills anyone himself, several are killed on his orders, and he blackmails his landlord's daughter into sleeping with him, refusing to bail her father out of prison unless she complies. The later revelation that she always loved and wanted Onofre cannot justify the rape or blackmail. Onofre is thus something of an antihero and certainly is not the ideal hero expected of a nationalist text. As discussed in the chapter on *Victus*, the use of a flawed hero or antihero is not necessarily an issue, but Onofre is far worse than Martí and thus his status as national representative is problematic and complicates a nationalist reading of the text.

Davies's protagonists, too, have failings, though less grave. The Rhondda Trilogy follows three generations of the Llewellyn family, landed gentry of Glamorganshire. In *Honey and Bread*, the focus is mainly on Owen and David, the sons of Tudor Llewellyn, the squire who has squandered the family fortune and is forced to sell the estate to a coalmining company to pay his debts – something Owen will not accept. The novel describes the final days of the rural valley and the early industrialisation. *A Time to Laugh* follows Tudor Morris, son of Owen Llewellyn's illegitimate son as he abandons the class into which he was born and throws himself into the workers' struggle, eventually marrying the sister of their leader. It is set at the end of the nineteenth century, and covers strikes and riots loosely based on real events. A link to the earlier book is provided by Tudor's grandmother Bronwen, Owen Llewellyn's former lover. In *Jubilee Blues*, the Llewellyn family representative is David Morris, Tudor's son, but the main focus of the novel is Cassie Jones, a servant girl from the country who marries and moves to the industrial valley to open a pub. There she witnesses the effects of the General Strike of 1926 and its aftermath: poverty, unemployment, the desperate hunger marches. Like Onofre, none of the protagonists are perfect. Owen Llewellyn is petulant and frequently cruel to his family as is his great grandson David Morris;<sup>4</sup> Tudor dedicates himself to his cause to the detriment of his relationships with his mother and quasi-fiancé Mildred; and Cassie, despite her sympathy for the unemployed miners, shrinks from the ugliness of the valleys and indeed at one point expresses her opinion that they

should all be flooded with water (probably not with the inhabitants still there, although this is not specified) (*JB*, p. 165). None of these are the ideal protagonist of a nationalist allegory. However they are far superior to Onofre and it is possible to see in them flawed identifiable characters, much like Martí from *Victus*.

Both works also focus on a particular place: the Glan Ystrad valley in the case of Davies (fictional but heavily based on Davies's native Rhondda) and Barcelona in that of Mendoza (real but also at times fantastic). Indeed, critics have argued that Barcelona is in fact the second protagonist of Mendoza's novel,<sup>5</sup> a symbol of modern Catalanism, with its importance evident from the novel's title. Other places are visited, but the main focus is the one area. However, both places can be seen as representing the whole nation.

It is somewhat problematic to claim Davies as a Welsh resistance writer. Despite leaving Wales at a relatively young age, it was the setting for most of his fiction. However, the nationality of his intended audience has been hotly debated, and some critics have accused him of making use of his country and people to sell novels in England. As already discussed, this is a common accusation made against Welsh writers in English, but one that Davies received more than most. A near contemporary of his, Pennar Davies, coined the term 'professional Welshmen' for those who deliberately misrepresented their countrymen to the English for profit, and used Davies as his prime example;<sup>6</sup> while Huw Osborne, considering a number of Davies's works in his 2009 study of the author, concludes that the author is writing those works at least for an English audience.<sup>7</sup>

However, as in the case of R. S. Thomas, writing for an English audience is not necessarily a barrier to being a resistance writer. Moreover, in the Rhondda Trilogy at least, Davies can be interpreted as writing for both Welsh and English audiences, retelling the history of the south Wales valleys from the perspective of what Katie Gramich, adopting Frank O'Connor's term, calls a 'submerged population group'; for Gramich, such groups in Davies's work include homosexuals, women and the working class, as well as, potentially, the Welsh.<sup>8</sup> In doing this Davies speaks truth to power in the case of the English audience, helps his people rediscover and affirm their history in the case of the Welsh and, as Webb did, represents the struggles of the workers and the Welsh as the same struggle.<sup>9</sup> He is less radical and less successful than Webb in this, but the seeds at least of Webb's firmer ideas are present in the novels discussed here.

Viewing Davies as a resistance writer is also problematic in other ways. His apparent anti-modernity and desire to return to a completely rural Wales can be seen as an example of Sánchez Piñol's enclaves of resistance, similar to that created in some of R. S. Thomas's work, and his apparent linking of Welshness and the Welsh language with a rural way of life that is dying out, appears to fall into one of the traps that Daniel Williams warns against. Davies's racial view of the world is also problematic.

Most problematic of all, though, is Davies's ambivalent relationship with Wales and with politics. He always described himself as Welsh, but did not openly commit to his nation in the way the other writers in this study did. He expressed his dislike of flag-waving and believed that art and politics should be separate, declaring: 'Down with passports to art.'<sup>10</sup> This appears to be the complete antithesis of the view of a resistance writer. But Davies was, at times, self-contradictory and the evidence suggests that he was not as indifferent to either Wales or politics as his statements suggest. Certainly, the Rhondda Trilogy shows an interest in the social and political issues of the area. Therefore, he can be seen as espousing an early and tentative form of resistance, expressing ideas and using techniques that would be taken up in greater force by later and more radical writers.

It is generally less problematic to consider Mendoza as a committed national author than it is to see Davies in that way. Although all his novels were written in Spanish, a choice of language which he attributes, primarily, to growing up during the Franco dictatorship when the use of Spanish was enforced in public and heavily encouraged in private ('There were therefore families who spoke in Castilian [Spanish] because they had to. This is what happened in my case, for example.'),<sup>11</sup> he wrote two theatre plays in Catalan: *Restauració* and *Glòria*. The majority of his novels are set in Catalonia, many in Barcelona. He is one of the authors that Francesc Vallverdú mentions as an example of Spanish-language writers who showed themselves to be part of Catalan culture through their political beliefs and writing.<sup>12</sup> David Knutson claims that Mendoza consistently writes about and celebrates his nation, and Catalan nationalism is present in his work 'above all in the consideration of Catalan pride, accompanied by an account of relations between Barcelona and Madrid'.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, his allegiance to Catalonia appears to be stronger than Davies's to Wales. However, certain elements of *La ciudad de*

*los prodigios*, particularly the use of humour and the surreal and fantastical inclusions, can appear to undercut the message of the text and thus its resistance potential. It will be demonstrated later that this is not necessarily the case, but the text is not as straightforwardly resistant as *Victus*. It is a rich and complex text, and the nationalist angle is only one aspect of it, as the admiration the novel received in Spain as a whole on its publication suggests. Saval reads it as a historical novel, a postmodern novel and a picaresque novel, with influences ranging from *The Great Gatsby*, through Dashiell Hammett, to Latin American magical realism.

Taking these two authors who might not normally be thought of as resistance writers and considering them in this way, is an attempt to do something new in a similar vein to San Juan's work on the English-language Filipino writer Nick Joaquín, who was generally considered 'a paragon of English-speaking writers', and thus not part of a revolutionary Philippines' literature. However, San Juan argues that it is important to reread Joaquín's work in the light of resistance theory and obtain whatever seeds of resistance that are possible from it. To do otherwise 'automatically surrenders the "sign" called "Joaquín" to the enemy'.<sup>14</sup> The same can be said of Davies and Mendoza. If these writers are not considered as Welsh/Catalan resistance writers then they may be taken up by the 'enemy' – the dominant culture – and used against their nation.

### THE STATE OF THEIR NATIONS

Both authors make clear distinctions between their nations and Spain and England respectively. While Mendoza does not necessarily present Catalonia as a separate nation, he does depict it as different to the rest of Spain, and decries the Madrid government's attitude and policies. For Knutson, Mendoza's depiction of the relationship between Barcelona and Madrid is one of the most distinctly Catalan nationalist traits of the author's work, still relevant today, with *La ciudad de los prodigios* the text which most exemplifies that.<sup>15</sup> Davies's novels, on the other hand, do seem to see Wales as a separate country for at least some of its history, and view the English incomers – both soldiers in the fifteenth century and industrialists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – as invaders.

*La ciudad de los prodigios* is clearly a pro-Catalan text, although it does criticise Barcelona and Catalonia on occasions. Mendoza draws

attention to Catalonia's difference from the rest of Spain early in the novel by mentioning the arguments against the secession of Catalonia from Spain.<sup>16</sup> Admittedly one of the arguments that he mentions is ridiculous – he claims that Catalans are tall, and therefore if Catalonia were to secede from Spain the national average height would drop, something that cannot be allowed. However ridiculous and untrue this may seem, though, by mentioning these arguments, Mendoza is highlighting that these discussions have taken place and thus alerts the reader that Catalonia is different, and has at least considered separating from Spain. Moreover, José Saval argues that Mendoza's use of humour and surreal elements in otherwise seemingly factual historical passages can serve to make the reader question all established facts,<sup>17</sup> and thus this seemingly trivial reason may lead to a questioning of Spain's determination to stop Catalonia seceding. It is even possible that by mentioning this one ridiculous reason, Mendoza is attempting to render all Spanish objections to the secession of Catalonia ridiculous; in which case, under the guise of humour, *La ciudad de los prodigios* is making a very radical statement indeed.

Later in the novel, Mendoza sets up Catalonia's difference in a more obvious and serious manner. Catalonia is depicted as being far more advanced industrially and technologically than the rest of Spain. There are many descriptions of growth and development within Catalonia as a whole and Barcelona in particular, and in the early pages of the novel references are made to several of the first examples of progress within Spain happening in Barcelona/Catalonia: the first regular stagecoach service, the first experimental gaslight system, the first steam-powered motor, the first railroad. Catalonia's superiority in the field of technological development is made abundantly clear; indeed the narrator states outright that: 'The gap between Barcelona and the rest of the peninsula was enormous' (*LCP*, p. 12). Here Mendoza produces a view of Barcelona and the rest of Spain as binary as Sánchez Piñol's, though very different, and with a focus on Barcelona specifically, rather than Catalonia as a whole. This assertion of superiority is a clear act of resistance.

Despite its superiority though, Mendoza presents Catalonia as being at the mercy of a centrist Madrid government that hinders its development, both accidentally because of incompetence, and deliberately because of malice. When describing the central government's economic policy and handling of popular unrest at the turn of the twentieth century, the narrator remarks:

The government, for its part, sat back and reaped the fruits of the situation, dragging its heels when it came to tackling Catalonia's internal problems, as if Catalonia were just another colony. It dispatched military troglodytes who knew only the language of the bayonet and whose idea of imposing peace was putting half of mankind to the slaughter. (*LCP*, p. 173)

Here the Madrid government is seen as inept and uncaring, unappreciative of the wealth that Catalonia provides to the rest of the peninsula. Finally, it resorts to indiscriminate violence. It is both incompetent and aggressive, completely removed from the people it supposedly governs. Catalonia's grievances are justified by this passage, and it echoes Webb's criticisms of the British government as 'a usurers government', acting with 'criminal irresponsibility' (*NHH*, pp. 155, 157). The mention of Catalonia being treated as if it were 'just another colony' is also telling, emphasising the contempt and disregard with which Catalonia feels it is being treated, and suggesting that it sees parallels between itself and Spain's colonies. The fact that this is only partly true and that this was also a time of prosperity for Catalonia is irrelevant. It is the attitude of the government, or rather Mendoza's interpretation of it, that is important here.

There are two other extended accounts of disagreement between Barcelona and Madrid, and by extension Catalonia and Castile/Spain, which illustrate the point further. The first of these in the novel, although not chronologically, is the argument over the funding of the Barcelona World Fair of 1888; the second is the question of the development of Barcelona that arose in the middle of the nineteenth century.

The World Fair of 1888 was extremely important to the city of Barcelona as a whole, and is equally central to the early part of *La ciudad de los prodigios*. The young Onofre finds work there, and its success or failure is a source of anxiety for the whole society. Numerous pages are devoted to descriptions of its planning, construction and opening. The clash with Madrid comes when the Barcelona council discover that they are unable to pay for the whole event and send two delegates to Madrid to ask for financial help. The Catalan delegates suffer greatly in Madrid. They are forced to wait for hours a day without seeing the Minister, their Catalan accents are mocked, and they spend months in a shabby hotel room ignored by the staff. Underlings at the ministry even play practical jokes upon them. This,

in fact, gives the Catalans a moral authority and an inner strength which ultimately leads to the Minister capitulating quickly when he finally sees them; but this does not in any way excuse the treatment meted out to them. The lack of respect Madrid has for Barcelona is clear.

Moreover, it soon becomes apparent that Madrid has not completely given in. The narrator notes tellingly that 'the central government gave not enough to save the Barcelona City Council from ruin yet enough so that the Catalans could not take all the credit' (*LCP*, p. 103). Madrid is shown as looking out for its own interests at the expense of Barcelona's; indeed it is suggested that Madrid is pleased by Barcelona's troubles. It is true that Barcelona is not shown to be flawless in this rivalry; the novel reports that there is a considerable amount of smugness that the first World Fair in Spain would be held in Barcelona, not Madrid. However the Madrid government is censured far more heavily by the text.

This slightly ambivalent criticism is also found in the subsection that begins the fourth chapter. This describes the development and expansion of Barcelona in the mid-nineteenth century, and again shows the central Madrid government exercising control over Barcelona while not caring about its welfare. The chapter begins with a discussion of Barcelona's city walls, in spite of which 'the capture or the sacking of Barcelona was never halted [...] The city's growth, however, was. While within the walls the population density went on rising, making life intolerable' (*LCP*, p. 174). Details of this 'intolerable life' follow: overcrowding, families packed into rooms and the spread of epidemics. This is supported by figures that show Barcelona's population density was far greater than other cities at the time (*LCP*, pp. 175–6). Then the narrator comes to the main point of this section – the reasons for the appalling state of Barcelona:

Why were the city walls not demolished? Because the government would not give permission: on strategic pretexts that did not stand up to analysis, it kept the city in a state of suffocation, kept it from growing in size or power. The kings, queens, and regents who in turn occupied the Spanish throne claimed that they had more pressing problems to deal with. The government was at best indifferent, at worst sarcastic. (*LCP*, p. 176)

Here the central government is condemned in no uncertain terms. It is presented as oppressing Barcelona deliberately, keeping its

inhabitants in appalling living conditions, to prevent the city becoming too powerful.

Finally the walls are demolished, but the city still needs an expansion plan to develop and modernise properly. Here the narrative takes on a slightly surreal or magical realist element as the concerned mayor of Barcelona is visited by visions, and a visitor whom he believes to be an angel (but who later turns out to be the devil) offering assistance. A bizarre impracticable plan to redevelop Barcelona as the new Jerusalem is produced by a stranger who promptly vanishes. The mayor is delighted with the plan, but the council are more cautious, and remind the mayor that he must consult with Madrid. The mayor responds furiously: 'Must even the will of God first go through Madrid?' and the councillors remind him that it is the law, at which they are 'privately relieved. They made a show of solidarity with the mayor's fury, but in truth were passing the buck to Madrid. "Whenever they can, they dump on us," they thought. "For a change, let them do us a big favor and turn this down."' (*LCP*, pp. 180–1)

This scene reveals the strict control Madrid exercises over Barcelona and, by extension, Catalonia; though it also shows that there are Catalans who are willing to collaborate with Madrid. In this case, though, it is possible to argue that they are in fact taking advantage of the repressive bureaucratic centralising system, subverting something set up to control Catalonia, in order to achieve their own ends. This could, therefore, be seen as a form of subtle resistance, although this is weakened by the fact that they are using it to undermine their own mayor. But this is perhaps justified because they are doing it for the good of Barcelona – the plan the mayor proposes is hopelessly impractical. They are therefore subverting the state system for the good of their nation.

The Madrid Minister responds to the proposal by reminding the mayor that the regulations require the submission of three alternative plans for the Minister to choose between. Tellingly, however, the Minister chooses none of the three plans submitted by the Barcelona council, instead going for a fourth project that none of the council had considered.<sup>18</sup> This choice reveals a complete disregard of the opinion of the people of Barcelona even when it pertains to their own city. Once again, the central government ignores the needs and wishes of the Catalans and instead imposes its own will on Barcelona. Madrid and Barcelona have not only different but opposing agendas.

The seriousness of this difference, and the oppression it engenders, is somewhat undercut by the slightly farcical nature of what follows. The mayor, enraged, demands that the entire council challenge their opposite number in Madrid to a duel, a preposterous suggestion with which the councillors pretend to agree fervently but have no intention of carrying out. The mayor resigns and later commits suicide, ending up in hell where he discovers the devil was behind the new Jerusalem plan. This makes it hard to take the issues raised in the passage seriously. However, if it were attempting to 'speak truth to power', the humour and surreal elements might have been deliberately adopted to lessen the radical nature of the text and ensure that its message was read rather than ignored by Spanish readers. As established with regards to R. S. Thomas, the most virulent message is not always the most effective one, as it has a tendency to repel the reader. The humour in this passage may make it more palatable, and so teach people facts of which they were unaware, showing Spanish readers the oppressive actions of their ancestors without making them feel censured for those actions.

It is important to note, as both Saval and Knutson have done,<sup>19</sup> that certain Catalans in *La ciudad de los prodigios* do not escape censure for their ineffectual and, at times, outright treasonous behaviour. The nobility of Barcelona are presented as dissolute, irresponsible and snobbish. They are happy to pretend friendship with Onofre to benefit from his vast wealth but in secret they despise him for his humble origins and modes of doing business. While Onofre is undoubtedly an unpleasant character, these attitudes of the upper classes do not make them appear attractive. Rather, they appear to be uncaring of their own land, in league with Madrid, and are at times condemned outright in the text. The narrator says of the city's leading figures:

Money for them was an end in itself, not a means to obtain or accomplish anything. It never occurred to them to use it to take the reins of the country into their own hands, to shape the government according to their own theories. If at times they entered the arena of politics, they did so reluctantly. They served Madrid as good administrators, efficiently, with no scheming, even when this worked against the best interests of the Catalonia they had previously defended, or even against their own best interests. Perhaps deep down, though considering themselves separate from Spain, they could not completely do without Spain. (*LCP*, pp. 249–50)

This is a scathing judgement; the city leaders are shown to be weak, preferring to grovel to Madrid rather than struggle for their nation's rights. Moreover, they are too foolish to realise that their nation's best interests may also be theirs. There are certain striking similarities to the depiction of the Generalitat officials in *Victus*. Joan Ramon Resina goes further and sees the novel as depicting 'the Catalan bourgeoisie's betrayal of the revolutionary impulse of Catalan nationalism in exchange for the Madrid government's guarantee of bourgeois class domination'. He explains:

In its heroic age, the subject of Mendoza's narrative, the Catalan bourgeoisie created modern Catalan society, manifesting its economic pre-eminence in Spain through the construction of Barcelona's definitive urban structure. Having raised itself to a historical apex from which it could have consolidated its power and itself as a substantial political entity, this bourgeoisie, fearful of the historical forces it had unleashed, entered into a Faustian pact based on the illusion of attained fulfilment.<sup>20</sup>

In Resina's view, the Catalan bourgeoisie are depicted by Mendoza as being cowardly and as undercutting all their achievements as a result. They could have laid the foundations for an independent Catalan state but cowardice and self-interest held them back. Despite the obvious weakness of its leaders though, the main blame for Catalonia's ills in the novel falls on the central government.

In *La ciudad de los prodigios*, it is clear that Mendoza sees Catalonia as very different, and in some ways separate, to the rest of Spain, if not a definitively separate nation. Davies's representation of the relationship between Wales and England in the Rhondda Trilogy is a little less clear-cut but there are some similarities to Mendoza's view. Davies presents Wales as very different to England; he depicts industrialisation as being un-Welsh and as stemming from England, in the first novel at least. This contrast is the reverse of Mendoza's; in *La ciudad de los prodigios* it is the stateless nation that is industrialised and far more developed than the rest of the state, which is generally shown to be a good thing. This division between industrialised and rural, whichever way it is presented, serves to emphasise the difference between the stateless nation and the state.

Though in many ways Mendoza's work is more overtly nationalist and radically resistant than Davies's, Davies takes a step that he does not – presenting Wales as a separate nation for at least some

of its history. In a passage in *Honey and Bread*, Davies describes the persistent attempts of Henry IV of England to defeat Owain Glyndŵr as an 'invasion' (*HB*, p. 50). The word 'invasion' is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as: 'The action of invading a country or territory as an enemy; an entrance or incursion with armed force; a hostile inroad'.<sup>21</sup> At the very least then, by this definition, Wales is a separate territory to England, and the implication in the text is that it is a nation in its own right. The narrator does admit that later 'slowly they became a wholly conquered nation' (*HB*, p. 52) – but they are still a nation. In this way, Davies gives more nationhood to Wales than Mendoza does to Catalonia.

It is harder to determine the text's view of Wales's status in the time in which the novels are set. Almost nothing is said about Wales's political position. However, the characters are always referred to as 'Welsh' or 'English', never as British – not even in the case of the few characters of mixed Welsh and English heritage. This is more marked than Mendoza's work where, although he refers frequently to Catalans as different to the other peoples of Spain, he never suggests that they are not Spaniards.

In *A Time to Laugh*, set at the end of the nineteenth century, Wales's separateness is still emphasised. Britain is barely mentioned and the troops brought in to suppress the rioting are seen as 'invaders,' just as the early mine owners were. When a religious mission comes to the valley the preachers speak in both English and Welsh,<sup>22</sup> emphasising Wales's cultural difference. Little is said about national politics as the focus is on capitalism and the coalowners as the enemy.

