

DIPLOMARBEIT

Titel der Diplomarbeit

“‘Despite our Speech we are not English’: Language
and Identity in the Works of R. S. Thomas”

verfasst von

Mag. Katharina Krischak, BA

angestrebter akademischer Grad

Magistra der Philosophie (Mag.phil.)

Wien, 2013

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt:

A 190 344 333

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt:

Lehramtsstudium UF Englisch UF Deutsch

Betreuer:

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Werner Huber

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	5
2. Wales, Welsh and Welshness	7
2.1. When Was Wales?	7
2.2. The Dragon Has Two Tongues	13
2.3. Welsh Literatures	13
2.4. Framing Welsh Identity.....	21
3. R.S. Thomas and Wales.....	25
3.1. Personal Bilingualism and the Question of Identity	25
3.1.1. Bilingualism as a Stimulus for Literary Production	27
3.1.2. <i>Hunanladdiad y Llenor: The Creative Writer's Suicide</i>	31
3.1.3. Poetry vs. Prose - Two Genres, Two Languages.....	34
3.2. R.S. Thomas and Welsh Nationalism	37
3.3. R.S. Thomas and His Readers	41
3.4. The Self-Invention of a Welsh Persona?.....	43
4. Wales, Welsh and Welshness in the Works of R.S. Thomas	48
4.1. The Red Past: Wales and Welsh History	49
4.2. Allusions to Welsh Literature and Myth	60
4.2.1. Welsh Poetry	61
4.2.2. Welsh Metric Forms	71
4.2.3. Welsh Prose	75
4.3. The Old Language: Representing Welsh	81
4.4. Beyond Offa's Dyke: Depicting English, England and the English	86
4.5. "Not British; certainly not English" - Defining Welshness	91
5. Conclusion.....	95
6. Bibliography	97
6.1. Dictionaries	97
6.2. Primary Sources	97
6.2.1. Poetry and Prose	97
6.2.2. Law Texts	98
6.3. Secondary Sources	99

6.3.1. Articles	99
6.3.2. Books:.....	105
6.3.3. Online Sources.....	107
Abstract (English).....	108
Abstract (deutsch).....	109
Curriculum Vitae	110

1. Introduction

*Why must I write so?
I'm Welsh see:
a real Cymro
(Welsh, 1-3)*

R.S. Thomas has frequently been called the “new force in Anglo-Welsh poetry”, who was “looking for something to join, a social and cultural base to confirm him in his role as both a passionate Welshman and an English poet” (Conran, 188). In this quote, Tony Conran touches upon two major issues which require attention when dealing with the poetic work of R.S. Thomas: language and identity.

R.S. Thomas is well-known as an English-language poet who despite the fact that Welsh was not his mother tongue thought of himself as a Welsh writer (Rogers, 158-159). As a consequence, Thomas must be considered to have composed Welsh literature in English, a fairly new concept which was not as widely accepted and appreciated in early 20th-century Wales as it is today. At a time of rising nationalist attitudes, severe linguistic changes and growing support for Welsh independence, many deemed the Welsh language the decisive factor for the “Welshness” of literary works (Lloyd, 435-436). Thomas was aware of the apparent paradox of composing in English and writing Welsh literature since he frequently made the tensions deriving from this contradiction the subject of his poetry. Therefore, he set out to explore ways and options to make his literature more Welsh in order to “justify the hyphen” (N. Thomas and Barnie, 26) of an Anglo-Welsh poet (Brown, *Screen of Eternity*, 185; N. Thomas and Barnie, 26; R.S. Thomas, *No-one*, 77). These strategies can be particularly observed in Thomas’s early poetry, in which the poet concerns himself with many issues regarding Wales, Welsh culture, the Welsh language and Welsh identity and on which the corpus of texts analysed in this thesis is mainly based. How successful Thomas employs these strategies can be seen when Geraint Evans (127) writes about his method: “It is almost a version of choosing to write only in Welsh”.

Therefore, this thesis sets out by introducing the Wales of the 20th century, the concept of Wales as a nation, its literary traditions, its languages and the notion of Welsh identity. Next, it aims to present the poet R.S. Thomas with regard to his bilingual background and its influence on his literary work, his position concerning the idea of an Anglo-Welsh literature and his attitudes towards Welsh nationalism.

Additionally, the intended readership of his poetry and Thomas's self-presentation as a Welshman shall be discussed and analysed. Finally, the presentation and study of the strategies Thomas employs to ensure the "Welsh character" of his poetry is at the heart of this thesis. The aim is to identify these strategies and the linguistic and cultural boundaries they establish, which have made scholars and readers alike wonder whether his work is not a contribution to the Welsh rather than the English literary tradition. Thus this is also an illustration of the "heritage of the real Wales" (Ward, 34) on which Thomas is said to have based his poetry.

2. Wales, Welsh and Welshness

2.1. When Was Wales?

*There is no present in Wales,
And no future,
There is only the past.
(Welsh Landscape, 20-22)*

“When was Wales?” is a question posed in the title of one of the most influential books in the field of Welsh history and national identity by Gwyn A. Williams, Professor Emeritus of History at University College, Cardiff. Any student of Welsh history must admit that he could not have posed a better question. When was Wales able to present itself as an independent nation? What was it in the past, and what is it today? A nation, a country, a region? Or is “Wales” merely a construct? This chapter sets out to take a look at this problematic question and intends to analyse the most important historical facts which had a considerable influence on the nation-building process in Wales and to clarify its historic and contemporary political and legal status in the context of the British Isles.

In this matter, it seems useful to start with a brief survey of the history of the emergence of the country. The beginnings of this process might best be dated to the 8th century (Karl, *Briten*, 7). It is believed that it was not until the rise of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of Mercia, Northumbria, Wessex and Bernicia in the 7th century that the Welsh kingdoms came into considerable contact with the Anglo-Saxons (Dark, 228; Karl, *Briten*, 7). An important event in this context was the erection of Offa’s Dyke in the 8th century. Commonly considered the traditional border between England and Wales, the dyke was actually built as a border between the kingdoms of Mercia and Powys in the time of King Offa (Karl, *Briten*, 7). The erection of Offa’s Dyke is of major importance as it was the first visible border between British and Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and continued to mark the border (especially) in northern Wales for many centuries. It therefore had a considerable influence on how the regions and peoples on each side of the dyke were perceived (Tauber, 396-397; Pryce, 777; Karl, *Briten*, 7; J. Davies, 80). Hence, it does not come as a surprise that it is at this time that the term *Welsche* is coined in Anglo-Saxon for those who live beyond the border while on the other side of the dyke it is the word *Cymry* - denoting a group of people sharing a country - that comes into usage (Karl, *Briten*, 7).

The centuries following the erection of this first physical boundary saw many attempts to unite (some of) the kingdoms west of the dyke. The best-known kings and princes who ruled large parts of Wales are Rhodri Mawr, Rhodri the Great, Hywel Dda, Hywel the Good, Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, and Llywelyn Fawr, Llywelyn the Great. Rhodri Mawr, ruler of Gwynedd from 844 to 878, inherited the kingdom of Powys, took over the kingdoms of Seisyllwg and Maelienydd and thus was the first king to rule large parts of Wales (Gwyn A. Williams, 55; J. Davies, 81-85; J. G. Jones, *History of Wales*, 13). The second successful attempt to control most of the country was made by Rhodri's grandson Hywel Dda, Hywel the Good, the heir of Seisyllwg, in the early 900s. He was able to seize sole control of Dyfed and other small kingdoms in the east (J. Davies, 85-87; Karl, *Briten*, 7; J. G. Jones, *History of Wales*, 14). Hywel also successfully forged an alliance with the kings of Wessex. With their support he took over the northern kingdom of Gwynedd and won the rule of Powys (Gwyn A. Williams, 55). Thus, Hywel Dda was ruler of nearly all of what is now Wales. (J. G. Jones, *History of Wales*, 14). The 11th century saw the rise of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, who was the first to be called *rex Britanniae*, King of Britain, who ruled *per totam Gualiam*, over all of Wales. The use of the word *Gualia* for Wales, which becomes common in the 12th century, is noteworthy. Clearly, Wales was starting to emerge linguistically as well as politically (Pryce, 781; J. G. Jones, *History of Wales*, 15-16). Upon Gruffudd's death, however, due to the custom of partible inheritance, the land was again split equally between his heirs, as had been the case upon the deaths of his predecessors (J. G. Jones, *History of Wales*, 13; J. Davies, 95; D. Jenkins, xi-xii; Charles-Edwards, *Kinship*, 61-73; 211-215; Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, 508). The only prince to successfully hand down the rule over all Wales to his descendants was Llywelyn Fawr. By 1199, Llywelyn had already achieved the title of *tocius norwallie princeps*, prince of the whole of north Wales (R. R. Davies, *Age of Conquest*, 239). Despite three conquering expeditions led by King John, who did not appreciate Llywelyn's expansion plans, Llywelyn was able to expand his territory further, extend his influence and safeguard his authority over Wales (J. Davies, 138-143; R. R. Davies, *Age of Conquest*, 295). His son and successor Dafydd ap Llywelyn even called himself *princeps Wallie* [sic], but it was not until the reign of Dafydd's nephew, Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, that the title found official recognition. Llywelyn ap Gruffydd was the only Welsh prince ever to be acknowledged as Prince of Wales by an English king, in this case King Henry III. Llywelyn is referred to as *princeps Wallie* [sic] in the Treaty of Montgomery in 1267

(Pryce, 784). But Llywelyn's downfall eventually came when King Edward invaded Wales in 1276, and he was finally killed in 1282. With the death of the first and last Prince of Wales, Welsh independence came to an end.(J. Davies, 154-161; 179; R. R. Davies, *Age of Conquest*, 386).

From that time on, Wales was under English rule and not even the Welsh Revolt led by Owain Glyn Dŵr in the early 1400s could change anything about that. Proclaimed Prince of Wales in 1400, Owain Glyn Dŵr was able to achieve a considerable number of military victories during the first years of the rising. But then the tide turned: the alliance with France and Scotland collapsed (J. Davies, 195-199; R. R. Davies, *Age of Conquest*, 443-447), the English recaptured most of Glyn Dŵr's conquests and finally in 1409 caught and arrested his family. Owain and his men fled into the hill country and continued organising minor attacks against the English. After 1413, however, nothing certain is known of the rebels of the Glyn Dŵr Rising (J. Davies, 202-203). Nevertheless, Owain Glyn Dŵr is one the most illustrious figures of Welsh history and has featured in many works of English and Welsh-language literature, as will be shown in Chapter 4.

After the revolt, the Welsh faced severe punishment under the Penal Laws which had been introduced during the rising. The Penal Laws imposed numerous prohibitions: for example, the Welsh were banned from holding office and dwelling in fortified towns, denied the right to carry arms and deprived of the freedom of assembly. Moreover, marriages between English and Welsh were prohibited and the law impeached the credibility of a statement made in court by a Welsh citizen. (J. Davies, 199; 203; 209; 219)

The Wars of the Roses and the emergence of the House of Tudor once more gave rise to hope among the Welsh. The history of the Tudors starts with the Welsh soldier Owain ap Maredudd ap Tudur. Owain anglicised his name to Owen Tudor and married Henry V's widow. His sons Edmund and Jasper were therefore half-brothers of the ruling king Henry VI. It comes as no surprise that the Welsh had high expectations when Henry, son of Edmund Tudor and therefore of Welsh descent, seized the English crown from Richard III in 1485 and became King Henry VII. (J. Davies, 209-210; 215-218).

These expectations were not entirely met, yet, the situation of the Welsh population did indeed improve under Tudor rule. The Penal Laws, though not abolished, were no longer executed, the local government in Wales was returned to the Welsh gentry, and it

became possible for the Welsh to climb the social ladder and pursue a career in England (J. Davies 219-221). Finally, during the reign of Henry VIII the Acts of Union, officially called the *Laws in Wales Acts* 1535 and 1542, came into effect in 1536 and 1543 respectively. Wales was integrated into the single legal jurisdiction of “England and Wales” meaning that English law came into force in Wales (*Laws in Wales Act 1535*, s.p.; J. Davies, 232-233; N. Davies, 407; Pittock, *Acts of Union*, 11). Additionally, for the first time, the acts also clearly defined the borders of Wales and its counties (J. Davies, 231-237; N. Davies 407). Therefore, at the time Wales was finally geographically laid out, it ceased to exist as it was fully incorporated into the Kingdom of England.

However, most people seem to have considered the *Laws in Wales Acts* as a major improvement as they were supposed to set the Welsh on an equal footing with the English (G. H. Jenkins, *Taphy-land historians*, 1-2; J. Davies, 237). There is no evidence that the Welsh people at the time considered their enactment as a significant transition or even a traumatic event. On the contrary, more than 350 years passed “in stony silence” (G. H. Jenkins, *Taphy-land historians*, 1-2) before a repeal of the acts was demanded and Welsh opposition of the Union made itself heard (G. H. Jenkins, *Taphy-land historians*, 6).

The 18th and 19th centuries saw the rise of national consciousness and home rule movements not only in Ireland but also in Wales. Welsh nationalism is firmly rooted in the Welsh language movement, which originated in the 18th century during the Romantic era (J. G. Jones, *Nationalism*, 1339). Very often the onset of nationalistic ideas in Wales is associated with the infamous Blue Books incident of 1847, which is also known as the “Treachery of the Blue Books”. The Blue Books were three volumes written by English inspectors, which comprised a report on the state of education in Wales. The report concluded that the education system in Wales was in need of reform as there were too few schools in the country, many teachers seem to have been inadequately prepared and many children did not attend school. But the English inspectors went far beyond reporting on the state of education. They depicted the Welsh as dirty, lazy, dishonest people prone to drunkenness and sexually immoral. They furthermore claimed that the continued existence of the Welsh language and the Nonconformist chapels were to blame for this state of affairs (Koch, *Welsh Language*, 1762; G. H. Jenkins, *Taphy-land historians*, 16; J. G. Jones, *Nationalism*, 1339). Moreover, continental ideas of nationalism were brought to Wales by Welsh writers of

the time who “created an image of Wales as ‘a nation rightly struggling to be free’” (J. G. Jones, *Nationalism*, 1339), and also the developments in Ireland were closely observed in Wales and inspired the idea of Welsh self-government. (J. G. Jones, *Nationalism* 1339). The early 20th century also saw the foundation of the first Welsh nationalist party, *Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru*, which was later renamed *Plaid Cymru* (Lynch, 52; J. G. Jones, *Nationalism*, 1340). Initially a linguistic-cultural movement, Plaid developed into a political organisation promoting a devolutionary programme (Lynch, 53-54; G. H. Jenkins, *Taphy-land historians*, 20). Plaid and its leaders also reassessed the Acts of Union and called it “the most fatal blow ever to the entire Welsh culture” (qtd. in G. H. Jenkins, *Taphy-land historians*, 21). Saunders Lewis, one of Plaid’s most prominent leaders in the 20th century (Matthews, 1148), went even further by stating that when the *Laws in Wales Acts* had been enacted, the country had been “taken out at dawn and shot” (qtd. in G. H. Jenkins, *Taphy-land historians*, 21) and that the union had been “the primary cause of the misery of Wales and of the servitude of the Welsh people ever since” (qtd. in G. H. Jenkins, *Taphy-land historians*, 21). Finally, the stony silence was broken and very harsh and populist words of opposition to the union were spoken and written.

Devolution, however, did not become a reality until 1997 for various reasons. Though a report of the Commission on the Constitutions appeared in 1973, which proved “generally sympathetic to devolutionary proposals” (J. G. Jones, *Nationalism*, 1340), 80% of Welsh voters voted against devolution in the first referendum for a Welsh Assembly held on 1 March 1979. This is generally believed to prove that nationalism in Wales was culturally and linguistically oriented rather than politically motivated. Indeed, political independence only became a real issue when the Welsh language appeared to be increasingly threatened by the influx of English speakers during the 1980s. The devolutionary programme returned to the Welsh political agenda in the course of the 1990s, and another referendum was held in 1997. This time 50.3% of Welsh voters voted in favour of devolution, and the *Government of Wales Act* of 1998 finally stated that “[t]here shall be an Assembly for Wales to be known as the National Assembly for Wales or Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru” (*Government of Wales Act 1998*, c. 38, s. 1) (J. G. Jones, *Nationalism*, 1340; Heinz, *Geschichte von Wales*, 194-198; N. Davies, 777-778).

In 2006, the power of the Assembly was extended in the *Government of Wales Act 2006* (c. 32, s. 45 (1)), and Wales was finally granted a devolved government. What did

not change, however, is Wales's official constitutional status. The *Laws in Wales Act 1536* states that the "Dominion, Principality and Country of Wales" (qtd. in N. Davies, 417) was to be annexed to England. Since then, any definition of Wales seems to have disappeared from legal documents (G. H. Jenkins, *Taphy-land historians*, 12). Wales as a political entity resurfaced in the 20th century and is very commonly referred to as a "country" of the United Kingdom outside legal contexts, but there seems to be no evidence in British legislature that would justify the use of the term "country" in relation to Wales.

What remains is the question of nationhood, which has been thoroughly debated in the 20th century. The United Kingdom today is considered a multinational state, suggesting it is made up of more than one nation and acknowledges its internal diversity (NAW Research Service, 3; Guibernau, 48-49). Moreover, modern definitions of nations outside the context of nationalistic movements state that

being a nation usually implies the attachment to a particular territory, a shared culture and history and the assertion of the right to self-determination. To define a specific community as a nation involves the more or less explicit acceptance of the legitimacy of the state which claims to represent it, or if the nation does not possess a state of its own, it then implicitly acknowledges the nation's right to self-government involving some degree of political autonomy which may or may not lead to a claim for independence. (Guibernau, 13)

It can be argued that many of these characteristics can be attributed to contemporary Wales. Wales is a geographically defined territory, its history and culture are, to some extent, different from English history and culture, and since the 1990s a process of devolution has been apparent which resulted in a degree of self-government enhanced in 2006 and to be further developed in the future (NAW Research Service, 3).

Thus, although we find traces of Welsh tendencies towards unification and state-building in the past, it can be stated that contemporary Wales is mainly defined as a region within the United Kingdom and that there is no reason to imply that Wales is officially a country. There is, however, evidence that suggests that Wales is a nation within the multinational state of Great Britain, not least because it is possible to mark out a concept of a distinctive Welsh national identity, which will be discussed later in this chapter and of which language is a one the most important features. Therefore, the issue of Wales's linguistic history, geography and identity will be addressed next.

2.2. The Dragon Has Two Tongues

Cymru or Wales?
(R.S. Thomas, *Cymru*, 1)

Ever since the arrival of the English and the decline of Latin and Norman French in Britain, Wales has been home to two very distinct languages, the one of Germanic, the other of Celtic origin. This dual linguistic identity of Wales and its people has been a matter of linguistic and political debate for centuries and is artfully comprised in R.S. Thomas's question whether we ought to be talking about *Cymru*, Welsh-speaking Wales, or Wales, English-speaking Wales that is, when talking about this land in the west of Britain. This chapter sets out to present both, *Cymraeg* and English as it is spoken in Wales, the two tongues of *Y Ddraig Goch*, the Red Dragon.

Welsh, or *Cymraeg*, belongs to the Brythonic branch of the Celtic languages and is closely related to the languages of Cornwall (Cornish/Kernewek), Brittany (Breton/Brezhoneg) and to the extinct language of Cumbria (Cumbric). The Brythonic branch is opposed to the Goidelic one, which includes Irish Gaelic, Scottish Gaelic and Manx Gaelic (Birkhan, *Allgemeine Merkmale*, 217-218; Russel, 186; Heinz, *Kumbrisch*, 255).

The history of the Welsh language – at least in modern times – is mainly a social and political one and can hardly be separated from the rise of Welsh nationalism and the political history of 20th-century Wales. The *Laws in Wales Acts* “effectively disenfranchised monoglot Welsh speakers within the domains of politics and law” (Koch, *Welsh Language*, 1761). Especially and famously clause 17 of the 1535 act states that public administration and legal affairs were solely to be conducted in English. Public offices were only to be filled with Welsh-speaking citizens who were equally able to speak English (Löffler, 1100; G. H. Jenkins, *Taphy-land historians*, 4). As a result, English became the language of social progress and high prestige (G. H. Jenkins, *Taphy-land historians*, 4-5) and it would take until the 20th century for this attitude to change.

In the 18th century antiquarians began to develop an interest in Welsh language and literature, efforts were taken to preserve and publish mediaeval Welsh manuscripts, the Eisteddfod, a contest in Welsh poetry and other literary genres, was revived, and societies were founded aiming at cultivating, exploring and modernising the Welsh language (Löffler, 1099-1100). Nevertheless, the 19th century saw a further decline of the language. On the one hand, the Industrial Revolution brought many coal miners

from England to Wales, and therefore an influx of English-speakers is observable from the 1850s onwards (Ball, 249). On the other hand, new political measures such as the introduction of an English state-school system were taken which further endangered the language (Löffler, 1100; Ball, 249). The situation worsened at the beginning of the 20th century due to the continuing low status of the Welsh language and the emigration of Welsh speakers from the Welsh heartlands to England (Ball, 249-250). But the decline of the Welsh language also sparked off the modern language movement and the Welsh language became the primary, most distinctive feature of Welsh identity in nationalist discourse (Löffler, 1100). A period of local campaigning and - with the exception of the activities of the group *Meibion Glyndŵr*, Sons of Glyndŵr (Guibernau, 122) - non-violent disobedience campaigns followed. First successful campaigns, however, were not conducted before the 1960s. For the language movement, the sixties were marked by a very influential speech delivered by Saunders Lewis in 1962 titled *Tynged yr Iaith*, the fate of the language. Lewis' lecture was a call for action (G. H. Jenkins, *Terminal Decline?*, 63): “Nid dim llai na chwyldroad yw adfer yr iaith Gymraeg yng Nghymru. Trwy ddulliau chwyldro yn unig y mae llwyddo” (S. Lewis, *Tynged yr Iaith*, 30). G. Aled Williams translates this passage as: “It will be nothing less than a revolution to restore the Welsh language in Wales. Success is only possible through revolutionary methods” (S. Lewis, *Fate of the Language*, s.p.). He stated that nothing but “penderfyniad, ewyllys, brwydro, aberth, ymdrech” (S. Lewis, *Tynged yr Iaith*, 28), “resolve, willpower, struggle, sacrifice and resolve” (qtd. in G. H. Jenkins, *Terminal Decline?*, 63), could change the fate of the language. “Fe ellir achub y Gymraeg” (S. Lewis, *Tynged yr Iaith*, 29), he claimed, “[t]he Welsh language can be saved” (S. Lewis, *Fate of the Language*, s.p.).

Lewis' lecture was undoubtedly “the defining moment in the history of the Welsh language in the twentieth century” (G. H. Jenkins, *Terminal Decline?*, 63). Most importantly, it prompted the foundation of the Welsh Language Society, *Cymdeithas yr Iaith*, which was the centre of the language movement all throughout the last century and, for example, campaigned for bilingual forms and governmental publications, bilingual road signs, the establishment of radio and television stations providing Welsh programmes and Welsh Medium Education (Ball, 250-251; Löffler, 1101). All these campaigns led to the passing of the *Welsh Language Act* of 1967. Finally, the *Laws in Wales Acts* were repealed, and it was declared that concerning the courts of Wales, “anything done in Welsh [...] shall have the like effect as if done in English” (qtd. in

Löffler, 1101). Welsh was officially recognised as a minority language in Wales. 25 years later, the status of the Welsh language was further improved in the *Welsh Language Act 1993*. As of 1993, Welsh and English were to be treated equally in the administration of justice and the conduct of public business in Wales. However, the legislation also provided a rather nebulous addition instantly calling this equality into question. It stated that the aforementioned principle shall have effect “so far as is both appropriate in the circumstances and reasonably practicable” (qtd. in Löffler, 1101). Therefore, campaigns for the Welsh language have not come to an end as an all-encompassing legislation is demanded. (Löffler, 1101; G. H. Jenkins, *Terminal Decline?*, 63; Ball 251-252).

Until 2001 it seemed like the revitalisation efforts had proven successful. The census of 2001 showed an increase in Welsh speakers in general: 20.5% of the population, and especially among young people. Moreover, 42% of 10-15 year olds were able to speak Welsh (Ball, 253). The 2011 census, however, revealed that the Welsh language is again in decline. Despite an increase in total population, the number of people fluent in Welsh decreased from 582,000 in 2001 to 562,000 in 2011 (Office for National Statistics, 1-3).

The linguistic situation today can thus be assessed in two very different ways. On the one hand, in spite of all attempts to extinguish the use of Welsh in Wales, the native language of the country has survived into the 21st century and has, more or less, become a second language in Wales. Moreover, much has been done to promote the language on the level of education, as a community language and in the mass media (Löffler, 1101-1103). On the other hand, even though the Welsh language does not face imminent extinction (in fact, it is the liveliest of the Celtic languages (Ball, 237; Koch, *Welsh Language*, 1756)) Welsh still is “a minority language facing the might of the most powerful language currently spoken on the planet” (Ball, 253), and pessimists paint a gloomy picture of the death of the language in the near future (cf. G. H. Jenkins, *Terminal Decline?*, 59-67).

This “most powerful language currently spoken on the planet” is, of course English, the second tongue of the Dragon. But it is important to remember that the English of Wales is one of many regional variations of the English language, and therefore it seems useful to look at the - comparatively short - history and state of English in Wales.

English finally arrived in Wales in Norman times. The Normans established strongholds in the north and south, and for the first time the invaders were prepared to

stay. English speakers began to arrive not only in the borderlands in the east, which had been an area of language contact for some considerable time, but also in the exclusively Welsh-speaking areas, most notably in south Wales. As stated above, English became the only official language in Wales in Tudor times and the English-speaking population grew, not only as a result of the westward advance of the English but also because the number of bilingual speakers in Wales rose as English was considered the language of progress and social advancement. The English-medium education system introduced in the 19th century and the Industrial Revolution enforced these changes (Penhallurick, 152). This is, of course, related to the influx of workers from England during this period and the fact that the pit owners and the professional classes were mainly English-speaking (Ball, 249). Since the turn of the 20th century, English can reasonably be considered to have been the majority language in Wales (Penhallurick, 152).

However, linguistic changes in Wales were neither limited to the social level nor to the Welsh language. English in Wales also underwent considerable change due to language contact with Welsh as well as with other English dialects spoken in England. The term which is most often used to describe the variants of English spoken in Wales is *Welsh English* (Penhallurick, 152-153; Heinz, *Celtic Englishes*, 270), “but it has not been the universal label of choice, and in Wales probably not the preferred option” (Penhallurick, 152). Nevertheless, the term shall be employed here for lack of better options.

There are two main types of Welsh English, a north-west and a mid-south variant (Penhallurick, 153). However, it is possible to identify some linguistic features which are characteristic for Welsh English. These features can be found on the level of phonetics and phonology with Welsh English prosody very closely resembling that of the Welsh language, of lexis with borrowings from both dialects of England and Welsh, and of morphology and syntax with transfers of syntactical structure from Welsh such as predicate fronting (Penhallurick, 162-164; Heinz, *Celtic Englishes*, 271).

Thus, it becomes evident that when dealing with Wales it is important to remember that it is a bilingual linguistic community and that each language has been under heavy influence from the other on both linguistic and supralinguistic levels. The answer to the question “*Cymru* or Wales?” which was posed at the beginning of this sections then must be that it is not a question of either/or. Wales and *Cymru* coexist in the same place at the same time.

2.3. Welsh Literatures

*“Anglo-Welsh Literature”. What is it?
(R.S. Thomas, Anglo-Welsh Literature, 51)*

As a consequence of this English and Welsh bilingualism explored above Wales is not only home to two languages but also to two literatures composed in these languages. To begin with, Welsh-language literature is one of the best attested and one of the oldest literary traditions in Europe. Welsh literature has a long tradition of poetry and prose reaching from the early mediaeval period to the literary works of contemporary Welsh writers. Welsh poetry might be said to emerge in the Early Middle Ages with the heroic poems of the legendary, maybe even fabled (Koch, *Aneirin*, 52-53; Koch, *Taliesin*, 1652-1653), poets Aneirin and Taliesin as well as the prophetic poetry of Myrddin (Heinz, *Literatur in Wales*, 334-336). It continues with the elegies of Llywarch Hen and Heledd, and the poetry of the High Middle Ages, the works of the *Beirdd y Tywysogion*, the Poets of the Princes, who mainly employed *awdl* and *englyn* measures (Johnston, *Literature of Wales*, 10-12; 28-34; Koch, *Welsh Poetry*, 1770; McKenna, 826; 828). The late mediaeval period witnessed the emergence of the *Cywyddwyr*, men of the *cywydd*, one of the most important Welsh metric forms, and the *cynghanedd*, the complex system of sound correspondences typical for Welsh strict-metre poetry (Koch, *Welsh Poetry*, 1770; Johnston, *Literature of Wales*, 34-37; Heinz, *Literatur in Wales*, 338-339). The best-known poet of the time is Dafydd ap Gwilym, whose importance for Welsh literature is often compared to that of Chaucer for English literature (Bromwich, *Aspects*, xi-xvi).

