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**English translations of Daniel Owen 1888-2010 :  
nation, canon and Welsh-English cultural relations**

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**English Translations of Daniel Owen 1888–2010:  
Nation, Canon and Welsh-English Cultural Relations**

**Adam Pearce**

**Bangor University**

**A thesis submitted to Bangor University for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

## Summary

In this thesis, I analyse four English translations of the novels of Victorian Welsh-language novelist Daniel Owen from a variety of postcolonial and Translation Studies perspectives. Drawing on recent theories in Translations Studies and Welsh cultural studies, I suggest that translations of Owen's work have been undertaken as part of a variety of political and cultural agendas. These often interrelated agendas have included attempts to reinvent the idea of the Welsh nation, attempts to reinforce and/or rehabilitate the reputation of Daniel Owen as a canonical author in the Welsh-language literary canon, and attempts to either inspire the tradition of Welsh Writing in English, or to distance that practice from Welsh-English translation. In presenting these arguments, I suggest that the role of Welsh-English translation in Welsh cultural history over the late nineteenth to twenty-first centuries has been underappreciated, and that it has in fact been central to processes of cultural and national re-imagination in Wales over this period.

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## Note to the reader

This thesis is written in English but contains quotations from texts and translations originally written in both Welsh and English. Where an English translation of a specific text is already available, e.g. the English versions of Thomas Parry's *Hanes Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg hyd 1900*, John Davies' *Hanes Cymru* and Meic Stephens' *Cydymaith i Llenyddiaeth Cymru*, I have quoted from that instead of the Welsh version. Where (to my knowledge) no English translation exists of a text, I have quoted the original Welsh, followed by a close English translation by my own hand. In cases where I wish to draw attention to the differences between the Welsh original and an English translation, I will usually quote the original first, followed by a close translation which emphasises the strict letter of the original, followed by a quotation from the English translation. Translations from the Welsh which are not credited to another hand in the text of the thesis and/or the bibliography are my own.

Quotations from some older Welsh-language texts sometimes exhibit spelling or grammatical errors, a mark of a time when the language had yet to be standardised. I have, to the best of my ability, reproduced these and indicated (with [sic]) where this is the case.

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# **Chapter 1: Introduction**

## **1.1 Opening statements, research questions**

This thesis examines in detail four English translations of late-nineteenth century Welsh-language author Daniel Owen's novels as a case study for how Welsh-English literary translation has operated within cultural and ideological discourses related to nationhood, the canon and the relationship between the two literatures of Wales (that is, those written in the Welsh and English languages). Although it makes use of a variety of theoretical concepts, this thesis takes its primary critical methodologies from the fields of Translation Studies and Postcolonial Studies and focuses on three main interrelated areas of analysis. The first of these is the various ways in which multiple translations of Daniel Owen's novels have engaged with discourses of the nation in the context of the unequal power-relationship between Wales and the English/British state. The second of this thesis' main areas of analysis is the ways in which Owen's translations contributed to and commented on the on-going hagiography of Owen as a central pillar of the Welsh-language literary canon. Thirdly, this thesis demonstrates that the study of the translations of Owen's novels reveals constantly shifting tensions between translated Welsh-language literature and Welsh writing in English, varying from attempts to use translation as a means of fostering and inspiring Welsh writing in English, to attempts to designate the two as non-overlapping and self-contained traditions.

This thesis attempts to contribute to several fields of academic research. Perhaps most obviously, it contributes to the well-established tradition of Daniel Owen scholarship within Wales, discussing an aspect of the author's legacy which has

remained almost entirely unexplored despite the comparatively large body of work which has taken the author as its subject (including Davies 1936; Jenkins 1948; Jones 1970; Jones 1936; Lewis 1936; Millward 1979; Rhys 2000a; Williams 1984, 1986). Primarily however it seeks to contribute to the growing body of work that takes literary translation in Wales as its subject. Although literary translation has a long history in Wales, this history has only begun to be explored comparatively recently (for example by Baumgarten & Gruber 2014; Clancy 1995, 1999; Crichton-Smith 1997; Johnston 1995; Kaufmann 2012; Price 2002; Thomas 1997; Thomas 1999; Waldron 2008; Wright 2005; and Williams 1995 among others). Many of these texts have identified the three key subject areas of my research; this thesis seeks to explore these areas through specific case studies. Furthermore, with some recent exceptions, most of the critical work on literary translation in Wales mentioned above has not made use of the theories, critical approaches and methodologies of Translation Studies. This situation stands in contrast to that of Ireland, which has formed the cultural and historical backdrop to a number of significant research projects in Translation Studies, such as Michael Cronin's *Translating Ireland* (1996) and Maria Tymoczko's *Translation in a Postcolonial Context* (1999). This thesis seeks both to better understand Welsh translation history by making use of some of the methodological tools of Translation Studies, and to contribute to that field by exploring some of the ideas raised by the Welsh cultural context.