The third book, *Jubilee Blues*, does contain references to Britain, and here Wales's national status is more complicated. On the one hand, there are references to the British Government as responsible for things like the dole and the Means Test, and it is seen as the enemy; one of the miner activists declares: 'We're going to eat into Britain, a consumption or a cancer' (*JB*, p. 131). There are references to miners in England and the text does point out that the General Strike was kept across the UK, a fact that the Welsh miners in the text realise the importance of. Moreover, when describing the strike the text states: 'This was not a dispute confined to Cymric indignations and ardours, but a national affair occupying as much space in the newspapers as a Test Match or a juicy murder' (*JB*, p. 92). The juxtaposition of national to Cymric makes it clear that national here refers to Britain. On the other hand, there are also references to England

as 'over the border', and the people in England are seen as being less politically aware than those in Wales. Tudor Morris claims that 'England's still too much in the garden state to start a revolution – men there think it would ruin their radish-beds and rose-bushes' (*JB*, p. 56). Wales is certainly portrayed as different to England here; more advanced in political consciousness, and distinct geographically, with 'over the border' suggesting a separate country.

This is borne out when a scheme to move some of the unemployed miners and their families to farms in England is discussed. Cassie, though born and raised in the country and a firm advocate of rural life, is horrified and declares: 'But the families won't go,' as she knows 'the tenacity with which roots went down into Welsh soil'. Later she thinks that she would like to return to the country: 'But perhaps not to England [...] where people were cold as fish' (*JB*, pp. 164, 212). While this view is clearly a result of Cassie's prejudice, and is in fact no worse than some of the things she has thought about the inhabitants of the Welsh valleys, it shows the difference that the Welsh feel from the English. Minnie James, one of those chosen to go, is distressed at the thought of 'starting all over again in a new *land* among strangers!' (*JB*, p. 211, my italics), which emphasises the alien nature of England even more forcefully. Wales may or may not be part of Britain, but it is certainly different to England. This is perhaps closer to Mendoza's view of Catalonia as expressed in *La ciudad de los prodigios*; part of the larger state (Spain or Britain) but distinct from the dominant culture of that state (Spanish or English). Thus Davies's presentation of Wales becomes less radical, ceasing to portray it as an independent nation but still maintaining its distinctive identity and its difference from England. While this is not a very active form of resistance, it nonetheless claims Wales is a separate nation, and therefore resists the British hegemonic discourse that sees the United Kingdom as a culturally homogenous entity. In the same way, Mendoza asserts Catalonia's identity and difference to the rest of Spain. This is an important message to both their national and wider audiences.

### LINKING STRUGGLES

As emphasised earlier, an important idea of both anticolonial thinkers like Thiong'o and resistance theorists like San Juan, is the need to recognise that all struggles against oppression are linked and that there should be solidarity between resistance movements. San Juan

discusses ‘the current multifaceted struggles of subalterns’,<sup>23</sup> implying that people can be oppressed through belonging to more than one subordinate group and must struggle for liberation of all parts of their identity. This is particularly relevant to the Welsh workers and women in Davies’s novels.

In the Rhondda Trilogy, Davies unites movements normally seen as separate,<sup>24</sup> seeing the industrial struggle as a continuation of the ancient Welsh resistance to English invasion. Stephen Knight writes that:

He [Davies] has an argument found in none of the other writers. He feels a clear sense that the best of the modern Welsh political resistance – from which he seems to exclude riots, looting and such unpleasantness, but not courage, community spirit and collective passion – in some ways goes back to a native Welsh tradition that has been expressed in poetry and music, but has also, crucially, been resistant to the invaders of this anciently self-conscious region.<sup>25</sup>

The textual evidence for this in the Rhondda Trilogy is substantial. Knight cites the narrator’s comment in *Honey and Bread* that the Welsh ‘never ceased to fight with a strange tenacity, obeying the wild instinct in their blood, when other peoples would have settled comfortably under the yoke of conquerors’.<sup>26</sup> This establishes the theme of the Welsh as a fighting people, capable of continuing resistance against great odds.

Meanwhile, industrialisation is presented as an alien English concept (as it was for R. S. Thomas). At one point the narrative states that ‘most of the successful buyers of property [who would profit from the industrialisation] belonged to the old breed of the conquerors’ (*HB*, p. 231). They are seen as invaders who are exploiting Welsh resources. Owen Llewellyn seconds this view, ranting:

But it [the coal] doesn’t belong to them. It belongs to us – us. If we wanted coal for our own use, we could have made a hole and taken it out of the earth quietly, in our own way. Not these thieves coming from outside, strangers, foreigners, ugly people who want to destroy. It’s as it was in the old days, barbarians come to conquer, only now they do it with money. (*HB*, p. 202)

Foreign invasion through war in the past and industrialisation in the present is strongly linked. Moreover, Owen appears to see

industrialisation as alien and damaging to Wales. It is possible that industrialisation by the Welsh would have been acceptable as they would have done it in their 'own way' and 'quietly', a manner which presumably would not have caused such destruction. This passage could be seen as anti-English as opposed to anti-industry per se, but in the context of the rest of the novel it appears to link Welsh resistance against the English with resistance to industrialisation.

If industrialisation is an alien, un-Welsh phenomenon, then resistance to it is automatically Welsh. But Davies is more explicit than this, linking past and present-day resistance. Owen longs to fight as his forefathers would have done:

I would have roused the villagers and won them over to my side; I would have got them to meet those London men when they arrived and stoned them out of the place. That would have been the way to act. The old way, the tribe fighting for its land. Isn't it still in their blood – isn't it? Why didn't they fight, seeing those thieves come up the valley! (*HB*, pp. 201–2)

His immediate instinct is to fight as the historical Welsh people would have done, to defend their land. For him the battling of the past is what should happen in the present. The Welsh should unite against the invading English industrialists.

It is possible to see a third struggle linked with Welsh resistance to industrialisation – that of ecology. This is not a struggle often mentioned by resistance theorists but it fits well with the national struggle against oppression, as it is the nation's territory that is being destroyed. In *Honey and Bread* the desecration of the land is described in detail:

Tall tree, short tree, sapling, and bush lay strewn beside the cleared way. [...] Up came the roots, the earth was turned over, and stones carted from a nearby quarry stamped thickly into the dark soil. Soon the crystal stream ran white and blue no more; it became mud-coloured, turgid, sullen-looking. [...] The gangs of alien men used the stream as a sewer. (*HB*, p. 272)

This is a vivid and dramatic depiction of environmental destruction and this is just the beginning of industrialisation. In the two later novels there are references to that same crystal stream, nostalgic comparisons to its current polluted state (*ATL*, pp. 41, 100–1; *JB*, p. 190).

The reference to 'alien' men is telling, once again linking industrialisation and the destruction of the valley with outsiders. A Welsh rural/anti-industry ecological struggle is needed to resist this 'invasion'.

The theme of Welsh resistance to industry is taken up in *A Time to Laugh*, although here the Welsh are fighting for better working conditions and pay rather than to stop industrialisation, which has already happened (this is where Davies differs from R. S. Thomas, because the latter, as we have seen, did not see the industrial struggles of the south as Welsh in nature). As a result, the ecological struggle is far less present but the other two strands remain. The most obvious link between Welsh resistance to the English, and workers' resistance to the owners and the power of the law that supports them, occurs in an early scene. Troops have been drafted into the valley in response to the growing unrest and plan to break up a meeting of the strikers. The strikers retaliate by luring the mounted soldiers up a steep ravine, and rolling boulders down upon them, quickly scattering the troops. Naturally the strikers are triumphant and the narrative delivers the telling statement: 'They had shown that they had strength and power yet; they had struck successfully at the interfering invaders. Still the mountains were theirs' (*ATL*, p. 48). The forces of law are seen as 'interfering invaders' that have to be battled against and expelled. The phrase 'they had strength and power yet' could simply refer to the fact that they have not been crushed by the long strike, but in the context it also implies that they still have the strength and spirit of their ancestors who fought off invaders. This is the English/British military invading Wales and the Welsh fighting them off as in the olden days. Moreover, mountains are often used as symbolic of Wales and are important in the passage of *Honey and Bread* describing Glyndŵr's resistance to English invasion; the Welsh are 'in the fastnesses of the thick dark hills' (*HB*, p. 50). Thus: 'Still the mountains were theirs' firmly links the current industrial resistance to Welsh resistance to the English in times past. Their present-day resistance is equally Welsh. They resist as workers and as Welshmen in the 'multifaceted struggles' of San Juan's 'subalterns'.

Knight notes correctly that Davies has limits to his approval of resistance and that he shies away from approving rioting and looting;<sup>27</sup> unsurprising considering that Davies came from a family of shopkeepers who would suffer in the event of looting. The majority of his main characters speak against rioting, though some see it as inevitable. It could be argued that Davies tries to evade the

unpleasantness of these issues in a somewhat racist manner, as early on the narrative states: 'Opinion was that the Welsh gangs stole for food and clothing, but did not wantonly destroy. The Irish revelled in destruction for its own sake, but the Welsh rioted in the sacred cause of belly and pocket' (*ATL*, p. 5). However, the important word here is 'opinion'. Davies is representing the accepted opinion in the valley, not his own view. When Mildred's maid Polly expresses the view that the rioters will be mainly those who have come from Bristol and Ireland – 'foreigners' – Mildred corrects her: 'I believe there is quite a large number of native Welsh among the rioters, Polly' (*ATL*, p. 55). Davies is not subscribing to the belief that the Welsh do not wantonly destroy things; he is merely expressing the view which many of his Welsh characters hold, or attempt to hold, in order to comfort themselves and feel superior. Davies is not explicitly condemnatory of this attitude, but neither is it correct to take it as his own. Much as he clearly disapproves of looting, he does not try to exonerate the Welsh of it, though he does refrain from linking it to traditional Welsh resistance.

One further struggle that Davies touches upon, albeit not to the same extent, is the struggle of women for rights and recognition. This is begun in *Honey and Bread* with reference to Nest Llewellyn, the wife of the Squire Tudor and a far more forceful character than her husband, who 'longed for the power to follow him into his male world, where women were treated as fantasies, and damage his vanity with rude blows'. She rages silently against her lot: "'You wait," she would burst out to herself in silent bitterness, "we'll get the better of you sometime; we *will* wear the breeches.'" (*HB*, p. 64). She is aware, though, that she is unlikely to see this happen in her lifetime.

Discussion of the women's struggle is taken up again in *A Time to Laugh*. The main exponents of women's rights here are Tudor's wife Daisy and two of her friends: Mrs Barnes and, to a lesser extent, Maud Powell. Daisy supports her husband and brother wholeheartedly in the strikes and is also in many ways a 'liberated' woman; comfortable with her own sexuality, and even teaching the young men who lodge in her house about women: 'The others I was willing to talk to about women openly and help them to understand things a bit' (*ATL*, p. 156). Maud Powell, meanwhile, is not consciously part of any struggle but she is unconventional; she remains unmarried and indifferent to men which, interestingly, is something even the radical Daisy cannot understand:

This offended Daisy's sense of the fitness of things. Useless for Maud to declare grievously: 'Men don't interest me, they leave me cold, I can't get warmed up about them-' Daisy was always trying to put men in her way. (*ATL*, p. 308)

Potentially, therefore, Maud is part of yet another submerged group as a gay or asexual woman. At the very least, she wishes to live differently to the majority of women at that time and is prepared to assert her right to do so.

The most radical woman in the text, however, is Mrs Barnes, who lives with a man not her husband, writes romances under a male pseudonym and is active in the women's rights movement as well as being a fervent socialist. She argues that there is no reason why women should not do men's work, which at first shocks Tudor, 'who had never devoted any thought to the female aspect of socialism' (*ATL*, p. 160), but later intrigues and then inspires him, leading him to ask Mrs Barnes to organise mass meetings for the women of the valley. Here the female struggle and the workers' struggle are depicted as sympathetic and complementary. Thus Davies can be seen to be espousing the anticolonial and resistance theory idea that all struggles against oppression are linked.<sup>28</sup>

In contrast Mendoza says little about women's struggles, though he does at times represent women as being abused by men. There is one instance where the wives of immigrant workers, fed up with their appalling living conditions, march into the World Fair construction site and take over the partly-completed buildings as living quarters. Despite being mainly class-based, this could be seen as a combined gender and class protest.

This is a rare example of combined resistance. While Mendoza does discuss and analyse both the struggle for workers' rights and the struggle of Catalan identity in *La ciudad de los prodigios*, he does not generally link them. This may be partly because he does not see industrialisation as a force foreign to Catalonia and so it is less simple to combine pro-Catalan and workers' protests, particularly as many of the workers come from other parts of Spain. (It could even be argued that since the wealth produced by the workers' labour helped develop Barcelona and played an important part in the development of the modern urban-based Catalan identity, the interests of Catalanists and workers at that time could not coincide as the one was based on the exploitation of the other.) However, Mendoza is certainly aware of

the unpleasant aspects of industrialisation. Indeed, in certain passages much of his language is reminiscent of Davies:

But all this progress had demanded a colossal effort. Barcelona, like the female of some giant species who had just given birth to numerous offspring lay drained, exhausted. Foul emanations seeped from cracks, rancid exhalations rendered unbreathable the air in the streets and homes. (*LCP*, p. 12)

This is as unpleasant as anything Davies describes. But industry and innovation are not condemned in and of themselves. Mendoza abhors progress's lack of care for those who do not share in its riches, particularly those like the workers who are integral to it; unlike Davies, however, he does not see it as a foreign force that must be resisted. Consequently, the workers' struggles on which the novel focuses are struggles for better living and working conditions, unconnected with the Catalan struggle which is primarily dealt with through the recounting of historical events and the argument over the funding of the World Fair.<sup>29</sup>

But it is possible to argue that Mendoza is criticising the Catalan upper classes for their lack of interest in the problems of the workers. Saval claims that Mendoza condemns both the failure of the Catalan upper class to recognise the similarity of its situation with that of Cuba, the colony struggling to free itself from Spanish rule, and its deliberate disregard of the quasi civil war fought by workers and anarchists on the streets of Barcelona.<sup>30</sup> It is possible to take this argument one step further and claim that Mendoza is suggesting the Catalan struggle would have been stronger had the upper class joined forces with the workers and anarchists, who had a strength and vitality they lacked, rather than relying on the Madrid government to protect their money, property and business interests. Their failure to do this is a betrayal of their nation for which they must be censured.

This is an interpretation based on slightly tenuous ground. Mendoza could be arguing here for a connection between the workers' struggle and the Catalans' national struggle but it is by no means as clear as Davies's linking of the struggles. Even this tenuous link is interesting however, as the workers' movements in Barcelona were never really associated with Catalan nationalism. In the same way, the industrial struggles in south Wales have not usually been seen as Welsh in character. Thus, even to hint at these links involves a radical

re-understanding of their nations along the lines of resistance theory, which states that all struggles are linked.

### FIGURES OF RESISTANCE

One specific form of resistance that links national and industrial resistance is the phenomenon this study will call ‘figures of resistance’. This is not a term found in the work of resistance theorists but one coined to denote individuals that mount a solitary resistance to the forces that confront their people, much like R. S. Thomas’s hill farmers. This resistance need not be successful – indeed frequently it is not – what matters is the willingness to undertake it, and the subtler ongoing effects that it may have. Unaided, at times despised or ignored by their own people, these figures nevertheless continue to resist, even when it seems hopeless. They are a feature of Davies’s work rather than Mendoza’s; while resistance is mounted in Mendoza it is generally enacted by a mass of people rather than individual figures. Certain of Davies’s individuals, however, mount a combined struggle against the English and industrialisation, resembling the ‘multifaceted struggles’ of San Juan’s ‘subalterns’. They appear primarily in *Honey and Bread*, characters that represent the old Welsh rural way of life and in doing so resist the industrialisation of the valley. They all instinctively dislike the changes that it brings and cling tenaciously to their traditions.

The first of these figures is Robert ap Gruffydd, whom Michael J. Dixon describes as ‘the only serious opposition’ to foreman Jeremiah Clark’s work of industrialising the valley.<sup>31</sup> He is an eighty-year-old man who lives a hermit’s life on the mountainside and sometimes gives prophecies to the locals. Though most of his prophecies have been wrong, the local people still respect him; they ‘suspected that he possessed a wisdom denied to others’ (*HB*, p. 179). He is one of the few outside the Squire’s family who can read and write and he is well aware of what the coming industry could mean for the local people. He warns them:

When the may-blossom is on the boughs, this place will be swallowed into the mouth of hell like an apple into the jaw of a wild boar. If you would save yourselves, take up your tables and chairs and flee, or your backs will be broken, and your legs and your arms, on the chariot wheels of the new Romans. (*HB*, p. 180)

Here he is advising his listeners to flee rather than fight. His tone changes later however; he cries: 'Shift yourselves! Strike against him [Jeremiah]'. In this speech his words combine the evocation of a glorious Welsh past of resistance with the need to fight today:

Let not Cadwgan of the Battle-Axe be deserted of his people in Glyn Rontha! Remember now that Owain Glyndwr [*sic*] still cries to his captain, 'Cadwgan, whet thy battle-axe!' and listens for the men and women to raise their battle-shout as they assemble in [*sic*] army. Yea, Cadwgan is whetting his axe now. Prepare then for battle. (*HB*, pp. 327, 329)

The past is used as a call to arms in the present day against a new type of invader. Welsh resistance is clearly connected to industrial resistance. His words have some effect: 'The people, stirred but still cautious, went home chewing Gruffydd's words slowly on their tongues' (*HB*, p. 329). There is no immediate action but many begin to rethink their opinion of Jeremiah.

Ap Gruffydd also defies Jeremiah in person. Enraged at the prophet's defiance, which, tellingly, he hears of from one of the immigrant workers described as 'alien' (*HB*, p. 329), Jeremiah goes to confront the man in his own home. After a trade of insults, ap Gruffydd emerges and greets Jeremiah with surprising politeness, bowing and offering him a cup of water. This courtesy shows up the rudeness of Jeremiah's response: "'Notice," snapped Jeremiah, "of one day I give you. This land is mine. You go out off [*sic*] it.'" His opponent responds in biblical language: 'The land is the Lord's and all the fruits thereof' (*HB*, p. 331) which gives him a gravity and authority that is hard to gainsay. This is slightly undercut by his spitting at Jeremiah but this in itself is an act of defiance that his opponent has no real answer to. Jeremiah threatens to have the house burned down the following day but ap Gruffydd simply responds that he will have left by then. His final words are ominous: 'But I am of this land and I will not cease to direct the minds of its people' (*HB*, p. 332). Ultimately though, as Dixon points out, 'his main function in the text is to symbolize the original ethos of the valley, and the spirit of resistance, rather than to lead a full-blown revolt'.<sup>32</sup> He delays the work somewhat and makes the locals rethink their opinions of Jeremiah and the coming industrialisation, but overall his resistance appears to be unsuccessful. However, the unrest and protest in *A Time to Laugh* and *Jubilee Blues*

suggests that the spirit of resistance he helped inspire lives on. This idea of seemingly-futile resistance still inspiring future generations is frequently found in Webb's work and in both *Victus* and Sánchez Piñol's statements in interviews.

Dixon notes that ap Gruffydd is based on the real-life figure of Dr William Price of Llantrisant,<sup>33</sup> a figure hugely admired by Davies. Price was concerned with the workers' rights and well-being, and in *Honey and Bread* ap Gruffydd urges the locals to see what is coming and to form something like an early version of a union: 'make yourselves a bond, give out of your wages a small coin in every week for a bank that will help you in adversity' (*HB*, p. 328). Ap Gruffydd's advice can be seen to provide a forerunner of the more politicised events of *A Time to Laugh* and thus a link between traditional Welsh resistance to invasion and latter-day industrial resistance.

The second figure of resistance is an old woman called Rebecca – a name which carries significance due to its link to the Rebecca Riots. She is an unpleasant figure (as ap Gruffydd is on occasion): filthy, living in squalor, and frequently sullen or flying into rages. Locals call her a witch and shun her. The squire keeps her provided with food and is a little scared of her. But it is she who mounts the most active resistance to the coming industrialisation. Her cottage is scheduled to be demolished to make way for the new road that is being built but she refuses to leave, barricading herself inside. She ignores all warnings, spitting at Jeremiah and threatening him with a cauldron of boiling urine if he returns. Finally he is forced to use a battering ram to break in. Men volunteer eagerly to help at first, glad of the diversion, but when she begins to curse they are taken aback and stare at the ground. When they begin to charge with the ram, she hurls everything she can at them: 'pieces of old pots and pans, flints, rank old garments, clods of earth, the innards of poultry, foul rabbit skins, clots of stale milk, and finally some volumes of Welsh poetry she had taken from the Glan Ystrad rubbish-dump' (*HB*, p. 299). This last item is the most significant. Rebecca has first rescued these objects of Welsh tradition from where they have been cast aside and then used them in the fight against the alien forces that are seeking to destroy her home. Here a part of Welsh tradition is quite literally used as a weapon of resistance. It is significant too, that Rebecca is the only character in the text that is specifically described as speaking in Welsh.

Also interesting is Jeremiah's reaction to her resistance. He is furious and curses her in ugly language: 'A stake in your stomach! [...] And spikes in your paps!', 'you black bad sow' (*HB*, pp. 299, 297). Much of this abuse is female-related. It could be argued, therefore, that Rebecca is resisting not only English domination as a Welsh person, but also male domination as a woman, again linking the two struggles (or three if the resistance to industry is included) and seeing them as facets of the same fight. It is this triple resistance that so enrages Jeremiah.