Mediaeval Welsh literature is also rich in prose, reaching from the masterpiece of *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi*, the Four Branches of the Mabinogi, and other native stories, to the Arthurian tales of *Culhwch ac Olwen*, *Gereint*, *Owain* and *Peredur*, and narratives translated or adapted from their French originals including tales inspired by the *chansons de geste* and stories about the Holy Grail (Johnston, *Literature of Wales*, 18-25; Heinz, *Literatur in Wales*, 336-337). Apart from these fictional texts there are also numerous works to be found in the field of religion, historiography, law and didactics (Heinz, *Literatur in Wales*, 337; Johnston, *Literature of Wales*, 25-27).

After the annexation by England, Welsh literature faced a severe decline. The Welsh bards lost their positions at the courts of the gentry and started to travel all over Wales in search of employment (Heinz, *Literatur in Wales*, 340). Still, literature in

Welsh was produced throughout the following centuries, and Welsh continued to be the language of religion, at least in the Welsh heartlands, and therefore the language of ecclesiastical literature. The 18th and 19th centuries saw the rise of antiquarian interest in Mediaeval Welsh literary texts which inspired the renaissance of Welsh literature (Heinz, *Literatur in Wales*, 340-343; Löffler, 1099-1100).

In the 20th century, Welsh literature began to flourish again. Writers explored old and new aspects of literature. The traditional strict-metres are still well-established but there are also poets who use new metres and writers who introduce new literary forms such as short stories. Furthermore, the Welsh novel has been revived and Welsh drama finally firmly established through the works of Saunders Lewis (Heinz, *Literatur in Wales*, 345-346). Therefore, it can be safely stated that Welsh-language literature has a long and rich tradition and is *one* of the *two* literatures of Wales.

The other literary tradition to be found in Wales is “Welsh writing in English” or “Anglo-Welsh literature”. This literature has long been a matter of debate for various reasons. First, there are the questions whether or not there is such a thing as Welsh writing in English and, if there is, what the best term for it is. Second, in how far does it differ from English literature proper? And third, how old is the Anglo-Welsh literary tradition?

With its roots in the political writings of the industrial south of Wales, Anglo-Welsh literature surfaced at the beginning of the last century (Lloyd, 436). The best-known Anglo-Welsh writer surely was Dylan Thomas. His preoccupation with Wales has been described as a “blend of fascination with and repulsion from his parents’ rural Welsh-speaking Nonconformist west” (M. W. Thomas, *Anglo-Welsh Literature*, 62). The “cultural schizophrenia” (M. W. Thomas, *Anglo-Welsh Literature*, 62) of being the son of Welsh-speaking parents but raised to speak English only is expressed on many occasions in his works (M. W. Thomas, *Anglo-Welsh Literature*, 62-63).

This first flowering of English literature in Wales set in motion a rather emotional discussion whether or not there was an English-language though genuinely Welsh literary tradition (Collins, *Keeping the Flag Flying*, 37; Lloyd 436). In the course of this debate, the term “Anglo-Welsh literature” was coined by H. Idris Bell in 1922, which became common usage in the 1930s and was actively promoted in the ‘50s and ‘60s (Lloyd, 436). The term, though, has frequently been under attack and was criticised for being ambiguous and even misleading. It was paralleled with similar expressions like Anglo-Norman and Anglo-Latin literature. Both examples indicate literatures written in

a foreign language but in England. Following this logic, Anglo-Welsh literature would actually denote Welsh-language literature written in England, not English literature in Wales (Buuren, 27). Others disliked the term because they believed it to imply a divided national allegiance or even the acceptance of a colonial relationship with England (Lloyd, 436). Therefore, another term was coined, which is most commonly used today: “Welsh writing in English” (M. W. Thomas, *Anglo-Welsh Literature*, 61; Lloyd, 436).

Those in favour of the idea of an English-language Welsh literary tradition argued that Welsh writing in English had been in existence since the 15th century, when a Welsh student at Oxford, Ieuan ap Hywel Swardwal, had composed an eulogistic poem to the Virgin Mary in English while writing in Welsh orthography and using a traditional Welsh verse pattern including cynghanedd (Collins, *Recovering a Tradition*, 55; German, 28).

In the 17th century, Henry Vaughan emerged as the central figure of Anglo-Welsh literature. Vaughan is known for his own poetic work as well as his many translations from Latin, Greek and even Spanish (Heinz, *Literatur in Wales*, 340; Collins, *Recovering a Tradition*, 55). The Methodist movement in Wales in the 18th century also initiated the composition of the same books in English and Welsh in order to reach the readership of both linguistic communities. An example of this is the Methodist poet William Williams of Pantycelyn, who is very often referred to solely as Pantycelyn. One of the greatest hymn writers of Wales, he composed his works in Welsh and provided an English translation for some of them. (Heinz, *Literatur in Wales*, 340-341). Therefore it can be claimed that English-language literature in Wales was well-established long before the 20th century.

Still, during the last century there were many who openly opposed the idea of Welsh writing in English as a second literary tradition in Wales. Among the most famous of this group were the Welsh-language dramatist Saunders Lewis, the Welsh-language poet Bobi Jones and the English-language Welsh poet Harri Webb (Lloyd, 436). In December 1938, Saunders Lewis delivered a lecture addressing the question “Is There an Anglo-Welsh Literature?”. Lewis’ answer was decidedly “no”. In this lecture, he stressed that this literary tradition did not offer any features that made it distinguishable from English literature and that Anglo-Welsh literary texts were written for an English-speaking English audience (Collins, *Recovering a Tradition*, 55). This led him to the conclusion that “there is not a separate literature that is Anglo-Welsh” (qtd. in Collins, *Recovering a Tradition*, 55). Bobi Jones likewise considered English-

language literature from Wales as a provincial English literature which could never equal the significance of Welsh literature composed in the Welsh language. Harri Webb, on the other hand, is a good example of those English-language writers from Wales who, at first, supported the Anglo-Welsh movement but later came to disapprove of this “load of rubbish” (qtd. in Lloyd, 436) that was Anglo-Welsh writing. They all, though approaching the matter from different sides, expressed an opinion many others shared: they believed Welsh-language literature to be the only authentic literature of Wales (Lloyd, 435-436).

Nevertheless, English-language literature from Wales struggled to be acknowledged as a literary tradition independent from that of England. The most prominent English-language writers in Wales in the 1960s and ‘70s aimed at promoting and firmly establishing an Anglophone literature which was “distinctively Welsh in character” (Lloyd, 437). Among the writers of this second wave of Welsh writing in English were the novelist Emyr Humphreys, the poet R. S. Thomas and the aforementioned Harri Webb (M. W. Thomas, *Anglo-Welsh Literature*, 64-65). Although they and other Anglophone Welsh writers used English, they argued that they were writing out of a typically Welsh environment and therefore a “milieu, physically and culturally distant from the centres of English-language literary activity” (Lloyd, 437). In the 20th century and beyond Welsh authors writing in English therefore sought to add a certain degree of Welshness to their writings. This they achieved by concerning themselves with, and making references to, Wales, its landscape, history, literature and culture (Collins, *Keeping the Flag Flying*, 37). A distinctive feature of Welsh writing in English is certainly its dealing with Wales’s bilingual and bicultural identity. This consciousness of the existence of two linguistic communities and two literatures significantly influences the English-language literary tradition of Wales in the 20th century (Lloyd, 435). In the 1980s and 90s, the need to openly demonstrate allegiance to Wales by addressing “Welsh” topics seems to have ceased, and most Anglophone authors appear rather disinterested in the fields of culture and politics (M. W. Thomas, *Anglo-Welsh Literature*, 66). The interest in bilingualism, however, still prevails today, though, in many cases, the authors’ perspectives have changed. Until very recently, Welsh authors writing in English and concerning themselves with cultures of Welsh-speaking Wales set out to learn Welsh rather late in life. But today, many Welsh writers composing literature in English are actually bilingual, and some even employ both languages in literary production (Heinz, *Literatur in Wales*, 344).

Thus, the bicultural and bilingual situation of Wales had a great impact on its literary traditions. Discussions about the Welshness of these literatures in the 20th century were heavily influenced by the political and linguistic changes in Wales at the time, but today Wales has more or less come to accept its dual literary tradition. Nevertheless, the debate about what the concept of “Welshness” in general comprises is still going on. Therefore, this notion will be examined more closely in the following section.

2.4. Framing Welsh Identity

*Not British; certainly
not English. Welsh
with all the associations [...].
(Expatriates, 1-3)*

The question of Welsh identity and its dimensions has been a dominant subject of public discourse throughout the 20th century and beyond. The issue was addressed by many (nationalist) politicians and members of the Welsh intelligentsia. It seems that very often the definition of Welshness relies on the argument that it is opposed to Englishness and also Britishness. Therefore, Welshness is frequently defined ex negativo as non-English and sometimes even non-British. The opposition to the term “Britishness” derives mainly from the notion that British and English are used synonymously with both words denoting “English”. That this perception of synonymy was widespread can be observed in *Diwedd Prydeindod, The End of Britishness*, a book by Gwynfor Evans, a former leader of Plaid Cymru, which was published in 1981:

Beth yw Prydeindod? Y peth cyntaf i’w sylweddoli yw mai gair arall ydyw am Seisnigrwydd; gair gwleidyddol, a gododd o fodolaeth gwladwriaeth Brydeinig, sy’n ymestyn Seisnigrwydd dros fywyd y Cymry, y Sgotiaid, a’r Gwyddelod. Os gofynnir beth yw’r gwahaniaeth rhwng diwylliant Seisnig a diwylliant Prydeinig sylweddolir nad oes ddim gwahaniaeth. Yr un ydynt. Yr iaith Brydeinig yw’r iaith Saesneg. Addysg Brydeinig yw addysg Seisneg. Teledu Prydeinig yw teledu Saesneg. Y wasg Brydeinig yw’r Goron Seisnig, a brenhines Prydain yw brenhines Lloegr. Cyfansoddiad Prydain yw’r hyn a alwai Dicey, y prif awdurdod arno, ‘the English constitution’. Y Senedd Brydeinig yw’r hyn a elwir yn nheithl cyfrol awdurdodol Kenneth Mackenzie, *The English Parliament*. Yr iaith Saesneg yw’r

unig iaith a ganiateir yn honno. Nid oes cyfraith Brydeinig - dim on cyfraith Seisnig a Sgotaidd. Seisnigrwydd ydyw Prydeindod. (qtd. in Gramich, *Cymru*, 99)¹

Therefore, if Britishness is perceived as synonymous with Englishness it does not serve well as a term expressing the identity of Welsh-identifying British - even though the term British originally referred to the British- (or Brythonic-)speaking inhabitants of Great Britain. “British” as a reference to all people living in Great Britain (and today Northern Ireland) did not come into use until the Act of Union with Scotland in 1707 (Gramich, *Cymru*, 105).

Furthermore, Welsh hostility towards this notion of Britishness is strongly linked to the perception of England’s hegemony within the Empire and the British state and the idea that Wales as one of the Celtic countries was actually England’s very first colony. This perception of the Celtic countries, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, as colonies is, of course, problematic since these nations were, as parts of Britain, colonisers themselves. Nevertheless, historical and cultural similarities in the situations of Wales and British colonies overseas support this idea, which has led to a discussion of the matter of Wales in a post-colonial context (Gramich, *Cymru*, 98; Bohata, 2-13)

But rejection of the term “British” was not and is not shared by all Welsh. Still, it is very prominent and by no means unrepresentative. In the second half of the 20th century surveys were carried out which showed that the majority of people living in Wales considered themselves “Welsh” rather than “British” (Gramich, *Cymru*, 97). Only able to choose between these two options, in 1979, 58% of the Welsh respondents considered themselves Welsh, while 34% saw themselves as British. These numbers have remained fairly stable ever since. In 2003, for example, 60% of the respondents considered themselves Welsh and 27% British (Uberoi and McLean, 48).

Since the 1990s, however, surveys have begun to include more options for the respondents to choose from. This change sheds light on the existence of a dual identity in Wales: Being able to choose amongst different categories such as “Welsh not

¹ What is Britishness? The first thing to realize is that it is another words for Englishness; it is a political word which arose from the existence of the British state and which extends Englishness over the lives of the Welsh, the Scots and the Irish. If one asks what the difference is between English culture and British culture one realizes that there is no difference. They are the same. The British language is the English language. British education is English education. British television is English television. The British Press is the English Pres. The British Crown is the English Crown, and the Queen of Britain is the Queen of England. The British Constitutions is called by Dicey, the main authority on the subject, ‘the English constitution’. The British Parliament is that which is termed in Kenneth Mackenzie’s authoritative book, *The English Parliament*. The English language is the only language it is permitted to speak there. There is no British Law - there is only English and Scottish Law. Britishness is Englishness. (transl. by Gramich in Gramich, *Cymru*, 99-100)

British”, “More Welsh”, “Equally”, “More British”, “British not Welsh” and “Other/none” the respondents answered slightly differently. Still, 38-47% considered themselves “Welsh not British” or “More Welsh” in the censuses of the 1990s and 2000s. But there were also 26-35% who saw themselves as equally British and Welsh (Uberoi and McLean, 48-49).

Nevertheless, these numbers also suggest that the majority of people living in Wales considers themselves Welsh in some respect. It is therefore necessary to look at what the notion of Welshness comprises. On the whole, studies in identity formation have shown that there are many different dimensions of identity which must be taken into account when attempting an illustration of national identity. Among the most common markers of national identity are ancestry, language, territory, political union/nation/state, customs, traditions, and religion (Safran, 77-91). The concept of Welsh identity also seems to incorporate these aspects, both as regards the 20th century and today. Until the 1980s there was a strong ethnic approach to Welsh identity, meaning that having Welsh ancestry was the decisive factor for a person’s Welshness. In the course of the 70s, however, the focus began to shift to language and, to some extent, territory (M. Jones, 18-20).

Given Wales’s bilingual situation it comes as no surprise that language played and still plays a major role in identity formation in Wales. Indeed, it can be claimed that “language has had the largest part in defining [Welsh] national identity” (Pittock, *Celtic Identity*, 116). This dominance of the language issue has led Aitchison and Carter (3) to state that “to be Welsh, in any meaningful way, a person must speak, or at least understand, Welsh. Otherwise he or she is no more than someone dwelling in a defined area called Wales”.

The discussion about attitudes towards Britishness, language and territory in Wales has led to the construction of a “Three-Wales Model”. According to this model, Wales is split up into three territories: “British Wales”, “Welsh Wales” and “Y Fro Gymraeg”. The inhabitants of these areas can be identified as British-identifying English-speaking Welsh, Welsh-identifying English-speaking Welsh and Welsh-identifying Welsh-speaking Welsh, respectively. The territory inhabited by the first group is mainly the border country, while the third group can be identified as living in the Welsh-speaking rural areas of Wales. The area in-between can be attributed to the Welsh-identifying English-speaking Welsh (Gramich, *Cymru*, 97-98; M. Jones, 18).

Furthermore, the foundation and rise to prominence of national institutions in the course of the 20th century is of importance for Welsh national identity. The founding of the National Library and the University of Wales at the turn of the last century and later on the establishment of the Welsh Office, the Welsh Arts Council, the Wales Tourist Board, the Welsh Rugby Union, the Sports Council for Wales, and other institutions has led to the creation of “an increasingly strong ‘proto-State’” (M. Jones, 19) and helped to develop a sense of nationhood (M. Jones, 19; R. M. Jones, 353-355).

Other dimensions of Welsh national identity include the media, religion and class. According to a survey carried out by Robert Andersen in 2001, national media play a role in identity formation. Reading national newspapers rather than broadsheet newspapers, which tend to be supportive of the British state, correlates with a strong Welsh national identity. Furthermore, Welshness seems to be tightly linked to membership in the Welsh Calvinist church. Most significant is the relationship between Welsh identity and social class. The highest percentage of Welsh-identifying Welsh is to be found in the Welsh working class whereas upper and upper middle class Welsh citizens are more likely to consider themselves British (Andersen, 15-18).

In the 21st century, the notion of Welshness is still constantly shifting and changing. In the face of a heterogeneous society Welsh identity is becoming increasingly diverse and the old identity markers such as language and religion are becoming obsolete (M. Jones, 22). Framing Welsh identity in its entirety is more or less an impossible task since notions of national identity are subject to numerous factors and influences of which only the most prominent have been covered. Nevertheless, for the 20th century, which is the time span of interest for this thesis, it can be stated that Welsh identity comprised all aspects mentioned above, which provide a framework of reference and an idea what Welshness is considered to comprise: most importantly language, class, anti-English attitude, ancestry, territory, nation and national institutions, religion as well as Welsh sports, the media and the press.

3. R.S. Thomas and Wales

3.1. Personal Bilingualism and the Question of Identity

This devilish Bilingualism!
(*The Creative Writer's Suicide*, 171)

R.S. Thomas is wellknown as an English-language Welsh poet. He was brought up by English-speaking parents who spoke Welsh as children but lost most of it when they were very young and never used it at home (Buuren, 13). Particularly his mother is said to have excluded Welsh from her son's life by, for example, purposely avoiding her Welsh-speaking relations (Rogers, 66). Thus, Thomas was raised as an English-speaking child in Wales. Later in his life he frequently expressed his grief concerning the fact that Welsh was not his first language. This can be observed in Thomas's own accounts of his youth in his autobiographical writings, especially the third-person narrative *Neb*, which translates as *No-one*. Thomas spent his first years in Liverpool and one day was taken to the beach at Hoylake, a place from which Wales can be seen across the sea. In *Neb*, he writes: "One day on the beach at Hoylake his father directed his attention to a row of mountains far away over the sea to the west. 'That's Wales,' he said, in English" (R.S. Thomas, *No-one*, 28). The addition of "in English" at the end is striking. Clearly, Thomas uses this story to emphasise that at the beginning of his life, he and his parents were outside Wales - both, from a physical and a linguistic viewpoint, a state he continually tried to change in the course of his life. The last sentence also reveals that Thomas seems to feel that there is a certain inconsistency in referring to and speaking about Wales in English, a view which he also frequently expressed in his lectures, articles and poems (cf. R.S. Thomas, *Cymru*, 5; R.S. Thomas, *Undod*, 156; Brown, *Screen of Eternity*, 193). When Thomas's parents moved back to Wales they went to Holyhead in Anglesey. There, R.S. Thomas went to school and came into contact with Welsh as a school subject. According to his own account, though, no knowledge of Welsh remained in his memory from his school days (R.S. Thomas, *No-one*, 32). It was not before the 1940s during his time at Maelor Saesneg in the parish of Hanmer that Thomas, as an adult and young vicar, decided to learn Welsh. His wish to learn the language was clearly linked to the desire to become rector of a Welsh-speaking parish; he experienced *hiraeth*, a yearning (GPG, 3494), for the Welsh hills. (R.S. Thomas, *No-one*, 49-50; Rogers 120-122). In Maelor Saesneg Thomas

realised that this was not where he belonged: “That was not my place, on the plain amongst Welshmen with English accents and attitudes. I set about learning Welsh, in order to be able to return to the true Wales of my imagination” (R.S. Thomas, *Former Paths*, 10). He continued his studies during his time at Manafon, especially with the support of H. D. Owen, the reverend of Penarth chapel. Finally, in the early 1950s he gave his first public talk in Welsh (Rogers, 164). In *Former Paths*, another one of his autobiographical works, he recounts the evening on which he addressed the congregation of the chapel at Penarth:

“I remember the evening: the chapel with its oil lamps, the wind blowing outside, and some twenty local farmers and their wives assembled to listen to that oddity - an Englishman who had learned Welsh. Mr Owen introduced me, asking the audience not to laugh if I made a mistake. Then off I went for about three-quarters of an hour like a ship driven in all directions by the wind. Somehow or other I reached dry land, and after a little discussion everyone went home.” (R.S. Thomas, *Former Paths*, 15)

From the 50s onwards, Thomas can be assumed to have been fluent in Welsh and when he moved to Eglwys-fach he was able to hold bilingual services (R.S. Thomas, *No-one*, 65). But it was not until 1967, when Thomas moved to Aberdaron that he finally became vicar of a Welsh-speaking parish. From then on he lived in a community where he could hear and speak Welsh on a daily basis. Therefore, it was at Aberdaron that Thomas felt that his personal pilgrimage had ended. He had finally become a Welsh-speaking Welshman living in Wales, a *Cymro* living in *Cymru Gymraeg*. As a result, it was at that time that Thomas stopped writing poetry about Wales. “To tell the truth, his muse had dried up” (R.S. Thomas, *No-one*, 73), Thomas once explained. He also no longer felt the necessity to emphasise his Welshness in his poetic writings (R.S. Thomas, *No-one*, 77). These observations allow an insight into Thomas’s perception of his own identity. The poet has often been described and equally often presented himself as an outsider and stranger in Wales and a man in internal exile in his own country due to the fact that English rather than Welsh was his first language (Morris, 116; Brown, *Screen of Eternity*, 182; M. W. Thomas, *For Wales, See Landscape*, 1). Thomas seems to have considered his bilingualism a curse or at the very least a mixed blessing (cf. R.S. Thomas, *Creative Writer’s Suicide*, 172). In his autobiographies he frequently expresses his regret about having been raised in English, and all throughout *Neb* and other autobiographical works there is one question lurking in the background: “How would

things have turned out if he [i.e. Thomas] had been able to speak Welsh from the beginning?” (R.S. Thomas, *No-one*, 77).

Thomas experienced his bilingualism as a state of “woundedness” and as a “scar on his personality” (Morgan, 4). He felt a constant tension between writing in English and wanting to compose literature in Welsh in order to contribute to the Welsh, not the English, literary tradition (Brown, *Screen of Eternity*, 184-185; N. Thomas and Barnie, 26-29; Morgan, 4-7). He also raised this issue in a conversation with Saunders Lewis when he, as a young poet, met the author and activist for the first time. Thomas discussed his thoughts and feelings with Lewis, who allegedly simply replied that exactly “out of such [i.e. linguistic] tensions art was born” (N. Thomas and Barnie, 28). Indeed, Thomas’s production of poetry on the topic in the subsequent years should prove Lewis right.

3.1.1. Bilingualism as a Stimulus for Literary Production

It certainly seems as if Saunders Lewis had indeed identified one of the key sources of inspiration of Thomas’s poetry. The poet’s inner linguistic conflict is central in his poetry. His personal struggle with his own bilingualism and regret that his proficiency in Welsh was not and never could be fully satisfactory, since it would never be his first language are conveyed on many occasions. The literary critic John Barnie summarises Thomas’s conflict as he describes it in his autobiography:

The problem of language is a nagging theme throughout *Neb*. R.S. Thomas has refined English in ways that only a great poet can, but to have achieved this in the very language that is destroying Welsh, the language of his nation and his spirit, is an irony almost too hard to bear. [...] This is one of the deepest rifts in a man divided against himself in complex ways. English is projected outwards here as ‘their’ language; yet it is his language too, the one which, through his profession of poetry, he had used to express his sensibility. Because of this, such hatred of English is a form of self-hatred. (qtd. in Buuren, 30)

Thomas felt he was compelled to use English for the purpose of writing poems since it was his first language, “a hard fact of linguistic experience that he seems continually to regret and that is expressed in numerous disguises in his poems” (R. G. Thomas, 19). Thomas’s most important and most famous work about the discrepancy of speaking English and being Welsh certainly is his poem “Welsh”. It is perhaps his “most fulsome

and desperate statement” on the Welsh language, which “embroils his own predicament” (Ward, 68):

Why must I write so?
I'm Welsh, see:
A real Cymro,
Peat in my veins.
I was born late;
She claimed me
Brought me up nice,
No hardship;
Only the one loss,
I can't speak my own
Language - Iesu,
All those good words;
And I outside them
Picking up alms
From blonde strangers.
[...]
I want my own speech, to be made
Free of its terms,
I want the right word
For the gut's trouble,
When I see this land
With its farms empty
Of folk, and the stone
Manuscripts blurring
In wind and rain
I want the town even,
The open door
Framing a slut
So she can speak Welsh
And bear children
To accuse the womb
That bore me. (Welsh, 1-15; 20-36)

The speaker of the poem clearly feels the need to state openly that he - the speaker is clearly male since he refers to himself as *Cymro* and not *Cymraes* - is Welsh despite the fact that his mother tongue is English. He is a Welshman through and through and even argues to have peat rather than blood running in his veins and keeping his body alive. But there is “the one loss”, the loss of the Welsh language, which, as a “real Cymro” should have been his mother tongue. This loss evokes a crisis of identity since the speaker seems to be of the opinion that his Welshness is less evident than that of a native speaker of Welsh. He feels cheated, deprived of his own language and forced to be dependent on the language of the “blonde strangers”, the English.

In the second half, the desperation of the speaker becomes even more evident. Upon seeing the abandoned farms and witnessing the depopulation of the Welsh countryside, the author overcomes his dislike of the industrialised towns and cities and has his figure “want the town even”, which, “from this poet, is to concede a lot” (Ward, 69). Furthermore, the play on the double meaning and repeated use of the verb “want” in lines 20, 23 and 29 should not be overlooked (Ward, 69).

Finally, it becomes evident that the speaker would give and put up with anything to change the fact that he is not a native speaker of Welsh. Moreover, he takes the “womb/ That bore” him to task, which is held responsible for the speaker’s current desperation and agony. The womb can be identified as the speaker’s mother who passed on her own first language to her child, which then became the speaker’s mother tongue. Or perhaps, on a more abstract level, the womb could also refer to England, the supremacy of which resulted in the spread of the English language all over Wales and created the English-speaking Welsh in the first place.

For rather obvious reasons, this poem also lends itself to an autobiographical interpretation. The facts presented in the poem match Thomas’s situation as an English-speaking child brought up in Wales, as a Welsh writer obliged to use an idiom which, he feels, is not his “true” native language, as well as his views as a Welsh cultural nationalist. M. Wynn Thomas (*Keeping His Pen Clean*, 73-74) has argued for an autobiographical and psychological interpretation on an even deeper level. In his opinion, what is behind this poem is Thomas’s “hatred of his snobbishly anti-Welsh mother” (M. W. Thomas, *Keeping His Pen Clean*, 74). M. Wynn Thomas (*Keeping His Pen Clean*, 74) explicitly refers to the last two lines of the poem, which indeed suggest that the mother is to be held responsible for raising the child in English rather than Welsh (Brown, *R.S. Thomas*, 9).

But of course one should not simplistically identify the speaker of the poem with R.S. Thomas, although the personal tone of the poem can hardly be denied. The frustrations and central tension, which is language, are powerfully expressed and can be found beneath the surface in many of his poems (Brown and M. W. Thomas, 166).

Another important poem in this context is “The Old Language”. The title phrase, of course, refers again to the Welsh language. While the phrase might not be too common a reference to Welsh in English, it should be noted that the Welsh equivalent, *yr hen iaith*, is basically synonymous with *Cymraeg*. It is interesting though that the poem itself does not deal with the Welsh language but rather with those who threaten its

existence. In “The Old Language” Thomas focuses on England and its role in depriving the Welsh of their mother tongue (Hooker, 34; Conran, 191):

England, what have you done to make the speech
My fathers used a stranger to my lips,
An offence to the ear, a shackle on the tongue
That would fit new thoughts to an abiding tune?
Answer me now. The workshop where they wrought
Stands idle, and thick dust covers their tolls.
The blue metal of streams, the copper and gold
Seams in the wood are all unquarried; the leaves’
Intricate filigree falls, and who shall renew
Its brisk pattern? When spring wakens the hearts
Of the young children to sing, what song shall be theirs? (The Old Language, 1-11)

The speaker of this poem openly accuses England of being responsible for the decline of the Welsh language in general and for the speaker’s personal inability to speak the language of his forefathers. The phrases “a stranger to my lips”, “an offence to the ear” and “a shackle on the tongue” are used to emphasise the degree of foreignness of the Welsh language which the speaker experiences. The questions in the second half of the poem underline the speaker’s fear that the language will not survive: who will continue the work of the fathers and who will teach the children to speak and sing in Welsh rather than English?