Despite her best efforts, Rebecca is finally forcibly ejected in an extraordinary, somewhat farcical, scene where she is gagged, tied to the battering ram, carried up to the Glan Ystrad mansion and left on the doorstep. The gagging is particularly telling as it represents the silencing of an oppressed people by the dominant power. Furthermore, Rebecca's supposed power as a witch is felt to come from her voice, she curses people or at least is believed to, so gagging her renders her impotent as well as silent. It seems to be the final victory of the invading power. Rebecca has fought hard, a struggle described in quasi-epic terms: 'Even on her back Rebecca magnificently crashed her two fists into the swarthy face above her' (*HB*, p. 300), but ultimately she is beaten. The industrialisation will continue and cannot be stopped by anything Rebecca or Robert ap Gruffydd can do.

Dixon writes that: 'If the figure of ap Gruffydd represents the permanence and rebellious potential of the old *gwerin* [as, it could be argued, does Rebecca], then a residual trace of the old gentry, in its more spirited aspect, also remains'.<sup>34</sup> He cites Owen Llewellyn's relationship with the peasant girl Bronwen whose child continues the Llewellyn line in later novels. Osborne, meanwhile, sees that relationship as part of Owen's resistance, recognising Bronwen's symbolic value to him.<sup>35</sup> Owen and Bronwen can both be seen as figures of resistance but in slightly different ways.

Owen longs to provide outright resistance, more even than Rebecca or ap Gruffydd do. He alone seems to recognise what the land means to his people and to be willing to fight for it. Osborne notes that it is surely not coincidental that he shares his name with Owain Glyndŵr,<sup>36</sup> the great defender of Wales who is mentioned several times in the novel. However Owen's resistance is unsuccessful. Ultimately all he can manage is to refuse to leave his home, and he dies of tuberculosis as industrial progress continues unabated.

Bronwen, though, is different. Her resistance lies not in direct opposition – she would not feel that it was her place to oppose the sale

of the estate – but in the values she embodies, and her continued survival. Osborne claims Bronwen is ‘representative of the Welsh folk’, and that she has ‘a primordial connection to the land’<sup>37</sup> – the land that is being desecrated by industrialisation. As such her continued survival can be read as the survival of the land and the old ways that she represents. She survives to pass down Welsh traditions – as Osborne notes, she likes to hear her grandson sing old Welsh songs which she has presumably taught him<sup>38</sup> – to oversee the new age of *A Time to Laugh* and, of course, to give birth to her son who in turn fathers the activist Tudor Morris. By passing on pre-industrial traditions and history she resists the totalising effect of the alien industrialisation. It is a more passive resistance than that of ap Gruffydd or Rebecca, and certainly not the type of which her lover Owen dreamed, but in its own quiet way it is more effective.

Bronwen could theoretically be accused of complicity with the new order because of her lack of active resistance and because she adapts to the new world reasonably well, marrying one of the incomers, Ben Morris, a young foreman working on the new railway, who raises hers and Owen’s child as his own. However, crucially, Morris is Welsh and specifically mentioned to be so: ‘But he was Welsh, though of the border, and with a streak of the gay Saxon in him’ (*HB*, p. 335). Despite his involvement with the coming industry, he is shown to be a good man – redeemed perhaps by being Welsh! – and he accepts Bronwen and her unborn child unreservedly. He is thus instrumental in allowing the Llewellyn line to continue, albeit illegitimately, and provide future resistance in the valley. Dixon notes that Bronwen and Ben’s marriage ‘could be read as symbolizing the conciliation of the old native order with the new *status quo*’,<sup>39</sup> though it is, of course, Owen’s line not Ben’s that is perpetuated. However, Ben helps raise the son who will in turn give birth to the next generation of activists and so it is perhaps more correct to say that the representatives of three very different parts of Wales – Owen from the gentry, Bronwen from the *gwerin* and Ben from the border and industrial area – combine to produce Tudor, and thus ensure both that resistance is continued, and that it is Welsh in nature and tradition. So despite Bronwen’s apparent compromise with the new industry, her adaptation is merely part of her continuing resistance, as it allows her to bring up her son in the ancestral land of his father. This adaptive resistance seems to be more effective than the outright fighting of Owen, Rebecca and ap Gruffydd.

## HISTORICAL PASSAGES

This section will focus on only one of Davies's trilogy, *Honey and Bread*, as it contains the best example of the feature to be examined: the insertion of textbook-like passages of history into the main narrative. This feature is also found in *La ciudad de los prodigios*.

The use of passages in the style of a history textbook is a logical choice for an author attempting to write a history of a marginalised people; it could be seen as a reappropriation of a genre traditionally controlled by the dominant powers. By imitating the style but changing the content, authors can subvert a dominant genre and turn it to their own purposes. However, Mendoza and Davies go further. While both passages resemble an account from a history book in some ways, they are not perfect imitations. On closer examination, the tone frequently slips and there are both insertions and omissions that are atypical of the genre. As a result, they could be said to be satirising the traditional historical narrative written by the victors and, consequently, further undermining it.

At the start of the second chapter of *Honey and Bread* a brief and selective account of the history of Glan Ystrad is relayed, which gives the history of the Llewellyn family and links it to the wider history of the invasion of Wales by England. It begins with Glyndŵr, describing how Henry IV's army had passed through Glan Ystrad 'after being sadly routed by Owain Glyndwr [*sic*] in September 1405.' It refers to the 'proud valley where Cadwgan, Owain's henchman, had whetted his battle-axe in response to the chieftain's call' (*HB*, p. 50). The valley is immediately linked with historical resistance against English invaders. Cadwgan is later invoked in Robert ap Gruffydd's speeches when he is attempting to rouse the workers; he acts as a reminder of the heroic past of the valley and its people and, through his link to Glyndŵr, of the whole of Wales. The fact that this is described as the fifth invasion by Henry IV's army adds strength to the idea of a tradition of fierce resistance – a highly successful one.

Interestingly, the passage at first almost seems sympathetic to the perspective of the English. The army has been 'sadly' defeated, Owain is described as a 'necromancer' who has called forth storms against the invaders, and a little later the narrative voices the belief that 'there was no doubt, Owain Glyndwr [*sic*] consorted with evil spirits and probably was Satan himself'. Later the Welsh are described as being

‘of a damnable nature’ (*HB*, pp. 50, 51). However, this is quickly followed by a list of the injustices imposed upon the Welsh:

Had not Henry decreed that a Welshman marrying an Englishman [*sic*] was to be subjected to severe penalties, and all Englishmen marrying Welshwomen were to be disfranchised in the boroughs! And no Welsh child was to be brought up as a scholar nor permitted to be apprenticed to any trade in any town in the kingdom; nor was there to be any assembling of bards and minstrels; nor could an Englishman be convicted at the suit of any Welshman. Obviously the Welsh were of barbarous temperament. (*HB*, p. 51)

This neatly undercuts any sympathy readers might have had for the English. The above list is a stark indictment of the English monarch’s behaviour towards the Welsh people, and turns the passage on its head. Suddenly the image of the Welsh as ‘damnable’ appears to be the view not of a reasoned people, but of a biased and oppressive one. This passage reveals the classic colonial device of othering and inferiorising a people to convince colonisers of the rightness of their mission. Following the list of prohibitions imposed upon the Welsh with: ‘Obviously the Welsh were of barbarous temperament’ (*HB*, p. 51), exposes the colonising mentality, which is the first step to opposing and rectifying it. Furthermore, it satirises the mindset, showing that it is coloniser, not colonised, that is barbarous. This will be enlightening to Welsh and English audiences alike. The Welsh will be stirred to anger, while the English will learn facts that they would probably not otherwise have known.

The belief that Glyndŵr used magic and consorted with the devil can be read as further undermining the authority of the English. They are suffering from superstitions of a kind that would normally be expected of the ‘barbarous colonised’ rather than the ‘civilising colonisers’. This undercutting has a similar effect to Mendoza’s assertion that the Spanish will not allow Catalonia to secede because that would lower the national average height. The dominant state is made to look ridiculous, rendered risible by the authors’ straight delivery of ludicrous claims.

Davies’s descriptions of the landscape are also interesting here. The Welsh are strongly linked with their environment:

Up in the fastnesses of the thick dark hills the natives rode in triumph; let the winds scream out of the valley’s deep throat, the rains lash in torrent,

they were made stronger in the storms, they could sing in wild unison with the winds and delight in the torn heavens. (*HB*, p. 50)

The mountains, as we have already seen, are also important to the resistance in *A Time to Laugh*. The hills take an active part in resisting the invaders; they are 'fastnesses', which shelter and defend their people. Equally important is the sense that the Welsh are at home in this land and these conditions; they are 'made stronger' by them. The English, in contrast, 'hated the mountainous alien landscape' (*HB*, p. 50). The word 'alien', used numerous times in the Rhondda Trilogy, here shows that the English are out of their place and out of their depth in a land that is not theirs. The conditions, the land and the people unite to expel them.

The passage then moves abruptly from Glyndŵr back to the time of the Normans. It then proceeds to describe briefly the ongoing struggle against the English, covering some four hundred years in the space of two paragraphs. Details and dates are not given; rather the emphasis is on the refusal to surrender and the inevitable forcing back of the local people, in a manner somewhat reminiscent of the first two stanzas of 'Welsh History':

Though conquered again and again, they never ceased to make rows within the steep confines of their miniature but cantankerous land, never ceased to fight with a strange tenacity [...] But slowly they became a wholly conquered nation, and all that remained to them were their blood-stained hills and mountains, their secretive language, and their urge to sing sad, hymn-like songs. (*HB*, p. 52)

The next paragraph emphasises the role of the bards in Welsh resistance to the English. They 'met and chanted to the restless people'. The words of the bards remind the beleaguered people of their history and give them a sense of their identity and thus: 'In spite of interference from without, invasions, stern decrees from powerful kings, the people kept intact in their dark hearts their sense of proud isolation, which was valuable to them beyond all other desires' (*HB*, p. 52). Thanks to the bards, the Welsh keep resisting in spite of everything arrayed against them. This idea is also expressed in several of Webb's articles.<sup>40</sup>

The narrative then ties the nation's history to that of the Llewellyn family, describing how an ancestor of theirs had lost his land as

a result of his support for Glyndŵr. This immediately links the Llewellyn family to the idea of Welsh resistance against the English. Admittedly the pride involved in this claim is undercut slightly by the description of how this poverty-stricken ancestor raided a village in Gloucestershire, and the admission that 'Tudor was a little ashamed of this ancestor' (*HB*, p. 53). However, given the portrayal of Tudor as an example of the Welsh gentry in decay, the narrator may well not be endorsing his judgement.

The family lands are restored under Henry VII and from there onwards the narrative is primarily that of the Llewellyn family, though they can be read as standing for the whole of Wales. Their history is played out against the wider backdrop of events in Wales as a whole; the eighteenth-century growth of Nonconformity in particular. On reaching the present of the novel, the historical narrative blends seamlessly into a description of Glan Ystrad and the life of Owen and David, continuing the narrative of the Llewellyn family and providing some justification for the inclusion of the passage in the novel.

This passage is notable not just for its textbook style or for its general recovery and retelling of history, but for the events and attributes it has chosen to emphasise. As with Webb, the Welsh are depicted as a people who resist, and this will be important for the self-image of the contemporary Welsh people. While Davies, unlike Webb, was not working for Welsh independence, he portrays the Welsh as a people who will fight to keep their land and customs, recounting the history of resistance as encouraged by resistance theorists like San Juan, Soyinka and Thiong'o.

A similar passage from *La ciudad de los prodigios* recounts oppression rather than resistance. Reference is made to resistance when describing the aftermath of the fall of Barcelona in 1714, but the novel does not narrate the struggle that preceded that date. It merely summarises the cause by explaining that Catalonia, 'jealous of her liberties and feeling them to be under threat' (*LCP*, p. 30), supported the losing side in the War of Spanish Succession and was heavily penalised by the new Bourbon monarch Philip V as a result. There is a grim and graphic account of what followed, similar to the descriptions in *Victus*. Firstly the invading army laid waste the land, confident of official approval while their commanders looked away. Then came what Mendoza calls 'the official punishment' (*LCP*, p. 30). The effect on people is foremost:

Catalans were executed by the hundreds, and their heads were put on lances and exhibited at prominent points up and down the principality. Thousands of prisoners were sent to do hard labor in remote regions of the peninsula and even in the American colonies; they died in their chains, far from their native land. The younger women were used for the pleasure of the soldiery, which resulted in a scarcity of marriageable ladies, still felt in Catalonia. (*LCP*, p. 30)

In addition to the obvious brutality, two things in this quotation stand out. One is the fact that this repression has effects that are still felt nearly two hundred years later. It has crippled the Catalan people, dealing them a blow from which they have yet to recover. The scarcity of marriageable women is particularly crippling to an oppressed minority as women are essential to the continuation of the people. Moreover this is an attack on the whole nation, not just the individual women. As Sarah Benton explains, mass war rapes are often seen as 'an actual assault on women, on a nation's honour and on men's capacity to protect their women'.<sup>41</sup> Thus while it is the Catalan women who suffer the attacks, the entire nation is affected, as the conquerors use this vile method to reinforce their victory. The other striking feature is the emotive image of Catalans dying as prisoners far from home. Indeed, the original Spanish could perhaps be better translated as 'without ever seeing their beloved homeland again'. In some cases, as with Manuel Desvalls in *Victus*, exile is seen as a worse punishment than death, as it involves separation from the homeland. In this way the cruelty of the actions of the Spanish state are emphasised.

The land itself is then ravaged: 'Large areas of farmland were devastated and strewn with salt to render the soil infertile; fruit trees were torn up by the roots. An attempt was made to wipe out livestock, especially the much-prized Pyrenean cow' (*LCP*, p. 30). Territory is sacred to any nation and the destruction wreaked upon it here shows that the brutality and the desire for vengeance of the Bourbon forces go far beyond common sense. Just as Martí in *Victus* cannot understand the destruction of the town of Játiva, so here the destruction renders the 'conquered' territory useless and is therefore illogical. Consequently, it is most likely due either to vengeance or to a desire to ensure that the Catalans are utterly defeated.

Public buildings are the next targets:

Castles were pulled down, the hewn stone used to wall in certain towns, making them penitentiaries in all but name. Monuments and statues adorning boulevards and squares were smashed. (*LCP*, p. 30)

The destruction of castles is important as it leaves Catalonia defenceless, while the assault on monuments and public buildings strikes at the symbols of the Catalans' sense of nationhood. Last of all comes the assault on culture and learning – the closing of Barcelona University and the conversion of many schools into stables. Every single facet of the life of the Catalan people is suddenly and brutally affected.

For the most part, the tone of this account is that of a factual report. It recounts the events that happened and does not venture an explicit opinion on them. The majority of it could have come from an official report or a textbook. It is in fact less emotive than the account of Glyndŵr's revolt in *Honey and Bread* which, while factual, at times takes on an almost epic quality (see the passages quoted above for several examples). However, the objective voice of the narrator slips occasionally, allowing emotive phrases like 'far from their native land' to enter the text. This clearly reveals that the narrator's sympathy is with the Catalan people. It also moves the text away from what otherwise could be a passage from a textbook. In some ways this could be seen to undermine Mendoza's project of writing a history of Catalonia from the Catalan perspective; however it is effective at conveying the horrors suffered by the Catalan people and bringing these to the attention of a wider audience, both inside Catalonia and further afield in the rest of Spain.

It is interesting to note that both passages contain an almost complete absence of dates, something that would normally be found in abundance in history books. There is only one in the Mendoza passage, 1701, the beginning of the War of Spanish Succession. This is placed right at the start. Not even the date of the fall of Barcelona is given, despite its huge significance to the Catalan nation. In the passage from *Honey and Bread* only two concrete dates are given: 1405, the occasion of one of the attempted invasions of Wales, and 1785, Tudor Llewellyn's birth date (though there are references to various centuries). It is also notable that one of those dates is the birth date of a fictional character rather than an actual historical event. Mendoza's date is a genuine historical one but the lack of

subsequent dates detracts from the impression of the passage as an excerpt from a history textbook. Elsewhere in the novel Mendoza includes numerous dates and figures, including the total cost of the 1888 World Fair, though the accuracy of some are questionable.<sup>42</sup> However, in his most historical passages he generally refrains from including dates, like Davies, which detracts from the textbook feeling of the passage. This has the effect of creating a very different type of historical narrative, different in style as well as content, to that created by the dominant culture.

Mendoza also disrupts his historical account through the use of humour and satire. He includes details that would not normally be found in such accounts. These details are frequently amusing in their own right and also in their incongruity. For example, in describing the attempt to eradicate the livestock of Catalonia, he notes that particular attention was paid to the Pyrenean cow. This is a surprising detail in what is otherwise a very general account; it mentions people rather than particular individuals, buildings and statues rather than specific landmarks. The account then goes on to say that the attempt was unsuccessful as a few cows escaped to the mountains though they were pursued. The image of the soldiers pursuing the cows with weapons is a comical one, as is the idea that the powerful invading army is unable to defeat a few cows. It undermines the serious reporting tone that has been used thus far in the passage.

A second slippage in tone comes a little later with the mention of another incongruous detail – an even more incredible one. The narrator mentions that the port of Barcelona was deliberately made dangerous to shipping, by importing sharks from the West Indies in tanks and dumping them in the sea. This measure failed, however, as the sharks could not cope with the climate and those that survived swam south to warmer seas (*LCP*, p. 31). This, even more than the image of the army chasing cattle, gives the passage a farcical feel and undermines the serious tone that has hitherto been adopted. However, it serves a particular and immediate purpose. The following paragraph quotes a description of Philip V of Spain, the author of these repressions, as '*roi fou, brave et dévot*' (*LCP*, p. 31) – a mad, brave and devout king. The sharks could therefore be considered as a depiction of that madness, of the kind of idea a mad king might have had, even if it did not actually happen. Moreover, it undercuts the latter complimentary bit of the description which is surely already being used ironically; calling a king who could inflict

such horrors on his subjects devout is ludicrous, at least to modern eyes. But by preceding the description of Philip with a statement that cannot possibly be true, Mendoza underlines the irony further, undercutting the description and ensuring that the reader cannot take it at face value. They will question the authority figure and many other things, including things learned from more 'official' sources. As with the comments by the English on the Welsh in the passage from *Honey and Bread* discussed above, it renders ridiculous, and even satirises, figures of power. As we have seen, Saval argues that Mendoza's use of humour is, at least in part, a device to make the reader question everything, and this example is no exception. Encouraging its readers to question history and what can really be known about history is also a common feature of postmodern historical novels, of which *La ciudad de los prodigios* can be considered one.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, the humour lightens the tone and therefore avoids the grim, despairing chronicles of oppression that occur in some of R. S. Thomas's work.

The inclusion of these historical passages in their respective novels is somewhat jerky and done on very little pretext, particularly in the case of Mendoza. They are by no means essential to the structure of the novel and this adds to both writers' claims to the status of resistance writer as they are including artistically unnecessary and even unsound techniques in order to draw attention to a recovered history of their nation. They are thus making the form of the text secondary to its message. In producing alternative histories of their respective nations they are informing their own people of a history that they will not have learned at school and are speaking truth to power to their wider audiences in the Spanish/English-speaking world. Davies, in particular, focuses on a history of Welsh resistance. While Mendoza discusses oppression not resistance, the oppression follows resistance, and it is still something that it is important for the Catalan people to know about. San Juan writes of the Philippines that 'this sense of affirming our identity as a distinct, historically evolved community can only come about through the people's awareness of a common plight – shared sufferings, shared struggles, shared defeats and victories',<sup>44</sup> and this is surely the case for all oppressed peoples. Through use of the passages discussed above, these texts seek to make the authors' compatriots aware of these shared things. Thus, while they are not as nationalist as *Victus*, they can be seen as undertaking one of the same projects.

### TYPES OF RESISTANCE

Various critics have commented on Davies's tendency to represent the world and particularly the Welsh in racial terms.<sup>45</sup> The most extended treatment of the subject comes in Daniel Williams's essay cited above. Williams claims that '[t]he Welsh in Rhys Davies's writings are represented in racial, primitivist, terms', some of which he later lists: 'bucolic and simple', 'beautifully child-like', possessing 'their priceless Celtic sense of wonder'.<sup>46</sup> Consequently, Williams argues: 'Welshness [in Davies] is not defined by a consensual engagement in a historically developing culture, but rather is pre-programmed "into the blood" of characters'.<sup>47</sup> If this is the case, and Williams's argument is convincing, then it is a major obstacle to seeing Davies as espousing the kind of open resistance found in Webb and Sánchez Piñol. As we have seen, Williams has elsewhere argued cogently that depicting the Welsh as a race or ethnicity, a category defined by blood and descent that one is born into or outside of and cannot elect to join, is potentially disastrous for a minority culture struggling to survive in the age of multiculturalism and globalisation. Representation of the Welsh people or of Welsh-language speakers as a closed group is almost certain to hasten their extinction.