The English are also the target of the speaker’s anger in Thomas’s socio-political poem “It Hurts Him to Think”. In the poem, the English are considered the major threat to the Welsh language and Welsh social infrastructure (Wigginton, 120). The English people and their language are synonymous with their industrialist culture which they brought to Wales (Garlick and Mathias, 38):

The
industrialists came, burrowing
in the corpse of a nation
for its congealed blood. 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. (It Hurts Him to Think, 20-28)

The poem presents the English as the colonisers, indeed as necrophagous invaders, who exploit the “corpse of the nation”, which can be interpreted as the Welsh coalfields but also, on another level, as Wales’s societal, cultural and linguistic demise (Wigginton,

120). Chris Wigginton (120) has argued that the poem focuses on the latter aspect of language and deals with “the naturalization of a colonizing language and the subsequent stigmatization of an indigenous language”.

The second half of the poem is again very often interpreted autobiographically. If the lyrical self was identical with the author, it would be possible to identify the “squalor of/ their feeding”, into which Thomas was born, as Cardiff, the centre of the industrial south and Thomas’s place of birth. From this point of view, this poem is also another poetic expression of his difficult relationship with his domineering mother (M. W. Thomas, *Keeping His Pen Clean*, 67).

But to reduce this poem to its potential autobiographical content is to ignore other aspects of this work. Wigginton agrees with M. Wynn Thomas’s interpretation of the “squalor of/ their feeding” as Cardiff but he goes beyond the autobiographical level and considers the industrial city a colonial product (Wigginton, 120; M. W. Thomas, *Keeping His Pen Clean*, 67-68). In his opinion, Thomas “represents the colonial enterprise as corrupting the cycle of life through its infection of the mother’s milk” (Wigginton, 120).

Finally, the speaker of the poem presents the English language as emetic and realises that as long as he speaks and writes in English his talk and writings will remain English rather than Welsh. They will be a contribution to the culture of the coloniser (Wigginton, 120), and his speeches and writing will be “still theirs”.

Thomas frequently addresses the question whether Welsh writing in English contributes to the Welsh or the English literary tradition in his lectures and speeches. As much as the linguistic conflict inspired him to write poetry, he seems to have always felt that a bilingual author was continually committing suicide as a writer (R.S. Thomas, *Creative Writer’s Suicide*, 171).

3.1.2. *Hunanladdiad y Llenor: The Creative Writer’s Suicide*

This devilish bilingualism! O, I know about all the arguments in favour of it: how it enriches one’s personality, how it sharpens one’s mind, how it enables one to enjoy the best of two worlds and so on. Very likely. But to anyone in Wales who desires to write it is a millstone around his neck. (R.S. Thomas, *Creative Writer’s Suicide*, 171)

This extract from *The Creative Writer's Suicide* neatly summarises Thomas's attitude towards his personal bilingualism, especially as it concerns his literary work. This lecture, which Thomas originally delivered in Welsh in 1977 and which was first published under its Welsh title *Hunanladdiad y Llenor*, deals with the language and identity of Welsh writers in general and Thomas himself in particular. It addresses the questions of which language a creative writer should compose in and to which literary tradition he contributes when he chooses to write in either language spoken in Wales. Thomas compares the bilingualism of the (Anglo-)Welsh writer with a millstone around his neck, a metaphor which evidently suggests that the creative writers of Wales are under a certain pressure deriving from the linguistic situation in Wales. Thomas believes that the best literature comes from a monoglot nation, and therefore, in his opinion, the bilingual Welsh writers who have Welsh as their first language must resist the temptation to write in English or even to incorporate English loans in their Welsh writing as their work should reflect as little influence from English as possible. On the other hand, the Anglo-Welsh writer - a term Thomas explicitly vows to use solely for the sake of convenience in this lecture - is more or less a lost cause. Obligated to write in English and therefore contributing to English rather than Welsh culture, the "Anglo-Welsh writer is neither one thing nor the other. He keeps going in a no-man's land between two cultures" (R.S. Thomas, *Creative Writer's Suicide*, 172) (R.S. Thomas, *Creative Writer's Suicide*, 171-174). Thomas continues, in a tone very similar to that of his poems discussed above:

Whatever may be said to the contrary, therefore, he is contributing to English culture, and deserves the strictures of his fellow-Welshmen on that account. [...] Woe that I was born! Who has suffered, if I have not suffered? For I bear in my body the marks of this conflict. Who in fact is this vaunted Anglo-Welshman - one who knows that he is Welsh, or likes to think of himself as such, but is constantly conscious of the fact that he speaks a foreign language. (R.S. Thomas, *Creative Writer's Suicide*, 172)

In an interview given in 1990, Thomas expresses a similar attitude towards Anglo-Welsh literature. He states that "it seems more impractical than ever that there should be a hyphenated literature, especially in verse. What is written in Welsh is Welsh literature of varying quality. What is written in English has to strain very hard indeed to merit the description of Welsh writing in English, which is nonsense anyway" (N. Thomas and Barnie, 28-29).

However, Thomas has not always held this opinion. Indeed, his answers to a questionnaire from the magazine *Wales* in 1946 suggest that he did not consider language as important for defining a writer's Welshness. To the question whether he saw himself as an Anglo-Welsh writer Thomas responded: "No! A Welsh writer. [...] The question of a writer's language is a mere matter of historical accident, and will seem to have little ultimate significance" (Rogers, 158-159). There is no record of Thomas's repeating this view concerning the importance of language, which is indeed very unlike his later statements, after this (Rogers, 158-159).

In the post-war period, Thomas also seems to have been a rather keen supporter of the Anglo-Welsh movement. As a young poet, he hoped that "Anglo-Welsh literature was only a halfway house on the road back to Welsh" (N. Thomas and Barnie, 26) and "might simply be a phase in the re-cymrification of Wales" (qtd. in Bianchi, 158). In his opinion, Anglo-Welsh writers should steep themselves in all things Welsh in order to "justify the hyphen" (N. Thomas and Barnie, 26). According to him, they should express

a very definite attitude to life and affairs, namely the constant realisation that he lives in or belongs to a country of great age, that by geography and tradition has developed an individual way of life, and that his chief duty as an artist is to beautify, to purify, and enlarge that way of life. After all, why chant the praise of Helen when Nest remains unsung? Why lament Troy fallen when Mathrafal lies in ruins? (qtd. in R. Jenkins, 50-51)

Above all, they should concern themselves with the Welsh language. In 1952, he expressed this view in an article in the magazine *Y Fflam* (Rogers, 169-170): "Gan fod yng Nghymru famiaith sy'n dal i ffynnu, ni all Cymro o'r iawn ryw edrych ar Saesneg ond fel modd i ail-ennyn diddordeb yn y diwylliant Cymraeg ac i arwain pobl yn ôl i'r famiaith."² (R.S. Thomas, *Llendyddiaeth Eingl-Gymreig*, 51).

Once Thomas even seems to have hoped to be able to get rid of the hyphen in the sense that all writers of Wales will again be Welsh writers, whatever their language. His model was Irish literature: "We must not [...] forget that we [i.e. the Anglo-Welsh] also are Welshmen. Ireland has contrived to remain Irish despite her use of English, and there is no overwhelming reason why we should not succeed also, provided we can get rid of that foolish epithet Anglo-Welsh" (R.S. Thomas, *Scottish Writing*, 26).

² "Since there is in Wales a thriving mother tongue, a true Welshman can regard English only as a means of rekindling interest in Welsh literature and of leading people back to the mother tongue" (R.S. Thomas, *Anglo-Welsh Literature*, 53).

Later on, however, Thomas seems to have lost faith in this approach and joined the ranks of those who claimed that Anglo-Welsh literature is nothing else than English literature. Thomas's change of mind might be linked to the perception that the Welsh language is a decisive factor of Welshness and the most evident aspect which distinguishes the Welsh from the English. In his prose work *Cymru or Wales?* Thomas writes:

One must make a stand. Hyphenisation is betrayal. Whatever the situation may be in other countries, in Wales we have by now only the language to distinguish us. One cannot be too flexible. [...] [I]f you are a writer and write in English, even about Welsh themes, you are contributing to English literature. Whereas if you write in Welsh, no matter what your subject-matter, it becomes Welsh literature. Any hawing, any concessions or qualifications, and one is on a slippery slope. (R.S. Thomas, *Cymru*, 30)

Thomas's personal solution to this problem seems to have been to write poetry in English while he tried his hand at prose in Welsh, a rather interesting distinction which deserves to be discussed more fully.

3.1.3. Poetry vs. Prose - Two Genres, Two Languages

As has already been stated, in the course of his adult life, R.S. Thomas was able to reach high linguistic competence in Welsh. His knowledge of Welsh enabled him to partake in Welsh-language public discourse as early as 1945. The earliest of his prose works include essays on bird species in Wales. These were soon followed by letters to the weekly Welsh-language newspaper *Y Llan*, *The Church*, in which Thomas takes the Church in Wales to task for its failure to assume the role of spiritual and moral leadership in post-war Wales (Brown, *Screen of Eternity*, 183-184). In particular, in these letters he criticises the church for its "un-Welsh attitude" and accuses it of being "a reflection of the extensive anglicisation [sic]" of Wales (qtd. in Brown, *Screen of Eternity*, 183).

However, Thomas's works in the Welsh language are confined to prose writings. There is next to no poetry in Welsh but quite a few essays and lectures written and held in his second language. In his essay *Pe Medrwn Yr Iaith*, which is translated as *If I knew the Language*, as well as in *Hunanladdiad y Llenor*, Thomas explains his reasons for choosing English for writing poetry. He is convinced that no one can ever achieve the competences necessary to write poetry in a second language acquired as late as he

learned Welsh. Thomas feels he lacks the “intuitive sensitivity to the intricacies and nuances of the [Welsh] language” and the “confidence to make the critical discriminations which are a fundamental part of the process of poetic composition” (Brown, *Screen of Eternity*, 184) which the native speaker has. Thomas believes “that self-criticism is a part of the creative process, and that anybody who is unable to do this thoroughly and directly is certain to fail as a writer and particularly as a poet. That is my [i.e. Thomas’s] main reason for not writing in Welsh” (R.S. Thomas, *Creative Writer’s Suicide*, 174). Therefore, to compose poetry in which the poet expresses his most profound thoughts and feelings (“rhaid iddo sgryfennu yn ei famiaith”) he, the poet, must write in his mother tongue, since, according to Thomas, “neb a sgrifennodd farddoniaeth wir fawr mewn ail iaith” (R.S. Thomas, *Pe Medrwn yr Iaith*, 121), no-one has ever written truly great poetry in a second language. However debatable this view might be, it is interesting to note that this was R.S. Thomas’s viewpoint. The poet elaborates on this in an interview with Ned Thomas and John Barnie where he states:

[...]poetry is language at its highest level of articulation. [...]when I write a poem I am deploying language at a higher tension, in a more concise and memorable way than when writing prose. And its success depends on the naturalness and instinctiveness which comes to me from my mother tongue, my first language, which happens to be English. I am drawing on resources of resonance and memorability which are the fiber of the language as it has been formed over the centuries. (N. Thomas and Barnie, 42)

According to Thomas, the language in which a poet writes poetry must be the language of his dreams (R.S. Thomas, *Pe Medrwn yr Iaith*, 121). He expressed this thought on various occasions. In a letter to Raymond Garlick in December 1982 Thomas writes about his wish to produce poems in Welsh and the fact that English remains the language of his thoughts:

I shall be a septuagenarian next March, so Macmillan are bringing out a selection of later poems to balance the earlier section. I wish they were in Welsh. Awake at night, I try to get back to sleep by composing *englynion*. I generally get back to sleep, but without the *englyn*. I don’t know how. *Yr hen iaith Saesneg diawledig yn yr isymwybod*. (qtd. in Rogers, 279)

The last sentence is of particular importance: “The old devilish English language in the subconscious” (Rogers, 279), and therefore it is in English that he must write his poetry. Were he to write poetry in Welsh he would not be able to write poetry of the same quality as his English poetry. Moreover, he would have to depend on others for correction and criticism even though he has always thought self-criticism to be an

essential part of the creative process. He once confessed that he would have regarded it a personal failure as a writer if he had not been able to take all steps of this process entirely by himself (Buuren, 30).

But this anecdote also reveals that Thomas indeed tried his hand at Welsh-language poetry, though only two poems have ever been published. The only one available and referred to in secondary literature about Thomas is “Y Gwladwr”, “The Peasant”, which in many ways can be claimed to resemble Thomas’s English poem “A Peasant”. It was published by Euros Bowen in the journal *Y Fflam* in 1950 and even drew praise from Welsh-language poets (J. W. Davies, 37; N. Thomas and Barnie, 41; Rogers, 170). Still, many critics are of the opinion that the poem does “little more than justify R.S.’s belief that his own Welsh isn’t instinctive enough for the needs of poetry in that language” (J. W. Davies, 37). Indeed, the editor had to correct some mistakes before publishing the poem. Raymond Garlick remembers Bowen’s dilemma: “There were some linguistic mistakes, so what was he to do, tell R.S. or correct them? He quietly corrected them, and Ronald would have seen that and he would have known what it meant. I don’t think there were many poems in Welsh after that” (qtd. in Rogers, 170).

As far as his prose is concerned, Thomas does not seem to have deemed this kind of instinctiveness necessary. He once stated that he simply felt that he had learned Welsh too late in life to make it the language of his poetry and as a result had to content himself with writing prose in Welsh, which he does not find as difficult as composing poetry (N. Thomas and Barnie, 42-43). It, therefore, becomes evident, that prose was ultimately of a secondary nature for him (Brown, *Screen of Eternity*, 184) and that Welsh was only to be the medium for his prose writings. These included numerous letters to editors, sermons, lectures, speeches, and essays on various topics. What is noteworthy is that Thomas’s prose works are significantly more nationalist in tone than his poems (Triggs, 5). Thomas frequently addresses the question of Welsh Identity, for example in *Cymru or Wales*, *Undod*, and *Pe Medrwn yr Iaith*, of which only the first was originally printed in English, and constantly expresses his worries about the future of the Welsh language (Brown, *Screen of Eternity*, 182-193). The views presented in the prose works can, of course, be regarded as Thomas’s own, while this cannot be assumed simplistically for his poetry. Still, a nationalist tone has frequently been ascribed to Thomas’s pieces of either genre. Therefore, it seems necessary to explore Thomas’s relationship with Welsh nationalism during the 20th century in more detail in the following chapter.

3.2. R.S. Thomas and Welsh Nationalism

*We were a people and are so yet.
[...] we will arise,
Armed, but not in the old way.
(Welsh History, 26; 29-30)*

Lines such as these are probably responsible for Thomas's public image as a diehard Welsh nationalist. Nationalistic lines and attitudes are to be found throughout his poetic work and, probably even more so, in his prose. Therefore, this chapter aims to examine Thomas's attitude towards, and involvement in, the nationalist movement in 20th-century Wales.

Thomas's nationalism is, first and foremost, a cultural nationalism. His primary concern is the culture, language and identity of Wales and its separation from that of England. He strongly opposes the term "Britishness" since, in his opinion, it is synonymous with Englishness: "Mwgd ydi Prydeindod. Dano nid oes ond un genedl, sef Lloegr" (R.S. Thomas, *Undod*, 155), "Britishness is a mask. Beneath it there is only one nation, England" (Gramich, *Cymru*, 97). Thomas also strives to emphasise the fact that England and Wales are two separate entities and were once even separate kingdoms. Today the Prince of Wales is heir to the throne of England, for Thomas yet another example of English infiltration. This becomes evident when Thomas attacks this institution and claims: "My Prince was murdered in 1282" (R.S. Thomas, *Cymru*, 29; my italics).

As for Welshness, Thomas considers it strongly linked to Welsh culture and heritage. In his work *Cymru or Wales?*, in which he discusses the issue of Welsh identity and the decline of Welshness in the face of the English supremacy, he writes:

Let us determine that the nation that was able to produce the Laws of Hywel Dda, Y Mabinogi, the poetry of Dafydd ap Gwilym and the wonderful chiming of y *gynganedd* with its place-names and personal names, as well as the poetry of so many of its farms and residences, such as Hafod-y-Gân, Crud-yr-Awel, Hendre Gwenllian, Pentre'r Piod and so on, and the beauty of its girls with names to match, like Ceridwen and Angharad, shall also never be thought of as destined for extinction. (R.S. Thomas, *Cymru*, 32)

It is by no means coincidental that Thomas only mentions Welsh-language literature and Welsh-language place-names. In his opinion, Welsh culture is more or less synonymous with the Welsh language (R.S. Thomas, *Creative Writer's Suicide*, 172). "What is Wales", he asks in his article *Undod*, Unity, "without the mother tongue" (my

translation): “Beth yw Cymru heb y famiaith?” (R.S. Thomas, *Undod*, 156). He continues: “Os oes unrhyw un yn credu y gallai brofi blas Cymreig heb yr iaith, mae’n ei dwyllo’i hun. Mae pob mynydd a nant, pob fferm a lôn fach yn cyhoeddi i’r byd mai rhywbeth amgenach ydi tirwedd yng Nghyrmu”³ (R.S. Thomas, *Undod*, 156).

Thomas first came into contact with nationalism during his time at Manafon while learning Welsh (N. Thomas and Barnie, 25). When speaking of Thomas’s nationalist views, scholars often refer to his relationship with Saunders Lewis. As a young poet, Thomas evidently got into contact with the political writings of the politician and nationalist Lewis and went to see him (N. Thomas and Barnie, 26). In his autobiographical writings, Thomas recalls the day: “He went to Llanfarian to visit Saunders Lewis without a word of introduction. He was received kindly and began to speak in English about his ideals and plans, but in no time at all was led by Saunders to soldier on in his imperfect Welsh” (R.S. Thomas, *No-one*, 54). In his *Autobiographical Essay*, Thomas remembers: “I went with youthful braggadocio to ‘offer my services to Wales!’” (N. Thomas and Barnie, 26).

These services, however, did not mean to involve direct political activism, in which many young Welshmen and -women engaged during the 1960s and 70s. Rather than in acting, he saw the role of the poet in influencing others through his work. It comes as no surprise then, that Thomas’s poetry of the sixties includes his most hostile and bitter poems against the English (R.S. Thomas, *No-one*, 67).

Anti-English attitudes and nationalism in Thomas’s works, as well as in the Welsh nationalist movement, go together. England is constantly portrayed as the oppressor and Wales as its – though not wholly innocent – victim, which survived hundreds of years of oppression. In *Cymru or Wales?* he writes: “We could show these people that [...] we, y Cymry, are here still after over a thousand years of pressure upon us to renounce our birthright and allow ourselves to be absorbed by the more powerful and numerous English, as Wales and the Welsh have already done” (R.S. Thomas, *Cymru*, 26).

The threat of being absorbed by the English is omnipresent in Thomas’s writings and is probably related to the political realities of 20th-century Wales. Without an assembly of its own, Welsh politics was discussed at Westminster and Welsh MPs only formed a small number amongst the members of parliament. Thomas once commented on this particular matter and wrote: “We are represented in her [i.e. England’s]

³ “If anyone believes he can experience the Welshness of Wales without the language, he’s fooling himself. Every mountain and stream, every farm and little lane announces to the world that landscape is not mere landscape in Wales” (Brown, *Screen of Eternity*, 193).

Parliament as a sop to democracy and must endure the farce of always being out-voted by the superior number of the English constituencies on any matter of importance to Wales” (R.S. Thomas, *Cymru*, 10).

Thomas also blames the English for the outcome of the Welsh Referendum of 1979: “One mustn’t be naive. The English state doesn’t want to give Wales her freedom on a plate, as some optimistic Welsh people expect. The Referendum of 1979 showed that clearly enough. The offer was presented to the Welsh in such a way as to ensure its refusal” (R.S. Thomas, *No-one*, 95).

The lost referendum leads Thomas to reflect on Welsh freedom and how it might be reached one day. His outlook is rather pessimistic as he draws the conclusion that freedom can be best and most successfully achieved by rallying the forces and fighting:

The sadness of the thing is that the only way to win freedom is through fighting for it. That is the lesson of history. Though R.S. was a pacifist, as was fitting for a priest, he knew of no example to the contrary, except India. And to this day it is the people who have used violence who have made the deepest impression on their oppressors. [...] R.S. had been a pacifist on principle [...]. He couldn’t recommend violence, even in the Welsh cause. Unfortunately, the Englishman respects violence, as he respects those who oppose him. (R.S. Thomas, *No-one*, 95).

On the whole, Thomas’s political stance becomes more and more radical in the course of the 1980s and 90s, a time when the matter of Wales has already vanished from his poetry and retirement offered more time for political activities. At that time, Thomas is actively involved in the “Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament” and in campaigning for *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* and environmental protection (M. W. Thomas, *Keeping His Pen Clean*, 72; Brown, *R.S. Thomas*, 91; Gramich, *Cymru*, 100). In 1992, he claims that the only true Welsh identity is that of the *Cymro* or *Cymraes*, the Welsh speaker (Gramich, *Cymru*, 100): “To those of us who speak the Welsh language, that is *Cymraeg*, there is no such entity as Wales. This land in which we live is *Cymru*” (R.S. Thomas, *Cymru*, 6).

However, the peak had probably already been reached in 1988 when Thomas attracted hostile headlines in newspapers all over Britain for giving support to the activities of *Meibion Glyndŵr*, the Sons of Glyndŵr. The group began an arson campaign against the rising number of houses in Welsh-speaking communities that were being bought up by English people and used as second and summer homes. As a result, prices of local property increased and those few local young people who had the intention of remaining in their home districts were not able to afford the houses and

cottages. Furthermore, since the second-home owners were mainly present during the summer months, there was a significant decline in the year-round population of the villages concerned resulting also in a decrease of local services and amenities. In the course of the 1980s the group set around 150 absentee-owned second homes on fire and attacked the offices of those estate agents based in Shrewsbury and Liverpool who had facilitated the sale of Welsh properties (Brown, *R.S. Thomas*, 91; Guibernau, 122). In 1988, the group got some unexpected support from the avowed pacifist R.S. Thomas. He gave support to their activities despite the evident possibility that someone would be killed in one of their fires: “What is one death against the death of the whole Welsh nation?” (qtd. in Brown, *R.S. Thomas*, 91), Thomas asked. His comments were widely reported and, of course, condemned by the press, politicians and other officials. The leader of Plaid Cymru even compared the poet’s statement to the views of the European Right, especially the French ultra right-wing party Front National, and called him “a Celtic copy of Jean-Marie Le Pen” (Rogers, 285) (Brown, 91-92; Rogers, 284-286).

Challenged about his comments a couple of years later Thomas said in an interview:

Many people lost their heads completely over my remarks about Meibion Glyndŵr. What I said in answer to a loaded question was that I admired their courage and was glad that the Welsh spirit was not totally subdued. We know that if they are caught, they will be given massive sentences. They know it, too. Therefore it requires courage on their part to risk it. As regards force, I have also tried to provoke a debate, because England is very vulnerable here [...]. Many of England’s heroes, who were set subjects in school, were butchers. When her existence is threatened, England will always fight. Why is it right for her, but wrong for Wales? (N. Thomas and Barnie, 33).

Asked whether it was not “tantamount to inciting people to violence” (qtd. in Brown, *R.S. Thomas*, 92), the poet answered:

I don’t think so. It’s being quite reasonable. We have to be on the defensive in Wales because we are a small country of two and a half million people living alongside an English nation of 55 million people. When we talk about the death of one English person, we mean a physical death. But Christ said, ‘Don’t fear those that have the power to destroy a body, fear those that have the power to destroy both the body and the soul.’ And when you’re dealing with a nation, you’re dealing with a spiritual concept, and there’s no doubt that the soul of Wales, the identity of Wales, have been eroded and are being eroded further all the time. That is why I said that. (qtd. in Brown, *R.S. Thomas*, 92)

Thus, with the *Meibion Glyndŵr* incident, despite all assurances of Thomas’s belief in pacifism (Barnie, 150; N. Thomas and Barnie, 32) and that he “was not prepared to

incite others to do what [he] was not prepared to do [him]self” (N. Thomas and Barnie, 32), Thomas’s image as the prototype of the Welsh extremist was irrevocably cemented into the public memory.

3.3. R.S. Thomas and His Readers

*All day I'd looked in the face
What I had hoped 'twould be
To write for my own race
And the reality.
(Yeats qtd. in R. Jenkins, 50)*

It is these lines taken from the poem “The Fisherman” by William Butler Yeats which R.S. Thomas quoted upon being asked “For whom do you write?” by the magazine *Wales* in 1946 (R. Jenkins, 50). Unfortunately this answer is anything but explicit. Who is Thomas’s “own race”, who is his readership? Therefore, this chapter sets out to define the intended audience of Thomas’s work, especially his poetic work dealing with the matter of Wales.

It has been argued that Thomas’s work engages a very specific readership. According to Tony Bianchi (169), there are two main factors which determine the audience of Thomas’s poems: ideology and form. Generally speaking, Thomas’s ideology matches that of the Welsh-speaking middle-class. Therefore, his readers share a certain hostility towards science and regard urban life as un-Welsh, while rural values are in high esteem. They tend to have an essentialist concept of nationhood, which is “based on a selective view of the past and notions of an organic tradition” (Bianchi, 169), and believe in the significance of having an elite which defends this ideal and with it the Welsh language, which is considered its embodiment. Furthermore, the readers commonly deem the English-speaking Welsh to be outsiders in their own country who need to “align themselves with these values to overcome this alienation” (Bianchi, 169). They unite in the elevation of culture and literature, which forms “the surrogate religion which informs these convictions” (Bianchi, 169).

On the level of form, R.S. Thomas engages the reader as “an active and conscious subject in the discourse” (Bianchi, 170). In order to achieve this, he employs several methods which are basically common strategies of reader-inscription. These include

marginalisation of the subject, careful and subtle manipulation of viewpoint, and subversion of expectations (Bianchi, 171). An interesting case in this context is, for example, Thomas's poem "A Welsh Testament" (1-6):

All right, I was Welsh. Does it matter?
I spoke a tongue that was passed on
To me in the place I happened to be,
A place huddled between grey walls
Of cloud for at least half the year.
My word for heaven was not yours.

Here, reader-inscription is achieved by implied dialogue (1), questions (1), and direct address (6). But there is also another element which is not identical with the addressee. The speaker declares that "men sought us" (A Welsh Testament, 20):

I saw them stare
From their long cars, as I passed knee-deep
In ewes and wethers. I saw them stand
By the thorn hedges, watching me string
The far flocks on a shrill whistle.
And always there was their eyes; strong
Pressure on me: You are Welsh, they said;
Speak to us so; keep your fields free
Of the smell of petrol, the loud roar
Of hot tractors; we must have peace
And quietness.
Is a museum
Peace? I asked. [...]
I was in prison
Until you came; your voice was a key
Turning in the enormous lock
Of hopelessness. Did the door open
To let me out or yourselves in? (A Welsh Testament, 23-35; 43-47)

The third element is differentiated by the use of the third person pronoun "them" and by the strategy of distancing as they "stare from their long cars" and "stand by the thorn hedges". It becomes evident that "they" address the speaker in the same way as the reader. This implies that the reader is included in the judgement on the intruding stranger. Thus, the position of the reader seems to shift from that of a "privileged interlocutor" (Bianchi, 172) to that of the alien intruder. The readers must ask themselves whether they are synonymous with the tourist whose eyes place pressure on the subject and with the agent that helps the speaker escape from the "'prison' or 'museum' of history, language and religion" (Bianchi, 172) and aspire to that condition themselves (Bianchi, 172). Bianchi concludes:

The poem closes on an enigma, and while it is clearly ‘about’ the subject’s disaffection with his “drab role”, it is also concerned with the observer’s inability to address that fact and the problem of Welshness with which it is associated. A notion of Welshness is systematically dismantled by one of the *volk*. The observer remains either alienated or, if so moved, incorporated into the drama only as a further subject of elegy. (Bianchi, 172-173)

However, Geraint Evans (127) adds another important factor to this list which specifies Thomas’s audience: language. While Bianchi (176) defines Thomas’s audience as English-speaking, Evans (127) is of the opinion that the poet’s intended readership is a bilingual one, probably in the sense that Welsh is the second language. Evans’ main argument is the interconnectedness of Thomas’s Welsh-language works and English poetry. He argues that a knowledge of one text has become a precondition for understanding another and that only those who have read Thomas’s Welsh-language works can claim that their readings of the English poems are fully informed. This might of course be especially true for the time when Thomas’s Welsh-language works had not yet been translated into English. Indeed, Evans considers the fact that so many of Thomas’s prose works were translated into English, “eagerly read and quickly assimilated into the essential lists of sources for the study of his poetry” (Evans, 127) proof for his argument, and there certainly is something to it.

Thus, it can be stated that Thomas’s audience is one of sensitive witnesses, victims and outsiders (Bianchi, 175). Thomas has successfully been able to engage “an English [and Welsh]-speaking readership in Wales in a discourse from which it has been historically excluded - but engag[e] it, finally, only to render it impotent” (Bianchi, 176).

3.4. The Self-Invention of a Welsh Persona?

*I’m Welsh, see:
A real Cymro [...]
(Welsh, 2-3)*

So far, this thesis has discussed Thomas’s struggle with his bilingual identity, his nationalist attitudes and his institutionalisation in the Welsh Parnassus. It is evident that Thomas tried very hard to obtain a Welsh identity – or is it not? It has indeed been argued that Thomas’s Welshness is nothing but a neat construct created by a poet whose

personal identity was quite English (M. W. Thomas, *For Wales, See Landscape*, 19; Rogers, 37; 71). Of course, it is not the aim of this chapter to sketch Thomas's character or analyse the poet's psyche but it seems important to point out some evident ambivalences and contradictions in Thomas's self-presentation as a Welshman, his perception in public and by those who belonged to the inner circle of his family and friends.

The most important piece of work in this context is probably Thomas's autobiography *Neb*. It was originally written in Welsh and documents Thomas's lifelong attempt to transform himself into a Welshman (Barnie, 145). His efforts can be observed in a number of passages in his autobiography. For example, when Thomas speaks of his love for the Welsh countryside and writes about how he would escape from the town where he attended university once in a while to climb the hills and mountains of Snowdonia:

Yn awr ac yn y man cymerai ddiwrnod yn rhydd a dal bws am Abergwyngregyn. Dringo tua'r Foel Fras wedyn a cherdded ar hyd y Carneddau ac i lawr a i Fethesda i ddal bws yn ôl i Fangor. Y tro cyntaf iddo wneud hyn, wedi esgyn rhyw fryncyn a gweld y copaon yn eu gogoniant o'i flaen, torrodd allan i ganu 'Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau' gan daflu'i lais pitw yn erbyn y mynyddoedd mawreddog o'i gwmpas. (R.S. Thomas, *Neb*, 21)⁴

The last sentence is of particular importance. Here, induced by the "glory" of Wales and the Welshness of its countryside, Thomas gives the scene "the full Hollywood treatment" (Rogers, 98) when he "bursts out singing" the national anthem of Wales – in Welsh, of course. This passage seems to serve as a demonstration of Thomas fully and enthusiastically embracing Welsh identity despite his English upbringing.

In a next step, Thomas includes anecdotes in the text, in which others whose Welsh identity is certain and is not called into question by the general public realise and recognise his Welshness. This is the case when the poet recalls one of his stays with the Welsh-language poet Euros Bowen: "Walking along the shores of Llyn Tegid, he [i.e. Thomas] mentioned how the light would lie differently on the slopes of Arenig from the way it did in Manafon. Euros stopped and said in his convinced manner, 'This proves that you're a Welshman'" (R.S. Thomas, *No-one*, 54).

⁴Now and again he would take a day off and catch a bus for Abergwyngregyn. Then climb onwards Foel Fras and walk along Y Carneddau and down to Bethesda to catch a bus back to Bangor. The first time he did this, after climbing a hillock and seeing the summits in their glory before him, he burst out singing, 'Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau', 'The Ancient Land of My Fathers' pitching his tiny voice against the majestic mountains around him. (R.S. Thomas, *No-one*, 37)

Since the fact that Welsh was only his second language was, in Thomas's own opinion, his greatest obstacle in developing a full Welsh identity, it is not before he speaks of his move to the Welsh-speaking parish of Aberdaron that he tells the reader that he "no longer felt it necessary to emphasise his Welshness" (R.S. Thomas, *No-one*, 77). Finally, the reader is told that there can be no more doubt about Thomas's Welshness. He has demonstrated his willingness to be and his endeavors to become Welsh, has been identified as Welsh by other Welshmen and has successfully crossed the linguistic border of Wales. Thus, *Neb* gives the reader an insight into how Thomas constructed his Welsh identity and persuades the audience of his Welshness. In this sense, *Neb* is first and foremost a long version of what Thomas expressed in one line from his poems: "I'm Welsh, see" (Welsh, 2).

But Thomas's Welshness was not seen by everybody, least of all perhaps by the members of his family. His son Gwydion considered his father quintessentially English – and snobbish. In an interview with the biographer Byron Rogers, Gwydion Thomas states:

[...] R.S. was a snob. My grandmother Peggy, she wasn't posh, she'd been brought up by clergy, and my grandfather, the seaman Tommy, he certainly wasn't posh. But R.S. was reinventing himself as an English gentleman. He tried to invent himself as other things later, like a Welsh nationalist, but he went too far with that one. He taught himself Welsh, but such an academic Welsh he found he couldn't talk to most Welshmen. I know he believed he was bound hand and foot by the English language, but basically he was an English vicar in a Welsh parish. Psychologically he could never be Welsh, I think he was obsessed with class. Those friends they had at EglwysFach... sorry, acquaintances, they were a colonial society with him as padre, I don't know why they didn't have a club. (Rogers, 37)

This observation closely resembles that of the literary critic M. Wynn Thomas, who concluded that Thomas's craving to be considered Welsh was equally strong as his desire to be perceived as English:

The same deep impulse to "pass" as English was evident in R.S. Thomas throughout his long life. His frequently bitter renunciation of English culture and all its works was accompanied by a litany of examples of his craving for it - from his refined accent, to his dispatch of his unfortunate son to English boarding schools, to abundant evidence of his social and cultural snobbishness. (M. W. Thomas, *For Wales, See Landscape*, 19)

This extract identifies two arguments which have often been brought forward to underline that the evidence concerning Thomas's personal identity is contradictory: first, that his English has always been an upper-class English English rather than a

Welsh variant (Rogers, 74-75). This has led his biographer, who knew Thomas personally, to state: “Thomas sounded posher than the Queen, posher even than his countryman Roy Jenkins, the most accomplished piece of social engineering since Frankenstein’s monster” (Rogers, 74-75). Other comments from personal acquaintances and family members were as follows: “I always felt he was an Englishman like Robert Byron or Bruce Chatwin or Richard Burton of Khartoum or wherever dressed up as a native, in his case Welsh”; “It [i.e. Thomas’s accent] made us groan, we felt it was that of a self-made man”; “That accent, [...] I’d know it anywhere”; “It astonishes because its pedigree is so utterly... English. And I mean an upper-middle-class English of thirty or forty years ago. It is like listening to Alec Guinness reading late Eliot” (Rogers, 75).

Secondly, the question has often been posed why Thomas did not raise his son in Welsh even though the Welsh language was so important to him and he himself lamented the fact that he had not been brought up to speak Welsh on infinite occasions – a fact which also his son wonders about: “[I]f he was so keen on the language why didn’t he try to teach it to me? There was no Welsh at home” (Rogers, 37). Similarly, Thomas’s grandson reflects: “You know, I never heard him speak Welsh, and he never brought it up with me” (Rogers, 29). Welsh clearly was not the language of the Thomas family. Concerning his reasons for raising his son in English, the following extract taken from a letter to Raymond Garlick is interesting: “Gwydion is home now. We have just endured a pantomime for him. We go all the way to Shrewsbury to imbibe these hours of English proletarian culture. However as there is no Welsh culture to put in its place - there it is. That is why we sent him to an English boarding school” (qtd. in Rogers, 219). The logic of this statement is remarkable. It implies that the son was “deliberately kept from all things Welsh for his own peace of mind” or else he would suffer the same fate as his father and also become “an outsider on a fruitless quest in his own country” (Rogers, 219).

His son, however, is sure that the real reason was that the matter of Wales was to be R.S. Thomas’s particular diversion which he did not plan to share: “[M]y mother’s attitude to Welsh nationalism was that if it made him happy, then let it. It was very much his own journey. I even think he would have been even happier had there been nobody at all waiting for him on the other side” (Rogers, 37).

Therefore, it can be seen that even though R.S. Thomas took great pains to present himself as a Welshman in public discourse it seems probable that the Welsh poet and nationalist R.S. Thomas is a carefully constructed persona, a role rather than a simple

reality. Indeed, one is inclined to agree with Thomas's biographer Byron Rogers who concludes that "Thomas in his time played many roles, Welsh patriot, English gentleman, naturalist, poet, priest" (Rogers 2006: 71).

The roles which are important for this thesis are obviously those of the poet and the Welsh patriot. They come together when R.S. Thomas deals with the matter of Wales in his poetry.

4. Wales, Welsh and Welshness in the Works of R.S. Thomas

Under the stimulus of the Anglo-Welsh movement, Thomas aimed to write “an Anglo-Welsh poetry based on the heritage of the real Wales” (Ward, 34) and to compose an English-language poetry essentially Welsh in character (Ward, 34; Evans, 127; R.S. Thomas, *Autobiographical Essay*, 10). Saunders Lewis once listed the necessary features of a presumable Anglo-Welsh literature, which he did not believe existed. M. Wynn Thomas (*Keeping His Pen Clean*, 62) summarised them thus: “first, ‘a separate world from the industrial civilization of England’; second a form of English which is idiomatically and rhythmically distinct from that of England; third, writers like Yeats who consciously ‘write for [their] own race’; and forth, writers who [...] were ‘doing something for nationalism’”. Interestingly, Thomas easily scores three out of four on this list, with regard to some poems which show some linguistic differences from Standard English perhaps even four out of four. In general, his poems are concerned with the non-industrial, rural parts of Wales, they are addressed to a very specific Welsh audience and there is evidently a nationalist agenda behind some of his poems about Wales (M.W. Thomas, *Keeping His Pen Clean*, 64).

In order to make his work more Welsh, the poet also uses a couple of different strategies and devices to establish difference and otherness, some of which resemble and some of which oppose those of post-colonial writing:

For example, Thomas uses references to Welsh history and historical figures to root his poetry in the Welsh tradition. His presentation of the Welsh is basically a “depiction of a heroic but impoverished indigenous people under constant siege, slowly losing a battle of attrition” (Bohata, 16). From a post-colonial view, his “essentialised, timeless perspective” is problematic since, on the whole, it “conforms to the kinds of histories of colonized peoples encouraged by imperial discourse” (Bohata, 16).

Furthermore, Thomas’s poetry is full of allusions to Welsh-language literature and myth. This results in a very specific and if not Cymrophone then at least Cymrophile audience that is familiar with the Welsh literary tradition, since, in Thomas’s opinion, “to resort to countless foot-notes [...] destroys the whole effect, especially in the case of poetry” (R.S. Thomas, *Creative Writer’s Suicide*, 172).

Moreover, R.S. Thomas deals with the Welsh language on different levels. There are poems about the language but there are also works which make use of the native

language of Wales. These instances can be explained with the model of code-switching in post-colonial literature. Thomas's poetry provides examples of extrinsic code-switching, where foreign words or phrases, mostly Welsh names and place-names, are added to provide "local colour", and political code-switching, where foreign words and phrases are incorporated in the text in order to discomfort the audience by confronting them with an apparent linguistic boundary that cannot be crossed. Since R.S. Thomas was not fond of footnotes or glossaries, there are hardly any instances of organic code-switching in his poetry. This form of code-switching would involve foreign words with no possible translation in the language of the text which are explained in the text or in a glossary in order to allow the reader to access the culture. (Bohata, 117-118; R.S. Thomas, *Autobiographical Essay*, 10).

Finally, Thomas deals with the question of Welsh identity. He addresses the issue on the level of race, nature and ancestry, but the most important features of Welshness still seem to be the Welsh language and a certain anti-English attitude. It is perhaps at this point that the nationalist agenda and a rather essentialist view of identity (M. W. Thomas, *Keeping His Pen Clean*, 73) becomes most evident, as shall be shown below.

4.1. The Red Past: Wales and Welsh History

When looking for references to historical events and personalities in the texts of R.S. Thomas it is only logical to start with his poem "Welsh History", in which the poet concerns himself exactly with what the title implies: the history of the Welsh people and their country. "Welsh History" is one of Thomas's most prominent poems and precedes many works on the history of Wales. One example is the aforementioned historical work by Professor Gwyn A. Williams *When was Wales?*. His assessment of the historical contents of the poem is worth noting. He states that "[t]his fine poem expresses some historical truths. [But i]t also sanctifies a monstrous historical lie" (Gwyn A. Williams, vi):

We were a people taut for war;
[...]
We fought, and were always in retreat,
Like snow thawing upon the slopes
Of Mynydd Mawr; and yet the stranger
Never found our ultimate stand
In the thick woods, declaiming verse

To the sharp prompting of the harp.

Our kings died, or they were slain
By the old treachery at the ford.
Our bards perished, driven from the halls
Of nobles [...].

We were a people bred on legends,
Warming our hands at the red past.
[...]

We were a people, and are so yet,
When we have finished quarrelling for crumbs
Under the table, or gnawing the bones
Of a dead culture, we will arise,
Armed, but not in the old way. (Welsh History, 1; 5-16; 26-30)

The sanctification of a historical lie, which Williams identifies in the poem, is related to the public presentation and perception of Welsh history in 20th-century Wales. Katie Gramich (*Narrating the Nation*, 2-4) has observed that Thomas seems to draw from the influential works of nationalist historians of the early 1900s, which of course reflect the dominant ideologies of the time of their composition. Gramich singles out O.M. Edwards' textbook *Ystraeon o hanes Cymru* (Stories from Welsh History), which would have been among the set books when Thomas attended school in Wales. The views conveyed in this and other popular constructions of Welsh history have heavily influenced poets and other writers as much as the general public. It does indeed seem possible that Thomas's presentation of Welsh history draws on Edwards' illustration of Wales. His Wales is not linked with progress but rather with resistance to modernity, perceived as a land of mountains - an idea which can also be observed in Thomas's poem "Welsh History" and his work in general. Edwards construes the Welsh mountains as "a stronghold, a terrain within which Arthur and his sleeping knights are ensconsed [sic], suggesting the eternal resting place of the Welsh spirit" (Gramich, *Narrating the Nation*, 3), and idealises the Welsh as a noble mountain people. He made it his mission to "raise up the old country" (Gramich, *Narrating the Nation*, 4), an approach which can also be observed in Thomas's poem.

It is interesting that "Welsh History" might draw from early nationalist constructions of history, since this nicely fits in with the fact that the poem originally bore the title "Welsh Nation". The poem "Welsh Nation" also had a different ending. Instead of "we will arise/ Armed but not in the old way", which now is the common

version, the original final lines were “we will arise/ And greet each other in a new dawn” (qtd. in Brown, *R.S. Thomas*, 34). A possible explanation for the change is that the original might have been too suggestive in the years after the war or have evoked negative connotations of nationalistic attitudes (Brown, *R.S. Thomas*, 34).

But of course, just as Professor Williams states, there are also “truths” to be found in “Welsh History”. For example, the “treachery at the ford” refers to the killing of Llywelyn the Last at the hand of one of King Edward’s soldiers in the battle at Irfon Bridge on 11 December 1282 (Ward, 65; J. G. Jones, *History of Wales*, 31; J. Davies, 160), which marked the end of Welsh political autonomy. Furthermore, lines 13 and 14, which mention that the “bards perished”, allude to the historical fact that after the annexation of Wales the bardic order was in serious decline. This was mainly due to the Anglicisation of Wales following the Acts of Union as well as the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII and the emigration of Welsh nobles to England, which resulted in a loss of patronage for the court poets. The bardic order finally disappeared in the course of the 17th century (C. W. Lewis, 182).

There are quite a number of poems in Thomas’s work which evoke the “red past” of Wales, which may allude to both a history of war and violence and the history of the red dragon. Some of these poems refer to historical events, while others deal with illustrious figures of Welsh history. By far the most prominent historical personality to appear in Thomas’s poems is Owain Glyn Dŵr, the leader of the most successful Welsh rising, since Wales had become part of the Kingdom of England. Owain is mentioned in quite a few of Thomas’s poems, one of which is titled “The Rising of Glyndwr”. The poem depicts a gathering of the rebels in the woods of Wales at which Glyn Dŵr speaks up (Brown, *R.S. Thomas*, 33). He incites his forces and the men and women of Wales to take up arms and overthrow English rule in Wales:

Thunder-browed and shaggy-throated
All the men were there,
And the women with their hair,
That is the raven’s and rook’s despair.
[...]

Then he spoke, and anger kindled
In each brooding eye;
Swords and spears accused the sky,
The wood resounded with a bitter cry. (The Rising of Glyndwr, 1-4; 9-12)

Glyn Dŵr is also referred to in “On Hearing a Welshman Speak”, a poem in which the sound of the Welsh language turns back time and induces the picture of illustrious figures of Welsh history returning to Wales, Owain Glyn Dŵr among them:

And as he speaks time turns,
The swift years revolve
Backwards.[...]
Glyn Dŵr stands
And sees the flames fall back
Like waves from the charred timbers
Before taking his place
Behind the harp’s slack bars
From which the singer called him. (On Hearing a Welshman Speak, 1-3; 8-13)

This poem tightly links Wales, in particular the Welsh language, and history, as it is the sound of the Welsh language that causes time to turn backwards. Owain Glyn Dŵr returns and is not yet subdued. He “sees the flames fall back [...] from the charred timbers”, and Glyn Dŵr’s court at Sycharth reappears, which was destroyed by English forces on a punitive foray against Glyn Dŵr’s manor in May 1403 (R. R. Davies, *Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr*, 113; 247). The days of Glyn Dŵr’s peaceful rule at Sycharth are evoked when there was entertainment, music and bardic song provided at his court. It is interesting that the poem implies that it was one of these singers or bards who incited Owain Glyn Dŵr’s vision of a free Wales throwing off the yoke of English rule under his command.

This idea is further pursued in another poem about Owain Glyn Dŵr. “The Tree” identifies the singer who called the leader of the Welsh Revolt from “his place behind the harp’s slack bars”. It is Gruffudd Llwyd, a 14th-century poet who composed poems to Glyn Dŵr (J. Davies, 194; Brown, *R.S. Thomas*, 33). According to “The Tree” the poet “pierced [Owain’s] lethargy” (The Tree, 16) and awakened his desire to take up arms against England (McKenzie, 33).

“The Tree” is especially interesting as Owain Glyn Dŵr enters the stage as the speaker of the poem. Glyn Dŵr explains how the “strange thought” (The Tree, 2) his poet had “put into [his] head” (The Tree, 1) “grew to a great tree” (The Tree, 34) and thus how the rebellion came about. The tree is said to have grown during spring and then:

For one brief hour summer came
To the tree’s branches and we heard
In the green shades Rhiannon’s birds
Singing tirelessly as the streams

That pluck glad tunes from the grey stones
Of Powys of the broken hills. (The Tree, 44-49)

This passage presents the time of the Welsh Rising as a “brief period of communal harmony and freedom achieved by Owain Glyndŵr” (Brown, *Screen of Eternity*, 191). Of course, this is not an accurate account of the time of the revolt. It rather alludes to the fact that the rebellion and the prospect of Welsh independence were met with great enthusiasm in Wales (J. Davies, 197). But then “[t]he music ceased” (The Tree, 20), the revolt failed and the “obnoxious wind/ And frost of autumn picked the leaves/ One by one from the gaunt boughs” (The Tree, 50-52) of the tree that represents the rebellion. Since then it has been winter and Owain Glyn Dŵr has been waiting for a new spring, a new attempt at a rising and a new chance for Welsh independence: “It is winter still in the bare tree/ [...] here at its roots I watch and wait/ For the new spring so long delayed” (The Tree, 57; 62-53). But to make the tree flourish again would involve effort and sacrifice by the Welsh (Brown, *R.S. Thomas*, 34) as “only [...] blood can make it bloom” (The Tree, 68).

Another poem referring to Glyn Dŵr is “Hyddgen”. Hyddgen is the site of one of the earliest battles between the Welsh and the English during the revolt. In its beginning, the Glyn Dŵr rebellion was first and foremost a guerrilla movement, and surprise was the rebels’ trump card. Hyddgen was one of these first surprise attacks by the Welsh on the English forces which resulted in “dashing victories” (R. R. Davies, *Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr*, 266) for Owain Glyn Dŵr and his men (R. R. Davies, *Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr*, 265-266). The battle of Hyddgen, on the slopes of Pumlumon, took place in June 1401 and laid the foundation for Owain’s military success in south Wales in the months to come (J. Davies, 198). Thomas has the following to say about this place which once was the site of one of Glyn Dŵr’s major victories:

The place, Hyddgen;
The time, the fifth
Century since Glyn Dŵr
Was here with his men.
He beat the English.
Does it matter now
In the rain? The English
Don’t want to come:
Summer country.
The Welsh too:
A barren victory? (Hyddgen, 1-11)

The poem evokes the history of Hyddgen although, on the whole, it does not portray the Hyddgen of the early 15th but that of the 20th century. The time, the 20th century, is referred to as “the fifth century since Glyn Dŵr”. That the rising of Glyn Dŵr marks the beginning of the calculation of time in this poem is noteworthy. It surely underlines the perception of Glyn Dŵr as a messianic figure, since usually calculations of time are linked to the life of a Messiah or the most important of prophets. But the following lines take the reader back to the present of the 20th century. The English are gone. But not because they were turned out; they do not want to come. This is no success since the Welsh do not want to stay either. Thus, it must seem like a barren victory.

In “Traeth Maelgwn” Thomas refers to another Welsh prince of mediaeval history, Maelgwn ap Cadwallon, ruler of Gwynedd in the 6th century and known as Maelgwn Gwynedd or also Maelgwn Fawr, Maelgwn the Great (J. Davies, 50; 55-56; 59; 705). He is the best documented Welsh king of the 6th century, as he is mentioned in many of the most important mediaeval texts dealing with Welsh history such as the Welsh Genealogies, the *Annales Cambriae*, Gildas’ *De Excidio Britanniae*, Geoffrey’s *Historia Regum Britanniae* and the legendary stories about the bard Taliesin. These texts, with all due caution, can serve as sources to grasp an idea of the historical Maelgwn Gwynedd. Gildas reports that Maelgwn was the most powerful of Welsh rulers at the time, slew many of his fellow rulers and therefore may have achieved the status of high king. His court is supposed to have been at Degannwy, a high-status post-Roman site, according to the archaeological analysis, overlooking the Conwy estuary (Koch, *Maelgwn Gwynedd*, 1238-1239; J. Davies, 55). Traeth Maelgwn is a sandbank at the mouth of the River Dyfi, which is associated with a tale about Maelgwn preserved in a Mediaeval Welsh law text. It is reported that Maelgwn and his fellow rulers from Gwynedd, Powys, Rheinwg, Morgannwg and Seisyllwg gathered at Aber Dyfi to decide who should be high king in Wales. All kings were expected to sit down on their thrones as the tide came in. Whoever would stay on his throne the longest would be high king (Owen, 49-52). It is this scene Thomas recounts in “Traeth Maelgwn”:

[...]. Maelgwn
 Was here once, juggling
 With the sea; there were rulers
 In Wales then, men jealous
 Of her honour. He put down
 Rivals, made himself king
 Of the waves, too; his throne
 Buoyant – that rocking beacon
 Its image. He kept his power

By intelligence; we lose
Ours for lack of it. (Traeth Maelgwn, 5-15)

The reference is pretty straightforward. Maelgwn puts down his rivals and wins the competition. His fellow rulers are forced to give up due to the rising tide but Maelgwn wins because of the way his throne is built. He makes himself “king of the waves with his “throne buoyant”, a chair made of waxed wings (Owen, 49-52). The last lines refer the reader back to the present, in which Thomas laments that while Maelgwn was able to secure his power over Wales by using his intellect, the Welsh are not.

According to Byron Rogers (218), another allusion to the tales about Maelgwn Fawr can be found in Thomas’s “Genealogy”. The lines “I was the king/ At the church key-hole, who saw death/ Loping towards me [...]” (Genealogy, 8-10) are supposed to refer to the stories about Maelgwn hiding in a church when the Yellow Plague broke out in the late 540s. Reportedly, he “stooped to look out of a keyhole and saw it ‘loping’ towards him” (Rogers, 218).

Another reference to a historical figure can be found in “Sir Gelli Meurig”, who, according to Thomas, was

Squire of a few
Acres, but swollen-headed
With dreaming of a return
To incense, to the confections
Of worship; a Welsh fly
Caught in a web spun
For a hornet. (Sir Gelli Meurig, 10-16)

The historical background of the poem is the life and death of Sir Gelli Meurig. He was an agent of the Earl of Essex who revolted against the government of Queen Elizabeth I. Gelli Meurig was caught up in the treacherous goings-on and hanged in London. He also is an example of those members of the Welsh gentry who left Wales for London in the hope of climbing the social ladder (Rogers, 220). That he is but an example of these expatriates becomes clear when Thomas goes on:

Don’t blame him.
Others have turned their backs,
As he did, and do so still,
On our land. [...]
They want the town
And its baubles; the fine clothes
They dress one in, who manage
The strings. Helplessly they dance
To a mad tune, who at home

In the bracken could have remained
Humble but free. (Sir Gelli Meurig, 17-20; 23-29)

The Welsh in the poem are fascinated by the promises of life in town and leave “the bracken”, the Welsh countryside, for a supposedly better life in London. Thomas indicates, though, that town life is linked to consumerism and a capitalistic, money-oriented society. Indeed, he suggests that moving to towns and cities means giving up one’s free will and becoming a puppet on the strings of hedonistic materialism and capitalism. Wales, on the other hand, may not offer the amenities of town life, but staying home ensures the freedom of the mind. Thomas makes moving to town sound like entering into a pact with the devil.

For those who left Wales, especially under Tudor rule, Thomas came up with a specific term in his poem “A Welshman at St. James’ Park”. He calls them “Bosworth blind”:

I think of a Welsh hill
That is without fencing, and the men,
Bosworth blind, who left the heather
And the high pastures of the heart. (A Welshman at St. James’ Park, 13-16)

This is, of course, a reference to the Battle of Bosworth in 1485, the final battle of the War of the Roses, in which Henry Tudor, with the help of Welsh forces, managed to seize (and keep) the English crown and the fact that many of the Welsh gentry left Wales, “the heather and the high pastures of the heart”, in the aftermath of the battle and followed Henry to London (J. Davies 209-210; 219-221; Rogers, 220). Presumably Thomas suggests that they were blinded by the idea that English rule over Britain had come to an end as a man of Welsh descent was crowned King of England, the prophecies had been fulfilled, the struggle was over and the Welsh would now be well received in London.

So far, all the poems mentioned refer to historical events and personalities of the Middle Ages. But in Thomas’s poetry there are also comments on contemporary events and politics. For example, “To Pay for His Keep” is a portrayal of Prince Charles’s investiture as Prince of Wales in 1969. The poet enters the mind of the 20-year-old prince and recounts the scene at Caernarfon (M. W. Thomas, *Keeping His Pen Clean*, 71):

So this was on the way
to a throne! He looked round
at the perspiring ranks

of ageing respectables:
police, tradesmen, councillors,
rigid with imagined
loyalty; and beyond them at
the town with its mean streets and
pavements filthy with
dog shit.

The castle was
huge. All that dead weight
of the past, that overloading
of the law's mounting
equipment! A few medals
would do now. He permitted
himself a small smile,
sipping at it in the mind's
coolness. (To Pay for His Keep, 1-19)

According to M. Wynn Thomas, in this poem “the Machiavellianism of the ruling mentality” (*Keeping His Pen Clean*, 71) can be observed. Through the eyes of Prince Charles, the present assembly of “respectables” is rather absurd and the streets of Caernarfon are “mean” and “filthy”. He deems the huge castle an “ostentatious symbol of occupying power” (M. W. Thomas, *Keeping His Pen Clean*, 71) and entirely unnecessary since “a few medals/ would do now”. But there is also a glance beyond the thoughts of the prince during the investiture. There are developments in the background which Charles “never noticed” due to “the dust raised/ by the prayers of the fagged/ clergy” (To Pay for His Keep, 20-23). In the distance, there is a “far hill” with “trees climbing/ it like a procession/ of young people, young as himself” (To Pay for His Keep, 23; 25-27). M. Wynn Thomas (*Keeping His Pen Clean*, 72) interprets this shift of perspective as a shift of focus from the television spectacular which the investiture had become, from this “triumphal royal procession” to contemporary Welsh politics, since the mention of the trees on the hill outside Caernarfon can easily be read as “a hint of Calvary to suggest the sacrifices made for the language by the young people of *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* and others”.

Even more interesting perhaps are Thomas's references to Tryweryn, which was a major political issue in the 1960s and resulted in a climax of nationwide protests in Wales. In 1965, the Liverpool Corporation flooded the Tryweryn valley in mid-Wales and created a reservoir to supply water for Liverpool. The valley had been home to the monoglot Welsh-speaking community of Capel Celyn, the inhabitants of which were forcibly removed from their houses. This resulted in harsh political controversy, caused

an outrage especially among nationalists since the decision was approved by Parliament at Westminster and stirred up embittered, even violent, reactions. These included the blowing up of pipelines near the dam, but, apart from this incident, the protests were non-violent demonstrations initiated mainly by the Welsh-speaking intelligentsia. The flooding of Tryweryn Valley is seen as a major reason for the manifestation of a new nationalist consciousness in Wales in the late 1960s (M. W. Thomas, *Keeping His Pen Clean*, 68-69; Jarvis, 30; BBC, s.p.). It was not until 2005 that the “insensitivity” (BBC, s.p.) of the council of the Liverpool Corporation and the “hurt” (BBC, s.p.) inflicted upon those displaced by the council was acknowledged and an official apology was issued (BBC, s.p.).