In his discussion of Davies, Williams makes no reference to the Rhondda trilogy. However these novels too, particularly *Honey and Bread*, also frequently represent the Welsh in terms of race and blood. Knight draws attention to the statement 'obeying the wild instinct in their blood' and blood (denoting descent or race) is used in numerous other places.<sup>48</sup> There are also several references to races and racial types; for example David Llewellyn is described as having 'the dark, almost swarthy mintage of the typical Celt' (*HB*, p. 10). The other two novels have less of this type of racial representation but *A Time to Laugh* does discuss different nationalities in the context of the south Wales coalfield at the end of the nineteenth century, seeing the various peoples who have emigrated there as still racially separate:

The sprinkling of raw Irish who had arrived in the coalfields from dark barbarous bogs and isolate [*sic*] pre-Christian villages often shocked the Welsh, though they were accepted with a deeper sense of familiarity than the quiet English, who had settled in sprinklings also. The English seemed not to riot or agitate at all: they were able to ignore their empty stomachs and ill-clad backs, causing a sniffing wonder. (*ATL*, p. 5)

As discussed earlier with reference to the rioting, this is not necessarily Davies's view. However, there is no disqualifying phrase such as 'opinion was', in this instance. Moreover, qualities which seem to be inherent are assigned to each race in sweeping terms, as they are to the Welsh in the historical passage discussed above (for example, their 'strange tenacity') and at other points. While the latter novels do express the importance of unity among all the workers no matter their origin or occupation, Davies's overall depiction of the Welsh is a far cry from Wilks's view of 'the Welsh nation proper – no racial entity, but a vigorous and ancient community which absorbed all immigrants so that they became as Welsh as the Welsh themselves'.<sup>49</sup>

*La ciudad de los prodigios* also expresses the importance of worker unity, or at least has some of its characters express it, and generally Mendoza focuses less on racial depictions than Davies does. He recognises that a large percentage of the workers in Barcelona, particularly during the time of the novel, came from parts of Spain outside of Catalonia but he still sees them as part of Barcelona. The novel draws attention to the appalling conditions in which these newcomers lived and sympathetically portrays their struggles for improvement. During larger struggles the workers are portrayed as a class rather than as distinct races.

However, Mendoza does at times represent the Catalans as a race. As Knutson notes: 'In the first pages of *La ciudad de los prodigios* they [the Catalans] are presented as a race with advantages over the other peoples of Spain'.<sup>50</sup> As Knutson also notes, this depiction is primarily humorous, which perhaps lessens the impact of the assertion, but the Catalans are certainly called 'a tall, strong and energetic race'.<sup>51</sup> The terminology employed is not so different to that used by Davies to describe the Welsh. At other times in the novel, however, the term Catalan is used more sweepingly, in ways which could be seen as representing a people based on location and choice as opposed to race. Therefore, there is perhaps the beginning of a more inclusive Catalan identity in *La ciudad de los prodigios*, and thus the possibility of a more open resistance. However, both authors' use of race as a category hinders the development and expression of this kind of resistance, though more so in the case of Davies than Mendoza.

Another factor that effects the kind of resistance these texts espouse is the portrayal by the authors of their respective countries. As shown in the previous chapter, the way in which a writer portrays their country is an important indicator of the type of resistance in

their work. It is particularly interesting in this context to examine Mendoza's portrayal of Catalonia and Davies's of Wales, which differ greatly.

Tony Brown argues that Davies constructs

an older 'Wales' [...] out of his own emotional and imaginative circumstances. It is a 'Wales', a 'home culture', which supposedly existed before the coming of industrialization and Nonconformity, a Wales from which Davies feels not only himself but contemporary Wales to have been displaced.<sup>52</sup>

Brown's essay does not examine the Rhondda Trilogy but much of what he says is also true of these texts. Osborne has noted that in *Honey and Bread*, the peasant girl Bronwen is both linked to the land and comfortable in her own body.<sup>53</sup> The advancement of society is already having an effect on the people of Wales, but some, like Bronwen, still hold that link to the past, to Davies's 'constructed' Wales.

Mendoza also invents or 'constructs' Barcelona to a certain extent. Knutson notes that the author chronicles the history of his city 'by means of true and invented forms almost at the same time'.<sup>54</sup> The Barcelona of *La ciudad de los prodigios* is both a city based on reality and an invented and fantastic city where supernatural beings mingle with real historical characters.

Constructing a Barcelona or Wales of their own is not a barrier to being a resistance text; as we have seen, many, if not most, resistance writers share visions of their nation as they would like it to be. What defines the presence and type of resistance is not the construction of an ideal nation, but what that construct then implies.

The chapter on R. S. Thomas showed that the majority of his work depicted an ideal Wales as Welsh-speaking, rural and free from technology. With the exception of Welsh-speaking, Rhys Davies's ideal Wales is very similar. Brown claims that in addition to being less constricting, Davies's constructed Wales is rural and notes the similarity with Plaid Cymru's 'Ten Points of Policy', published in their paper *Y Ddraig Goch* in 1933 (just two years before the publication of *Honey and Bread*). As we have seen in the previous chapter, this policy was based on deindustrialisation of the south and an economy consisting of light industry and agriculture. Although, as Brown notes, Davies expressed hostility towards Welsh nationalism at times,

the ideas are strikingly similar.<sup>55</sup> Davies longs for a return to a beautiful, rural Wales.

Much of the Rhondda Trilogy supports the idea of a return to the pastoral. In *Honey and Bread*, industrialisation is depicted as a profoundly un-Welsh phenomenon and the rural is a far more attractive option. Dixon is right to note that there is a shift in Davies's treatment of industrialism within the trilogy 'from a rather hostile perspective towards his subject-matter in *Honey and Bread* to a position encompassing a seemingly more empathic scope in *A Time to Laugh* and *Jubilee Blues*'.<sup>56</sup> However, even this 'more empathic scope' remains suspicious of industrialisation. Characters think wistfully of the beautiful pre-industrial valley with its abundant trees and clear stream full of fish. The ugliness of the surroundings and the at times uncouth behaviour of the men are a common motif, even as their increasing awareness and organisation are praised. And while Davies appears to accept, through Bronwen, that industrialisation was inevitable, it is still not depicted positively. Bronwen tells Tudor: 'But they had to come: the world belongs to the people and it seems to me that they will tear it up and stamp and spoil wherever they choose to go' (*ATL*, p. 94). The imagery in her words is reminiscent of the language of invasion and destruction used to describe the industrialisation process in *Honey and Bread*. Moreover, as Dixon also notes, the trilogy ends with Cassie Jones, the heroine of *Jubilee Blues*, escaping from the mining valleys and returning to her beloved countryside.<sup>57</sup> The farm that is her destination is described in idyllic terms:

Brynsiriol! It was a white farm sitting on top of a hill under the sky. She knew it well. Meadows sloped up to it smooth as quilts. Front of the house was a cedar-tree hundreds of years old. [...] From the house was a view that went for miles up and down a wide valley, bottom of which was a blue river. (*JB*, p. 272)

The description of the farm creates an impression of rural beauty, space (the wide valley) and aged rootedness (the cedar-tree), in contrast to the cramped, dirty and much more recently-constructed mining valley communities. The rural not the industrial is the ideal.

This construction of the ideal Wales as rural and traditional is a barrier to the espousal of effective resistance. The rural areas of Wales risk becoming, like R. S. Thomas's 'enclaves of resistance', places to which the Welsh people can retreat and where they can

barricade themselves in, but also places where they stagnate through lack of ability to grow or develop. As we saw with Thomas, a desire to retreat completely to the rural is totally unrealistic in the current age – no country can survive now without some industry. Furthermore, it excludes anyone who is not or does not wish to be part of that rural idyll. Unlike Thomas, the Welsh language is not so central here and is thus not necessarily associated with this retreat in the way it is in Thomas's work, but the vision of an ideal, rural, traditional Wales is otherwise much the same and creates a similar enclave. While these enclaves are a form of resistance, they are not one that will help the nation move forward.

This is not a charge which can be levelled at Mendoza. As already argued, in *La ciudad de los prodigios* Mendoza presents industrialisation as generally a force for good, although he is quick to recognise and decry the suffering that rapid expansion can cause. However, he celebrates Barcelona, and Catalonia more generally, as a highly-industrialised area and consequently superior to the rest of Spain. While Davies sees industrialism as decidedly un-Welsh, Mendoza celebrates the invention, ingenuity and industry of his people, portraying Catalonia as enlightened and progressive, and, indeed, suggesting that Catalan identity can change and move with the times, that it is a work in progress rather than a fixed set of attributes and values. It has changed hugely since the Fall of Barcelona in 1714 but it is still Catalan. This is a more productive approach in terms of resistance as it lacks the anti-modernity of Davies's vision. Rather than wishing to withdraw Catalonia from contact with the outside world, the novel encourages it to place itself on the world stage by emulating the World Fairs (Saval has commented at length on the parallels between the novel and the period in the lead-up to the 1992 Barcelona Olympics during which it was written).<sup>58</sup> Mendoza's ideal for his nation is far less introspective than Davies's and consequently more likely to encourage an open, productive resistance. Like Davies, his use of racial types is an obstacle to this, but less so than in the case of the Welsh author.

\*\*\*

As we have seen, *La ciudad de los prodigios* and the Rhondda Trilogy can be read as attempting to resist Spanish/English hegemony by rewriting their nations' histories as accounts of oppression by the dominant power and resistance to that oppression. In doing this,

they make their own people aware of their history which will in turn encourage them to rethink their current circumstances and, perhaps, work for change. Making use of their wider audience they also speak truth to power, educating the Spanish/English about the oppression their ancestors committed.

It is true that the texts do not commit as fully as some others to this project. At times the behaviour of Onofre Bouvila, the digressions, and the use of different genres, can detract from the message of *La ciudad de los prodigios*, as can the use of humour – although, as already discussed, this last can be seen as serving a different part of the resistance project. Meanwhile, the use of racial types in Rhys Davies's work and the idealisation of the rural are barriers to an open, inclusive resistance. However, none of these issues can negate the fact that these novels can be read, at least partially, as resistance texts, and that they contain seeds of ideas expressed in the more radical writers already discussed in this work. Mendoza's treatment of the repression that followed 1714 is similar to Sánchez Piñol's in that it seeks to both educate and horrify Catalan and Spanish readers alike. Davies's recognition of the traditional Welsh values displayed in the industrial communities and their resistance to capitalism, and his assertion that the mining valleys are an important part of Wales, find echoes in Webb. When considered in the light of the authors of previous chapters, neither Davies nor Mendoza can be so lightly dismissed as non-resistance writers. Moreover, it is harmful to Welsh and Catalan culture to do so. While the resistance of these authors may be only a shadow compared to some of the others, they are taking a step in the right direction – an important one.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Davies's novels generally remain closer to historical accounts than Mendoza's. Davies may combine different strikes or change certain dates, but the events described in his novels all took place. While many of the events Mendoza describes took place, they are punctuated by clearly invented details and Caragh Wells points out that Mendoza admitted in an interview that he falsified Barcelona's history in the novel (Caragh Wells, "The City of Words: Eduardo Mendoza's "La ciudad de los prodigios"", *The Modern Language Review*, 96.3 (2001), 715–22 (717–18)). However the majority of the history is accurate and those details which are not add to Mendoza's project of resistance writing in a different way.
- <sup>2</sup> José Saval notes that this was a very important time period for the consolidation of the cities of the new capitalist society and that it was the time of

greatest growth and development for Barcelona (José Saval, *La ciudad de los prodigios, de Eduardo Mendoza* (Madrid: Editorial Síntesis, 2003), p. 52). It was also a period that saw the development and strengthening of a modernising Catalan identity, urban-based and focusing on the Barcelona bourgeoisie who became wealthy as a result of industrialisation and in turn poured their money into expanding the city. Consequently, Barcelona became symbolic of Catalonia as a whole and it is certainly depicted in this way in *La ciudad*, though, as we shall see, Mendoza also highlights severe failings of the Catalan bourgeoisie, seeing them as failing to work for Catalonia's political benefit. Moreover, Saval argues that Mendoza depicts the workers, many of them immigrants, who did the physical work of expanding the city, as responsible for its growth (Saval, *La ciudad*, p. 119). However, it can also be argued that the bourgeoisie's wealth made the idea of a Catalan state more viable when it was discussed in later years.

- 3 The final novel, *Jubilee Blues* (1938), deals with events that are contemporary to the time of writing and is therefore not strictly a historical novel. It is also debateable as to whether the second book, *A Time to Laugh* (1937), can be considered a historical novel as it recounts events only just prior to the author's lifetime and some thirty years prior to the time of writing, whereas many definitions of the historical novel require a gap of at least fifty years. However, there is no question about the status of the first in the trilogy, *Honey and Bread* (1935), which is set in the mid-nineteenth century, and therefore for the sake of simplicity, and because of the project it argues they are undertaking, this study will use the term 'historical novel' loosely to refer to all texts examined in this chapter.
- 4 See, for example, Rhys Davies, *Honey and Bread* (London: Putnam, 1935), p. 9 and *Jubilee Blues* (London: William Heinemann, 1938), pp. 76–8. Future references in text as *HB* and *JB*.
- 5 See for example, Alex Broch, Vance Holloway and Amelia Pulgarin, all quoted in Saval, *La ciudad*, pp. 78–9.
- 6 Davies Aberpennar, 'Anti-Nationalism Among the Anglo-Welsh', *The Welsh Nationalist* (February 1948), p. 3.
- 7 Osborne argues that Davies's primary audience was always the English but focuses on *My Wales* and *The Story of Wales* in particular. Huw Osborne, *Rhys Davies* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), pp. 37–40. Of course Davies had little choice about publishing in England; there were virtually no opportunities for publishing in English within Wales until well after the Second World War.
- 8 Katie Gramich, 'The Masquerade of Gender in the Stories of Rhys Davies', in Meic Stephens (ed.), *Rhys Davies: Decoding the Hare* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001), pp. 205–15 (p. 209).
- 9 Osborne notes that Davies was seen in England as not only Welsh but also as a representative of the Rhondda working class, when in fact he was actually lower middle class. Osborne quotes various reviews published in England that seem to imagine (incorrectly) that Davies is an insider, writing of the class struggle. However, Osborne also notes that Davies's sympathy for this class is genuine and so his slightly distanced writing position is not of necessity a barrier to the production of resistance literature that considers the class and

- national struggles (Osborne, *Rhys Davies*, pp. 58–64). Moreover, an interview by Davies in *The Western Mail* implies to Osborne that: ‘Davies suggests that the “rawness” of life in Wales transcends any intent he may have had as a writer, that his craft is secondary to and determined by his subject’ (Osborne, *Rhys Davies*, p. 64). This prioritising of subject over form is, of course, highly typical of resistance writers.
- 10 Davies, quoted in Stephen Knight, ‘“Not a Place for Me”: Rhys Davies’s Fiction and the Coal Industry’, in *Rhys Davies: Decoding the Hare*, pp. 54–70 (p. 69).
  - 11 Eduardo Mendoza, quoted in David Knutson, ‘Eduardo Mendoza ¿Novelista catalán?’, in Stewart King (ed.), *La cultura catalana de expresión castellana: Estudios de literatura, teatro y cine* (Kassel: Reichenberger, 2005), pp. 73–83 (p. 74).
  - 12 Francesc Vallverdú, ‘Pròleg’, in Ute Heinemann, *Novel·la entre dues llengües: El dilema català o castellà*, trans. Laura Puigdomènech (Kassel: Reichenberger, 1996), pp. ix–xiii (p. xii).
  - 13 Knutson, ‘¿Novelista catalán?’, p. 75.
  - 14 San Juan, *After Postcolonialism*, p. 186.
  - 15 Knutson, ‘¿Novelista catalán?’, pp. 75, 78.
  - 16 Eduardo Mendoza, *La ciudad de los prodigios*, trans. Bernard Molloy, *The City of Marvels* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), p. 8. All references are to this translated version. Future references in text as *LCP*.
  - 17 Saval, *La ciudad*, p. 77. It should be noted that Saval does not discuss this passage in particular when considering Mendoza’s use of humour.
  - 18 While the circumstances surrounding the event are fantastical and exaggerated, the basic facts are true. El pla Cerdà (the Cerdà plan) was imposed upon Barcelona by Madrid against the wishes of the city council who favoured Antoni Rovira i Trias’s plan which kept the old city as the centre of the new. In contrast, Cerdà’s grid plan both absorbed and decentred the old city giving it no preference over the new. In November 1859 the Barcelona council chose Rovira’s plan but eight months later Madrid reversed the decision, insisting on the implementation of Cerdà’s plan. This interference caused much resentment in Barcelona. Robert Hughes, *Barcelona* (London: Harvill Press, 2001), pp. 325–7.
  - 19 Saval, *La ciudad*, pp. 105–6; Knutson, ‘¿Novelista catalán?’, p. 79.
  - 20 Joan Ramon Resina, ‘Money, Desire and History in Eduardo Mendoza’s City of Marvels’, *PMLA*, 109.5 (1994), 951–68 (954, 964).
  - 21 *Oxford English Dictionary Online*.
  - 22 Rhys Davies, *A Time to Laugh* (Cardiff: Library of Wales, 2014), p. 123. Originally published 1937. Future references in text as *ATL*.
  - 23 San Juan, *Writing and National Liberation*, p. 111.
  - 24 As seen in the Harri Webb chapter, the industrial struggles in south Wales were not usually considered national in character though Webb and the Welsh Republican Movement certainly saw them as such.
  - 25 Knight, *Decoding the Hare*, p. 60.
  - 26 Davies, quoted in Knight, *Decoding the Hare*, p. 61.
  - 27 Knight, *Decoding the Hare*, p. 60.

- <sup>28</sup> While pre-dating much Marxist anticolonial thought, this view contains a great deal of similarity to it. In Burkina Faso, Thomas Sankara stressed the importance of women's involvement in the revolution and transformation of the nation: 'nothing definitive or lasting can be accomplished in our country as long as a crucial part of ourselves is kept in this condition of subjugation – a condition imposed over the course of centuries by various systems of exploitation' (Thomas Sankara, *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* (Lulu.com, 2020), p. 22). He also saw parallels between the class and female struggles: 'In fact, throughout the ages and wherever the patriarchy triumphed, there has been a close parallel between class exploitation and women's oppression' (Sankara, *Women's Liberation*, p. 28).
- <sup>29</sup> Resina does note that when Primo de Rivera becomes dictator middle- and lower-class Catalan nationalists head underground in the same way as the socialists and anarchists do, suggesting at least a common enemy. However, this is merely a passing reference and no extended treatment is given to the situation of these activists in the novel. Resina, p. 965.
- <sup>30</sup> Saval, *La ciudad*, pp. 105–6.
- <sup>31</sup> Michael J. Dixon, 'The Epic Rhondda: Romanticism and Realism in the Rhondda Trilogy', in *Rhys Davies: Decoding the Hare*, pp. 40–53 (p. 44).
- <sup>32</sup> Dixon, 'The Epic Rhondda', p. 44.
- <sup>33</sup> Dixon, 'The Epic Rhondda', p. 44.
- <sup>34</sup> Dixon, 'The Epic Rhondda', p. 44. Gwerin can be variously translated as folk, people or peasantry and usually refers to the common people of Wales. The gwerin were idealised by certain Welsh writers of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries like O. M. Edwards who depicted them as a moral, upright, religious, cultured and self-educated people who were the soul of the Welsh nation. See Prys Morgan's essay 'The *Gwerin* of Wales: Myth and Reality' for a more detailed definition of the gwerin and a discussion of how the idealised image was created. Prys Morgan, 'The *Gwerin* of Wales: Myth and Reality', in I. Hume and W. T. R. Pryce (eds), *The Welsh and Their Country* (Llandysul, Dyfed: Gomer Press, 1986), pp. 134–52.
- <sup>35</sup> Osborne, *Rhys Davies*, pp. 71–2.
- <sup>36</sup> Osborne, *Rhys Davies*, p. 71.
- <sup>37</sup> Osborne, *Rhys Davies*, pp. 72, 73.
- <sup>38</sup> Osborne, *Rhys Davies*, pp. 74–5.
- <sup>39</sup> Dixon, 'The Epic Rhondda', p. 44.
- <sup>40</sup> See for example 'Our National Anthem' where Webb emphasises how 'Hen Wlad fy Nhadau' (Land of my Fathers), the Welsh National Anthem, links the role of warriors and poet/songwriters: 'The virile warriors, lovely in the love of their land, are not directly or explicitly compared with poets and singers. They stand shoulder to shoulder with them. [...] both [warriors and bards] have played their part in the battle for freedom.' Harri Webb, 'Our National Anthem', in *A Militant Muse*, pp. 55–70 (p. 60).
- <sup>41</sup> Sarah Benton, 'Founding Fathers and Earth Mothers: Women's Place at the Birth of Nations', in Nickie Charles and Helen Hintjens (eds), *Gender, Ethnicity and Political Ideologies* (New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 27–45 (p. 38). Reference is made to similar happenings in *Victus*, although the occurrences mentioned actually occur before the fall of Barcelona rather than after.

- <sup>42</sup> See Saval, *La ciudad*, pp. 54, 77, 189–90, for a discussion of Mendoza’s use of facts and figures and their veracity.
- <sup>43</sup> For more on the postmodern historical novel see de Groot, pp. 109–38 and Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (New York: Routledge, 1988).
- <sup>44</sup> San Juan, *Only By Struggle*, p. 16.
- <sup>45</sup> Daniel Williams, ‘Withered Roots: Ideas of Race in the Writings of Rhys Davies and D. H. Lawrence’, in *Rhys Davies: Decoding the Hare*, pp. 87–103; Kirsti Bohata, ‘The Black Venus: Atavistic Sexualities’, in *Rhys Davies: Decoding the Hare*, pp. 231–43.
- <sup>46</sup> Williams, ‘Withered Roots’, pp. 88–9.
- <sup>47</sup> Williams, ‘Withered Roots’, p. 88.
- <sup>48</sup> Knight, *Decoding the Hare*, p. 60.
- <sup>49</sup> Ifor Huw Wilks, quoted in ‘Gweriniaethwr’, *The Young Republicans*, p. 141.
- <sup>50</sup> Knutson, ‘¿Novelista catalán?’, p. 76.
- <sup>51</sup> Knutson, ‘¿Novelista catalán?’, p. 76, my italics.
- <sup>52</sup> Tony Brown, “‘The Memory of Lost Countries’: Rhys Davies’s Wales”, in *Rhys Davies: Decoding the Hare*, pp. 71–86 (p. 72).
- <sup>53</sup> Osborne, *Rhys Davies*, p. 78.
- <sup>54</sup> Knutson, ‘¿Novelista catalán?’, pp. 75–6.
- <sup>55</sup> Brown, “‘The Memory of Lost Countries’: Rhys Davies’s Wales”, p. 83.
- <sup>56</sup> Dixon, ‘The Epic Rhondda’, p. 41.
- <sup>57</sup> Dixon, ‘The Epic Rhondda’, p. 52.
- <sup>58</sup> Saval, *La ciudad*, pp. 13, 159, 189.