In Thomas’s poetry Tryweryn is referred to only once in name. In “He Lies Down to Be Counted” Thomas observes that “not even the draught from Tryweryn” (6) can elicit an active response from the Welsh, who have become “a servile people” (3). Moreover, it has been suggested that there are other, indirect references to the flooding of the hamlet of Capel Celyn. In “Welcome”, for instance, Thomas sends the English tourist back “To the cold bud of water/ In the hard rock” (21-22) (M. W. Thomas, *Internal Difference*, 125). Another example can be found in “Reservoirs”:

There are places in Wales I don’t go:
Reservoirs that are the subconscious
Of a people, troubled far down
With gravestones, chapels, villages even; (Reservoirs, 1-3)

This poem, which takes on the tone of a very bitter elegy, can at least partly be read as a reference to the flooding of the north Wales valley. The mention of reservoirs that are “troubled [...] with [...] villages even” certainly evoke the events concerning the Tryweryn reservoir (M. W. Thomas, *Keeping His Pen Clean*, 68-69). As Thomas compares the reservoirs to “the subconscious of a people”, Tryweryn becomes a “synecdoche for the whole Welsh geopolitical landscape” (M. W. Thomas, *Keeping His Pen Clean*, 69).

Furthermore, Thomas’s work includes two poems about one of the most illustrious political figures of 20th-century Wales who was particularly important for the language movement: Saunders Lewis. In the poem bearing the politician’s name as its title, Thomas writes:

And he dared them;
Dared them to grow old and bitter
As he. He kept his pen clean
By burying it in their fat
Flesh. He was ascetic and Wales
His diet. He lived off the harsh fare
Of her troubles, worn yet heady
At moments with the poets' wine.

A recluse, then; himself
His hermitage? Unhabited
He moved among us; would have led
To rebellion. Small as he was
He towered, the trigger of his mind
Cocked, ready to let fly with his scorn. (Saunders Lewis, 1-14)

It has been frequently pointed out that this portrait of Saunders Lewis can also be read as an unintentional self-portrait of R.S. Thomas. The description fits both characters apart from the reference to Lewis' shortness, which, however, did not prevent him from towering, since Thomas was considerably taller than the original subject (M. W. Thomas, *Keeping His Pen Clean*, 77; J. W. Davies, 3).

The other poem referring to Saunders Lewis is "The Patriot". Lewis can easily be identified in the poem as there is again a reference to his body height as well as an allusion to Lewis' inspirational and influential lectures (M. W. Thomas, *Keeping His Pen Clean*, 77; J. W. Davies, 38):

He had that rare gift that what he said,
Even the simplest statement, could inflame
The mind and heart of the hearer. Those, who saw
For the first time that small figure
With the Welsh words leaving his lips
As quietly as dives on an errand
Of peace-making, could not imagine
The fierceness of their huge entry
At the ear's porch. (The Patriot, 1-9)

That these portraits of Saunders Lewis by R.S. Thomas were influential themselves can be seen when one looks at the poetry of Welsh-language poets such as Alan Llwyd and Emyr Humphreys. Both poets allude to these two poems about Lewis in their own works on the Welsh nationalist (J. W. Davies, 38). But as much as R.S. Thomas influenced Welsh writers and poets of the 20th century and beyond, he himself drew from the works of Welsh-language writers throughout history. Indeed, in Thomas's works there are

many instances where events from Welsh history are evoked. But the number of allusions to Welsh literature exceeds by far that of references to any other sources.

4.2. Allusions to Welsh Literature and Myth

“Where is our poetry/ But in the footnotes?” (Dead Worthies, 1-2), Thomas once asked. It seems as if the poet, as a result of this assessment, drew the consequences and set out to bring Welsh literature into focus in his poetry - without adding footnotes. Indeed, there is an extensive amount of allusions to Welsh poetry and prose to be found in his works. Some of these references are easily traceable whereas others are very easily overlooked - especially by readers not familiar with Welsh literature. His frequent allusions to Welsh-language poetry and prose can therefore be considered another form of setting boundaries and distinguishing his work from English literature proper. In his compilation *The Stones in the Field* the poet explains that the poetry in this publication is based on the tradition of Welsh nature poetry (Price, 15): “These are essentially nature poems, but they are not written in the English tradition. Their imagery is more akin to those early Welsh writers, whose clarity of vision was born out of an almost mystical attachment to their environment” (qtd. in Price, 15). But this is one of the very few times Thomas provides an explanation for his references, and in the majority of cases no explanation is given. It has been suggested that, therefore, many allusions to Welsh literature were lost to English critics, who were usually not well-versed in the field, at the time of the publication of the poems (Morris, 122). However, much work has been done since to uncover and present Welsh literary influences on Thomas’s poetry, especially by Jason Walford Davies, who has explored the variety of Thomas’s allusions to Welsh poetry and prose in his profound article “*Thick Ambush of Shadows*”: *Allusions to Welsh literature in the work of R.S. Thomas*, which provides an important basis for the subsequent analysis of such references in this paper.

4.2.1. Welsh Poetry

One literary source on which R. S. Thomas frequently draws in his writings is the work of Welsh-language poets throughout history, though maybe especially the poetry of the mediaeval era. His references range from direct mention of poets' names or quotations from their poetry, to indirect allusions on the thematic level.

Among his allusions to mediaeval poets, two *cynfeirdd*, two of the earliest poets of Welsh literature, can be found: Aneirin and Taliesin. They both have become paragonsof early Welsh poetry and as such reappear in the R.S. Thomas's poetry of the 20th century. Aneirin is famously known as the author of the Gododdin, a series of heroic elegies dating from the 6th or 7th century, which have come down to us in the *Llyfr Aneirin*, The Book of Aneirin, from the late 13th century. (Johnston, *Literature of Wales*, 5; Koch, *Aneirin*, 52-54). In R.S. Thomas's poetry the following references to Aneirin and his work can be found:

In "Zero" the poet asks:

Is it
that time when Aneirin
 fetched the poem out of his side
and laid it upon the year's altar
 for the appeasement of envious
gods? (Zero, 11-16)

In this poem Aneirin is mentioned along with figures and important events of antiquity such as Dido and Aeneas or Caesar and his crossing of the Rubicon (Zero, 6-10). It is interesting to see how Thomas mingles allusions to Welsh and classical literature and history. If J. W. Davies (3) is to be believed, this passage, which describes a creation out of one's own side, is also an allusion to the Genesis metaphor used in the hymns of William Williams Pantycelyn, who wrote: "This book flowed from my spirit like water from a well, or the spider's web from his own side" (qtd. in J. W. Davies, 3).

In another poem Thomas states that "Catraeth/ has always to be re-fought" (He is sometimes contrary, 5-6). This, of course, is a reference to the battle Anerin sang about in the Gododdin. In this set of elegiac poems Aneirin mourns the loss of many heroes of the British tribe of the Gododdin in the Battle of Catraeth dated around the year 600, in which the British suffered a severe defeat against the Angles of Deira and Bernicia. All but one of the Gododdin are said to have been killed in battle. Aneirin provides the fallen warriors, whose loyalty to their lord and preparation to die an honourable death in

battle he strongly emphasised according to the heroic tradition, with the ultimate glory of everlasting fame by mourning them in his elegies (Johnston, *Literature of Wales*, 5; Koch, *Aneirin*, 52-54). That the Battle of Catraeth has always to be re-fought is a rather gloomy picture as the poet implies that the battle also is always lost. This becomes clear when he uses a picture which will be more fully explained below and states that “the birds of Rhiannon/ will never be heard in your/ suburban garden” (He is sometimes contrary, 7-9), suggesting that Welsh culture will never prevail and, even worse, will cease to exist when English culture predominates.

The figure of Taliesin is the subject of a separate poem, “Taliesin 1952”. In Welsh literature, Taliesin not only appears as an (allegedly) historical person and poet at the court of Urien of Rheged but also as mythical figure of tales, legends and prophetic poetry (Johnston, *Literature of Wales*, 2-3; Jarman, 106-110). It seems that it is the latter Taliesin who is referred to in this poem. Taliesin is the speaker of the poem and states that he has been “all men known to history” (Taliesin 1952, 1):

I have been Merlin wandering in the woods
Of a far country, [...]

I have been Glyn Dŵr set in the vast night,
Scanning the stars for the propitious omen,
[...]

I have been Goronwy, forced from my own land
To taste the bitterness of the salt ocean;
[...]

King, beggar and fool, I have been all by turns,
Knowing the body's sweetness, the mind's treason;
Taliesin still, I show you a new world, risen,
Stubborn with beauty, out of the heart's need. (Taliesin 1952, 5-6; 9-10; 13-14; 17-20)

It should be noted that the figure of Merlin in this case is not the Merlin of the Arthurian legends or of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, but rather Myrddin Wyllt, the wild man known to Celtic legend. Myrddin is the wild man of Wales, while Lailoken and Suibne Geilt are his counterparts in Scottish and Irish legend, respectively. Myrddin or Merlin is a man who went mad from grief and horror in the aftermath of the catastrophic battle for which he feels responsible. He took refuge in the woods where he led the life of a hermit as a prophet and seer (Frykenberg, 1790-1791; 1794-1795; Johnston, *Literature of Wales*, 16). The interpretation of Merlin as Myrddin Wyllt

seems appropriate when considering that the Merlin of the poem is described as “wandering the woods” and, in the following lines, having a “mind broken/ By a sudden acquaintance with man’s rage” (Taliesin 1952, 6-7), which can be seen as a reference to the battle which drove Myrddin mad.

The name Goronwy seems to relate to the 18th-century Welsh-language poet Goronwy Owen, who emigrated to Virginia and experienced and expressed great feelings of longing for his native Anglesey in his poetry (LIGC/NLW, s.p.; J. W. Davies, 22; 27-28). Thomas refers to these aspects of exile and homesickness when he further characterises Goronwy as having “known exile and a wild passion/ Of longing changing to a cold ache” (Taliesin 1952, 15-16).

But the references to Welsh literature in this poem go beyond the naming of the important Welsh personalities Glyn Dŵr and Goronwy Owen and the literary figure of Myrddin. At the centre of the poem is the mythical figure of Taliesin, the main character of the folk tale *Hanes Taliesin*. In this story, the character Gwion Bach accidentally swallows three drops of a magic potion brewed by the witch Ceridwen and undergoes a series of transformations before he is finally reincarnated as the poet and seer Taliesin. This mythical Taliesin and his “shamanistic persona” (Johnston, *Literature of Wales*, 16) is also very prominent in early Welsh poetry (Johnston, *Literature of Wales*, 16). In the *Ystoria Taliesin*, for example, Taliesin tells his audience that he was with God when Lucifer fell, carried the banner before Alexander the Great and witnessed Christ’s crucifixion (qtd. in J. W. Davies, 27). Another example is the poem “Angar Kyvyndawt” in the *Llyfr Taliesin*, the *Book of Taliesin*, which refers to Taliesin’s many magical transformations (J. W. Davies, 27):

Eil gweith ym rithat.bum glas gleissat.
 bum ki bum hyd. bum iwrch ymynyd.
 bum kyff bum raw. bum bwell yn llaw
 bum ebill yg gefel. blwydyn a hanner.
 bum keilyawc [...] bum amws [...]
 bum tarw [...] bum buwch
 (qtd. in J. W. Davies, 27)

I was conjured up a second time: I have
 been a blue salmon,
 I have been a dog, I have been a stag, I
 have been a roebuck on the mountain,
 I have been a stock, I have been a
 spade, I have been an axe in the hand
 I have been a gimlet in tongs, [for] a
 year and a half.
 I have been a cock [...] I have been a
 stallion [...]
 I have been a bull [...] I have
 been a cow.
 (qtd. in J. W. Davies, 27)

Especially on the level of form, similarities between the Mediaeval Welsh text and the poem by R.S. Thomas can be observed. The repeated use of “I have been” at the beginning of four out of five stanzas seems to echo the “bum” (“I have been”) structure of “Angar Kyvyndawt”. As far as content is concerned, both Welsh poems refer to Taliesin’s transformations, but only the *Ystoria Taliesin* shares Thomas’s emphasis on the reincarnation of Taliesin over centuries and can be considered as a source here. However, it seems probable that Thomas worked with translations rather than with the Welsh originals (J. W. Davies, 27-28).

Another source from early Welsh poetry worth mentioning are the elegiac poems of the saga poetry tradition. Saga poetry, based on legends about the past and as compositions of the 9th and 10th centuries, refer to, and lament, events of the 6th and 7th centuries. There are three main cycles: a cycle whose speaker remains unidentified, the *Canu Llywarch Hen* and the *Canu Heledd*. Llywarch Hen, Llywarch the Old, and Heledd are two literary figures, though they seem to be based on characters known from the Welsh genealogies. According to these genealogies, the historic Llywarch Hen was a cousin of Urien Rheged, an important king of the kingdom of Rheged in the Old North. In the saga poetry cycle he is portrayed as an old man lamenting and blaming himself for the deaths of his sons, whom he urged to fulfil heroic deeds with the result that they are all killed. Heledd, the speaker of the third cycle, was the sister of Cynddylan, a 7th-century king of northern Powys. In the poems she laments the death of Cynddylan and all her brothers in battle against the English of Mercia and the devastation of Powys. Like Llywarch Hen, she alone survives the catastrophe and suffers the consequences of warfare (Johnston, *Literature of Wales*, 10-12; Rowland, 141-142). Of course, this is not an accurate representation of the 7th century, but most probably influenced by the political situation around the year 850 when the Welsh borderlands were under severe attacks from Mercia, which coincides with the assumed date of composition of the cycle (Rowland, 120-121; 137-138). It is this last cycle of saga poetry that is particularly important in relation to R.S. Thomas.

First, there is a direct quotation of the Welsh original in “Border Blues” (44-46): “Eryr Pengwern, penngarn llwyd heno.../ We still come in by the Welsh gate, but it’s a long way/ To Shrewsbury now from the Welsh border”. Thomas does not provide a translation and thus the meaning of the line as well as the literary reference are lost to a reader unfamiliar with Welsh. The Welsh quote can be translated as the “grey-crested eagle of Pengwern - tonight” (Rowland, 486). It is the introductory phrase of 5

consecutive stanzas of the *Canu Heledd*, in which Heledd describes the eagles wheeling in the air and craving the flesh of the bodies of the dead warriors of Powys who were slain by the Angles of Mercia (Rowland, 486; J. W. Davies, 9). The *Canu Heledd* provide an enthralling description of a border conflict between England and Wales and therefore the quotation serves the purpose of Thomas's poem well. In "Border Blues" the poet elaborates on the topic and also comments on the present situation. Shrewsbury and the land between the town and the present border, he laments, are no longer part of Wales. Why he singles out Shrewsbury becomes obvious when the reference to the *Canu Heledd* is recognised. Shrewsbury is very often identified with Pengwern, the seat of the princes of Powys, to which Heledd refers in the quote above. Consequently, Shrewsbury once belonged to Powys and therefore to Wales, but has been a part of England (more or less) ever since it was seized by the Mercian kings in the Early Middle Ages (J. Davies, 64).

Second, there is another, less obvious reference to the *Canu Heledd* in "Genealogy" (13-15): "I marched to Bosworth with the Welsh lords/ To victory, but regretted after/ The white house at the wood's heart". At first sight, the references here seem pretty straightforward. The march to Bosworth refers to the famous battle between Henry Tudor and Richard III, the regret to the disillusionment of the Welsh when their high expectations of Welsh rule in London were not met, and as a logical consequence the "white house" can be identified as the House of York with its emblem of the white rose. But at second glance another literary allusion emerges, especially when one takes into account how Thomas formed the whole phrase. He does not only refer to a "white house" but "the white house at the wood's heart". This wording again resembles a well-known passage from the *Canu Heledd*:

Y dref wenn ym bronn y coet.
ysefy hefras eiryoet.
ar wyneb y gwellt y gwaet.
(Rowland, 436)

The white town at the wood's heart,
This was always its custom,
On the surface of its grass, its blood.
(J. W. Davies, 29)

The allusion to this extract, which "recalls the English's bloody sacking of Whittington, near Oswestry, in Powys" (J. W. Davies, 29), further underlines the regret which Thomas lets the speaker of his poem feel with regards to having supported Henry Tudor in his efforts to seize the crown. Now, it seems, the speaker finds the king guilty of betrayal as he compares Henry's rule over Wales with the pillaging of the town in the borderlands (J. W. Davies, 29).

As far as the anonymous saga cycles are concerned, the mention of a place called “Abercuawg” is important. Formerly attributed to Llywarch Hen, the poem *Claf Abercuawg* is today considered an anonymous piece of work (J. W. Davies, 32). Interesting for the analysis of R.S. Thomas’s poetry is the following passage:

Coc lauar a gan gan dyd. kyfreu eichyawc yn dolyd. cuawc gwell corrawc no chebyd.	A vocal cuckoo sings with the daybreaks a loud song in the meadows of Cuawg. A prodigal is better than a miser.
Yn aber cuawc yt ganant gogeu. ar gangheu blodeuawc. coc lauar canet yrawc. [...] Kethlyd kathyl uodawc hiraethawc y llef teith odef. tuth hebawc. coc vreuer yn aber cuawc. (Rowland, 448-449)	In Abercuawg cuckoos sing on flowering branches. Vocal cuckoo, let it sing for a long time to come. [...] Singer of continual song, its cry full of longing. intending to wander, of hawk-like movement is the vocal cuckoo in Abercuawg. (Rowland, 497)

This description of Abercuawg is indeed very similar to that of R.S. Thomas in one of his poems: “Abercuawg! Where is it?/ Where is Abercuawg, that/ place where the cuckoos sing?” (Abercuawg, 1-3). The first line, actually the whole poem, refers to the search for this nearly mystical place, which cannot be located. Thomas also uses the same question to introduce his address at the National Eisteddfod in 1976: “Lle mae Abercuawg?” (R.S. Thomas, *Abercuawg*, 83), he asks, where is Abercuawg? But in his lecture he comes to the conclusion that Abercuawg is “above time” (R.S. Thomas, *Abercuawg (transl.)*, 163). It is neither part of “some golden age of the past” nor does it belong to the modern world, but it is always “on the verge of being” (R.S. Thomas, *Abercuawg (transl.)*, 163). The way to discover the real Abercuawg, which in the course of Thomas’s address develops into a metaphor for his ideal Wales, is to change present circumstances. Thomas describes the linguistic and cultural changes he observes in the Wales of the 1970s and states that “nid dyma Abercuawg” (R.S. Thomas, *Abercuawg*, 96), that “this is not Abercuawg”, and demands that Wales must arrive at “gwell na hon” (R.S. Thomas, *Abercuawg*, 96), something better than this current situation. According to Thomas, this is to be achieved by not giving in to the compromise of bilingualism, which will even lead to the attempt to anglicise Abercuawg, if only on a signpost, as it seems by now a metaphor for the heart and soul of Wales. This must be prevented at all cost, because “the truth is one cannot translate [Abercuawg], any more

than one can translate *cynganedd*” (R.S. Thomas, *Abercuawg (transl.)*, 165). He also warns that Abercuawg will never be found in an industrialised Wales and that the cuckoos will never sing to an industrialised society (R.S. Thomas, *Abercuawg (transl.)*, 162-166).

In addition to saga poetry, the poetry of the *cywyddwyr* is also important for Thomas. In particular, this regards Iolo Goch and Dafydd ap Gwilym, both poets of the 14th century (Johnston, *Literature of Wales*, 36; 39). The poetry of the *cywyddwyr* is, in general, an important source for Thomas in his search for images (J. W. Davies, 14). In his “On Hearing a Welshman Speak” Thomas’s reference to Dafydd and his work is at the same time an allusion to Iolo Goch’s poetry. The passage in question is:

As long as prayers are wound
Once more on the priest’s tongue
Dafydd reproves his eyes’
Impetuous falconry
About the kneeling girl. (On Hearing a Welshman Speak, 17-19).

On the one hand, these lines refer to Dafydd ap Gwilym’s poem *Merched Llanbadarn*, The Girls of Llanbadarn. The scene in Dafydd’s poem, as in Thomas’s, takes place in church on a Sunday morning, and Dafydd spends his time looking at the beautiful girls of Llanbadarn:

Ni bu Sul yn Llanbadarn	No Sunday ever was there in
Na bewn, ac eraill a’i barn,	that I would not be -- and others will condemn
Â’m wyneb at y ferch goeth	it--
A’m gwgil at Dduw gwiwgoeth.	facing [some such] lovely girl
A gwedy’r hir edrychwyf	with my nape to God’s true loveliness.
Dros fy mhlur draws fy mhlwyf,	And when I have long surveyed
Y dywaid un fun fyrgroyw	across my feathers, the people of my parish,
Wrth y llall hylwyddgall hoyw:	one sweet tender lass will say
	to her companion, lively, famous, wise:
‘Y mab llwyd wyneb mursen	‘That grey-faced flirt of a boy
A gwallt ei chwaer ar ei ben,	wearing on his head his sister’s hair,
Godinabus fydd golwg	lascivious is the look he has,
Gŵyr ei ddrem; da y gŵyr ddrwg.’	he has a side-long glance; he must know
(Merched Llanbadarn, 19-30)	mischief well.’
	(Bromwich, <i>Dafydd ap Gwilym</i> , 139)

On the other hand, Thomas draws from Iolo Goch’s elegy on Dafydd’s death (J. W. Davies, 28) - although it should be noted here that, in the late Middle Ages, it was customary to compose elegies about fellow poets during their life time in order to either praise or mock them (Bromwich, *Earlier Cywyddwyr*, 135-137; 140-141). In *Marwnad*

Dafydd ap Gwilym Iolo Goch describes Dafydd as “Hebog merched Deheubarth” (Marwnad Dafydd ap Gwilym, 13), “the hawk of the girls of Deheubarth” (Johnston, *Iolo Goch*, 88), an image which can also be found in poems about Dafydd by Madog Benfras and Gruffudd Gryg (J. W. Davies, 29), which eventually explains Thomas’s choice of words.

There are many other references to the poetry of Dafydd ap Gwilym such as in “Bravo!”, where R.S. Thomas introduces a woman about whom he says “She will/ grow old and her lovers will not/ pardon her for it” (Bravo!, 15-17). This passage brings Dafydd’s description of the ageing Morfudd to the reader’s mind (J. W. Davies, 16). Morfudd was one of the two women Dafydd ap Gwilym named and addressed in his works (Johnston, *Literature of Wales*, 37), and there is a whole poem about her in old age in which Dafydd states the following:

Ef a ddywawd, wawd wydnbwyl Am liw’r dyn nid aml ar dwyll:	He said (severe discretion’s praise) about the hue of her who does not often deceive:
‘Cymer dy hun, ben cun cant, Crysan o’r combr a’r crisiant. Gwisg, na ddiosg wythnosgwaith, Gwasgawd mwythus lyfngawd maith. Dirdras fun, chwedl ail Derdri; Duach fydd, a dwyoch fi!’	‘Dress yourself, lord of a throng of lords, in shift of cambric, and in shining white, Put on, without discarding for a week, a costly mantle for the wearisome flesh. A well-born girl - a second Deirdre’s tale - it will become more black, and twice alas for me!’
Foel-llwyd ddeheuawd frawd-ddyn, Felly’r brawd du am bryd dyn. Ni pheidiwn, pe byddwn Bab, Â Morfudd tra fûm oerfab. Weithion, cyhuddeidion cawdd, Y Creawdr a’i hacraawdd, [...]. (Morfudd yn Hen, 15-28)	The bald grey fire, with ever-ready warning, the gloomy friar spoke thus of my girl’s loveliness. I would not give up Morfudd [even] were I Pope so long as I remained a sprightly youth; but now - vexations and complaint - the Creator has disfigured her [...]. (Bromwich, <i>Dafydd ap Gwilym</i> , 48-50)

R.S. Thomas also frequently refers to Iolo Goch’s poems. J. W. Davies (16), for example, argues that the recurrent descriptions of the peasant Prytherch working in the fields are partly inspired by Iolo Goch’s ploughman in *Cywydd y Llafurwr*. Another important poem for Thomas’s poetry is Iolo’s praise poem of Owain Glyndŵr and his court at Sycharth, to which Thomas refers in “The Tree” (6-12)

Accustomed to Iolo and his praise
Of Sycharth with its brown beer,
Meat from the chase, fish from the weir,

Its proud women sipping wine,
 I had equated the glib bards
 With flattery and the expected phrase,
 Tedious concomitants of power. (The Tree, 6-12)

This clearly is a reference to Iolo Goch's *Llys Owain Glyndŵr*, Iolo's portrayal of Owain Glyndŵr's Court, in which he describes the estate and its surroundings:

Pysgodlyn, cudduglyn cau,	a fishpond, hollow enclosure,
A fô rhaid i fwrw rhwydau;	what is needed to cast nets
Amlaf lle, nid er ymliw,	place most abounding, not for dispute,
Penhwyaid a gwyniaid gwiw,	in pike and fine sewin,
A'i dir bwrdd a'i adar byw,	and his bord-land and his live birds,
Peunod, crehyrod hoywryw	peacocks, splendid herons;
[...]	[...]
Cyfreidiau cyfar ydiw,	bringing the best brew of beer from
Dwyn blaendrwyth cwrw	Shrewsbury,
Amwythig,	liquors of foaming bragget,
Gwirodau bragodau brig,	every drink, white bread and wine,
Pob llyn, bara gwyn a gwin,	and his meat and his fire for his kitchen;
A'i gig a'i dân i'w gegin;	[...]
[...]	
A gwraig orau o'r gwragedd	and the best woman of all women,
Gwyn fy mynd o'i gwin a'i medd!	blessed am I by her wine and her mead!
[...]	[...]
Ni bydd eisiau, budd oseb,	there will be no want, beneficial gift,
Na gwall na newyn na gwarth,	nor lack nor hunger nor shame,
Na syched fyth yn Sycharth.	nor ever thirst in Sycharth.
Gorau Cymro, tro trylew,	The best Welshman, valorous feat,
Piau'r wlad [...]	owns the country [...]
A phiau'r llys, hoff yw'r lle.	and owns the court, splendid is the place.
(Llys Owain Glyndŵr, 59-64;	(Johnston, <i>Iolo Goch</i> , 41-43)
72-76; 81-82; 90-94; 96)	

It is well-known that Owain Glyndŵr was among Iolo Goch's patrons, and the poet addressed three poems to the descendant of the princes of Powys. In one of these poems, Owain's resentment at his disinheritance is expressed. But the main focus of the poems is the description of Owain's court at Sycharth and the praise of the social stability it represented. Iolo did not live to see Glyndŵr and his men rising in rebellion against the English, and it is therefore not known whether the poet with his ambiguous attitude towards English rule in Wales and his love for order and stability would have approved of it (Johnston, *Literature of Wales*, 39-40).

Consequently, Iolo's case is very different from Gruffud Llwyd's, another poet whose name the reader comes across in "The Tree", as has been shown in Chapter 4.1. Gruffudd Llwyd was the nephew of the bard Hywel ap Einion and himself a bard under

the patronage of Owain Glyndŵr. He is well-known for his *cywydd mawl*, a *cywydd* of praise, addressed to Owain (Cartwright, 527). In his song he clearly links Owain to the idea of the *mab darogan*, the prophesied redeemer, and makes him a second Cadwaladr, the leader returning to forge an anti-English alliance. Both figures are firmly rooted in the Welsh tradition of *canu brud*, prophetic songs, and expected to overthrow Anglo-Saxon, or English, rule and re-establish British reign in Britain or, in this case Welsh reign in Wales (Koch, *Prophecy*, 1463; J. Davies, 194). There does not seem to have been any ambiguity in Gruffudd's attitude towards the English in his works. This is reflected in "The Tree" when Thomas has Owain say the following about Gruffudd:

[...] Gruffudd with his theme
 Of old princes in whose veins
 Swelled the same blood that sweetened mine
 Pierced my lethargy, I heard
 Above the tuneful consonants
 The sharp anguish, the despair
 Of men beyond my smooth domain
 Fretting under the barbed sting
 Of English law, starving among
 The sleek woods no longer theirs. (The Tree, 13-22)

Other allusions to more recent poetry include references to the poetic works of William Williams Pantycelyn, Ann Griffiths, Dewi Emrys, and the aforementioned Gronow Owen. In "Border Blues" there are references to the hymns of Pantycelyn (Border Blues, 52-53), and Thomas addresses a whole poem, "Fugue for Ann Griffiths", to the 18th-century hymn-writer Ann Griffiths (M. W. Thomas, *Keeping His Pen Clean*, 76; J. W. Davies, 22; 34). Thomas's poem "Those Others", in which he addresses his inner exile in Wales (Those Others, 1-3) is preceded by an extract from "Yr Alltud", The Exile, by Dewi Emrys. Also the imagery of the poem, including the picture of "Castaways on the sea/ of grass [...] Clinging to their doomed farms" (Those Others, 27-29), can be traced back to Dewi Emrys' more literal exiles, who find themselves "[b]eyond a flood that exiles" them "on a moor made fallow around a white holding" (qtd. in J. W. Davies, 8), and the doomed farms where the farmer must work on gorse land (J. W. Davies, 7-8). Finally, it is also the theme of exile which connects Thomas with Goronwy Owen (J. W. Davies, 22). The influence of Goronwy Owen on Thomas's poetry and especially on his sense of exile is evidenced by Thomas's composition of the poem "Hiraeth", which translates as "longing", "yearning" or "homesickness" (GPG, 3494) and in which he describes his longing for Anglesey just as Goronwy Owen did in

his poem “Hiraeth am Fôn” (J. W. Davies, 22), which can loosely be translated as “Longing for Anglesey”.

Thus, it can be stated that R.S. Thomas indeed makes use of Welsh poetry as an important source for his own work. Yet, the influence of Welsh-language poetry goes beyond the thematic level and is also detectable on the level of form, as shall be discussed in the following section.

4.2.2. Welsh Metric Forms

In his work, R.S. Thomas also refers to and makes use of distinctively Welsh metric forms, most notably the *awdl*, a long ode with end rhyme (Koch, *Awdl*, 148), the *cywydd*, a Welsh verse form consisting of rhyming couplets (Rowlands, xx-xxi), and perhaps the *englyn*. The latter is an early mediaeval metre consisting of three to four lines which are connected by middle and end rhyme. Its most basic form is the *englyn milwr*, the soldier-*englyn*, which consists of three lines with seven syllables and the last syllables rhyming (Johnston, *Literature of Wales*, 10). The *englyn milwr* provides the basis for numerous variations, of which one is found in the poetry of R.S. Thomas: the *englynion y beddau* (J. W. Davies, 2).

Englynion y beddau are found in the *Llyfr Du Caerfyrddin*, the Black Book of Carmarthen, a 13th-century manuscript. The term *englynion y beddau* translates as the “Stanzas of the Grave”. These stanzas are “a catalogue of heroic tradition and place-name lore” (Koch, *Englynion*, 702), as they list the graves of Welsh heroes (Koch, *Englynion*, 702). According to Jason Walford Davies (2), an allusion to this *englyn*-form can be observed in R.S. Thomas’s poem “Dead Worthies”:

Where is our poetry
but in the footnotes
What laurels for famous
men but asterisks and numbers?

Branwen (Refer below),
Llywelyn - there is but
one, eternally on his way
to an assignation. [...] (Dead Worthies, 1-8)

As the poet clearly does not follow the syllable structure or rhyme scheme of the *englyn* - and it would seem rather adventurous to argue that a four-line stanza already makes an *englyn* -, Davies’s argument probably is more related to the level of content. In this

poem R.S. Thomas commemorates notables from the Welsh literary tradition or history just like the mediaeval poets used to honour their heroes. Thomas identifies the “graves” of Branwen, Llywelyn and other illustrious figures in the footnotes of contemporary writing in the same way that the mediaeval poets identified the location of the graves of their heroes.

The other metre which R.S. Thomas makes use of in his poetry is the *cywydd*, the predominant measure of the 15th century (Rowlands, xx). The term *cywydd*, which literally means “harmony” (Johnston, *Literature of Wales*, 34), is actually an umbrella term for four *cywydd* metres, but the *cywydd deuair hirion* became so popular in the late Middle Ages that it became known simply as the *cywydd* (Rowlands, xxii). The *cywydd* may consist of an optional number of rhyming couplets. Each line contains seven syllables and while one line must end on a stressed syllable, the other must end on an unstressed one. Whether the stressed or the unstressed ending comes first is irrelevant. The order of stressed and unstressed syllables may also vary between couplets (Rowlands, xx-xxi). It is therefore possible that the second line of the first couplet ends on a stressed syllable and the first line of the second couplet ends on a stressed syllable too.

According to J.W. Davies (17), this pattern can be observed in R.S. Thomas’s poem “The Tree”, where he assumes the poet plays variations on the form of the *cywydd*. Indeed, as the lyrical I of the poem is Owain Glyn Dŵr, the choice to incorporate the *cywydd* form in the poem would seem very appropriate, as it was the predominant metric form of Glyn Dŵr’s time. J.W. Davies detects the *cywydd* metre in the following couplets of the poem:

As though he plucked with each string
The taunt fibres of my being
[...]
And days were fair under those boughs;
The dawn foray, the dusk carouse
[...]
But there at its roots I watch and wait
For the new spring so long delayed. (The Tree, 4-5; 39-40; 62-63)

Certainly, the use of the *cywydd* form here is not very obvious. The number of syllables does not comply with the rules of the *cywydd*. What can be observed, though, is that the rhyme scheme resembles that of the *cywydd*. The first couplet is a good example: the rhyming syllable is -ing, which is stressed in “string” in the first line and unstressed in the second in “being”. Unfortunately the rhymes of the other two couplets only work on

the orthographic level. From the point of view of phonetic realisation, all four lines end with stressed syllables, and the couplets therefore do not obey the rules of the *cywydd* metre. In fact, it is doubtful whether R.S. Thomas consciously employed the *cywydd* form here, as the three couplets, of which only one can be interpreted as a good example of Mediaeval Welsh metre, are only six lines from a poem consisting of sixty-eight lines.

As far as Welsh rhyme schemes are concerned, internal rhymes can be found in the poem “A Welsh Ballad Singer” (J. W. Davies, 4):

Thomas Edwards - Twin o’r Nant
 If you prefer it - that’s my name,
 Truth’s constant flame purging my heart
 Of malice and of mean cant. (qtd. in J. W. Davies, 4)

It seems as if Thomas is making use of a simplified *awld-gywydd* metre, which allows internal rhymes instead of, or combined with, end rhymes. Internal rhyme here means that the last syllable of one line may rhyme with the last syllable before the caesura, the *gorffwysfa* (Rowlands, xxix), of the following line (Edwards, 1771). According to J. W. Davies (4), in this passage, it is not only “name” and “flame” that rhyme but also “Nant” and “cant”. He argues that the latter rhyme is an allusion to Nant’s own poem, on which Thomas draws here and in which Nant rhymes his own name with the Welsh word “cant”, meaning “hundred”. It is indeed possible to read the structure of this poem in this way, although, again, the proof of Welsh influence on the poetic form is not exactly strong.

Another interesting poem in this context is “Hill Farmer”. With regard to this poem, R.S. Thomas himself explained in an unpublished BBC radio broadcast in 1947 that he had “tried to introduce a certain amount of internal rhyme and assonance” (Brown and M. W. Thomas, 167) into this poem (Brown and M. W. Thomas, 167). Indeed, there are several instances where assonances and repetitions as well as internal rhyme can be observed:

And he will go home from the fair
 To dream of the grey mare with the broad belly,
 And the bull and the prize tup
 That held its head so proudly up.
 He will go back to the bare acres
 Of caked earth, and the reality
 Of fields that yield such scant return
 Of parched clover and green corn.
 Yes, he will go home to the cow gone dry,

And the lean fowls and the pig in the sty,
And all the extravagance of a Welsh sky. (qtd. in Brown and M. W. Thomas,
167)

Therefore, the use of Welsh metres in the work of R.S. Thomas cannot be proven with certainty but it seems that the poet's knowledge of Welsh poetic forms has inspired certain experiments in technique as well as subject matter (Brown and M. W. Thomas, 167).

Regarding poetic forms as subject matter, there are also many explicit references to Welsh measures and rhyme schemes. For example, in "The Tree" the poet Gruffudd Llwyd is described as "singing of the dead,/ In *awdl* and *cywydd* to the harp" (The Tree, 2-3). The *awdl*, commonly translated as "ode", was the most common form of poetry in the Middle Ages before the introduction of the *cywydd* metre and is a poem of variable length and end rhyme (Koch, *Awdl*, 148). Moreover, there are allusions to the Welsh sound correspondence patterns; for instance, in the poem "Poet's Meeting", which was published as a pamphlet in 1983 (J. W. Davies, 14). Here, some of the world's most famous poets come together, from Shakespeare and Wordsworth to Aeschylus, Catullus and Dafydd ap Gwilym. About the latter the poet writes:

The consonants
clicked as ap Gwilym
countered, a turnstile
too fast for Catullus to get through. (qtd. in J. W. Davies, 14)

This clicking of the consonants is, of course, nothing else than a descriptive reference to *cyghanedd*, the well-known complex system of sound correspondences which are entirely unique to Welsh. A similar picture is drawn in "Salt", when Thomas has a sailor in a melancholy mood observe that "the capstan spoke/ in *cyghanedd*" (Salt, 56-57). When Thomas depicts this rattling clicking noise of the *cyghanedd* he probably refers to *cyghanedd groes* and *cyghanedd draws* in particular, the two types of *cyghaneddion* to which consonantal correspondence is essential. In both cases, the same sequence of consonants must be repeated in the first and second half of the line. The difference between these types is that while in *cyghanedd groes* the consonants of the two halves have to match completely, in *cyghanedd draws* there may be a middle section which is not part of the correspondence (Johnston, *Literature of Wales*, 34-35). Therefore, *cyghanedd* is an internal rhyme scheme which is much more focused on consonant correspondences than rhyme schemes of other languages. It does not take much to

imagine that the sound of *cynganedd* is indeed very different from English rhymes, where it is not possible to exclude vowels from the rhyme pattern.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the poem “Poets’ Meeting” is in itself an allusion to the poetic genre of *ymryson barddol*, the bardic contest. The poets named in the text meet to challenge each other’s poetic skills. But it seems that Dafydd and his skills in the Welsh strict-metres gain a decided victory over Wordsworth’s iambics, the Latin verses of Catullus, the expertise of Aeschylus in drama and the skilful poetry of William Dunbar (J. W. Davies, 14).

It can be stated that next to thematic references to Welsh poetry there are quite a few examples of allusions to Welsh metres and poetic forms to be found in Thomas’s poetry. A further important source from which the poet draws are numerous Welsh-language prose works as will be shown next.

4.2.3. Welsh Prose

Thomas’s poetry is rich in allusions to Mediaeval Welsh prose tales and legends and even lives of saints. The poem “Border Blues”, which is particularly loaded with references to Welsh literature, includes the following passage:

I was going up the road and Beuno beside me
Talking in Latin and old Welsh,
When a volley of voices struck us; I turned,
But Beuno had vanished, and in his place
There stood the ladies from the council houses:
Blue eyes and Birmingham yellow
Hair, and the ritual murder of vowels. (Border Blues, 24-30)

Evidently, in these lines Thomas describes the linguistic border between Wales and England. While he talks to Beuno, a 6th-century Welsh saint, in “Latin and old Welsh”, the “ladies from the council houses” represent English infiltration (J. W. Davies, 9; Henken, 205). But the literary reference to the saint’s vita, *Buchedd Beuno*, must not be overlooked. It is the “volley of voices”, presumably English voices, in Thomas’s poem which leads the reader to the *Hystoria o Uched Beuno*, The History of Beuno’s Life, short *Buchedd Beuno*, which is notable for its anti-English tone (Henken, 206). The Life of Beuno includes an account of Beuno walking along the river Severn when suddenly

“he heard a voice on the other side of the river, inciting dogs to hunt a hare, and the voice was that of an Englishman, who shouted “Kergia! Kergia! which in that language incited the hounds. And when Beuno heard the voice of the Englishman,

he at once returned, and coming to his disciples, said to them, "My sons, put on your garments and your shoes, and let us leave this place, for the nation of the man with the strange language, whose cry I heard beyond the river urging his hounds, will invade this place, and it will be theirs and they will hold it as their possession." (qtd. in J. W. Davies, 10)

Thus, it can be argued that Thomas's "volley of voices" mirrors the hunting cry "Kergia!", which probably is a reflection of English "Charge!". Beuno's vanishing and replacement by the ladies from Birmingham allude to Beuno's abandonment of his home upon hearing the English voices and therefore to the English invasion of Wales, on a linguistic level at least. The allusion to a hunting cry can also be claimed to refer to the military expansion of England into Welsh territory (J. W. Davies, 10).

Other literary allusions include references to more widely known Mediaeval Welsh texts such as *Culhwch ac Olwen*, the earliest Arthurian tale in any language, *Peredur*, the Welsh version of Percival, and the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi*, four famous native Welsh tales (Johnston, *Literature of Wales*, 18-23). In Thomas's "Shrine at Cape Clear", for example, his description of a statue of the Virgin Mary as "more white than the sea's/ Purest spray" (qtd. in J. W. Davies, 18) seems to echo the portrayal of Olwen in *Culhwch ac Olwen*. In the Mediaeval tale, Olwen, her skin and hands are also described as "whiter [...] than the sea's spay" (qtd. in J. W. Davies, 18), which clearly indicates an intended allusion to the Arthurian tale (J. W. Davies, 18).

Another interesting reference to *Culhwch ac Olwen* can be found in "Winter Retreat". In this poem, Thomas paints an interesting picture of death as "a wild boar/ Running amok, eyes red, great jaws/ Slavering horribly with their mad lust for blood" (qtd. in M. W. Thomas, *War Poet*, 9). This mention of a wild boar evokes the image of Twrch Trwyth (J. W. Davies, 19), the monstrous boar which, in an episode of *Culhwch ac Olwen*, Arthur and his men chase across Wales and Cornwall until they finally hunt it down (G. Jones and T. Jones, 129-135).

Furthermore, references to another story from *Culhwch ac Olwen*, can be found in Thomas's "The Ancients of the World". In his poem, Thomas mentions all kinds of fabulous creatures:

The salmon lying in the depths of Llyn Llifon,
Secretly as a thought in a dark mind,
Is not so old as the owl of Cwm Cowlyd
Who tells her sorrow nightly on the wind.

The ousel singing in the woods of Cilgwri,
Tirelessly as a stream over the mossed stones,

Is not so old as the toad of Cors Fochno
Who feels the cold skin sagging round his bones.

The toad and the ouzel and the stag of Rhedynfre,
That has cropped each leaf from the tree of life,
Are not so old as the owl of Cwm Cowlyd,
That proud eagle would have to wife. (The Ancients of the World, 1-12)

These creatures, with the exception of the toad of Cors Fochno, also appear in *Culhwch ac Olwen*. In one of the episodes, Culhwch's task is to find the lost Mabon, son of Modron, and in the course of the story many mythical beasts are consulted. There is the Ouzel of Cilgwri, the Stag of Rhedynfre, the Owl of Cum Cawlwyd, the Eagle of Gwernabwy and the Salmon of Llyn Llyw. The eagle is the oldest creature followed by the owl while the ouzel is the youngest. (G. Jones and T. Jones, 123-126; Morris, 117; 127)

In "Farm Wives", which Thomas published in *The Dublin Magazine* in 1955, the poet describes these women referred to in the title as

Sallow of cheek, a crow's wing
Of hair over the brow's smudged
Vellum; their legs all red and scarred
With brambles and the bites of flies. (qtd. in J. W. Davies, 19)

Jason Walford Davies (19) suspects in these lines a parody of a passage from the *Historia Peredur Vab Efrafc*, where a crow is depicted on the snow eating a duck's flesh. Peredur observes the scene and compares "the blackness of the crow and the whiteness of the snow and the redness of the blood, to the hair of the woman he loved best, which was as black as jet, and her flesh to the whiteness of the snow, and the redness of the blood in the white snow to the two red spots on the cheeks of the woman he loved best" (qtd. in J. W. Davies, 19).

By far the most frequent, however, are allusions to the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi*, a set of four loosely linked tales, each with its own central hero. The references, again, reach from mention of characters' names to indirect allusions to the events narrated in the tales. One of the most straightforward references is, perhaps, Thomas's mention of Lleu, sometimes also spelled Llew, in "Eheu! Fugaces". The poet asks:

One year for Llew the spear
was in the making, for us
how many the viruses
that will finish us off? (Eheu! Fugaces, 1-4)

As is already evident from the title, this poem deals with the topic of transience. Thomas compares the time until a virus is generated that will eventually threaten mankind with the time it took to fashion the spear which was the right weapon to slay Lleu, a character from *Mabinogi Math*, the fourth branch of the *Mabinogi*. Lleu is married to Blodeuwedd, who falls in love with Gronw Pebr. Together, the lovers plan to murder Lleu. Blodeuwedd tricks her husband into telling her how he might be killed, since Lleu is known to be virtually invulnerable. Lleu explains that he can only be slain under certain circumstances: in a bath tub with a vaulted well-thatched frame over it situated on a river bank, with a spear that has been in the making for a year and has been fashioned only on Sundays during mass when all other people are in church, in presence of a male goat and only when Lleu himself places one foot on the back of the goat and the other on the edge of the tub (G. Jones and T. Jones, 70). Blodeuwedd and Gronw Pebr follow these instructions and Gronw spends a year fashioning the spear fit to murder Lleu. In the end, however, the couple is not successful as Lleu struck by the spear transforms into an eagle and flees. He is restored to life thanks to the magic powers of his uncle Gwydion, who also punishes Blodeuwedd by turning her into an owl (G. Jones and T. Jones, 71-74).

Other poems by Thomas allude to the children of Llŷr, the main characters of *Mabinogi Branwen* and *Mabinogi Manawydan*, the second and third branch, respectively. The poem “Gone?” depicts an image of “a forest of aerials” (Gone?, 7), a recurrent metaphor for industrialised Anglesey (J. W. Davies, 23), “as though an invading fleet invisibly/ had come to anchor among these/ financed hills” (Gone?, 8-10). This imagery can be traced back to *Mabinogi Branwen* (J. W. Davies, 23), where Irish swineherds tell their king about having seen trees on the sea moving towards Ireland. These trees crossing the Irish Sea are of course the masts and sail-posts of a Welsh fleet coming to Branwen’s rescue and prepared for armed conflict. Branwen ferch Llŷr was married to the Irish king Matholwch but then treated abominably in her new home. Banned to the kitchen and exposed to violence and abuse, she manages to tame a starling and send to her brothers in Wales for help (G. Jones and T. Jones, 32-34). A similar case can be observed in “The Echoes Return Slow”. Thomas writes:

There was this sea
and the children
sat by it and said
nothing. A ship passed,
and they thought of it,
each to himself, of how it was fine

there or irksome
or of little account. (The Echoes Return Slow, 53-60)

This extract might be read as a reference to the opening of *Mabinogi Branwen*, where the children of Llŷr overlook the sea and witness the approach of Matholwch's impressive ships, when he first comes to Wales to ask for Branwen's hand in marriage (J. W. Davies, 23):

[O]ne afternoon he was at Harddlech in Ardudwy, at a court of his. And they were seated upon the rock of Harddlech overlooking the sea [...]. And as they were seated thus, they could see thirteen ships coming from the South of Ireland, and making towards them with an easy swift motion, the wind behind them, and nearing them swiftly. [...] When they saw the ships from near at hand, certain were they that they had never seen ships in fairer trim than they. Beautiful, seemly, and brave ensigns of brocaded silk were upon them." (G. Jones and T. Jones, 25)

Matholwch comes ashore to discuss the matter with Branwen's brother Bran and the marriage between Matholwch and Branwen is agreed upon. But Branwen's half-brother Efnisien is furious when he hears about the upcoming marriage because his permission has not been asked. Seeking revenge, he mutilates Matholwch's horses. This results in a minor diplomatic crisis, but Bran is able to appease the deeply offended Matholwch by presenting him with a magic cauldron which has the power to resurrect the dead (G. Jones and T. Jones, 27-29). A reference to this episode and Branwen's fate in Ireland is found in R.S. Thomas's "Abercuawg", when he states:

[...] I have listened
to the word 'Branwen' and pictured
the horses and the soil red
with their blood, and the trouble
in Ireland [...]. (Abercuawg, 23-27)

Additionally, references to the other strong female character of the *Four Branches* can be noted: Rhiannon. She is married to the lord of Dyfed, Pwyll, the hero of the first branch of the *Mabinogi*. Her fate is also very well known. She is wrongly accused of having killed her own son and has to do penance for her supposed crime by having to meet visitors outside the gates and carry them to the town on her back like a horse (G. Jones and T. Jones, 18-19). Rhiannon also reappears in *Mabinogi Manawydan*, the third branch, as Pwyll's widow and marries Branwen's brother Manawydan (G. Jones and T. Jones, 41-42). In R.S. Thomas's poetry Rhiannon is mentioned in connection with birds. "The birds Rhiannon" or "Rhiannon's birds" is a phrase which he frequently employs in his poems, for example in "Deprivation" (24), "Maes-yr-Onnen" (14) and "The Tree"

(46). In all these cases, the singing of Rhiannon's birds appears to be an indicator for Welshness. They sing, when Thomas wants to emphasise the Welsh character of a place such as the chapel described in *Maes-yr-Onnen* (*Maes-yr-Onnen*, 1-14) or when he lets Glyn Dŵr speak of the time of the Rising as "one brief hour [of] summer" (*The Tree*, 44). However, the birds of Rhiannon refuse to sing to modern Wales, which he characterises as

[...] a brittle
instrument laid on one side
by one people, taken up
by another to play their twanged
accompaniment upon it [...]. (*Deprivation*, 19-23)

However, there is no mention of birds in *Mabinogi Pwyll* or *Mabinogi Manawydan*, the two branches in which Rhiannon appears as a major character. In fact, the extract Thomas refers to is itself a reference to Rhiannon in *Mabinogi Branwen*. Bendigeidfran foretells his men: "In Harddlech you will be feasting seven years, and the birds of Rhiannon singing unto you" (G. Jones and T. Jones, 18). When they arrive in Harddlech the prediction is fulfilled: "And then they went on to Harddlech, and they sat them down and began to regale them with meat and drink; and even as they began to eat and drink there came three birds and began to sing them a certain song, and of all the songs they had ever heard each one was unlovely compared with that" (G. Jones and T. Jones, 39).

In Thomas's Autobiography *Neb* he also mentions the birds of Rhiannon and writes: "This is one of the most magical songs to be heard in Britain, and, listening to these melodious notes, there came to mind the Birds of Rhiannon and the old tale of how the hearer would, in hearing them, forget time. He later came across this bird's nest in the nearby field, but, alas, this sweet singer is by now very rare in Britain" (R.S. Thomas, *No-one*, 64). Here, the poet confuses two parts of *Mabinogi Branwen*. The first is the aforementioned description of the birds of Rhiannon singing to the seven who were able to escape from Ireland. The other is a later episode when the seven feast in Gwales in Pembrokeshire and, fascinated by the magic of the place that made them stop thinking about all their sorrows, forget time. In this part there is no mention of Rhiannon's birds (J. W. Davies, 32-33; G. Jones and T. Jones, 39). It is interesting that, as a result, from this confusion, it is possible to trace Thomas's source for the stories of the *Four Branches*. It seems as if he read *Celtic Stories* by Edward Thomas, where a link between the singing of the birds of Rhiannon and forgetfulness of time can also be observed, before he wrote these lines in his autobiography (J. W. Davies, 33).

4.3. The Old Language: Representing Welsh

It has already been pointed out that the issue of bilingualism is essential to R.S. Thomas's works. It is therefore not surprising that the reader comes across many instances when the two languages of Wales are discussed, used, described, cherished and demonised in his poetry. This section will deal with Thomas's representation and integration of the Welsh language in his works, while his attitude towards the English tongue will be explored in Chapter 4.4.

Thomas's references to Welsh can take various forms. His works are full of descriptions of the language, Welsh names, place-names and Welsh-language quotes from a variety of sources, and even a few Welsh words and translated idioms can be found scattered across his texts. It is interesting to note, though, that his poems which bear the titles "Welsh" and "The Old Language", where one might reasonably expect to find references to the language beyond the title, actually deal with the English tongue and the implications of speaking English as a Welsh person and are therefore not considered here.

Thomas's descriptions of Welsh seem to focus on the sounds of Welsh consonants (Nisbert, 105). In "Welsh Landscape" (14-15) he writes about the "soft consonants/ Strange to the ear", which closely resembles the "tuneful consonants" from "The Tree" (17), which may also be another reference to *cynghanedd*. Given the fact that the most obvious difference between the Welsh and the English sound systems probably are, as stated in Chapter 2.2., the sibilant /ð/ and the dorsal fricative /x/, which are typically Welsh consonants but do not exist in English, it appears to be reasonable to underline this dissimilarity in the two phonetic systems. The idea that it is indeed consonants which are on Thomas's mind is encouraged when one reads his poem "Expatriates". In this poem, the poet explains that "[t]he cold stream's sibilants" (Expatriates, 17) are unknown to the streets of English towns and that the "tongues [of the Welsh] are coated with/ A dustier speech" (Expatriates, 18-19).

About a place situated in the Welsh hill country Thomas writes that it is "as Welsh as/ it is unpronounceable" (Plas Difancoll, 16-17). For a non-Welsh speaker there are many such "unpronounceable" place-names to be found in Thomas's poetry, which add a certain local colour to his writings. It seems to be for this reason that, in "The Welsh Hill Country" (4; 10; 16), he writes about Bwlch-y-Fedwen, Nant-yr-Eira and Ty'n-y-Fawnog, all located in Snowdonia National Park, remembers the emigrants of lakes

Aled and Eiddwen (Expatriates, 22-23), speaks of the streams of Mawddwy (He is sometimes contrary, 11-12), the river Teifi (Salt, 5), and mentions Welsh places like Hafod Lom, Ystrad Flur, Strata Florida, and Ffynon Fair, St. Mary's Well, in the titles of his poems. In most instances, Thomas uses the Welsh names of places, such as Hyddgen and Traeth Maelgwn, which have already been discussed, because they "recall the country's history" (M. W. Thomas, *Keeping His Pen Clean*, 76). Llanrhaedr-ym-Mochnant is another example. It is the title of a poem which alludes to, but does not name, William Morgan's translation of the Bible (M. W. Thomas, *Keeping His Pen Clean*, 76). If the reader does not know that Morgan was from Llanrhaedr-ym-Mochnant and does not pay attention to the mentioning of the place, this clue can easily be lost on him/her. On the other hand, it is also important not to write off any Welsh word as a place-name. For example, Plas Difancoll, which has been cited above, does not seem to be the name of a particular place in Wales. In the poem, Thomas portrays an old, abandoned stately home with broken windows which "leans on itself,/ sags" (Plas Difancoll, 31-32) and its surroundings where even "[t]he fish starve in their waters" (Plas Difancoll, 29). The poet effectively describes the ruinous state of the place and the "hopelessness/ of its condition" (Plas Difancoll, 39-40). Plas Difancoll seems to be in the process of decay and disappearing, which is exactly what the name of the place denotes: "Plas Difancoll" can loosely be translated as place (also referring to a mansion) of total loss and disappearance (GPG, 1942; 4990).

Other Welsh words incorporated in Thomas's texts are, for example, Welsh exclamations, such as in "Border Blues" (55): "We reached home at last, but *diawl*! I was tired". *Diawl* is Welsh for the devil. However, since the meaning of the phrase is sufficiently clear even without knowing the exact translation of the exclamation, it can be argued that the use of Welsh here is again only an attempt at adding local colour to the text by extrinsic code-switching (cf. Bohata, 117). More challenging is the phrase spoken by the minister in the verse play "The Minister": "I held a *seiat*, but no one came" (The Minister, 49). It is evident from the context that it is some kind of gathering and the fact that a minister organises it might hint towards a religious purpose. But only checking a dictionary can provide certainty, where it is stated that a "seiat" is a religious, especially Methodist, meeting usually held on a week-night (GPG, 5531).