This page intentionally left blank

## EPILOGUE

### A GROWING NEED FOR RESISTANCE LITERATURE?

As we have seen, the authors in this study conform to the broad paradigm of resistance literature, found in the work of theorists like Harlow, San Juan and Parry. Moreover, there are many similarities in the works that have been examined. *Victus* contains several ideas that are similar to those found in Webb's articles, in particular the emphasis on the common people as the agent of resistance and change. Sánchez Piñol, Webb and Thomas frequently focus on defeat but with an eye to the present and future, while Mendoza and Davies insert historical passages into their narratives in order to imitate and subvert the style of a history textbook. These are similarities that cross national borders. Wales and Catalonia's situations may be different but some of the methods used by their authors to resist the power of the central state and to mobilise people for change are the same. It would be interesting, therefore, to look further at these two literatures through the lens of resistance theory, considering more authors, particularly female writers, and to extend the comparison to literature written in the language of the state in other stateless nations such as Brittany, the Basque Country and Scotland, to see if these similarities exist on a wider scale.

There are also, however, differences between the authors' work and in some cases these differences do seem to be split roughly along national boundaries. With the exception of Webb, who is the most radical author of all those discussed, the Catalan writers portray

a more inclusive and progressive resistance than their Welsh counterparts. *Victus* depicts Catalonia as a multicultural society that is proud to be so, a nation that welcomes incomers as long as they are prepared to work for the benefit of their new home. Mendoza, meanwhile, though sometimes appearing to portray the Catalans as a race, also discusses the waves of immigration from other parts of Spain that occurred during the time period of his novel and shows both the hardships these newcomers underwent, thus evoking sympathy for them, and the contribution they made to the 1888 World Fair which was extremely important to Barcelona, and to Catalonia as a whole. On the Welsh side, however, Davies depicts the Welsh in racial terms, while Thomas's portrayal of Wales is closed and limited. Their views of the Welsh nation are more restricted than Mendoza's and Sánchez Piñol's of the Catalan nation, and far more so than their compatriot Webb's vision of Wales. While too few authors have been considered in this study to draw any definite conclusions as to whether this reflects a difference between Wales and Catalonia, it is possible to suggest a couple of reasons for the greater tendency towards an open resistance in the Catalan authors.

Part of this tendency may be attributable to the slightly different times in which the various authors were writing. Davies produced the Rhondda Trilogy fifty years before *La ciudad de los prodigios* and nearly eighty before *Victus*. The majority of Thomas's work examined here had been completed before the publication of *La ciudad* in 1986 (the new poems in *Welsh Airs* (1987) being the exception). While this is not a barrier to comparing them through a resistance theory model, it inevitably means that the later writers have different experiences and influences to the earlier, in addition to those caused by the differences in their own countries and situations. It is therefore not surprising that the Catalan authors, writing in a time of global expansion and mass movements of people where multiculturalism is being increasingly stressed and lauded, should have a more positive attitude to immigration, although continuing and, indeed, growing distrust of immigrants in numerous countries today might suggest that they would take the opposite view. In addition, Mendoza's work was published only a decade after Franco's death and under the dictatorship there had been policies of forced migration to Catalonia in an attempt to dilute, indeed erase, the Catalan identity. Such things are not easily forgotten and it would be understandable therefore if Mendoza's work displayed suspicion of immigrants and depicted Catalonia as a closed

society. Yet, on the whole, it does not. Equally, Webb was writing at a similar time to Thomas and earlier than either Catalan author, and yet managed to portray Wales as an inclusive welcoming society. Therefore timeframe alone cannot explain the disparity between the other Welsh authors and their Catalan counterparts.

This disparity may also stem from differences between the two nations, in particular their security in their national language and culture. Catalan is spoken by a far higher percentage of the population of Catalonia than Welsh is in Wales. While the language was banned in public under Franco, it was kept alive by the determination of its speakers and has since experienced a resurgence. Welsh, while never officially banned, has come far closer to dying out and is still spoken only by a minority within the country. It is therefore under far greater threat from incomers than Catalan is. In addition, it is generally easier for Catalonia to integrate immigrants linguistically, as Spanish is far more closely related to Catalan than English is to Welsh. Consequently, Welsh nationalists are likely to be wari-er of non-Welsh-speaking incomers, more concerned about their language and culture being diluted, and thus more inclined to portray Wales and the Welsh language as a closed culture for defensive purposes.<sup>1</sup> It is a natural reaction. Ultimately though, as we have seen, it is harmful as it excludes those who wish to join the nation and learn its language as well as those who do not care about such things.<sup>2</sup> Nor does it take into account those who were born and raised in Wales who cannot speak Welsh. This defensive attitude can lead only to dwindling numbers and the likely eventual death of the culture.

There has been some recognition of this in Wales more recently with increasing encouragement for all to learn Welsh. Moreover, some primarily-Welsh-language writers are now using English to communicate with those citizens of Wales who do not speak Welsh. They are realising what some Welsh writers in English like Harri Webb knew all along – that excluding people is disastrous for a minority culture and that people need not to be fluent Welsh-speakers in order to support the language (Webb notes that many of those who campaigned for Welsh-language schools were not themselves Welsh-speaking).<sup>3</sup> As we have seen, the Welsh-language poet Menna Elfyn published her collection *Eucalyptus* with facing English translations and dedicated the volume to ‘the new Welsh speakers’,<sup>4</sup> a clear attempt to reach out to those within Wales, whether newcomers or long-term residents who did not speak Welsh, and encourage them to learn the language and

engage with Welsh culture. Since then she has produced several other collections with translations.

Gwyneth Lewis, meanwhile, translated her 1999 meditation on the death of the Welsh language, *Y Llofrudd Iaith* (*The Language Murderer*), as *Keeping Mum* in 2003, having been persuaded that the fate of the Welsh language might be of interest to more than just Welsh speakers.<sup>5</sup> Previously, Lewis had produced totally different works in Welsh and English, explaining that: 'Translating my own work from Welsh into English has held little appeal, simply because the audience and concerns addressed are distinct and, often, mutually antagonistic.'<sup>6</sup> This way of thinking is symptomatic of the kind of attitude that causes divisions between the language communities of Wales, as it ignores the situation of those who may not speak Welsh (or not fluently enough to read Welsh poetry) but who live in Wales and feel committed to the nation and the language. Indeed, Lewis's given reason for translating *Y Llofrudd Iaith* is that: 'I was persuaded, however, that the fate of a language might be of interest to those concerned with the wider linguistic ecology',<sup>7</sup> an audience both broader and more nebulous than the English-speaking Welsh. However, *Keeping Mum* is so focused on the Welsh language and its potential loss that it will inevitably resonate more with culturally-sensitive inhabitants of Wales than with outsiders, even those outsiders who are interested in minority languages. The poem 'Her End', which describes the death of the personified Welsh language, is full of Welsh words and phrases: proverbs, quotations from poetry and old terms no longer used, and while translations are provided at the foot of the page, it is likely that readers used to seeing and hearing Welsh even if they cannot understand it, will feel less alienated by the flood of foreign words than those who are not.<sup>8</sup> Certainly people in Wales are more likely to be immediately struck by the image of the 'death' of the language. Linguists might mourn the death of Welsh, but likely no more than they would any other language. For those living in Wales, it would be a far more personal experience; something that surrounded them and formed part of the fabric of their lives, even if they did not recognise this or use it much, would be gone. Thus, whatever Lewis's intended audience, *Keeping Mum* can be seen as an attempt to bridge the gap between the two linguistic communities of Wales, encouraging both to see the Welsh language as a shared heritage and so to care about its fate. This is not too dissimilar to Sánchez Piñol's claim that the events of 1714 are the inheritance of

all Catalans whatever their language, a belief that may have influenced his choice of language when writing *Victus*. Examining more Spanish-language literature produced in Catalonia around the time of and in response to the events of the last decade, particularly the 2017 referendum, would make for an interesting further study. It would be especially interesting to focus on writers like Sánchez Piñol who have previously produced work in Catalan and compare them with writers like Elfyn and Lewis.

Despite the fact that Wales and Catalonia today enjoy more power than they have since being incorporated into the central state, many within the nations still feel that there is a need for resistance. Catalonia has been agitating for independence for a decade and a half and much has happened in that period to sour relationships between Catalonia and the central Madrid government further. While things have quietened over the last few years, partly perhaps because of the Covid pandemic and its impacts, the Catalan parties' growing frustration with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez noted in the introduction may yet explode and there are plenty of people within Catalonia who still want independence.

In Wales meanwhile there has been growing talk of independence. The non-party group 'YesCymru' was formed in 2014 to campaign for Welsh independence.<sup>9</sup> Adam Price, the leader of Plaid Cymru from 2018 to 2023, talked about the need for an independent Wales in several of his speeches,<sup>10</sup> and, as already noted, Plaid's manifesto for the 2019 General Election included working for independence. Their manifesto for the 2024 Election, however, did not. This omission may have been because mention of independence was felt to have previously lost Plaid some votes as many of the inhabitants of Wales do not support independence, either for ideological reasons or because of concerns that the country would not be financially sustainable if separated from Westminster. As with Catalonia, the pandemic may also have had an impact as it forced politicians from all nations to concentrate on that crisis ahead of any other matters (though there was also concern in Wales about incomers from other parts of the UK bringing the virus and stretching local resources to their limits, and so, in some ways, the pandemic exacerbated Wales's feelings of separateness and the need for independence, particularly with regards to the desire to control its borders). Certainly Plaid has been quieter on independence recently. However, there are also concerns that if Scotland were to seek independence and Northern Ireland to unite

with the Republic, then Wales would be left as the sole non-English member of the UK, and would suffer due to the disparity in population size and wealth. As a result, support for Welsh independence may rise and Wales too may soon be battling for independence in earnest. If that is the case then resistance literature will form a crucial part of that struggle; a way to reach, influence and mobilise people. Authors like Webb who have not been deemed as sufficiently literary to be worthy of serious study, may suddenly come back into fashion as exemplars of resistance writers whose work can rouse people to fight for their nation in whatever way necessary. Contemporary writers may then draw on these examples to produce new resistance literature for this specific time and movement.

This process has certainly begun in Catalonia. *Victus* can claim to be a novel of the independence movement, written to support the ongoing Catalan struggle. The Catalan-language novel *Lliures o morts* (Free or Dead), published within a few weeks of *Victus* and also set during the War of Spanish Succession, is another example.<sup>11</sup> In her comparison of the two novels Cramer has identified many similarities in their depiction of Catalan resistance.<sup>12</sup> In the Catalan case as well, studying existing literature through the lens of resistance theory would be beneficial to the cause as it would provide examples for contemporary authors and might allow for the reclamation of authors previously dismissed as 'un-Catalan' in their writing,<sup>13</sup> as it might in Wales in the case of authors like Rhys Davies.

Acknowledging that it is possible to have English-language Welsh and Spanish-language Catalan resistance literature would also be crucial to any independence movement, especially in Wales where the percentage of Welsh speakers is comparatively low. The message would need to reach and appeal to everyone. Such small nations cannot afford serious divisions – if independence is to be achieved, the vast majority of people will need to support it. Resistance literature in both the nation's major languages will be a crucial influence on whether that happens. As we have seen, the most radical writers, Webb and Sánchez Piñol, work hard to make everyone feel part of their vision of Wales/Catalonia. Equally, while the other writers are less explicit in this regard, the very fact that they are writing resistance literature in Spanish/English implies that these languages and their speakers are an integral part of their nations.

Resistance theory's emphasis on all struggles being linked may also provide a political model for Wales and Catalonia today.

Supporting each other in their bids for independence and reaching out to other nations in similar situations could be extremely beneficial. This has happened already to some extent; there was much support for Catalonia in both Wales and Scotland, with Scottish MPs turning out in support of Catalonia ahead of the 2017 referendum,<sup>14</sup> and demonstrations on the Catalans' behalf in Wales.<sup>15</sup> The chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Catalonia, a group that pushed for enquiries into the actions of the Spanish state surrounding the 2017 referendum, was the now-retired Plaid Cymru MP Hywel Williams.<sup>16</sup> There have also been hints of a more formal political alliance. In 2015, Catalan MEP Ramon Tremosa called for Scotland and Catalonia to coordinate their independence referenda,<sup>17</sup> while in the Scottish paper *The National*, George Kerevan argued that in the wake of EU silence on the jailing of Catalan leaders, Catalonia must ally with the Basque Country, and Scotland with Northern Ireland and Wales to break apart the Spanish and British states that seek to dominate them.<sup>18</sup> More recently, SNP members welcomed members of Catalonia's Junts independence party to Westminster, in order 'to compare notes on fighting "intransigence from governments in London and Madrid"'.<sup>19</sup>

However, so far, little more than these tentative suggestions has occurred in the way of a formal political alliance between stateless nations striving for their independence. In the meantime, though, some of their opponents have recognised the benefit of a united approach. In the run up to Scotland's 2014 referendum, Spain's prime minister Mariano Rajoy argued that Scottish independence would break up Europe. Spain were clearly anxious that Scotland would provide an example for Catalonia to follow and there were even suggestions that Spain would veto an independent Scotland's entry into the EU.<sup>20</sup> This was a clear sign of solidarity between two states, Spain and Great Britain, and a recognition of the fact that they were fighting the same battle against secession. Eventually Spain stated that while not supporting Scottish independence they would not veto its entry into the EU,<sup>21</sup> but the threat clearly showed the alliance of the larger powers. If large nation-states unite in such a way to preserve the status quo, it would seem logical for those who wish for change to form their own alliances. Consequently, applying resistance theory to their current-day political situation as well as to their literature in all languages could be of great benefit to both Catalonia and Wales.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> As discussed in the introduction, there are numerous examples of suspicion of, concern about, and even hostility to, English incomers to Wales in the last fifty years, particularly regarding buyers of second homes. Several groups were founded to counter this. The already-mentioned Meibion Glyndŵr were the most extreme and best-known but there were other groups like Adfer (founded in the 1970s) and Cymuned (founded in 2001) that used peaceful and constitutional means to pursue their ends.
- <sup>2</sup> In fairness to Cymuned it should be said that in John Davies's view it opposed 'not in-migration in itself, but that form of in-migration which could be seen as colonization' (Davies, *The History of Wales*, p. 689). It was therefore unlikely to oppose the immigration of people who were prepared to involve themselves with Welsh culture and their local community.
- <sup>3</sup> Harri Webb, 'To the Young People of Wales', in *No Half-Way House*, pp. 270–2 (p. 271).
- <sup>4</sup> Menna Elfyn, *Eucalyptus* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1995).
- <sup>5</sup> Gwyneth Lewis, *Y Llofrudd Iaith* (Llandybie: Gwasg Dinefwr, 1999); Gwyneth Lewis, *Keeping Mum* (Tarsset: Bloodaxe, 2003). Technically, only the first section of *Keeping Mum*, entitled 'The Language Murderer', is a translation of *Y Llofrudd Iaith*, though it contains far fewer poems than the original and some in the English work did not exist in the Welsh-language collection. The second section, 'Keeping Mum', is set in a mental hospital with the detective from the original Welsh-language work transformed into a psychiatrist who is 'investigating how abuses of language had led to his patients' illnesses' (Gwyneth Lewis, p. 10), while the third section, 'Chaotic Angels', is unrelated to the original Welsh work.
- <sup>6</sup> Lewis, *Keeping Mum*, p. 9.
- <sup>7</sup> Lewis, *Keeping Mum*, pp. 9–10.
- <sup>8</sup> Lewis, *Keeping Mum*, p. 21.
- <sup>9</sup> YesCymru, <https://www.yes.cymru/>.
- <sup>10</sup> See Adam Price, *Wales: The First and Final Colony: Speeches and Writing 2001–2018* (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 2018).
- <sup>11</sup> Jaume Clotet Planas and David de Montserrat Nono, *Lliures o morts* (Barcelona: Columna Edicions, 2012).
- <sup>12</sup> Crameri, *Goodbye, Spain?* pp. 82–93.
- <sup>13</sup> An interesting example of this type of author is Juan Marsé. Marsé was one of the signatories of the notorious Foro Babel (see introduction) and has often been criticised by the Catalan literary establishment for satirising the Catalan bourgeoisie, and, worse, for doing so in Spanish. Yet both Crameri and King have argued that Marsé's work is distinctly Catalan in character and that he cannot be dismissed so lightly from a consideration of Catalan culture. King, *Escribir la catalanidad*, pp. 56–7; Crameri, *Language, the Novelist and National Identity*, p. 181. Moreover, there are times when Marsé appears to express a kind of Catalan resistance to oppression, particularly through his use of the Catalan language in his Spanish-language work.

- <sup>14</sup> <https://www.commonspace.scot/articles/11790/scottish-parliamentarians-turn-out-support-catalan-referendum>; J. H. Elliott, *Scots and Catalans: Union and Disunion* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018), p. 252.
- <sup>15</sup> Vickie Oliphant, 'Could Wales be Next? Protestors Back Catalonia Independence Amid Calls for SPLIT from UK', *The Express*, 7 October 2017. Online. Available at: <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/863564/Catalonia-referendum-independence-Catalan-Wales-Yes-Cymru-Llangefni-protest-Britain> (accessed 17 February 2026).
- <sup>16</sup> <https://www.appgcatalonia.org.uk/>. The Chair and Secretary of the group attended the trial of the Catalan politicians and activists in 2019 and members of the group also visited some of the Catalan defendants in prison.
- <sup>17</sup> <https://www.commonspace.scot/articles/3164/catalan-mep-ramontremosa-scotland-we-must-coordinate-our-independence-referendums>
- <sup>18</sup> George Kerevan, 'The EU's Silence is Deafening as Spain Reacts to Catalan Protests', *The National*, 21 October 2019. Online. Available at: <https://www.thenational.scot/news/17981713.eus-silence-deafening-spain-reacts-catalan-protests> (accessed 17 February 2026).
- <sup>19</sup> Hamish Morrison, 'SNP and Catalan independence MPs meet to share knowledge', *The National*, 18 January 2025. Online. Available at: <https://www.thenational.scot/news/24866654.snp-catalan-independence-mps-meet-spanish-government-threatened> (accessed 17 February 2026).
- <sup>20</sup> Jennifer Rankin, 'Spain Says It Will Not Impose Veto if Scotland Tries to Join EU', *The Guardian*, 2 April 2017. Online. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/apr/02/spain-drops-plan-to-impose-veto-if-scotland-tries-to-join-eu> (accessed 17 February 2026).
- <sup>21</sup> Rankin, 'Spain Says It Will Not Impose Veto if Scotland Tries to Join EU'.

This page intentionally left blank

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aaron, Jane, 'Bardic Anti-colonialism', in Jane Aaron and Chris Williams (eds), *Postcolonial Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005), pp. 137–58.
- Aberpennar, Davies, 'Anti-Nationalism Among the Anglo-Welsh', *The Welsh Nationalist* (February 1948), p. 3.
- Achebe, Chinua, *Morning Yet on Creation Day: Essays* (London: Heinemann, 1975).
- AFP International Text Wire in English, 'Spain's Catalonia reimposes Covid measures as cases spike', 6 July 2021.
- 'Catalonia extends Covid passes to bars, restaurants as Spain cases rise', 26 November 2021.
- All-Party Parliamentary Group Catalonia. <https://www.appgcatalonia.org.uk>.
- American Friends Service Committee, *Speak Truth to Power: A Quaker Search for an Alternative to Violence* (Pennsylvania: American Friends Service Committee, 1961).
- Ara, "'Catalunya no va unir-se voluntàriament a Espanya, va ser brutalment conquerida'", 27 February 2014. Online. Available at: [https://www.ara.cat/politicaldret-decidir-cayetana-PP-cowling-escocia-catalunya\\_0\\_1092490981.html](https://www.ara.cat/politicaldret-decidir-cayetana-PP-cowling-escocia-catalunya_0_1092490981.html) (accessed 17 February 2026).
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2002).
- Basini, Mario, *Real Merthyr* (Bridgend: Seren, 2008).
- BBC News, 'Castlemartin Range: How the Army use the training site', 15 June 2017. Online. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-west-wales-40286831> (accessed 18 February 2026).

- 'Clashes follow Catalan independence referendum', 1 October 2017. Online. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-europe-41460085> (accessed 15 February 2026).
- Benton, Sarah, 'Founding Fathers and Earth Mothers: Women's Place at the Birth of Nations', in Nickie Charles and Helen Hintjens (eds), *Gender, Ethnicity and Political Ideologies* (New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 27–45.
- Bhabha, Homi, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004).
- Birt, Paul, *Cerddi Alludiaeth: Thema yn Llenyddiaethau Québec, Cataluny a Chymru* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1997).
- Boada Montagut, Irene, 'Nationalism and Language in Catalan and Irish Contemporary Short Stories: Feminist and Postcolonial Perspectives', *Catalan Review: International Journal of Catalan Culture*, 12.1 (1998), 9–21.
- 'Nacionalisme i llengua en el conte contemporani català i irlandès. Algunes perspectives feministes i postcoloniales', *Journal of Catalan Studies / Revista Internacional de Catalanística*, 2 (1999).
- *Women Write Back: Irish and Catalan Short Stories in Colonial Context* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2003).
- Bohata, Kirsti, 'The Black Venus: Atavistic Sexualities', in Meic Stephens (ed.), *Rhys Davies: Decoding the Hare* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001), pp. 231–43.
- *Postcolonialism Revisited* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004).
- Boxer, Diana, and Florencia Cortés-Conde, 'From bonding to biting: Conversational joking and identity display', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 27/3 (1997), 275–94.
- Brantly, Susan C., *The Historical Novel, Transnationalism, and the Postmodern Era* (New York: Routledge, 2017).
- Brooks, Simon, *Why Wales Never Was* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2018).
- Brown, Tony, "'On the Screen of Eternity": Some Aspects of R. S. Thomas's Prose', *The Powys Review*, 21 (1987–8), 5–15.
- "'The Memory of Lost Countries": Rhys Davies's Wales', in Meic Stephens (ed.), *Rhys Davies: Decoding the Hare* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001), pp. 71–86.
- *R. S. Thomas* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006).
- Chapman, T. Robin, *Islwyn Ffowc Elis* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000).
- Clotet Planas, Jaume, and David de Montserrat Nono, *Lliures o morts* (Barcelona: Columna Edicions, 2012).