Finally, there are also Welsh phrases to be found in Thomas's poetry which cannot be understood from this context. No translation is offered, neither in the text nor in a footnote. These phrases are usually quotes from Welsh literary texts, such as the extract

from the *Canu Heledd* presented in the preceding chapter. In “Border Blues” three quotes can be found which are all important for comprehending the poem’s meaning. While the first quote is first and foremost a literary allusion to a whole literary text, the other two are embedded in the storyline of the poem. “*Mi sydd fachgen ifanc, ffôl, / Yn byw yn ôl fy ffasi*” (Border Blues, 59-60) is taken from the eighteenth-century ballad *Bugeilio’r Gwenith Gwyn* and translates as “I am a young, foolish lad, / Living as my fancy takes me” (J. W. Davies, 10). The juxtaposition of the “bachgen ifanc”, the young lad, and the “lad of the ‘fifties” provides an important contrast of old and new, ancient and modern (J. W. Davies, 10), which is not observable without the Welsh. The third Welsh quote is from a well-known Welsh hymn, *Y Delyn Aur*, *The Golden Harp*, (M. W. Thomas, *Keeping His Pen Clean*, 76; J. W. Davies): “Ni bydd diwedd / Byth ar sŵn y delyn aur” (Border Blues, 121-122) can be translated as “There will never be an end to the sound of the golden harp” (my translation). The poem then goes on: “Though the strings are broken, and time sets / The barbed wire in their place, / The tune endures” (Border Blues, 123-125). Thus, understanding the Welsh quote is crucial for the poem. A reader unfamiliar with Welsh will not be able to comprehend which instrument is meant, as there is no further reference to a harp in the poem. Therefore, these Welsh phrases can be considered examples of political code-switching (cf. Bohata, 117-118), as the English-speaking reader is obviously confronted with a linguistic and also cultural boundary.

But in his poetry Thomas only rarely establishes this boundary by inserting Welsh phrases in his text. Still, there are English phrases for which the meaning can only be appreciated in full when the Welsh expression to which they allude is discovered. It seems that R.S. Thomas tries to “celticise” his poetry “by imping Welsh idioms into it” (J. W. Davies, 29). An example for this practice can be found in “The Moor” (1-3): “It was like a church to me. / I entered it on soft foot, / Breath held like a cap in the hand”. What is meant is of course a state of pure admiration of the moor and an intensely felt perception of its beauty which takes the speaker’s breath away. The reason for the wording, though, is that it refers to the Welsh expression for the condition of being out of breath: “â i wynt yn ei ddwrn”, meaning “with his breath in his fist” (J. W. Davies, 29-30). A similar case is the description of Dic Aberdaron in the poem of the same title as a “hedge-poet” (Dic Aberdaron, 9). It would probably be wrong to assume that this wording is derived from the English idiom “hedgerow poet” denoting a minor pastoral poet (J. W. Davies, 30). It is much more likely that this is a translation of the Welsh

“bardd bol clawdd”, which can literally be translated as a “hedge-side poet” and is “the derogatory Welsh term for a mere rhymester” (J. W. Davies, 30).

In some instances, a certain degree of influence of Welsh on Thomas’s English can also be observed on the level of syntax. In *Cymru or Wales?* Thomas states: “We could show these people that [...] we, y *Cymry*, are here still” (R.S. Thomas, *Cymru*, 26). He uses the same construction in one of his poems from the collection *Counterpoint*:

We are here still. What
is survival’s relationship
with meaning? The answer once

was the bone’s music at the lips
of time. (Crucifixion, 16-20)

The phrase, which is under scrutiny here, is of course “We are here still”, a syntactical structure unknown to Standard English, which would require “We are still here”. J. W. Davies (30) suggests that the word-order of the phrase reflects the syntax of the equivalent Welsh sentence: “Ry’n ni yma o hyd”, “We are here still”, or actually literally “It is us [who are] here still” (my translation). The question remains whether this syntactical structure really is a reference to Welsh word-order or rather mirrors the regional variant of English spoken in Wales.

In any case, it becomes evident that references to certain features of the Welsh language can be found all over Thomas’s poetry. But there are also comments on the sociolinguistic situation in Wales. In “Alma Mater”, for example, Thomas refers to Cardiff as “the nation’s/ museum, the burial ground/ of its speech” (Alma Mater, 9-11), which most probably refers to the fact that the Welsh language was and is least spoken in the south, which had faced an influx of English-speaking workers during the Industrial Revolution. Moreover, Thomas confirms many linguists’ observation that Welsh in the 20th century was very tightly linked to the church – one of the few public domains from which Welsh was not banned in the course of history – when he states in “Fugue for Ann Griffiths” (52-54): “The dust settles on the Welsh language,/ but is blown away in great gusts/ week by week in chapel after chapel”. The poet furthermore also refers to the legal text that has often been blamed by Welsh nationalists for the decline of the Welsh language. In “It Hurts Him to Think” he states:

The decree went forth
to destroy the language -- ‘not cariad’
they said, ‘love’. The nursing future
saw the tightening lips

of the English drawn on the hard sky
to the east. 'You can have the job,
if you ask for it in the right
words'. (It Hurts Him to Think, 1-8)

The "decree" mentioned here refers to the Laws in Wales Acts (M. W. Thomas, *Keeping His Pen Clean*, 67), which excluded Welsh from most public domains. But that it also affected the private sphere is indicated by the example Thomas gives and for which he chose the word "love" - which certainly is first and foremost a word of the private domain. In the lines quoted Thomas also refers to the situation in the workplace, where English is the predominant language and where in the 20th century monoglot Welsh speakers do not stand a chance.

As stated in Chapter 2, a glance at the social history of the Welsh language reveals that, at the beginning of the 20th century, it was clearly an advantage to be able to speak English in order to climb the social ladder. As a result, speaking Welsh became less and less prestigious; a fact which Thomas recognises when he takes the Welsh to task for "speaking their language without pride" (Plas Difancoll, 44) and reproves them for having given in to colonisation by the English.

In his poetry, Thomas leaves no doubt that the English, the colonisers, are those mainly responsible for the state of the Welsh language in the 20th century. But he suggests that they have always had help from the Welsh who cannot be bothered to oppose the influx of the English and their language and thus have dug the grave for their language themselves:

I have walked the shore
For an hour and seen the English
Scavenging among the remains
Of our culture, covering the sand
Like the tide and, with the roughness
Of the tide, elbowing our language
Into the grave we have dug for it. (Reservoirs, 16-22)

Here, Thomas expresses his horror of Wales literally being swamped by the English and of the Welsh language being swallowed up and drowned. His accusation of the Welsh has led the historian Norman Davies (812) to read this poem as a reaction to the lost referendum for Welsh devolution in 1979. Thomas's negative attitude towards the English and their language is evident in this poem – as it is in many others as will be shown in the following.

4.4. Beyond Offa's Dyke: Depicting English, England and the English

As much as R.S. Thomas concerns himself with Wales in his poetry, there are also a vast number of poems which deal with England, the English and their language. Thomas's uneasy and difficult personal relationship with the English language has already been discussed and it has been pointed out that this is reflected in his poetry. Indeed, in his poems there are many references to English which present a negative attitude towards the language. In "Looking at Sheep" the English "[a]re emptying their waste speech" (Looking at Sheep, 12) about the Welsh. In "Welsh", one of the poems with a very personal tone, Thomas writes about the English: "I don't like their talk/ Their split vowels" (Welsh, 16-17). The "split vowels" possibly refer to English diphthongs which are commonly monophthongised in Wales. In "Border Blues" the speaker also expresses his displeasure with the English spoken by the "ladies from the council houses" (Border Blues, 28) in Birmingham when he accuses them of "the ritual murder of vowels" (Border Blues, 30).

This negative picture of the English language is most certainly linked to Thomas's disapproval of bilingualism in Wales. His personal resentment is evident when he exclaims "This devilish bilingualism!" (R.S. Thomas, *Creative Writer's Suicide*, 171) in his lecture *The Creative Writer's Suicide*. But he also addresses the issue of bilingualism in Wales in his poetry. The speaker in his poem "A Lecturer", for example, indicates that Welsh is superior to the English language because it has been a language in the British Isles long before English evolved and gained a foothold in Britain. The narrator tells his audience that the lecturer will take them "on a tour/ Of the Welsh language, its flowering/ while yours [i.e. the English's] was clay soil" (A Lecturer, 7-9).

The English themselves are also described in fairly negative terms. They are "blonde strangers" (Welsh, 15) or have "Birmingham yellow/ Hair" (Border Blues, 29-30) and "faces/ With red cheeks" (Rose Cottage, 19-20) which stare at the Welsh and gaze at their way of life. For example, the figure of Iago Prytherch, the Welsh-speaking hill farmer Thomas invented, complains: "I am alone, exposed/ In my own fields with no place to run/ From your sharp eyes" (Invasion on the Farm, 5-7). A similar situation is depicted in "A Welsh Testament" (23-29):

I saw them stare
From their long cars, as I passed knee-deep
In ewes and wethers. I saw them stand

By the thorn hedges, watching me string
The far flocks on a shrill whistle.
And always there was their eyes' strong
Pressure on me [...].

The English, especially English visitors in Wales, are also presented in a very negative light in "Traeth Maelgwn". The speaker of the poem refers to

[...] marks
On the sand, that mean nothing
And don't have to to the fat,
Monoglot stranger. (Traeth Maelgwn, 2-5)

The English tourists do not and cannot understand Welsh culture, which is mainly due to the fact that they do not speak Welsh. In the context of this poem, the adjective "monoglot" becomes a pejorative term which is used to express severe criticism of English monolinguals and England's linguistic policy of monolingualism.

Thomas's works contain a lot of criticism of tourism in Wales in general and English tourists in particular. In a letter to his son Gwydion in 1988 he writes: "The Welsh crisis deepens as the English pour in week by week" (Rogers, 48). This view is reflected in poems such as "Looking at Sheep", in which an "Elsan culture" (13) threatens the Welsh and their civilization. The expression "Elsan culture" can be regarded as a reference to the English tourism culture of the many caravan parks along the Welsh coast (Morris, 122) since Elsan is a chemical product used by campers and caravaners to break down human waste in the toilet (Brown, *R.S. Thomas*, 64). Of course, this means that English culture and its language are thus associated with excrement (Ward, 64; Brown, *R.S. Thomas*, 64).

Furthermore, Thomas frequently portrays the ignorant English tourists who do not recognize that they have not only entered another country which is different from England but also crossed a linguistic boundary. Of the English-speaking visitors Thomas writes in "Resort":

On the conveyor belt
Of their interests they circle the town
To emerge jaded at the pier;
To look at the water with dull eyes
Resentfully, not understanding
A syllable. Did they expect
The sea, too, to be bi-lingual?" (Resort, 10-16)

In the poem, the English tourists are taken to task for not acknowledging that Wales is home to another, entirely different language. It is implied that the bilingualism they expect of the Welsh and even demand was actually not an inherent characteristic of Wales until historical circumstances forced the Welsh to become a bilingual language community. The question at the end of the poem summarises this crucial point and also recalls Thomas's request stated in *The Creative Writer's Suicide*: "Let nobody imagine that because there is so much English everywhere in Wales it is not a foreign language" (R.S. Thomas, *Creative Writer's Suicide*, 173).

Indeed, most poems about the negative effects of tourism primarily deal with the negative influence of the English language in Wales, which the tourists bring with them. "Because of this, he [i.e. Thomas] looked at the lips of the visitors. Very quietly he cursed their language" (R.S. Thomas, *No-one*, 77), Thomas explains in his autobiography. This personal resentment can also be observed in accounts of Thomas's behaviour towards English tourists in Wales. According to C. H. Sisson Martin Roberts (9), Thomas once reacted thus when an English tourist asked him for directions in English: "He pretended to not understand her, and replied in Welsh. Apparently he referred to her [...] as 'a thing in a bikini', her attire being an additional cause for indignation". In Thomas's poetry, a very similar attitude is expressed: "You have not been here before./ You will offend with your speech" (*Strangers*, 11-12), the English are told in "Strangers".

R.S. Thomas seems to be very keen to stress that the English are outsiders in Wales in order to emphasise the difference between Wales and England. In *Cymru or Wales?* Thomas proudly tells a story about a Welsh-speaking little girl who loves to answer the phone. On one occasion the phone rings and the little girl picks it up, listens for a moment and then puts the receiver down. (R.S. Thomas, *Cymru*, 26). Upon being asked who the caller was, she merely answered, "Oh, some English people" (R.S. Thomas, *Cymru*, 26). Thomas is enthralled by her reaction: "More of that, I say; more of that. That's the way to teach the English that *yng Nghymru 'rydym yn siarad ein hiaith ein hunain* - in their Wales we speak our language" (R.S. Thomas, *Cymru*, 26). But Thomas is himself quite capable of "teaching" the English that they are, in fact, not welcome when the lyrical I in "Welcome" greets the English in Wales thus:

You can come in.
 You can come along way;
 We can't stop you.
 You can come up the roads

Or by railway;
You can land from the air.
You can walk this country
From end to end;
But you won't be inside;
You must stop at the bar,
The old bar of speech. (Welcome, 1-11)

This poem provides anything but a warm welcome for the English in Wales. The last line reveals why the English can never be “inside” Wales: they do not speak its language and therefore, even though they may come to Wales from all directions and on all means of transport, they cannot cross the linguistic border. Speaking Welsh, according to this poem, is essential for being an insider in Wales and understanding its culture. Or, in Thomas's own words: “without the key of the Welsh language one and all must needs pass by the door that opens on the real Wales” (qtd. in Brown, *R.S. Thomas*, 60). In “The Parlour” (5-6) the English are informed that they “knock with the wrong/ tongue” and are therefore not allowed to enter. It should be noted that the title “The Parlour” is by no means coincidental. The parlour, Thomas explains elsewhere, traditionally was the part of a Welsh house where visitors were received while the family and friends were asked into the kitchen (M. W. Thomas, *Internal Difference*, 123-124). He considers the Welsh “a homely people; they live in their kitchen. They have their front parlour, of course, and without the language the traveller will never get beyond it” (qtd. in M. W. Thomas, *Internal Difference*, 124). In “The Parlour” the English are confronted with a pretended politeness, which essentially means that they are received in their own tongue:

Over
Polite tea we hand you
The iced cake of translation.
It is not what we mean. (The Parlour, 9-12)

A very similar statement can be found in “Welcome”:

We have learnt your own
Language but don't
Let it take you in;
It's what you pay with. (Welcome, 12-16)

Both poems imply that tourism is one of the major reasons why the Welsh-speaking Welsh learn English. But the fact that the Welsh speak English does not mean that Welsh culture is also translated for English tourists. The spread of the English language

in Wales does not provide the visitors with a way to understand the culture of Wales, it gives the Welsh the opportunity to elicit money from the tourists. But finally, the English must travel back to England without having gained access to Wales and her culture:

Past town and factory
You must travel back
To the cold bud of water
In the hard rock. (Welcome, 19-22)

This passage reveals that, in general, England and the English are associated with industrialism. In “It Hurts Him to Think” the word “industrialists” is even used as a synonym for the English who “burrow[...]/ in the corpse of a nation/ for its congealed blood” (It Hurts Him to Think, 21-23). The negative attitude towards industrialist England expressed in Thomas’s poetry reaches a climax when the speaker of the poem “Resort” states that the English must ultimately “return to the vomit/Of the factories” (Resort, 9-10). This extreme vocabulary was surely chosen to convey intense anger and desperation (Brown, *R.S. Thomas*, 64). Industrialisation was brought to Wales via England and in the eyes of R.S. Thomas seems to have been one of the major reasons for the decline of the Welsh language. Therefore, England is to blame for both, the Anglicisation of Wales and her industrialisation (Wigginton, 120-121).

But the Welsh are also chided for selling out their land to the English since they allow the English to pay them: “Here are a slow people/ With drained hearts, offering/ A welcome to those who can pay” (Gwalia, 4-6). The Welsh give up their self-respect in order to make money in the tourism sector:

Anything to
sell? cries the tourist
to the native rummaging among
the remnants of his self-respect. (If You Can Call It Living, 15-18)

But finally, facing the Anglicisation of Wales’s linguistic landscape, the intrusion of the English tourist and the English infiltration of Wales, there is “the last Welshman’s cry”, “shrunk to an echo indistinguishable/ From silence”, and imploring on the English to leave Wales: “Stranger, go home” (Gwalia, 10-12).

4.5. “Not British; certainly not English” - Defining Welshness

Defining Welsh identity is a tricky business, as has been shown in Chapter 2.4. Apparently, Welshness is frequently defined as “not English” or even “not British”. This is also the case in Thomas’s poem “Expatriates”. Thomas sets out with this definition *ex negativo* but then also mentions some stereotypical Welsh characteristics:

Not British; certainly
Not English. Welsh
With all the associations,
Black hair and black heart
Under a smooth skin
Sallow as vellum; sharp
Of bone and wit that is turned
As a knife against us. (Expatriates, 1-8)

According to this extract, Welshness comprises a mischievous, dishonest character, a sharp wit and a certain tendency to turn against one’s own kind. Again, the recurring theme of the Welsh being held responsible for the bad state of Wales and the Welsh language and digging their own grave are observable here. The markers of “race” and character, though, are not mentioned without a fair bit of mockery. The “black heart” probably refers to the stereotype of the Welsh which has been around since the infamous Blue Book report, which sketched the Welsh as “fierce, laggardly, unreliable, dishonest, dirty, universally unresourceful and lacking any methodicality, their womenfolk little better than slatterns and ‘universally unchaste’, their children bastards more often than not” (qtd. in Pittock, *Celtic Identity*, 117). As far as the “racial” markers are concerned, the poem mentions black hair and a fair skin colour, which are well-known stereotypical characteristics of the Welsh (Bohata, 51). In “A Welsh Testament” (21) Thomas also refers to the “high cheek-bones” and “length of skull” of the Welsh, at which the tourists stare and which they perceive as typically Welsh. In a similar way, the poet often comments on the shape and size of the skull of his most prominent figure, the farmer Prytherch. The farmer is described as having a “savage skull”, or “wide skull”, or even “thick skull” (Bohata, 51). In all these cases, the poet probably alludes to the ideas of anthropometry and cranial measurements (Bohata, 50-53), which were very popular throughout the 19th and first half of the 20th century. The Celts in general and with them the Welsh were described as darker than the English and having either a dolichocephalic or brachycephalic skull, depending on the political view of the authors and their attitude towards the Celts and their relationship with Germanic peoples,

(Birkhan, *Keltenrezeption*, 452-460). “Thomas is, of course, aware of the anthropological overtones of such language [...] [In “A Welsh Testament”] he mocks the perspective of what is constructed as a tourist-imperialist’s concern to conserve supposedly authentic markers of ‘race’ and culture” (Bohata, 53). This becomes even more evident when Thomas speaks of the “absurd label/ Of birth, of race hanging askew/ About my shoulders” (A Welsh Testament, 41-43).

Thus, it can be seen that references to the construction of national identity on the basis of race are also present Thomas’s poetry. In “Welsh History” this aspect is combined with the features of nature and ancestry:

We were a people bred on legends,
Warming our hands at the red past.
The great were ashamed of our loose rags
Clinging stubbornly to the proud tree
Of blood and birth [...]. (Welsh History, 15-19)

Particularly the last two lines are of interest in this context. The “proud tree/ Of blood and birth” defines threefold identity. There is a racial aspect, as “blood and birth” are considered important, a natural element, as the tree is personified and wears loose rags, and an ancestral dimension through the implication that the “proud tree” is a family tree. There seems to be some irony attached to the latter image since Thomas here refers to the stereotyping of the Welsh as a people obsessed with family pedigree (Wigginton, 119).

But above all, it is the Welsh language which plays an important role in defining Welshness. This prominent view is also frequently expressed in Thomas’s poetry (Wigginton, 129). A good example of this is the poem “Welsh”, which has already been discussed. The speaker’s frustration at his own inability to speak the native language of Wales is evident. This is particularly vexing since the speaker, at the same time, sees himself as, and feels like, a “real Cymro” (Welsh, 2). *Cymro* is a term which usually denotes a Welsh-speaking Welshman (while *Cymraes* refers to a Welshwoman) and is also used by Thomas in this sense in his lectures and articles (e.g. R.S. Thomas, *Cymru*, 30). The question this poem raises then is whether it is possible to be a “real Cymro” without being a native speaker of Welsh.

A similar idea is expressed in the poem “Border Blues” (117): “Despite our speech we are not English”. The lyrical I is again in the position of an English-speaking Welsh person and emphasises that speaking English does not necessarily imply that the speaker is English. Thus, what can be observed is that the speakers of these two poems consider

it necessary to explain that speaking English as a Welsh person is not an indicator of Englishness. But then again, this need for explanation only arises because they are not native speakers of Welsh. Obviously, the speakers are of the opinion that if they were able to speak the Welsh language their Welshness could never be called into question. Thus, while language may not be the only marker of identity it is nevertheless presented as a very crucial element and rather straightforward characteristic of Welshness. Basically, the view transmitted in the poems is that speaking Welsh definitely equals being Welsh while native speakers of English must struggle to define their Welshness in other terms.

That the Welsh language is crucial to Welsh national identity is furthermore suggested in the poems “The Patriot” as well as “A Welsh Testament”. The speaker of “The Patriot”, who – as has already been explained – may reasonably be identified as Saunders Lewis, portrayed as a Welsh speaker, as there are “Welsh words leaving his lips” (The Patriot, 5). Therefore, being a Welsh patriot and speaking Welsh is apparently linked. “A Welsh Testament” on the other hand states an external view on Welshness which seems to comprise similar elements: “You are Welsh, they said/ Speak to us so” (A Welsh Testament, 29-30). These lines suggest that speaking Welsh is also perceived as an important characteristic of Welshness in the outside world – or rather, this is what the speaker of the poem believes outsiders to consider essential to Welsh identity. Clearly, the Welsh language is employed as a useful means of clear differentiation between the Welsh and the English or any other outsider.

The separateness of the English and the Welsh is also the topic of the poem “A Welshman at St James’ Park”:

I am invited to enter these gardens
As one of the public, and to conduct myself
In accordance with the regulations;
To keep off the grass and sample flowers
Without touching them; to admire birds
That have been seduced from wildness by
Bread they are pelted with.

I am not one
Of the public; I have come a long way
to realise it. Under the sun’s
Feathers are the sinews of stone,
The curved claws.

I think of a Welsh hill
That is without fencing, and the men,

Bosworth blind, who left the heather
And the high pastures of the heart. I fumble
In the pocket's emptiness; my ticket
Was in two pieces. I kept half. (A Welshman at St James' Park, 1-18)

The speaker clearly refuses the invitation, which is inscribed in the public notices of St James' Park, to become one of the public (M. W. Thomas, *Keeping His Pen Clean*, 74). The language of the first paragraph echoes the officialese of these signs (R. G. Thomas, 25). But the speaker does not consider himself as one of the public, which is the English public after all – or modern mass society, if Thomas used the term “public” in the Kierkegaardian sense, as has been suggested (Bohata, 118-119; R. G. Thomas, 25).

Furthermore, the sharp contrast between England and Wales in the poem is noteworthy. The two nations are contrasted here by the comparison of an ordered English garden with the untamed and cruel wilderness of the Welsh hill country. The speaker's preference is evident: he prefers the “curved claws” to the tamed birds and the heather and pastures to the flowers of the park (Ward, 83).

The poem ends with a neat implied comment on the separateness of the two nations: the ticket is in two pieces and the speaker chooses one half, reminding the reader of the fact that Wales is not England and to be Welsh means not to be English, which remains the only really distinctive feature of Welshness in Thomas's poetry.

5. Conclusion

*All right, I was Welsh. Does it matter?
(A Welsh Testament, 1)*

It has been shown that the aspects of language and identity are of high importance with regard to the concept of Welshness in general as well as R.S. Thomas and his poetic work in particular. On the one hand, this is noticeable on a personal level since the poet himself was bilingual and considered his bilingualism a linguistic dilemma and a “scar on his personality” (Morgan, 4) though it undoubtedly provided inspiration for literary creation; on the other, this is visible on the level of poetry, where Thomas rather successfully employs a variety of strategies in order to intensify the Welsh character of his poetry. The features he adds to his poetry closely resemble the aspects which were deemed decisive in the construction of Welsh identity in early 20th-century Wales: the Welsh language, anti-English attitudes, Welsh history and heritage, and an inclination towards a cultural nationalism.

The analysis of the corpus of poems which are considered particularly “Welsh” in character has revealed that Thomas uses references and allusions to Welsh history and historical figures, Welsh literary figures, Welsh literature and Welsh poetic forms to demonstrate his ability to deal with Welsh topics and his knowledge of Welsh heritage and the literary tradition of Wales. Thus, the readership of his poetry also becomes more exclusive since a non-Welsh-speaking non-Cymrophile would miss many of Thomas’s allusions - perhaps those to Welsh literature in particular. Thomas also employs the method of code-switching which evidently establishes a linguistic boundary or at the very least raises awareness of “the old bar of speech” (Welcome, 11). Furthermore, the expression of anti-English sentiments and an essentialist view of national identity does not only reveal a certain nationalist propaganda in Thomas’s poetry but also shows that the poet inscribes the most common features of the 20th-century concept of Welsh identity in his poetry in order to make his English-language compositions more Welsh.

Finally, it can be stated that even though Thomas wrote English-language poetry, especially in his early years as a poet, he not only developed successful strategies to increase the Welshness of his poetry but also addressed a very specific bilingual audience which was very well informed about Welsh history, literature and culture and was therefore most likely to have a Welsh background. By inscribing

aspects of Welsh identity in his poetry Thomas made an effort to raise readers' awareness of the fact that while it would be unwise to believe that the English language identifies a person as culturally English one would be equally ill-advised to infer that Thomas's poems are a contribution to English literature based on the fact that they are written in English. The poets once wrote: "Despite our speech we are not English" (*Border Blues*, 117). It can be concluded that this statement seems to be equally true with regard to Thomas's literary work.

6. Bibliography

6.1. Dictionaries

Thomas, R. J. (ed.). *Geriadur Prifysgol Cymru* Vol. 1-4. Cardiff: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1950-2003.

6.2. Primary Sources

6.2.1. Poetry and Prose

- Bromwich, Rachel (ed. and transl.). *Dafydd ap Gwilym. A Selection of Poems.* (= Welsh Classics Vol. 1). 1982. Llandysul: Gomer, 1993.
- Jenkins, Dafydd (ed. and transl.). *The Law of Hywel Dda. Law Texts from Medieval Wales.* Llandysul: Gomer, 2000.
- Johnston, Dafydd (ed. and transl.). *Iolo Goch. Poems.* (= Welsh Classics Vol. 5). Llandysul: Gomer, 1993.
- Jones, Gwyn and Thomas Jones (transl.). *The Mabinogion.* London [et al.]: Dent, 1970.
- Thomas, Ronald Stuart. "Abercuawg." 1976. *Selected Prose.* Ed. Sandra Anstey. Bridgend: Poetry Wales, 1983. 155-166.
- , "Abercuawg." 1976. *Pe Medrwn yr Iaith ac Ysgrifau Eraill.* Ed. Tony Brown and Bedwyr Lewis Jones. Abertawe (Swansea): Christopher Davies, 1988. 83-97.
- , "Anglo-Welsh Literature." 1952. *Selected Prose.* Ed. Sandra Anstey. Poetry Wales, 1983. 51-53.
- , "Autobiographical Essay." *Miraculous Simplicity. Essays on R.S. Thomas.* Ed. William V. Davies. Fayetteville: U of Arkansas P, 1993. 1-20.
- , *Collected Poems 1945-1990.* 1993. London: Phoenix, 2001.
- , *Collected Later Poems 1988-2000.* Tarsset: Bloodaxe, 2004.
- , *Cymru or Wales?.* Llandysul: Gomer, 1992.
- , "Hunanladdiaid y Llenor." 1977. *Pe Medrwn yr Iaith ac Ysgrifau Eraill.* Ed. Tony Brown and Bedwyr Lewis Jones. Abertawe/Cardiff: Christopher Davies, 1988. 103-110.
- , *Laboratories of the Spirit.* London: Macmillan, 1975.

- . "Llendyddiaeth Eingl-Gymreig." 1952. *Pe Medrwn yr Iaith ac Ysgrifau Eraill*.
Ed. Tony Brown and Bedwyr Lewis Jones. Abertawe/Cardiff: Christopher
Davies, 1988. 49-52.
- . *Neb.* (= Cyfres y Cewri 6). 1985. Caernarfon: Gwasg Gwynned, 1992.
- . "No-one." *Autobiographies*. Ed. and transl. Jason Walford Davies. London: J. M.
Dent, 1997.
- . *Poetry for Supper*. London: Rupert Hart-Davies, 1958.
- . "Some Contemporary Scottish Writing." 1946. *Selected Prose*. Ed. Sandra
Anstey. Bridgend: Poetry Wales, 1983. 29-40.
- . *Tares*. London: Rupert Hart-Davies, 1961.
- . *The Bread of Truth*. London: Rupert Hart-Davies, 1963.
- . "The Creative Writer's Suicide." 1978. *Selected Prose*. Ed. Sandra Anstey.
Bridgend: Poetry Wales, 1983. 169-174.
- . "Undod." 1985. *Pe Medrwn yr Iaith ac Ysgrifau Eraill*. Ed. Tony Brown and
Bedwyr Lewis Jones. Abertawe/Cardiff: Christopher Davies, 1988. 139-159.
- . *Welsh Airs*. 1987. Bridgend: Poetry Wales, 1995.