- CommonSpace, ‘Catalan MEP Ramon Tremosa to Scotland: “We must coordinate our independence referendums”’, <https://www.commonspace.scot/articles/3164/catalan-mep-ramontremosa-scotland-we-must-coordinate-our-independence-referendums>.
- ‘Scottish Parliamentarians turn out to support Catalan referendum’, <https://www.commonspace.scot/articles/11790/scottish-parliamentarians-turn-out-support-catalan-referendum>.
- Conran, Tony, *The Cost of Strangeness: Essays on the English Poets of Wales* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1982).
- *Frontiers in Anglo-Welsh Poetry* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997).
- Coogan, Tim Pat, *1916: The Easter Rising* (London: Phoenix, 2005).
- Cowling, Geoff, ‘Preface’, in Kathryn Crameri, *‘Goodbye, Spain?: The Question of Independence for Catalonia* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2014), pp. xi–xiv.
- Crameri, Kathryn, *Language, the Novelist and National Identity in Post-Franco Catalonia* (Oxford: European Humanities Research Centre, University of Oxford, 2000).
- *‘Goodbye, Spain?: The Question of Independence for Catalonia* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2014).
- Crick, Bernard, ‘The English and the British’, in Bernard Crick (ed.), *National Identities: The Constitution of the United Kingdom* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), pp. 90–104.
- Crotty, Patrick, ‘Extraordinary Man of the Bald Welsh Hills: The Iago Prytherch Poems’, in Damian Walford Davies (ed.), *Echoes to the Amen: Essays After R. S. Thomas* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), pp. 13–43.
- Davies, Grahame, *Sefyll yn y Bwlch* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1999).
- Davies, Janet, *The Welsh Language* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999).
- Davies, John, *A History of Wales* (London: Penguin Books, 2007).
- Davies, Rhys, *Honey and Bread* (London: Putnam, 1935).
- *Jubilee Blues* (London: William Heinemann, 1938).
- *A Time to Laugh*, (Cardiff: Library of Wales, 2014).
- Day, Graham, and Andrew Thompson, *Theorizing Nationalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).
- De Groot, Jerome, *The Historical Novel* (London: Routledge, 2010).
- Dixon, Michael J., ‘The Epic Rhondda: Romanticism and Realism in the Rhondda Trilogy’, in Meic Stephens (ed.), *Rhys Davies: Decoding the Hare* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001), pp. 40–53.

- Elfyn, Menna, *Eucalyptus* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1995).
- Elis-Thomas, Dafydd, 'The Image of Wales in R. S. Thomas's Poetry', *Poetry Wales* 7.2 (Spring 1972), 59–66.
- Elliott, J. H., *Scots and Catalans: Union and Disunion* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018).
- Fanon, Frantz, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963).
- Ffowc Elis, Islwyn, *Wythnos yng Nghymru Fydd* (Caerdydd: Plaid Cymru, 1957).
- Foucault, Michel, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (London: Penguin, 1984).
- *The Government of Self and Others*, ed. Frédéric Gros, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
- Friend, Julius, *Stateless Nations: Western European Regional Nationalism and the Old Nations* (Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
- Gabikagojeaskoa, Lourdes, *Eran soñadores de paraísos: Nostalgia y resistencia cultural en la obra de Juan Marsé* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2013).
- Gaillard, Valèria, 'Estic molt fart del conflicte amb Espanya', *El Punt Avui*, 10 October 2021. Online. Available at: <http://www.elpuntavui.cat/article/5-cultural/19-cultural/583101-estic-molt-fart-del-conflicte-amb-espanya.html> (accessed 16 February 2026).
- Garlick, Raymond, *An Introduction to Anglo-Welsh Literature* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1970).
- Gramich, Katie, 'The Masquerade of Gender in the Stories of Rhys Davies', in Meic Stephens (ed.), *Rhys Davies: Decoding the Hare* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001), pp. 205–15.
- Gregson, Ian, *The New Poetry in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007).
- Gutting, Gary, *Foucault: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).
- 'Gweriniaethwr', *The Young Republicans: A record of the Welsh Republican Movement – Mudiad Gwerinaethol Cymru* (Llanrwst: Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, 1996).
- Hallam, Tudur, "'Curse, bless, me now": Dylan Thomas and Saunders Lewis', *Journal of the British Academy*, 3 (December 2017), 211–53.
- Hargreaves-Mawdsley, W. N., *Spain under the Bourbons: 1700–1833 a collection of documents* (London: Macmillan, 1973).
- Harlow, Barbara, *Resistance Literature* (London and New York: Methuen, 1987).

- Hedgecoe, G., 'Catalan nationalists threaten government over failed promise claims', *The Irish Times*, 15 January 2025. Online. Available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/world/2025/01/15/catalan-nationalists-threaten-government-over-failed-promise-claims/> (accessed 18 February 2026).
- Heeringa, Inge, *Política, Prensa, Piñol: Un Análisis Discursivo del Catalanismo en el Lanzamiento y la Recepción de Victus* (Unpublished Bachelor thesis, Radboud University, 2015–16).
- Heinemann, Ute, *Novel·la entre dues llengües: El dilemma català o castellà*, trans. Laura Puigdomènech (Kassel: Edition Reichenberger, 1996).
- Hensman, Rohini, 'The Role of Women in the Resistance to Political Authoritarianism in Latin America', in Haleh Afshar (ed.), *Women and Politics in the Third World* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 48–72.
- Hernández Cardona, F. Xavier, *The History of Catalonia*, trans. Peter Michael Law (Barcelona: Rafael Dalmau, 2007).
- Hill, Charles G., *Jean-Paul Sartre: Freedom and Commitment* (New York: P. Lang, 1992).
- Hogan, Patrick Colm, *Understanding Nationalism* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2009).
- Hughes, Robert, *Barcelona* (London: Harvill Press, 2001).
- Humfrey, Belinda, 'Harri Webb in the Wrong Language', *The Anglo-Welsh Review*, 21 (1972), 9–17.
- Humphries, John, *Freedom Fighters: Wales's Forgotten 'War', 1963–1993* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008).
- Hutcheon, Linda, *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (New York: Routledge, 1988).
- Jenkins, Nigel, 'The Poetry of Harri Webb', *Planet*, 83 (October/November 1990), 24–8.
- Jones, Elidir, 'Nationalism and Welsh Writing in Comparative Contexts, 1925–1966' (unpublished PhD. thesis, Cardiff University, 2011).
- Jones, Dafydd Glyn, 'His Politics', in Alun R. Jones and Gwyn Thomas (eds), *Presenting Saunders Lewis* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1983), pp. 23–78.
- Jones, Harri Pritchard, 'Review of Glyn Jones' *The Dragon has Two Tongues*', *Poetry Wales*, 3 (Spring 1969), 45–50.
- Jones, Glyn, *The Dragon Has Two Tongues* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001).
- Jones, J. R., *Prydeindod* (Llandybie: Christopher Davies, 1966).
- 'A Raid i'r Iaith ein Gwahanu?' (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 1978).
- Jones, Nicholas, 'Supercharging the Struggle: Models of Nationalist Victory in the Poetry of Harri Webb', *Welsh Writing in English: A Yearbook of Critical Essays*, 9 (2004), 102–22.

- Kerevan, George, 'The EU's Silence is Deafening as Spain Reacts to Catalan Protests', *The National*, 21 October 2019. Online. Available at: <https://www.thenational.scot/news/17981713.eus-silence-deafening-spain-reacts-catalan-protests> (accessed 17 February 2026).
- King, Stewart, 'Orquestando la identidad: Estrategias poscoloniales en *L'opera quotidiana* de Montserrat Roig', in Robert Archer and Emma Martinell Gifre (eds), *Proceedings of the First Symposium on Catalonia in Australia / Actes del primer simposi sobre Catalunya a Austràlia (La Trobe University, Melbourne, 27–29 September 1996)* (Barcelona: PPU, 1998), pp. 59–76.
- 'Transformando el estado español: Los discursos regionalistas y poscoloniales en la literatura catalana de expresión castellana', in Ana Bringas López and Belén Martín Lucás (eds), *Identidades multiculturais: Revisión dos discursos teóricos* (Vigo: Universidade de Vigo, 2000), pp. 113–20.
- *Escribir la catalanidad: Lengua e identidades culturales en la narrativa contemporánea de Cataluña* (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2005).
- Kipling, Rudyard, *Rudyard Kipling: Selected Poems*, ed. Peter Keating (London: Penguin, 2000).
- Knight, Stephen, "'Not a Place for Me": Rhys Davies's Fiction and the Coal Industry', in Meic Stephens (ed.), *Rhys Davies: Decoding the Hare* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001), pp. 54–70.
- *A Hundred Years of Fiction: Writing Wales in English* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004).
- Knutson, David, 'Eduardo Mendoza ¿Novelista catalán?', in Stewart King (ed.), *La cultura catalana de expresión castellana: Estudios de literatura, teatro y cine* (Kassel: Reichenberger, 2005), pp. 72–83.
- König, Julia, Paulina Meichelbeck and Miriam Puchta, 'The Curious Case of Carles Puigdemont – The European Arrest Warrant as an Inadequate Means with Regard to Political Offences', *German Law Journal*, 22/2 (March 2021), 256–75.
- Lewis, Gwyneth, *Y Llofrudd Iaith* (Llandybie: Gwasg Dinefwr, 1999).
- *Keeping Mum* (Tarsset: Bloodaxe, 2003).
- Lewis, Saunders, *Ten Points of Policy, Deg Pwynt Polisi, Canlyn Arthur* (Aberystwyth: Gwasg Aberystwyth, 1938).
- 'Y Dilyw 1939' translated as 'The Deluge 1939' by Gwyn Thomas, in Alun R. Jones and Gwyn Thomas (eds), *Presenting Saunders Lewis* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1983), p. 177.
- 'Is there an Anglo-Welsh Literature?' (Cardiff: Cardiff Branch of the Guild of Graduates of the University of Wales, 1939).

- 'The Caernarfon Court Speech', in Alun R. Jones and Gwyn Thomas (eds), *Presenting Saunders Lewis* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1983), pp. 115–26.
- 'Fate of the Language', trans. G. Aled Williams. Online. Available at: <https://morris.cymrultestunlsaunders-lewis-fate-of-the-language.html> (accessed 19 March 2026).
- Martí, David, and Daniel Cetrà, 'The 2015 Catalan election: a de facto referendum on independence?', *Regional and Federal Studies* 26/1 (2017), 107–19.
- McNerney, Kathleen, and Cristina Enríquez de Salamanca, *Double Minorities of Spain: A Bio-Bibliographic Guide to Women Writers of the Catalan, Galician and Basque Countries* (New York: MLA, 1994).
- McRoberts, Kenneth, *Catalonia: Nation-building without a State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).
- Mendoza, Eduardo, *La ciudad de los prodigios/The City of Marvels*, trans. Bernard Molloy (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988).
- Merchant, W. Moelwyn, *R. S. Thomas* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1979).
- Mock, Steven, J., *Symbols of Defeat in the Construction of National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
- Morgan, Prys, 'The *Gwerin* of Wales: Myth and Reality', in I. Hume and W. T. R. Pryce (eds), *The Welsh and Their Country* (Llandysul, Dyfed: Gomer Press, 1986), pp. 134–52.
- Morris, Brian, *Harri Webb* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1993).
- O'Neill, Chris, 'Harri Webb and Nationalist Poetry', *The Anglo-Welsh Review*, 65 (1979), 90–9.
- Oliphant, Vickie, 'Could Wales be Next? Protestors Back Catalonia Independence Amid Calls for SPLIT from UK', 7 October 2021. Online. Available at: <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/863564/Catalonia-referendum-independence-Catalan-Wales-Yes-Cymru-Llangefni-protest-Britain> (accessed 17 February 2026).
- Osborne, Huw, *Rhys Davies* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009).
- Oxford English Dictionary Online. <https://www.oed.com>.
- Palau Vergés, Montserrat, 'Autoras catalanas: Doble marginación y doble rebelión (género y nacionalismo en Cataluña)', in Ana Bringas López and Belén Martín Lucás (eds), *Identidades multiculturais: Revisión dos discursos teóricos* (Vigo: Universidade de Vigo, 2000), pp. 169–76.
- Parry, Benita, 'The Institutionalization of Postcolonial Studies', in Neil Lazarus (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Studies* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2002), pp. 66–80.

- ‘Edward Said and Third-World Marxism’, *College Literature*, 40.4 (2013), 105–26.
- Payne, John, *Catalonia: History and Culture* (Nottingham: Five Leaves, 2004).
- Phillips, Dylan, ‘A New Beginning or the Beginning of the End? The Welsh Language in Postcolonial Wales’, in Jane Aaron and Chris Williams (eds), *Postcolonial Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005), pp. 100–13.
- Plaid Cymru, ‘General Election Manifesto 2019’. Online. Available at: <https://manifesto-cymru.cavendishconsulting.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Plaid-Cymru-Manifesto-2019.pdf> (accessed 3 February 2026).
- ‘General Election Manifesto 2024’. Online. Available at: [https://assets.nationbuilder.com/plaid2016/pages/10962/attachments/original/1718214059/Plaid\\_Cymru\\_Manifesto\\_2024\\_ENGLISH.pdf?1718214059](https://assets.nationbuilder.com/plaid2016/pages/10962/attachments/original/1718214059/Plaid_Cymru_Manifesto_2024_ENGLISH.pdf?1718214059) (accessed 17 February 2026).
- Plataforma per la Llengua, ‘The Catalan Language’. Online. Available at: [https://www.plataforma-llengua.cat/media/upload/pdf/the-catalan-language-en-v7-final\\_29\\_43\\_2445.pdf](https://www.plataforma-llengua.cat/media/upload/pdf/the-catalan-language-en-v7-final_29_43_2445.pdf) (accessed 17 February 2026).
- Price, Adam, *Wales: The First and Final Colony: Speeches and Writing 2001–2018* (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 2018).
- Rankin, Jennifer, ‘Spain Says It Will Not Impose Veto if Scotland Tries to Join EU’, *The Guardian*, 2 April 2017. Online. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/apr/02/spain-drops-plan-to-impose-veto-if-scotland-tries-to-join-eu> (accessed 17 September 2026).
- Resina, Joan Ramon, ‘Money, Desire and History in Eduardo Mendoza’s City of Marvels’, *PMLA*, 109.5 (1994), 951–68.
- Roberts Jones, Sally, ‘A Matter of Choices: the Poetry of Harri Webb’, *Poetry Wales*, 26/2 (1990), 27–30.
- Said, Edward, *Orientalism* (Harmonsworth: Penguin, 1995).
- *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1993).
- Sampedro, Victor, F Javier López-Ferrández and Patricia Hidalgo, ‘Digital disintermediation, technical and national sovereignty: The Internet shutdown of Catalonia’s “independence referendum”’, *European Journal of Communication*, 37/2 (2022), 127–44.
- Sams, Hannah, *Ffarwel i’r Abswrdd?: Agweddau ar y Theatr Gymraeg Gyfoes* (Unpublished PhD thesis, Swansea University, 2016).
- ‘Dramodwyr Rhwng Dau Fyd: Aled Jones Williams a Sergi Belbel’, *Llên Cymru*, 42/1 (October 2019), 186–233.
- San Juan Jr, E., *Only By Struggle* (Quezon City: Kalikasan Press, 1988).

- *Writing and National Liberation* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1991).
- *From the Masses, to the Masses* (Minneapolis: MEP publications, 1994).
- *Allegories of Resistance: The Philippines at the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994).
- *Hegemony and Strategies of Transgression* (Albany: State University Press, 1995).
- *Beyond Postcolonial Theory* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1998).
- *After Postcolonialism* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000).
- Sánchez Piñol, Albert, *Victus*, trans. Thomas Bunstead and Daniel Hahn (New York: HarperCollins, 2014).
- 'Prólogo', in Núria Clotet and Jordi Fexas, *Sumáte: Cuando todos contamos* (Barcelona: La Campana, 2014), pp. 7–13.
- Sankara, Thomas, *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* (Lulu.com, 2020)
- Saval, José, *La ciudad de los prodigios, de Eduardo Mendoza* (Madrid: Editorial Síntesis, 2003).
- Savill, H. J. 'The Iago Prytherch Poems of R. S. Thomas', in Sandra Anstey (ed.), *Critical Writings on R. S. Thomas* (Bridgend: Seren, 1992), pp. 30–45.
- Senedd Cymru, 'History of devolution'. Online. Available at: <https://senedd.wales/how-we-work/history-of-devolution/> (accessed 3 February 2026).
- Serra, Montserrat, 'Amb "Victus" l'Albert Sánchez Piñol ens ha incomodat', *Vilaweb*, 25 September 2012. Online. Available at: <https://www.vilaweb.cat/noticia/4042483/20120925/victus-lalbert-sanchez-pinol-ens-incomodat.html> (accessed 16 February 2026).
- Simpson, Mercer, 'Harri Webb, Poetic Canvasser or Rebel Joker?' *Welsh Review*, 23/2–3 (1988), 37–40.
- Soares, I., V. Cotovio and H. Clarke, 'Catalonia referendum result plunges Spain into political crisis', *CNN*, 2 October 2017. Online. Available at: <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/10/01/europe/catalonia-spain-independence-referendum-result/index.html> (accessed 15 February 2026).
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988).
- Sarah Harasym (ed.), *The Post-colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues* (New York: Routledge, 1990).
- Stephens, Meic, 'The Garth Newydd Years', *Planet*, 83 (October/November 1990), 18–23.
- 'Notes on the Poems', in *Harri Webb: Collected Poems*, ed. Meic Stephens (Llandysul: Gomer, 1995), pp. 381–467.

- ‘Introduction’, in *No Half-Way House: Selected Political Journalism*, ed. Meic Stephens (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 1997), pp. 11–24.
- ‘Introduction’, in *A Militant Muse: Harri Webb Selected Literary Journalism 1948–80*, ed. Meic Stephens (Bridgend: Seren, 1998), pp. 7–11.
- ‘Introduction’, in Meic Stephens (ed.), *Rhys Davies: Decoding the Hare* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001), pp. 1–28.
- Stevenson, Anne, ‘The Uses of Prytherch’, in M. Wynn Thomas (ed.), *The Page’s Drift: R. S. Thomas at eighty* (Bridgend: Seren, 1993), pp. 36–55.
- Suwarno, Peter, ‘Depiction of Common Enemies in Religious Speech: The Role of the Rhetoric of Identification and Purification in Indonesian Religious Conflicts’, *Walisono: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan*, 21/1 (2014), 1–18.
- Thomas, Alys, ‘“Mâitres chez nous”? Awaiting the Quiet Revolution in Wales’, in Jane Aaron and Chris Williams (eds), *Postcolonial Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005), pp. 85–99.
- Thomas, Brinley, ‘Wales and the Atlantic Economy’, *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, VI (November 1959), 169–92.
- ‘A Cauldron of Rebirth: Population and the Welsh Language in the Nineteenth Century’, *Welsh History Review/Cylchgrawn Hanes Cymru*, 13 (Jan 1, 1986), 418–37.
- Thomas, M. Wynn, *Internal Difference: Twentieth-Century Writing in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992).
- *Diffinio Dwy Lenyddiaeth Cymru* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1995).
- *Corresponding Cultures: The Two Literatures of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999).
- ‘Dylanwadau: Dylan Thomas a Llenorion Cymraeg’, *Taliesin*, 112 (Haf 2001), 13–29.
- *Serial Obsessive* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 2013).
- *All That Is Wales: The Collected Essays of M. Wynn Thomas* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2017).
- Thomas, Ned, ‘Introduction’, in Sandra Anstey (ed.), *R. S. Thomas: Selected Prose* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press, 1983), pp. 7–16.
- ‘R. S. Thomas and Wales’, in M. Wynn Thomas (ed.), *The Page’s Drift: R. S. Thomas at eighty* (Bridgend: Seren, 1993), pp. 211–20.
- *Bydoedd: Cofiant Cyfnod* (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 2010).
- Thomas, R. S., *An Acre of Land* (Newtown: Montgomeryshire Print. Co., 1952).
- *Song at the Year’s Turning* (London: R. Hart Davies, 1955).
- ‘The Welsh Parlour’, *The Listener*, 16 January 1958, p. 119.

- *What is a Welshman?* (Swansea: Christopher Davies, 1974).
- ‘O’n Cwmpas’, *Y Faner*, 4 March 1977, p. 9.
- ‘Patriotism and Poetry’ (unpublished lecture, Lampeter, late 1970s).
- *Welsh Airs* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press, 1987).
- *R. S. Thomas: Selected Prose*, Sandra Anstey (ed.), (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press, 1995).
- ‘Nefoedd’, in *ABC Neb*, ed. Jason Walford Davies (Caernarfon: Gwasg Gwynedd, 1995), pp. 59–63.
- *Autobiographies*, ed. and trans. Jason Walford Davies (London: Phoenix, 1998).
- *Collected Poems 1945–1990* (London: J. M. Dent, 2003).
- *R. S. Thomas: Letters to Raymond Garlick*, ed. Jason Walford Davies (Llandysul: Gomer, 2009).
- *Uncollected Poems*, ed. Tony Brown and Jason Walford Davies (Tarset: Bloodaxe, 2013).
- Thomas, Wyn, *Hands off Wales: Nationhood and Militancy* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 2013).
- Vallverdú, Francesc, ‘Pròleg’, in Ute Heinemann, *Novel·la entre dues llengües: El dilema català o castellà*, trans. Laura Puigdomènech (Kassel: Reichenberger, 1996).
- Wa Thiong’o, Ngũgĩ, *Writers in Politics: Essays* (London: Heinemann, 1981).
- *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (London: J. Currey, 1986).
- *Moving the Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedoms* (London: J. Currey, 1993).
- Walford Davies, Jason, ‘Introduction’ in *R. S. Thomas: Autobiographies* (London: Phoenix, 1998), pp. ix–xxxv.
- ‘Notes and References’ in *R. S. Thomas: Autobiographies* (London: Phoenix, 1998), pp. 175–92.
- *Gororau’r Iaith: R. S. Thomas a’r Traddodiad Llenyddol Cymraeg* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 2003).
- Walters, Mary-Alice, ‘Preface’, in Thomas Sankara, *Women’s Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* (Lulu.com, 2020), pp. 11–4.
- Webb, Andrew, ‘R. S. Thomas, Emyr Humphreys and the Possibility of a Bilingual Culture’, in Geraint Evans and Helen Fulton (eds), *The Cambridge History of Welsh Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 529–56.
- Webb, Harri, ‘Letter to Mrs. Jones’, *The Welsh Republican*, April–May 1951, p. 4.

- ‘Glorious Figures from our Past – George Shell’, *The Welsh Republican*, February–March 1956, p. 4.
- *Dic Penderyn and the Merthyr Rising of 1831* (Swansea: Gwasg Penderyn, 1956).
- ‘Letter to the Editor’, *Poetry Wales*, 7/2 (Spring 1972), 121–3.
- *Collected Poems*, ed. Meic Stephens (Llandysul: Gomer, 1995).
- *No Half-Way House: Selected Political Journalism*, ed. Meic Stephens (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 1997).
- *A Militant Muse: Selected Literary Journalism 1948–80*, ed. Meic Stephens (Bridgend: Seren, 1998).
- Wells, Caragh, ‘The City of Words: Eduardo Mendoza’s “La ciudad de los prodigios”’, *The Modern Language Review*, 96/3 (2001), 715–22.
- Wigginton, Chris, *Modernism from the Margins: The 1930s Poetry of Louis MacNeice and Dylan Thomas* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007).
- Wiley, Anthony Terrace, *Angelic Troublemakers: Religion and Anarchism in America* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014).
- Wilks, Ivor Huw, ‘Harri’s Web’, *Planet*, 83 (October/November 1990), 13–17.
- Williams, Chris, ‘Problematizing Wales: An Exploration in Historiography and Postcoloniality’, in Jane Aaron and Chris Williams (eds), *Postcolonial Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005), pp. 3–22.
- Williams, Daniel G., ‘Withered Roots: Ideas of Race in the Writings of Rhys Davies and D. H. Lawrence’, in Meic Stephens (ed.), *Rhys Davies: Decoding the Hare* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001), pp. 87–103.
- *Black Skin, Blue Books: African Americans and Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012).
- *Wales Unchained: Literature, Politics and Identity in the American Century* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2015).
- Williams, Gwyn A., *When was Wales?* (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1986).
- Williams, Raymond, ‘The Welsh Industrial Novel’, in Daniel Williams (ed.), *Who Speaks for Wales?: Nation, Culture, Identity* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), pp. 95–111.
- Wintle, Justin, *Furious Interiors* (London: HarperCollins, 1996).
- Welsh Government, ‘Welsh language data from the Annual Population Survey: July 2023 to June 2024’, 9 October 2024. Online. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/welsh-language-data-annual-population-survey-july-2023-june-2024-html> (accessed 17 February 2026).
- ‘Welsh Language in Wales’, 6 December 2022. Online. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/welsh-language-wales-census-2021-html> (accessed 17 February 2026).

YesCymru. <https://www.yes.cymru/>

Yuval-Davis, Nira, *Gender and Nation* (London: SAGE, 1997).

Zaza, Wendy-Llyn, 'Memorias de la infantesa: decadència, desplaçament i desesperança a Luna lunera de Rosa Regàs', in Stewart King (ed.), *La cultura catalana de expresión castellana: Estudios de literatura, teatro y cine* (Kassel: Reichenberger, 2005).

This page intentionally left blank

# INDEX

## A

- Aaron, Jane 85  
abrogation 21, 44  
Achebe, Chinua 21  
Acts of Union 5, 29  
Adfer 214  
Africa 4, 21, 31, 72, 86  
    North 4, 21  
    Writers from 21  
    *see also* Achebe, Chinua;  
    wa`Thiong`o, Ngũgĩ  
African Americans 22, 30, 31  
Al-Sadawi, Nawal 48  
    *Woman at Point Zero* 48  
All Party Parliamentary Group on  
    Catalonia 213, 215  
American Friends Service Committee  
    27  
appropriation (linguistic) 21, 44  
Aragon *see* Crown of Aragon  
Argemí, Aureli 1  
Article 155 (Spanish Constitution) 16  
Ashcroft, Bill 21, 44  
Asian Americans 22, 30  
Austria 6, 94, 99, 109  
    Charles Hapsburg of 6, 94, 99

## B

- Balibar, Étienne 34  
Barcelona 1, 6, 8, 9, 10, 42, 89, 91, 92,  
    93, 94, 95, 100, 102, 104, 105,  
    107, 109, 110, 112, 113, 115, 116,  
    117, 163–5, 166, 167, 168, 169,  
    170–3, 181, 182, 191, 193, 194,  
    197, 198, 200, 201–2, 203, 204,  
    208  
Barcelona, County of 4  
Barcelona, Fall of 6, 89, 91, 92, 93, 94,  
    104, 110–11, 115, 193, 200, 204  
Barcelona World Fair (1888) 8, 163,  
    170–1, 182, 194, 208  
Barcelona World Fair (1929) 163, 181,  
    200  
*bardd gwlad* 75–6  
bards 81, 135, 189, 190, 204  
Barros, Maria Lorena 22, 48  
Basini, Mario 75, 83, 87  
Basque Country, the 8, 13, 207, 213  
Basque people, the 61  
Belbel, Sergei 2  
Benton, Sarah 192  
Berlin Wall, the 127  
Bevan, Aneurin 62, 64

- Bhabha, Homi 21, 22  
 binarism 22, 98  
 Birmingham 11, 57, 85, 139  
 Birt, Paul 2  
 Bohata, Kirsti 29, 38, 53, 140, 141  
 Bourbon 6, 95, 98, 107, 108–9, 111,  
 112, 191, 192  
   Bourbon army 95, 98, 107, 108–9,  
 111, 112, 192  
   Philip Bourbon 6, 96, 191, 194–5  
 Bowen, Euros 132  
 Boxer, Diana 68, 69, 70  
 Britain 32, 72, 119, 123, 125, 127, 175,  
 176, 213  
 British army 9, 175, 179  
 British culture 125, 127  
 British Empire 30, 53, 58, 59, 60, 70,  
 72, 84  
 British Government 7, 10, 30, 53, 54–5,  
 58, 79, 123, 126, 138, 141, 158,  
 170, 175  
 British identity 127  
 British nation 123  
 British nationality 175  
 British State 1, 11, 30, 40, 55, 123, 200,  
 207, 211, 213  
 Britishness *see* Prydeindod  
 Brittany 83, 207  
 Brooks, Simon 7  
 Brown, Dee 127  
 Brown, Tony 120, 122, 126, 131, 135,  
 144, 156, 198  
 Burke, Kenneth 68  
 Burkina Faso 204
- C**  
 Cabral, Amílcar 23, 61, 63  
 Capel Celyn 11, 56, 67, 139  
   *see also* Tryweryn  
 capitalism 23, 24, 61, 63, 64, 85, 120,  
 141, 149, 175, 201  
 Capmany, Maria Aurèlia 18  
 Casanova, Rafael 105, 117  
 Castile 5, 93, 95, 96, 98–106, 109, 110,  
 113, 114, 116–17, 170  
 Castilian army/soldiers 6, 105, 108,  
 113  
   *see also* Spanish army/soldiers  
 Castilian Empire 101  
   *see also* Spanish Empire  
 Castilian language 5, 9, 99, 108, 167  
   *see also* Spanish language  
 Castilian nationality 37, 94, 96, 99, 100,  
 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 109, 110,  
 111, 114, 117  
 Castilian State 5, 6, 9, 91, 96, 101, 102,  
 108, 111  
   *see also* Spanish State  
 Catalan bourgeoisie 42, 174, 182, 202,  
 214  
 Catalan culture 1, 2, 6–7, 10, 16, 17, 35,  
 37, 38, 103, 164, 167, 201, 214  
 Catalan identity 2, 9, 10, 18, 34, 89,  
 94–5, 105, 108, 115, 164, 165,  
 176, 181, 193, 197, 200, 202, 208,  
 212  
 Catalan language 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9,  
 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 34, 35,  
 37, 38, 42, 89, 90, 91, 97, 98,  
 107–8, 116, 164, 167, 209, 211,  
 212  
 Catalan nation *see* Catalan people, the  
 Catalan National Day 6, 14, 89, 115  
 Catalan nationalism 2, 15, 104, 167,  
 168, 174, 182, 204  
 Catalan people, the 6, 9, 15, 16, 17, 30,  
 31, 39, 89, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96,  
 97, 98, 99, 101, 102, 103, 104,  
 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111,  
 112, 113, 114, 115, 116–17, 169,  
 171, 172, 173, 175, 192, 193, 195,  
 197, 201, 208, 211, 213  
 Catalan Socialist Party 16  
 Catalan speakers *see* Catalan language

- Catalonia 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 24, 26, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 53, 89, 90, 91, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 107, 108, 109, 110, 112, 115, 116, 117, 164, 165, 167, 168, 169, 170, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 181, 189, 191, 192, 193, 194, 197, 198, 200, 202, 207, 208, 209, 211, 212, 213
- Assembly of 10
- Catalan-language literature of 2, 9, 10, 17, 18, 38, 40, 41, 89, 90, 211, 212
- claim to nationhood 3
- comparison with Wales 1–4, 5, 6–7, 8–9, 10, 17, 18, 19, 20, 31, 32–3, 67, 207–8, 209
- considered as a colony 18, 30, 38, 53, 170
- customs and traditions 9, 95–8, 100, 111
- difference from Spain/Castile 2, 96, 98–103, 104, 114, 116–17, 168–9, 174, 176
- education in 1–2, 8–9, 13–14, 19, 106–7, 111
- history of 3–17, 41, 89, 91, 93, 191–3
- immigration into 8, 9, 13, 17, 103, 106, 197, 200, 202, 208
- independence campaign and demonstrations 2, 14, 17, 37, 67, 91, 95, 102, 107, 109, 110, 211, 212
- independence consultation (2014) 15–16, 93
- independence referendum (2017) 16–17, 43, 95, 213
- industrialisation 8, 181–2, 200
- official bilingualism 13–14
- potential state 39, 92–3, 96, 97, 103, 104, 174, 202
- Spanish-language literature of 2–3, 18–20, 32, 37, 38, 89–90, 120, 167, 210–11, 212, 214  
*see also* Sánchez Piñol, Albert; Mendoza, Eduardo
- Spanish-speakers in *see* Spanish language and Castilian language
- Statute of Autonomy 7, 9, 13, 15
- traditional rights and freedoms 5, 105
- Catholic Monarchs, the 5
- Cesaire, Aimé 21
- Charlon, Anne 38
- Chartists 78, 85
- CIEMEN 1, 40
- civic nationalism 103, 104
- Claerwen 85
- Clarke, Gillian 33, 34  
‘The Water Diviner’ 33, 34
- class 9, 23, 24, 31, 60–1, 63–4, 71, 100, 105, 106, 112, 114, 122, 157, 165, 166, 173, 174, 181, 182, 197, 202, 204
- Clywedog Dam 139
- colonialism 23, 24, 28, 85
- Companys, Lluís 7, 9
- Connor, Walker 3
- Conran, Tony 18
- Conservative Party (British) 54, 86
- Cortés-Conde, Florencia 68, 69, 70
- Corts 5, 6
- Covid-19 pandemic 14, 17, 43, 211
- Cowling, Geoff 30
- Crameri, Kathryn 18, 39, 53, 67, 90, 92, 95, 103, 104, 106, 112, 212, 214
- Crick, Bernard 68
- Crown of Aragon 4, 95–6
- Cuba 182
- Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg 11, 122, 132

- Cymru Fydd 7  
 Cymuned 214  
 Czech people, the 122, 127, 128
- D**
- Dai'r Cantwr 78  
 Davies, Grahame 153, 154  
 Davies, Idris 85  
 Davies, John 4, 7, 41, 214  
 Davies, Pennar 166  
 Davies, Rhys 37, 40, 163–205 *passim*,  
 207, 208, 212  
     *Honey and Bread* 165, 175, 177–9,  
     180, 183–7, 188–91, 195, 196,  
     197, 198, 199, 202  
     *Jubilee Blues* 165–6, 175–6, 178,  
     199, 202  
     *A Time to Laugh* 165, 175, 178, 179,  
     180–1, 196–7, 199, 202
- de Azúa, Félix 19  
 de Groot, Jerome 92, 106  
 democracy 10, 13, 23, 37, 61, 64, 96,  
 100, 101, 112, 114, 132  
 dialogue 29, 91, 138  
 direct action 11–12, 51–2, 82, 83, 134  
 Dixon, Michael J. 183, 184, 185, 186,  
 187, 199  
 dominant culture 1, 33, 92, 168, 176,  
 194  
 During, Simon 22, 98
- E**
- Edicions '62 10  
 Edward I 4, 6  
 Elan Valley 62, 85  
 Elfyn, Menna 35, 48, 209, 211  
 Elis, Islwyn Ffowc 152, 153  
     *Wythnos yng Nghymru Fydd* 152, 153  
 Elis-Thomas, Dafydd 132–3, 135, 139,  
 145  
 Elizabeth II 85  
 Elliott, J. H. 15, 43
- Ellis, Tom Edward 7  
 enclaves of resistance 32–4, 40, 145–55,  
 161, 167, 199–200  
 England 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 39, 52, 53,  
 54, 57, 61, 62, 64, 67, 68–70, 71,  
 72, 73, 79, 99, 109, 122, 126–9,  
 138, 140, 141, 152, 158, 163, 166,  
 168, 174, 175–6, 188, 202  
 England Government *see* British  
 Government  
 English Armed Forces 53, 55  
 English Crown 4  
 English culture 127  
 English dominance of Wales 52–4, 60,  
 61, 65, 97  
     *see also* Wales considered as a colony  
 English identity 125, 127, 157  
 English language 2, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12,  
 13, 18, 21, 32, 35, 38, 47, 49, 53,  
 64, 66, 67, 83, 119, 120, 125, 127,  
 129, 130, 131, 137, 138, 141, 143,  
 146, 149, 150, 151, 152–3, 154,  
 155, 158, 161, 166, 168, 175, 176,  
 195, 202, 209, 210, 212, 214  
 English nationality 4, 8, 11, 17, 30, 33,  
 51, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 60, 61,  
 62, 63, 64, 65, 68, 69, 70, 71, 73,  
 79, 80, 86, 97, 99, 117, 119, 120,  
 123, 124, 125, 126–9, 130, 136,  
 137, 139, 140, 141, 142, 144, 156,  
 157, 166, 168, 175, 176, 177, 178,  
 179, 183, 186, 188–9, 190, 191,  
 195, 196, 201, 202, 212, 214  
 English Romantic tradition 76  
 English speakers *see* English language  
 Esquerra Republicana Catalana 7  
 ethnic nationalism 103  
 ethnicity 24, 26, 34, 36, 64, 65, 104,  
 106, 196  
 EU *see* European Union  
 Europe 6, 57, 101, 107, 213  
     Eastern Europe 127, 128–9

- European Union 16, 17, 43, 107, 110, 213
- Evans, Christine 33, 34  
     'Second Language' 33, 34
- Evans, Gwynfor 84
- F**
- Fabra, Pompeu 7
- Fanon, Frantz 23, 61, 63, 75
- female resistance 38–9, 48, 186
- Ferdinand of Aragon *see* Catholic Monarchs, the
- figures of resistance 148, 149, 183–7
- First, Ruth 48
- First World 24, 28,
- Foro Babel 42, 214
- Foucault, Michel 28, 30
- France 4, 5, 6, 9, 45, 93, 99, 103, 105, 108, 113
- Franco dictatorship 9–10, 12–13, 19, 41, 42, 107, 167, 208, 209
- Free Wales Army 83
- French army/soldiers 6, 93, 113
- French military assistance for Catalonia 6
- Friend, Julius 3
- Frost, John 61, 62, 78, 79
- G**
- Gabikagojeaskoa, Lourdes 101
- Garlick, Raymond 122, 130, 137–8, 159
- General Strike, the 165, 175
- Generalitat 1, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 15, 16, 94, 105–6, 174
- globalisation 35, 47, 196, 208
- Glyndŵr, Owain 4, 10, 60, 61, 64, 79–81, 85, 135, 136, 179, 184, 186, 188–9, 190, 191, 193
- Goytisolo, Juan 18
- Gramich, Katie 166
- Gramsci, Antonio 23, 63, 112
- Great Britain *see* Britain
- Gregson, Ian 34, 47
- Griffiths, Gareth 21, 44
- Griffiths, James 59, 72, 84
- Guatemala 22, 28, 48, 138
- Gutting, Gary 28, 45  
     gwerin 186, 187, 204  
     Gwynedd, Ieuan 78, 79
- H**
- Hammet, Dashiell 168
- Harlow, Barbara 20–1, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26–7, 36, 38, 48, 49, 50, 91, 92, 207
- Hapsburg *see* Austria
- Heeringa, Inge 90, 116–17
- hegemony 23, 37, 40, 92, 200  
     English hegemony 37, 200  
     Spanish hegemony 37, 40, 200
- Henry Tudor *see* Henry VII
- Henry IV 175, 188
- Henry VII 61, 191
- Henry VIII 5
- Hensman, Rohini 38
- Hernández Cardona, F. Xavier 9, 40, 41, 42
- Hill, Charles G. 45
- historical novel 37, 39, 40, 89, 92, 106, 163, 168, 195, 202, 205
- Hogan, Patrick Colm 55, 68
- Humfrey, Belinda 50, 51
- humour 40, 51, 69–73, 78, 113, 168, 169, 173, 194–5, 201, 203
- Humphreys, Emyr 19
- Humphries, John 42, 52, 67
- Hungarian people, the 122
- I**
- Imperialism 21, 24, 31, 58, 59, 79  
     English Imperialism 58, 79
- Institut d'Estudis Catalans 7
- Ion* 28
- Ireland 52, 127, 180, 212
- Irish people, the 8, 87, 122, 180, 196  
     in Wales 8, 180, 196

Isabella of Castile *see* Catholic Monarchs, the  
 Iwan, Dafydd 41  
 ‘Yma o Hyd’ 41  
 ap Iwan, Emrys 79

**J**

Jenkins, Nigel 50, 66, 76  
 Joaquín, Nick 168  
 Jones, Elidir 82  
 Jones, Emyr Llywelyn 67, 83  
 Jones, Glyn 13, 19, 41  
 Jones, J. R. 2, 40, 123–5, 127, 129, 145, 154, 156, 161  
 Jones, Nicholas 52, 59, 61, 82  
 Jones Williams, Aled 2  
 Juan Carlos I 13  
 Junqueras, Oriol 16–17, 43  
 Junts 213

**K**

Kanafani, Ghassan 20  
 Kerevan, George 213  
 Khaled, Leila 48  
 Khatibi, Abdelkebir 21  
 King, Stewart 2, 8–9, 18–19  
 Kipling, Rudyard 84  
 ‘Recessional’ 84  
 ‘Mandalay’ 84  
 Kitchener First World War posters 79  
 Knight, Stephen 29, 177, 179, 196  
 Knutson, David 167, 168, 173, 197, 198

**L**

Labour Party (British) 58, 59, 68, 70, 72, 86, 122  
 language  
   Castilian *see* Castilian language and Spanish language  
   Catalan *see* Catalan language  
   Chinese 119  
   English *see* English language

French 98, 107, 108  
 Gaelic 32, 121  
 Manx 32  
 Scots 121  
 Spanish *see* Spanish language and Castilian language  
 Welsh *see* Welsh language  
 Lenin, Vladimir 23  
 Lewis, Gwyneth 210, 211, 214  
   *Y Llofrudd Iaith* 210, 214  
   *Keeping Mum* 210, 214  
 Lewis Saunders 10–11, 17, 62, 121–2, 129–30, 154, 156, 161  
 ‘Y Dilyw 1939’ 122  
 Lewsyn yr Heliwr 78, 79  
 Liberal Party (British) 7, 86  
 linguistic normalisation 13  
 linking struggles 24, 31–2, 37, 38, 54, 60, 62, 65, 85, 122, 127, 176–87, 212–13  
 Linna, Väinö 92  
*littérature engagée* 45  
 Liverpool 11, 12, 57, 139  
 Lliga Regionalista 7  
*Lliures o morts* 212  
 Lloyd George, David 62  
 Lloyd George, Megan 73  
 Llŷn Peninsula 10, 122, 125, 126  
 Llywelyn ein Llyw Olaf 4, 61  
 Llywelyn Fawr 4  
 London 54, 66, 99, 178, 213  
 Luxemburg, Rosa 24