6.2.2. Law Texts

- Government of Wales Act 1998*. London: HMSO. UK Legislation. The National
Archives. 27 May 2011. 18 January 2013
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/38/pdfs/ukpga_19980038_en.pdf>.
- Government of Wales Act 2006*. London: HMSO. UK Legislation. The National
Archives. 4 July 2011. 18 January 2013
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/32/pdfs/ukpga_20060032_en.pdf>.
- Laws in Wales Act 1535 (repealed 21.12.1993)*. London: HMSO. UK Legislation.
The National Archives. 26 May 2011. 24 March 2013.
<<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/aep/Hen8/27/26>>.
- Welsh Language Act 1967*. London: HMSO. UK Legislation. The National Archives.
15 July 2010. 18 January 2013
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1967/66/pdfs/ukpga_19670066_en.pdf>.

6.3. Secondary Sources

6.3.1. Articles

- Andersen, Robert. "National Identity and Independence Attitudes: Minority Nationalism in Scotland and Wales." *CREST Working Papers* 86 (Sep. 2001): 1-21. Centre for Research into Elections and Social Trends. National Centre for Social Research. Department of Sociology, University of Oxford. 23 March 2012. 4 February 2013 <<http://www.crest.ox.ac.uk/papers/p86.pdf>>.
- Ball, Martin. "Welsh." *Language in the British Isles*. Ed. David Britain. Cambridge: CUP, 2007. 237-253.
- Barnie, John. "Across the Grain." 1986. *Critical Writings on R.S. Thomas*. Ed. Sandra Anstey. Bridgend: Seren, 1992. 145-153.
- Bianchi, Tony. "R.S. Thomas and His Readers." 1986. *Critical Writings on R.S. Thomas*. Ed. Sandra Anstey. Bridgend: Seren, 1992. 154-181.
- Birkhan, Helmut. "Allgemeine Merkmale des Keltischen und das Festlandkeltische." *Bausteine zum Studium der Keltologie*. Ed. Helmut Birkhan. Vienna: Praesens, 2005. 217-227.
- Broadbent, Graeme. "The British Constitution." *Public Law Directions*. Ed. idem. Oxford: OUP, 2009: 1-22. Oxford University Press. Online Resource Centre. 18 January 2013 <http://fds.oup.com/www.oup.com/pdf/13/9780199289721_chapter1.pdf>.
- Bromwich, Rachel. "The Earlier Cywyddwyr. Poets Contemporary with Dafydd ap Gwilym." *A Guide to Welsh Literature 1282 - c. 1550*. Vol. 2. Ed. A. O. H. Jarman and Gwilym Rees Hughes. Revised by Dafydd Johnston. Cardiff: U of Wales P, 1997. 126-149.
- Brown, Tony. "'On the Screen of Eternity'. Some Aspects of R.S. Thomas's Prose." 1988. *Miraculous Simplicity. Essays on R.S. Thomas*. Ed. William V. Davies. Fayetteville: U of Arkansas P, 1993. 182-199.
- Brown, Tony and M. Wynn Thomas. "The Problems of Belonging." *A Guide to Welsh Literature. Welsh Writing in English*. Vol. 8. Ed. M. Wynn Thomas. Cardiff: U of Wales P, 2003. 165-202.
- Cartwright, Jane. "Early and Medieval Literature." *The Year's Work in Modern Language Studies* 62 (2000): 527-534. Jstor. 2013. Vienna University Library. 04 March 2013 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25833644>>.

- Castay, Marie-Thérèse. "The Self and the Other. The Autobiographical Element in the Poetry of R.S. Thomas." *The Page's Drift. R.S. Thomas at Eighty*. Ed. M. Wynn Thomas. Bridgend: Seren, 1993. 119-147.
- Davies, Jason Walford. "'Thick Ambush of Shadows': Allusions to Welsh Literature in the Work of R.S. Thomas." *Welsh Writing in English: A Yearbook of Critical Essays* 1 (1995): 75-127. Canolfan Astudiaeth R.S. Thomas/R.S. Thomas Study Centre. Bangor University. 5 February 2004. 27 January 2013 <http://rsthomas.bangor.ac.uk/documents/wwe1_75-127.doc>.
- Edwards, Huw M. "Welsh poetry [2] 17th and 18th centuries." *Celtic Culture. A Historical Encyclopedia* Vol. 5. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006.
- Evans, Geraint. "Crossing the Border. National and Linguistic Boundaries in Twentieth-Century Welsh Writing." *Welsh Writing in English. A Yearbook of Critical Essays* 9 (2004): 123-135.
- Frykenberg, Brian. "wild man in Celtic legend." *Celtic Culture. A Historical Encyclopedia* Vol. 5. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006.
- German, Gary. "Two Early Examples of Welsh English as a Marker of National Identity. Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal's *Hymn to the Virgin* and Shakespeare's Fluellen." *Pays de Galles. Quelle(s) Image(s)? What Visibility for Wales? Actes du Colloque de Brest, 25-26 Janvier 2007*. Eds. Anne Hellegouarc'h-Bryce, Gary German and Jean-Yves Le Dizez. Brest: CRBC-UBO, 2009: 23-38. Hyper Articles en Ligne. Centre pour la communication scientifique directe. 26 April 2010. 22 January 2013 <http://hal.univ-brest.fr/docs/00/47/44/20/PDF/German_PDGalles_.pdf>.
- Gramich, Katie. "Cymru of Wales? Explorations in a Divided Sensibility." *Studying British Cultures. An Introduction*. Ed. Susan Bassnett. London and New York: Routledge, 1997. 97-112.
- , "Narrating the Nation. Telling Stories of Wales." *North American Journal of Welsh Studies* 6/1 (2011): 2-19. 30 September 2011. 3 February 2013 <<http://welshstudiesjournal.org/article/view/12/8>>.
- Heinz, Sabine. "Celtic Englishes." *Bausteine zum Studium der Keltologie*. Ed. Helmut Birkhan. Vienna: Praesens, 2005. 270-274.
- , "Kumbrisch." *Bausteine zum Studium der Keltologie*. Ed. Helmut Birkhan. Vienna: Praesens, 2005. 255-256.

- , "Literatur in Wales." *Bausteine zum Studium der Keltologie*. Ed. Helmut Birkhan. Vienna: Praesens, 2005. 334-348.
- , "Walisisch." *Bausteine zum Studium der Keltologie*. Ed. Helmut Birkhan. Vienna: Praesens, 2005. 242-254.
- , "Geschichte von Wales." *Bausteine zum Studium der Keltologie*. Ed. Helmut Birkhan. Vienna: Praesens, 2005. 188-204.
- Henken, Elissa R. "Beuno." *Celtic Culture. A Historical Encyclopedia* Vol. 1. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006.
- Jarman, A. O. H. "The Later Cynfeirdd." *A Guide to Welsh Literature* Vol. 1. 1976. Ed. A. O. H. Jarman and Gwilym Rees Hughes. Cardiff: U of Wales P, 1992.
- Jenkins, Geraint H. "Terminal Decline? The Welsh Language in the Twentieth Century." *North American Journal of Welsh Studies* 1/2 (Summer 2001): 59-67. 12 January 2013 <<http://spruce.flint.umich.edu/~ellisjs/Jenkins.PDF>>.
- , "'Taphy-land historians' and the Union of England and Wales 1536-2007." *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies* 1/2 (March 2008): 1-27. Research Institute for Scottish and Irish Studies. University of Aberdeen and Arts & Humanities Research Council. AHRC Centre for Irish and Scottish Studies, University of Aberdeen. 12 January 2013 <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/riiss/JISS/Geraint_Jenkins.pdf>.
- Jenkins, Randal. "R.S. Thomas. Occasional Prose." 1972. *Critical Writings on R.S. Thomas*. Ed. Sandra Anstey. Bridgend: Seren, 1992. 46-61.
- Jones, J. Graham. "Nationalism in the Celtic countries, [4] Wales." *Celtic Culture. A Historical Encyclopedia* Vol. 4. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006.
- Jones, Moya. "Framing Welsh Identity." *Textes et Contexts* 1 (2008): 15-22. Revue Interdisciplinaire "Textes & Contextes". MSH Dijon and Centre Inter Langue. 23 March 2008. 24 March 2013 <<http://revuesshs.u-bourgogne.fr/textes&contextes/document.php?id=313>>.
- Jones, R. Merfyn. "Beyond Identity? The Reconstruction of the Welsh." *The Journal of British Studies* 31/4 (Oct. 1992): 330-357. Jstor. 2013. Vienna University Library. 04 February 2013 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/175884>>.
- Karl, Raimund. "Siedlung und Sozialstruktur im eisenzeitlichen Wales." *Keltische Forschungen* 1 (2006): 73-147.

- . “Wie aus Briten, die sich für Römer halten, Welsche werden. Integration und Konfrontation in Wales im 1. nachchristlichen Jahrhundert.” Unpublished article. Obtained by e-mail. 22 March 2012.
- Koch, John T. “Aneirin.” *Celtic Culture. A Historical Encyclopedia* Vol. 1. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006.
- . “Awdl.” *Celtic Culture. A Historical Encyclopedia* Vol. 1. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006.
- . “Maelgwn Gwynedd.” *Celtic Culture. A Historical Encyclopedia* Vol. 4. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006.
- . “Prophecy.” *Celtic Culture. A Historical Encyclopedia* Vol. 4. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006.
- . “Taliesin [1] the historical Taliesin.” *Celtic Culture. A Historical Encyclopedia* Vol. 5. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006.
- . “Welsh Language.” *Celtic Culture. A Historical Encyclopedia* Vol. 5. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006.
- . “Welsh Poetry [1] early and medieval.” *Celtic Culture. A Historical Encyclopedia* Vol. 5. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006.
- Lewis, Ceri W. “Bardic Order, the [2] in Wales.” *Celtic Culture. A Historical Encyclopedia* Vol. 1. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006.
- Lewis, Saunders. “Tynged yr Iaith.” *Tynged yr Iaith*. Ed. idem. 1972. Aberystwyth: Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg, 1998: 12-31. *Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg*. 18 January 2013 <<http://cymdeithas.org/sites/default/files/archif/pdf/tynged.pdf>>.
- . “Fate of the Language”. Trans. G. Aled Williams. *Blog Carl Morris*. 13 February 2012. 18 January 2013 <<http://quixoticquisling.com/testun/saunders-lewis-fate-of-the-language.html>>.
- Löffler, Marion. “Language (revival) movements in the Celtic countries, [4] Wales.” *Celtic Culture. A Historical Encyclopedia* Vol. 3. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006.
- Matthews, Ioan. “Lewis, Saunders [1], the politician.” *Celtic Culture. A Historical Encyclopedia* Vol. 3. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006.
- McKenna, Catherine. “Gogynfeirdd.” *Celtic Culture. A Historical Encyclopedia* Vol. 3. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006.

- McKenzie, Tim. "'Green as a Leaf'. The Religious Nationalism of R.S. Thomas." *Welsh Writing in English. A Yearbook of Critical Essays* 10 (2005): 32-51.
- Morris, Brian. "The Topography of R.S. Thomas." 1980. *Critical Writings on R.S. Thomas*. Ed. Sandra Anstey. Bridgend: Seren, 1992. 122-127.
- National Assembly for Wales Research Service. "Wales in the United Kingdom." Research Service Quick Guides The Constitution Series 1 (July 2011): 1-4. National Assembly for Wales/Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru. July 2011. 18 January 2013 <<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/research/bus-assembly-research-publications/research-constitution/research-constitution-quick-guides.htm>>.
- Nisbert, Robert. "R.S. Thomas. The Landscape of Near-Dispair." *Miraculous Simplicity. Essays on R.S. Thomas*. Ed. William V. Davies. Fayetteville: U of Arkansas P, 1993. 102-109.
- Office for National Statistics. "2011 Census: First Results on the Welsh Language." *Statistical Bulletin* 118 (Dec. 2012): 1-13. Welsh Government/Llywodraeth Cymru. National Statistics and Ystadegau ar Gyfer Cymru/Statistics for Wales. 11 December 2012. 18 January 2013 <<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/statistics/2012/121211sb1182012en.pdf>>.
- Penhallurick, Robert. "English in Wales." *Language in the British Isles*. Ed. David Britain. Cambridge: CUP, 2007. 152-170.
- Pittock, Murray G. H. "Acts of Union, Wales (1536-43)." *Celtic Culture. A Historical Encyclopedia* Vol. 1. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006.
- Price, Cecil. "The Poetry of R.S. Thomas". 1952. *Critical Writings on R.S. Thomas*. Ed. Sandra Anstey. Bridgend: Seren, 1992. 13-18.
- Pryce, Huw. "British or Welsh? National Identity in Twelfth-Century Wales." *The English Historical Review* 116/468 (Sep. 2001): 775-801. Jstor. 2013. Vienna University Library. 12 January 2013 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/579192>>.
- Roberts, C. H. Sisson Martin. "R.S. Thomas. A Vivid Stubbornness." *Poetry Wales* 29/1 (July 1993): 9. *Poetry Magazines*. Heritage Lottery Fund, English Arts Council, Poetry Library, Southbank Centre and Poetry Global System. September 2004. 12 February 2013 <<http://www.poetrymagazines.org.uk/magazine/record.asp?id=13446>>.

- Rowlands, Eurys I. "Introduction." *Poems of the Cywyddwyr: A Selection of Cywyddau c. 1375-1525*. (= Mediaeval and Modern Welsh Series Vol. VIII). Ed. Rowlands. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1976. xi-xlix.
- Russel, Paul. "The history of the Celtic languages in the British Isles." *Language in the British Isles*. Ed. David Britain. Cambridge: CUP, 2007. 185-199.
- Safran, William. "Nationalism." *Handbook of Language & Ethnic Identity*. Ed. Joshua A. Fishman. New York [et al.]: OUP, 1999. 77-93.
- Tauber, Hannes. "Britannische Autoren und ihr Verhältnis zur römischen Vergangenheit." *Akten des 5. Deutschsprachigen Keltologensymposiums. Zürich, 7.-10. September 2009*. Ed. Karin Stüber, Thomas Zehnder and Dieter Bachmann. [= *Keltische Forschungen. Allgemeine Buchreihe* 1]. Vienna: Praesens, 2010.
- Thomas, M. Wynn. "Anglo-Welsh Literature." *Celtic Culture. A Historical Encyclopedia* Vol. 1. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006.
- , "For Wales, See Landscape. Early R.S. Thomas and the English Topographical Tradition." *Welsh Writing in English. A Yearbook of Critical Essays* 10 (2005): 1-31.
- , "Keeping His Pen Clean. R.S. Thomas and Wales." *Miraculous Simplicity. Essays on R.S. Thomas*. Ed. William V. Davies. Fayetteville: U of Arkansas P, 1993. 61- 79.
- , "War Poet". *Welsh Writing in English: A Yearbook of Critical Essays* 2 (1996): 82-97. Canolfan Astudiaeth R.S. Thomas/R.S. Thomas Study Centre. Bangor University. 5 February 2004. 27 January 2013
<http://rsthomas.bangor.ac.uk/documents/wwe2_82-97.doc>.
- Thomas, Ned. "R.S. Thomas and Wales." *The Page's Drift. R.S. Thomas at Eighty*. Ed. M. Wynn Thomas. Bridgend: Seren, 1993. 211-220.
- Thomas, Ned and John Barnie. "Probing. An Interview with R.S. Thomas." *Miraculous Simplicity. Essays on R.S. Thomas*. Ed. William V. Davies. Fayetteville: U of Arkansas P, 1993. 21-46.
- Thomas, R. George. "Humanus Sum. A Second Look at R.S. Thomas." 1970. *Critical Writings on R.S. Thomas*. Ed. Sandra Anstey. Bridgend: Seren, 1992. 19-29.

- Triggs, Jeffrey Alan. "R.S. Thomas and the Problem of Welsh Identity." Jeffrey Triggs Homepage. 7 February 2012. 4 February 2013
<<http://triggs.djvu.org/global-language.com/triggs/Nationalist.pdf>>.
- Uberoi, Varun and Iain McLean. "Britishness. A Role for the State?." *Britishness. Perspectives on the British Question*. Ed. Andrew Gamble and Tony Wright. Malden, Mass. [et al.]: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009. 41-53.
- Vicary, J. D. "Via Negativa. Absence and Presence in the Recent Poetry of R.S. Thomas." 1985. *Miraculous Simplicity. Essays on R.S. Thomas*. Ed. William V. Davies. Fayetteville: U of Arkansas P, 1993. 89-99.
- Wigginton, Chris. "Welshing on the Language. R.S. Thomas, Oliver Reynolds and Postmodern Wales." *Welsh Writing in English. A Yearbook of Critical Essays* 4 (1998): 118-132.

6.3.2. Books:

- Aitchison, John and Harold Carter. *A geography of the Welsh language. 1961 - 1991*. Cardiff: U of Wales P, 1994.
- Bedient, Calvin. *Eight Contemporary Poets. Charles, Tomlinson, Donald Davie, R.S. Thomas, Philip Larkin, Ted Hughes, Thomas Kinsella, Stevie Smith, W.S. Graham*. 1974. London [et al.]: OUP, 1975.
- Birkhan, Helmut. *Nachantike Keltenrezeption. Projektionen keltischer Kultur*. Vienna: Praesens, 2009.
- Bohata, Kirsti. *Postcolonialism Revisited*. Cardiff: U of Wales P, 2004.
- Bromwich, Rachel. *Aspects of the Poetry of Dafydd ap Gwilym*. Cardiff: U of Wales P, 1986.
- Brown, Tony. *R.S. Thomas*. Cardiff: U of Wales P, 2006.
- Buuren, Martinus Johannes Joseph van. *Waiting. The Religious Poetry of Ronald Stuart Thomas, Welsh Priest and Poet*. Diss. Catholic U of Nijmegen, 1993.
- Charles-Edwards, Thomas Mowbray. *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship*. Oxford [et al.]: Clarendon, 1993.
- , *Wales and the Britons. 350 - 1064*. Oxford: OUP, 2013. Google Books. 24 March 2013.
<[http://books.google.be/books?id=AK_yn7Q3_x0C&printsec=frontcover&hl=d](http://books.google.be/books?id=AK_yn7Q3_x0C&printsec=frontcover&hl=de#v=onepage&q&f=false)
[e#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.be/books?id=AK_yn7Q3_x0C&printsec=frontcover&hl=de#v=onepage&q&f=false)>.

- Conran, Tony. *Frontiers in Anglo-Welsh Poetry*. Cardiff: U of Wales P, 1997.
- Dark, Ken. *Britain and the End of the Roman Empire*. 2000. Stroud: History Press, 2011.
- Davies, John. *A History of Wales*. 1993. London: Penguin, 1994.
- Davies, Norman. *The Isles. A History*. 1999. London [et al.]: Macmillan, 2000.
- Davies, Robert R. *The Age of Conquest. Wales 1063-1415*. 1987. Oxford: OUP, 2000.
- , *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr*. Oxford and New York: OUP, 1995.
- Garlick, Raymond and Mathias Roland. *Anglo-Welsh Poetry 1480-1980*. Chippenham: Poetry Wales, 1984.
- Guibernau, Montserrat. *Nations without States. Political Communities in a Global Age*. Cambridge: Polity, 1999.
- Hooker, Jeremy. *Imagining Wales. A View of Modern Welsh Writing in English*. Cardiff: U of Wales P, 2001.
- Johnston, Dafydd. *The Literature of Wales*. 1994. Cardiff: U of Wales P, 1996.
- Jones, J. Graham. *The History of Wales*. 1990. Cardiff: U of Wales P, 1997.
- Lynch, Peter. *Minority Nationalism and European Integration*. Cardiff: U of Wales P, 1996.
- Morgan, Christopher. *R.S. Thomas. Identity, Environment and Deity*. Manchester: Manchester U P, 2003.
- Owen, Aneurin. *Ancient laws and institutes of Wales*. Vol. 2. London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1841. Google Books. 3 March 2013
<http://books.google.at/books?id=T9MLAQAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=de&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false>.
- Pittock, Murray G. H. *Celtic Identity and the British Image*. Manchester and New York: Manchester U P, 1999.
- Rowland, Jenny. *Early Welsh Saga Poetry: A Study and Edition of the "Englynion"*. Cambridge: Brewer, 1990.
- Thomas, M. Wynn. *Internal Difference. Twentieth-century Writing in Wales*. Cardiff: U of Wales P, 1992.
- Ward, John Powell. *The Poetry of R.S. Thomas*. 1987. Bridgend: Seren, 2001.
- Williams, Gwyn A. *When Was Wales? The History, People and Culture of an Ancient Culture*. 1985. London: Penguin, 1991.

6.3.3. Online Sources

BBC News. "Official Apology over Tryweryn." *BBC News*. 19 October 2005. 10 February 2013 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/wales/4354256.stm>.

Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru/National Library of Wales. "Goronwy Owen's Cywydd Hiraeth (NLW MS 11568B)." *Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru/The National Library of Wales*. 21. March 2007. 7 February 2013. <<http://www.llgc.org.uk/index.php?id=goronwyowennlwms11568b>>.

Abstract (English)

Under the stimulus of the Anglo-Welsh movement and at the beginning of his career, the poet R.S. Thomas intended to write Anglo-Welsh literature based on the linguistic and cultural heritage of Wales and thus compose an English-language poetry which was essentially Welsh in character. This thesis identifies and analyses the strategies the poet employs to achieve this aim and the sources on which he draws to emphasise the Welshness of his literary work. Thomas once wrote about the Welsh: “Despite our speech we are not English” (*Border Blues*, 117). This statement seems to be equally true with regard to his poetry.

This thesis sets out by introducing Wales in the 20th century. It analyses the notion of Wales as a country and nation and presents the languages spoken in Wales. Additionally, it provides an overview of the development of the concept of Anglo-Welsh literature and Welsh writing in English in the course of the 20th century and discusses the question of Welsh national identity, its dimensions and markers. This section is followed by an introduction to the poet R.S. Thomas, his linguistic background and the influence of his personal bilingualism on his literary work, his attitude towards, and involvement in, Welsh nationalism in 20th-century Wales, the intended audience of his poetic work and an examination of his self-image as a Welshman. The next chapter focuses on Thomas’s poetic work and the poet’s strategies to increase the Welshness of his English-language poetry. It is shown that he aims to achieve his goal by making references to events and figures of Welsh history and allusions to Welsh-language literature and Welsh poetic forms, incorporating Welsh quotations and Welsh-language phrases to add local colour and emphasise the linguistic border between England and Wales, expressing anti-English attitudes and alluding to makers of Welsh identity, of which the Welsh language remains the most decisive.

Finally, this thesis arrives at the conclusion that by inscribing aspects of Welsh identity in his English-language poetry Thomas makes a successful effort to emphasise the fact that while it would be unwise to believe that the English language identifies a person as English one would be equally ill-advised to simplistically infer that Thomas’s poetry is a contribution to English literature based on the fact that it is written in English.

Abstract (deutsch)

In den frühen Werken R.S. Thomas' ist zweifellos ein starker Einfluss der Ideen der anglo-walisischen Literaturbewegung des 20. Jahrhunderts festzustellen. Am Beginn seines Schaffens war es dem Dichter ein großes Bedürfnis den walisischen Charakter seiner englischsprachigen Gedichte zu unterstreichen. Ziel dieser Arbeit ist es, eben diesen walisischen Charakter sowie die Strategien, die der Autor einsetzt, um sein Anliegen, eine englischsprachige walisische Literatur zu schaffen, zu verwirklichen, zu identifizieren und analysieren. In Bezug auf die Beziehung zwischen Sprache und Identität der Waliser schreibt der Dichter in einem seiner Werke: „Despite our speech we are not English“ (Border Blues, 117). Eine Aussage, die für seine Poesie nicht weniger relevant scheint.

Im Rahmen dieser Diplomarbeit wird zunächst die historische Entwicklung der walisischen Nation und der in Wales gesprochenen Sprachen beleuchtet. Einer kurzen Einführung in die Literaturtraditionen von Wales und insbesondere in die anglo-walisische Bewegung folgt die Präsentation des Konzepts einer walisischen Identität. An dieses Kapitel schließt eine Vorstellung des Dichters R.S. Thomas an, wobei ein wesentlicher Fokus dabei auf der Sprachbiographie des Autors liegt. Desweiteren werden der Einfluss seiner Zweisprachigkeit auf seine Dichtung, seine Einstellungen gegenüber dem walisischen Nationalismus des 20. Jahrhunderts, seine intendierte Leserschaft sowie die Selbstdarstellung des Dichters als Waliser untersucht. Im letzten Kapitel liegt der Fokus auf dem dichterischen Schaffen R.S. Thomas' und den Strategien, die der Dichter einsetzt, um den walisischen Charakter seiner Dichtung zu betonen. Es wird gezeigt, dass er dieses Ziel mithilfe von Verweisen auf die walisische Geschichte und Literatur, walisischsprachiger Zitate und Ausdrücke, England-feindlicher Äußerungen und nationalistischer Anspielungen verfolgt.

Durch die Einarbeitung identitätsstiftender walisischer Aspekte in seine englischsprachige Dichtung demonstriert Thomas, dass die Sprache, in welcher ein literarisches Werk verfasst ist, genauso wenig über dessen kulturelle Verortung aussagt, wie die Sprache eines Menschen über dessen kulturelle Zugehörigkeit. R.S. Thomas' Dichtung ist, wenn auch auf Englisch verfasst, daher keinesfalls unreflektiert der englischen Literatur zuzuordnen.

Curriculum Vitae

Mag. Katharina Krischak, BA

Ausbildung

06. 2012	Universität Wien: Abschluss des Individuellen Diplomstudiums Keltologie
10. 2010	Universität Wien: Abschluss des Bachelorstudiums Deutsche Philologie
Seit 03. 2006	Universität Wien: Lehramtsstudium Englisch und Deutsch
06. 2004	Matura am Stiftsgymnasium Wilhering

Berufserfahrung

03. 2013 bis 07. 2013	Traineeship bei der Europäischen Kommission, Brüssel (DG EAC - Unit B.1 School Education; Comenius)
06. 2012 bis 07. 2012	Traineeship am Conseil de l'Europe/Council of Europe, Strasbourg (DG II – Directorate General of Democracy – Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation – Unit for Capacity Building, Exchanges and Mobility in Education (The Pestalozzi Programme))
11. 2010 bis 09. 2011	Mitarbeit an der Erstellung des Cornish-English/English- Cornish Dictionary im Rahmen des Projekts <i>Standard Dictionary of the Cornish Language</i> des Cornish Language Partnership
02. 2010 bis 06. 2012	Nachhilfelehrerin und Sprachtrainerin für Englisch, Deutsch und Latein am Nachhilfeinstitut Studienkreis, Wien
10. 2007 bis 01. 2010	Erstsemestrigentutorin für Keltologie im WS 2007, WS 2008, SS 2009, WS 2009

Vorträge

09.2009	„Körper und Körperlichkeit in den Werken Gwerful Mechains“: Vortrag im Rahmen des 5. deutschsprachigen Keltologensymposiums von 7.-10.9.2009 in Zürich.
---------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Publikationen

11. 2010 „Körper und Körperlichkeit in den Werken Gwerful Mechains“. In: Stüber et al. (Hg.): *Akten des 5. Deutschsprachigen Keltologensymposiums. Zürich 7.-10. September 2009*. [=Keltische Forschungen Allgemeine Buchreihe 1]. Praesens: Wien 2010, S. 177-188.

Bildungsreisen

07. 2008 Besuch der Summer School in Mediaeval and Modern Irish Language and Literature der School of Celtic Studies am Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies
07. 2007 Bretonisch Sprachaufenthalt in Lesneven, Bretagne
02. 2003 Sprachaufenthalt in Paris, Frankreich
09. 2002 Schulbesuch in Dol de Bretagne, Frankreich
07. 2002 Sommerakademie für Begabtenförderung des PI Linz
08. 2000 Sprachaufenthalt in Bradford, England
06. 2000 Sprachaufenthalt in Sliema, Malta
07. 1999 Sprachaufenthalt in Bradford, England

Sprachkenntnisse

Deutsch (Muttersprache)

Englisch (verhandlungssicher)

Französisch (fließend)

Spanisch (Grundkenntnisse)

Bretonisch (Grundkenntnisse)

Irish (Grundkenntnisse)

Walisisch (Grundkenntnisse)

Kornisch (Grundkenntnisse)

Übersetzungkenntnisse in Mittelkymrisch, Altirisch, Mittelbretonisch, Alt- und Mittelhochdeutsch und Latein