**M**

MAC *see* Mudiad Amddiffyn Cymru  
 MacDiarmid, Hugh 82, 121  
 Macià, Francesc 7  
 Madrid 15, 16, 94, 101, 109, 111, 113, 167, 168, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 203, 213  
 Madrid Government 168, 169–73, 174, 182, 203, 211  
   *see also* Spanish Government

- magical realism 168  
 Mancomunitat 7  
 Marsé, Juan 18, 19, 214  
 Martí, Isabel 90  
 Martins, Alzira 116  
 Marx, Karl 23, 63, 86  
 Marxism 23, 61, 63, 65, 204  
 Mas, Artur 15  
 McRoberts, Kenneth 3  
 Meibion Glyndŵr 12, 122, 214  
 Menchú, Rigoberta 22, 28, 48, 138  
 Mendoza, Eduardo 37, 40, 115,  
 163–205 *passim*, 207, 208  
*Glòria* 167  
*La ciudad de los prodigios* 37,  
 163–205 *passim*  
*Restauració* 167  
 Merchant, W. Moelwyn 120  
 Merthyr Rising, the 9, 61, 77–8, 79  
 Mesquida, Biel 18  
 Mexico 10  
 Minhinnick, Robert 47  
 Miron, Gaston 2  
 Mock, Steven J. 106  
 Moix, Terenci 90  
 Morris, Brian 75, 77, 78, 82, 83  
 Morris-Jones, John 7  
 Mudiad Adfer 161  
 Mudiad Amddiffyn Cymru 12, 51–2,  
 82, 83, 139  
 multiculturalism 35, 36, 64, 196, 208
- N**  
 national-democratic 26  
 national-popular 23, 25, 26, 51, 61,  
 63–4, 112  
 Native American 48, 101, 122, 127–8, 157  
 neo-colonialism 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 30  
 New Criticism 25  
 Newport Rising 9, 61, 62, 85  
 Nguyễn Đình Thi 24  
 Night of the Long Knives 60
- Nonconformity (Christian) 5, 61, 191,  
 198  
 Northern Ireland 211, 213  
 Nova Canço 10  
 Nova Planta decree 6
- O**  
 O'Connor, Frank 166  
 O'Neill, Chris 50  
 Oliver, Maria Antònia 38  
 Osborne, Huw Edwin 166, 186, 187,  
 198, 202–3
- P**  
 Pacte Fiscal 1, 14–15  
 Padley, Walter 70  
 Palau Vergés, Monserrat 38  
 Palestine 20, 48  
 Parry, Benita 22, 29, 36, 207  
 Partido Popular 15  
 Pearse, Pádraic 87  
 Peate, Iorwerth 161  
 Penderyn, Dic 61, 77–8  
 Penyborth 10, 60, 62, 122  
 Pérez-Reverte, Arturo 116  
 Philip V *see* Bourbon  
 Philippines, the 22, 25–6, 30, 45, 168, 195  
 pla Cerdà, el 203  
 Plaid Cymru 10, 11, 14, 49, 51, 64,  
 74–5, 81–2, 84, 122, 132, 152,  
 154, 156, 198, 211, 213  
 'Ten Points of Policy' 198  
 Poems and Pints 76  
 postcolonial studies 20–1  
 postcolonial theory 21–2, 23, 29, 30, 98  
 postcolonialism *see* postcolonial theory  
 postmodern historical novel *see*  
 historical novel  
 Price, Adam 211  
 Price, Dr William 78, 185  
 Primer Encontre d'Escriptors dels  
 Països Catalans 17

- Primo de Rivera, Miguel 7, 204  
 Prince of Wales 4, 12  
 Pritchard, Dai 67  
*Prydeindod* *see* J. R. Jones  
 Prydeindod ideology 123–4, 125, 127  
 Puigdemont, Carles 16, 17  
 Pujol, Jordi 13
- Q**  
 Quakers 27  
 Québec 2
- R**  
 race 24, 34, 35, 40, 47, 52, 76–7, 124,  
 147, 167, 196–7, 200, 201, 208  
 Rajoy, Mariano 213  
 Reapers' War, the 5–6  
 recovering history 20, 26, 37, 39, 76–81,  
 91, 107, 188–95, 201  
 Regàs Pagès, Rosa 19  
 Republic of Ireland *see* Ireland  
 reservoirs 11, 56–7, 138–9, 140  
*see also* Capel Celyn; Claerwen;  
 Clywedog; Elan Valley; Thomas,  
 R. S., 'Reservoirs'; Tryweryn  
 Resina, Joan Ramon 174, 204  
 resistance literature approach/theory  
 20–9, 63–4, 65, 76–7, 133  
*see also* Harlow, Barbara; Parry,  
 Benita; Said, Edward; San  
 Juan Jr, E.; Soyinka, Wole;  
 wa'Thiong'o, Ngūĩ  
 Riera, Carme 38  
 Rizal, José 23, 45  
 Roberts Jones, Sally 51, 75  
 Roig, Montserrat 18, 38  
 Rustin, Bayard 27
- S**  
 Said, Edward 20, 21  
 Salih, Tayeb 21  
 Sams, Hannah 2  
 San Juan Jr, E. 22–30, 36, 38, 40, 48,  
 50, 51, 61, 63–4, 65, 91, 112, 117,  
 120, 121, 133, 138, 168, 176–7,  
 179, 183, 191, 195, 207  
 Sánchez, Pedro 17, 211  
 Sánchez Piñol, Albert 32–3, 35, 36, 37,  
 39, 40, 81, 89–117 *passim*, 134, 135,  
 146, 148, 155, 163, 167, 169, 185,  
 196, 201, 207, 208, 210–11, 212  
*Victus* 37, 39, 40, 89–117 *passim*,  
 134, 163, 185, 211  
 Sartre, Jean-Paul 45, 61  
 'The Burgos Trials' 61  
 Saval, José 168, 169, 173, 182, 195, 200,  
 201–2, 203  
 Savill, H. J. 142  
 Scotland 14, 15, 207, 211, 213  
 Scottish independence referendum 15,  
 213  
 Scottish National Party *see* SNP  
 Second Spanish Republic 7, 9  
 Senedd, y 1, 12  
 Setmana Tràgica 9  
 Silko, Leslie Marmon 48  
 Simó, Isabel-Clara 38  
 Simpson, Mercer 75  
 SNP 213  
 Socialism 15, 50, 58, 60, 63, 64, 70, 85,  
 120, 156, 181, 204  
 Socialist Republic of Wales 49, 131, 155  
 Sogues, Marc 116  
 SOMISREM 41  
 Soviet Empire 122, 127  
 Soyinka, Wole 76–7, 111, 191  
 Spain 1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 16, 17, 19, 30,  
 32, 90, 91, 93, 96, 99, 100, 101,  
 102, 106, 110, 116, 163, 168, 169,  
 170, 171, 173, 174, 175, 176, 181,  
 193, 194, 197, 200, 208, 213  
 historic nationalities of 13  
 Spanish army/soldiers 5, 6, 16, 109  
*see also* Castilian army/soldiers

- Spanish Civil War 9, 10, 28, 31  
 Spanish Constitution 16  
 Spanish Empire 30, 89, 116, 182  
   *see also* Castilian Empire  
 Spanish Government 1–2, 7, 9, 14, 15,  
   16, 43, 91, 169, 189, 200, 211  
 Spanish history 92, 110  
 Spanish language 2, 3, 5, 8–9, 13, 14,  
   17, 18, 19, 32, 37, 38, 42, 89, 90,  
   91, 94, 98, 99, 105, 108, 116, 120,  
   137, 167, 176, 192, 195, 209, 211,  
   212, 214  
   *see also* Castilian language  
 Spanish literature 17, 18, 116  
 Spanish media 110  
 Spanish people, the 91, 169, 173, 201  
 Spanish speakers *see* Spanish language  
   and Castilian language  
 Spanish State 1, 5, 18, 30, 37, 39, 40,  
   164, 169, 176, 189, 192, 200, 207,  
   211, 213  
   *see also* Castilian State  
 Spanish throne 93, 94, 99, 100, 113, 171  
 speaking truth to power 27–9, 39, 40,  
   91, 106, 137–42, 145, 163, 166,  
   173, 195, 201  
 Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty 21, 22  
 stateless nations 1, 6, 31, 40, 76, 207,  
   213  
 Stephens, Meic 49–50, 51, 57, 70, 75,  
   78, 82, 84  
 subaltern 21, 22, 63, 177, 179, 183  
 Súmate 2, 103, 104, 116
- T**
- Third World 23, 24, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 45  
 Thomas, Alys 66  
 Thomas, Dylan 17, 71  
 Thomas, M. Wynn 18, 41–2, 77, 129,  
   134, 136, 142, 143, 146, 147, 148,  
   159, 160, 161  
 Thomas, Ned 1, 130  
 Thomas, R. S. 19, 33, 34, 36, 37, 39, 85,  
   119–61 *passim*, 163, 166, 167,  
   173, 177, 179, 183, 195, 197, 198,  
   199–200, 207, 208, 209  
 ‘Abercuawg’ (lecture) 151–5  
 ‘Abercuawg’ (poem) 151  
*An Acre of Land* 133, 134, 135, 146,  
   159  
 ‘Afforestation’ 140–2  
 ‘Again’ 155  
 ‘Arrival’ 155  
*Blwyddyn yn Llŷn (A Year in Llŷn)*  
   126, 127, 128–9, 157  
 ‘Commission (for Ramond Garlick)’  
   137–8, 159  
 ‘The Creative Writer’s Suicide’ 119,  
   156, 157  
 ‘The Depopulation of the Welsh Hill  
   Country’ 149  
 ‘Drowning’ 136  
 ‘Gone?’ 150  
 ‘Gwalia’ 136–7  
 ‘He lies down to be counted’ 143  
 ‘He lives here’ 122, 144  
 ‘Hyddgen’ 136  
 ‘If you can call it living’ 143  
 ‘It hurts him to think’ 143–4  
*Letters to Raymond Garlick* 122, 130  
 ‘Y Llwybrau Gynt’ (‘Former Paths’)  
   130, 131, 157  
*Neb (No-one)* 121, 127, 129, 130,  
   131, 149, 156, 157  
 ‘Nefoedd’ 160  
 ‘O’n Cwmpas’ 158  
 ‘Out of the Hills’ 147  
 ‘The Parlour’ 150–1  
 ‘Patriotism and Poetry’ 149, 154  
 ‘A Peasant’ 147–8  
 ‘Reservoirs’ 129, 132, 136, 138–40,  
   142, 143  
 ‘[Review of] Bury my Heart at  
   Wounded Knee’ 127–8, 137, 157

Thomas, R. S. (continued)

- 'Some Contemporary Scottish Writing' 121, 130
  - Song at the Year's Turning* 133, 134, 135, 159
  - Tares* 136
  - 'Toast' 144–5
  - 'The Tree' 125, 135, 136, 155
  - 'Undod' ('Unity') 153–4, 158, 161
  - 'Welcome' 33–4, 145–6, 150–1
  - 'Welcome to Wales' 132
  - Welsh Airs* 125, 133, 136, 144, 150, 159, 208
  - 'The Welsh Hill Country' 148–9
  - 'Welsh History' 125, 133–5, 144, 146, 190
  - 'Welsh Landscape' 125, 132
  - 'The Welsh Parlour' 150, 151
  - What is a Welshman?* 122, 125, 142–4, 145
  - 'Words and the Poet' 120
- Tiffin, Helen 21, 44
- Tonypandy Riots, the 9
- Tory Party *see* Conservative Party (British)
- Tremosa, Ramon 213
- Tryweryn 11–12, 30, 56, 57, 67–8, 125, 139, 146
- see also* Capel Celyn

## U

- United Kingdom, the 1, 5, 8, 29, 53, 54, 176
- United States (US) 16, 22, 25, 27, 30

## V

- Valentine, Lewis 10–11
- Vallverdú, Francesc 37, 167
- Vázquez Montalbán, Manuel 19
- Villarroel, Antonio de 93, 94, 103–4, 105, 106, 112, 114

## W

- Wales 1–20, 24, 26, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41, 49, 50, 52–75, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 107, 119, 120, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126–31, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 158, 160, 161, 164, 166, 167, 168, 174, 175, 176, 178, 179, 182, 186, 187, 188, 191, 193, 196, 198, 199, 200, 201, 203, 204, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214
- claim to nationhood 3
- comparison with Catalonia 1–4, 5, 6–7, 8–9, 10, 17, 18, 19, 20, 31, 32–3, 67, 207–8, 209
- considered as a colony 29–30, 39, 52–60, 72, 140–1, 189
- devolution referendum (1979) 12
- devolution referendum (1997) 2, 12
- economy of 12, 54, 56–7, 67, 132, 141, 198
- education 8–9, 14, 19, 53, 77, 78
- English speakers in *see* English language
- English-language literature of 2–3, 18–20, 29, 32, 33–4, 36–7, 50, 119, 129–30, 166, 212
- see also* Davies, Rhys; Thomas, R. S.; Webb, Harri
- history of 3–17, 39, 41, 51, 52, 77–81, 135, 136, 184
- Home Rule *see* Wales, self-government for
- immigration into 8, 12, 13, 33, 35, 52, 120, 124, 126, 136, 145–6, 152, 158, 168, 184, 187, 209, 214
- independence 14, 49, 52, 78, 115, 191, 211, 212
- industrial struggles 175–6, 177, 179, 185, 203

- Wales (continued)
- industrialisation in 8, 130, 144, 155, 158, 164, 165, 174, 177–9, 183, 185, 186, 187, 188, 199
  - National Library of Wales 7
  - National Museum of Wales 7, 164
  - north Wales 10, 66, 67, 130, 131, 161
  - official bilingualism 12, 13–14
  - Parliament for 73
  - self-government for 7, 69, 84, 122, 127
  - south Wales 8, 10, 37, 58, 59, 66, 85, 122, 130, 131, 154, 158, 166, 179, 182, 196, 198, 203
  - tourism into 14, 33, 54, 120, 126, 136, 139, 143, 145, 146, 152, 154, 157, 158
  - Welsh-language literature of 2, 10, 17–18, 35, 40, 48, 57, 119, 120, 130, 151, 152, 153, 159, 185, 204, 209–10, 214
- Walford Davies, Jason 119, 152, 157
- Walters, Dave 67
- Walters, Mary-Alice 86
- War of Succession *see* War of Spanish Succession
- War of Spanish Succession 6, 89, 93, 95, 106, 107, 110, 115, 116–17, 191, 193, 212
- Reprisals on Catalonia in aftermath 6, 110–11, 191–3
- wa'Thiong'o, Ngũgĩ 21, 23, 24, 26, 31, 32, 38, 47, 86, 176
- Webb, Andrew 133, 146
- Webb, Harri 19, 24, 36–7, 39, 49–87 *passim*, 92, 97, 105, 107, 112, 115, 119, 120, 122–3, 126, 128, 129, 131, 132, 134, 135, 137, 155, 158, 166, 170, 185, 190, 191, 196, 201, 203, 204, 207, 208, 209, 212
- 'Against Imperialism' 64
  - 'Against Military Conscription' 55–6
  - 'Alien Rule the Road to Ruin' 54–5
  - 'The Babes in Milk Wood' 71–4
  - 'The Breed of the Sparrowhawk' 64–5, 67–8, 83
  - 'By a Mountain Pool' 79–81, 135
  - 'Colli Iaith' 57–8, 134
  - Dic Penderyn and the Merthyr Rising of 1831* 77–8
  - 'The Disclaimers' 83
  - 'Emyr Llew Has Gone to Prison' 83
  - 'Feet First' 58, 59
  - 'For Franz Fanon' [*sic*] 59, 155
  - 'A Free and Independent People' 58
  - 'The Future of Wales is in Our Hands' 86
  - 'The Gathering Storm' 64
  - 'Glorious Figures from our Past... or what they don't allow to be taught in Welsh Schools' 78–9
  - 'The Green Gold of Wales' 49, 67, 82, 86
  - 'An Imperial Hymn' 59–60
  - 'The Joys of Battle' 66
  - 'Letter to the Editor' 120
  - 'Letter to Gwilym Prys Davies' 74–5
  - 'Letter to Mrs Jones' 65
  - 'Letters to Mr Jones' 52–4, 65
  - 'Not to be Used for Babies' 75
  - 'Ode to the Severn Bridge' 69–70
  - 'An Old and Haughty Nation Proud in Arms' 80, 134
  - 'The Only Way' 68
  - 'Our National Anthem' 204
  - 'Owain Glyndŵr: Profligate Rebel or National Hero?' 61–2
  - 'The Saga of Welsh Resistance' 61–2
  - 'Saraband' 51
  - 'The Strength of Wales' 64
  - 'To the Young People of Wales' 209
  - 'Tryweryn' 56

- Webb, Harri (continued)  
 ‘Walter, Walter Lead us by the Halter’ 70–1  
 ‘We Believe in the Welsh People’ 62, 85, 129  
 ‘We Speak in the Name of Wales’ 62–3, 66, 85, 86  
 ‘Webb’s Progress (I)’ 76  
 ‘Webb’s Progress (II)’ 50  
 ‘Welsh Water for Wales’ 56–7
- Weber, Max 93, 97
- Wells, Caragh 201
- Welsh Assembly, the 12
- Welsh culture 2, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 17, 30, 33–5, 36, 41, 56, 57, 58, 65, 77, 84, 119, 123, 125, 129, 134, 139, 140–2, 151, 153, 159, 164, 196, 198, 201, 209, 210, 214
- Welsh identity 10, 13, 18, 34, 37, 52, 60, 64–5, 66, 67, 122, 125, 127, 130, 131, 140, 145, 149, 150, 151, 153, 161, 164, 167, 174, 178, 179, 182, 183, 187, 199, 200, 201, 214  
*see also* Welshness
- Welsh land 55, 56, 83–4, 119, 123, 128, 140, 154, 176, 190, 203
- Welsh language 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 32, 33–5, 36, 41–2, 47, 48, 51, 56, 57, 59, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 84, 85, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 129–30, 131, 132, 133, 136–7, 138, 139, 140, 141, 144, 145, 146, 147, 149, 150, 151, 152–4, 155, 158, 159, 160, 161, 164, 167, 175, 185, 198, 200, 209–10, 212, 214
- Welsh nation *see* Welsh people, the  
*Welsh Nation* 49, 64
- Welsh nationalism 2, 11, 12, 36, 50, 51, 70, 85, 122, 123, 145, 153, 164, 198, 209
- Welsh people, the 2, 4, 5, 10, 19, 30, 31, 35, 50, 51, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 60, 61, 62–3, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 73, 74–5, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 83, 85, 97, 112, 121, 123–5, 127, 128–9, 131, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 140, 142–4, 145, 146–7, 149, 150, 157, 158, 166, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 186, 187, 188–9, 190, 191, 195, 196–7, 199, 204, 208
- Welsh place names 59, 70, 154  
*Welsh Republican, The* 35, 49, 52, 71, 77, 78, 83
- Welsh Republicans *see* Welsh Republican Movement, the
- Welsh Republican Movement, the 49, 52, 63, 75, 78, 81–2, 84, 158, 203
- Welshness 10, 37, 61, 119, 122, 123, 125, 126, 127, 129, 131, 148, 154, 157, 158, 167, 196  
*see also* Welsh identity
- Westminster 8, 14, 55, 211, 213  
*see also* British Government
- Wigginton, Chris 34, 47
- Williams, Chris 29–30
- Williams, Daniel 31, 33–6, 47, 48, 64, 145–6, 151, 160, 167, 196
- Williams, D. J. 10–11
- Williams, Hywel 213
- Williams, Owain 67
- Williams, Waldo 140  
 ‘Preseli’ 140
- Williams, Zephaniah 78–9
- Wilks, Ifor Huw 35, 77, 197
- Wintle, Justin 130–1
- Y**
- YesCymru 211
- Z**
- Zaza, Wendy-Llyn 19

'A superbly researched study of "resistance literature", here applied to works in English by Welsh authors and in Spanish by Catalan authors. It offers an innovative comparative approach, which makes a case for their Welshness and Catalanness in the context of two stateless nations whose cultures are different from that of the dominant state.'

Dr Montserrat Lunati, Honorary Senior Research Fellow,  
Cardiff University and Honorary Reader, University of St Andrews

This volume presents a comparison of Welsh writing in English and Catalan writing in Spanish, and analyses the work of selected authors from each literature: Harri Webb, R. S. Thomas and Rhys Davies from Wales; Albert Sánchez Piñol and Eduardo Mendoza from Catalonia. From a resistance literature perspective, the author asks whether it is possible for a literature of national resistance to exist in a language that is not the national language. Traditionally, Welsh literature and Catalan literature have been defined as literatures written in Welsh or Catalan – while positions are shifting, the idea that there could be national resistance literature written in other languages remains novel. Resistance literature is not an approach previously applied to study either Welsh writing in English or Catalan writing in Spanish, and this book argues that the writers under consideration have produced varying degrees of 'resistance literature'.

**Catriona Coutts** is an Associate Researcher at Bangor University. Her doctoral thesis compared Spanish-language authors from Catalonia with English-language authors from Wales.

Cover image: Flags of Catalonia and Wales © esfera / shutterstock

UNIVERSITY OF WALES PRESS

[www.uwp.co.uk](http://www.uwp.co.uk)