Moving beyond literature and translation to broader cultural considerations, this research aims to contribute to a growing body of critical work which treats Wales within a postcolonial theoretical framework. The application of postcolonial theoretical contexts to Wales is somewhat controversial (Ashcroft et al 1989: 33, Bohata 2004,

Hechter 1975, Williams 2005, Webb 2013), however this thesis operates from the standpoint that it is both possible and beneficial to do so. In treating the historical relationship Wales and England as colonial, this thesis correspondingly makes use of (post)colonial critical tools and terminology by engaging with concepts such as Orientalism (Said 2003) and hybridity (Bhabha 1994, Burke 2009). Edward Said's concept provides a useful framework with which to interpret nineteenth-century notions of the conflicting nature of 'Welsh' (or 'Celtic') and 'English' (or 'Saxon') identities. As demonstrated by Robert Young in *The Idea of English Ethnicity*, the notion of an English identity was typically understood in terms of its essential opposition to that of Celtic identity (2008), much as Edward Said argued that Western conceptions of the East have been understood in terms of a cultural binary with the West (2003). Similarly, historic English portrayals of the Welsh, such as that put forward by Matthew Arnold (1867/1891), which argued that the Celts were the artistic, emotional, spiritual and whimsical balance to Anglo-Saxon rationality and philistinism, echoed contemporary Western conceptions of the East (Said 2003). The concept of cultural hybridity will also prove useful in this analysis: translations are, according to Peter Burke, 'the most obvious case of hybrid texts' (2009: 17), and translators themselves are often exiles or members of displaced or marginal groups and thus 'hybrid individuals' (2009: 31, 99–101). Several of the translators whose work is discussed here might well be considered to fall into these categories, being for example Englishmen domiciled in Wales. Cultural hybridity is indeed a useful concept to bear in mind when considering Welsh identity itself (McCrone 2002), especially if we are to accept its nature as a colony (Bohata 2004: 7). Daniel Owen himself demonstrated aspects of cultural hybridity, being bilingual, an inhabitant of a culturally diverse border-region, and although he wrote his

novels in Welsh, the novel itself was a foreign genre to Wales. The Calvinist-Methodist church of which Owen was a member, and which was the major cultural influence in Wales during the nineteenth century, was itself a hybrid institution: although Welsh was the main language of its many adherents, it had ultimately arrived in Wales from England and maintained ties with other non-conformist institutions outside Wales.

Two of this thesis's three main areas of analysis will engage with postcolonial criticism, and they will do so from two different perspectives. Firstly, by discussing translation in a postcolonial context, this research will explore how Welsh-English translation was used as a means to challenge and counter British/English cultural hegemony in Wales. Secondly, by discussing the English-language literature of Wales and exploring its relationship with Welsh-English translation it will demonstrate how the colonial language was appropriated by the colonised and used as a means of artistic expression (at least in some circumstances –as will be seen, the use of English as a literary medium in Wales is a politically complex and controversial practice).

This thesis discusses in detail four separate translations of novels by Daniel Owen. Two of these translations, James Harris' 1888 translation of *Rhys Lewis* and Claud Vivian's 1894–6 translation of *Enoc Huws*, were produced during Owen's own lifetime. The other two translations date from much later: T. Ceiriog Williams and E. R. Harries' 1963 translation of *Gwen Tomos* and Les Barker's 2010 translation of *Enoc Huws*. Between them, these four texts represent approximately three-quarters of the corpus of Daniel Owen translations into English. The rationale behind my selection of translations for analysis will be explained in Chapter Two. The novelist Daniel Owen



was chosen for several reasons. The wide chronological spread covered by the translations of his novels means that the question of Welsh-English translation can be approached with reference to a wide variety of social, historical and cultural contexts, something possible with few other individual literary figures in Welsh. Although he is not widely known outside Wales, he has been extensively researched and discussed by Welsh critics. Almost as soon as his novels were published, critics began to engage with them, and they have been continually discussed in the century and a quarter since. This has allowed a critical bibliography to accumulate around the author that probably outstrips in terms of quantity that of any other individual writer in the Welsh-language (Williams 1999: 2). This extensive critical bibliography provides a useful background to this study, and is also a reflection of Owen's central position within the Welsh-language literary canon. Owen's canonicity is not only an important basis for many of the arguments raised in this thesis; it also makes the translations of his work an important area of study from the perspective of a Welsh translation history.

The three main areas of analysis on which this thesis focuses form its primary research questions. The first of these is: how have the translators of Daniel Owen's novels into English used their work as a means to engage with questions of Welsh identity and nationhood? This question will primarily be answered with reference to the 1888 translation of *Rhys Lewis* and the 1963 translation of *Gwen Tomos*. It will draw on existing research and theories of nation within the British Isles such as Michael Hechter's *Internal Colonialism* (1975) and Robert Young's *The Idea of English Ethnicity* (2008), as well as drawing from research in postcolonialism, particularly postcolonial translation studies. In answering this question, this thesis will attempt to

show that literary translation from Welsh into English has been used to promote a positive ideal of Welsh nationhood and identity, both during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

This thesis' second primary research question is: how have the translators of Daniel Owen's novels into English engaged with the author's literary status as a canonical writer in the Welsh language? This question will be answered with reference mainly to the 1963 translation of *Gwen Tomos* and the two translations of *Enoc Huws*. It will draw on research into the function of translation and retranslation as canonising activity, such as Kieran O'Driscoll's *Retranslation through the Centuries* (2011) as well as studies of the nature of the Welsh language literary canon such as Tudur Hallam's *Canon ein Llên* (2007). Through answering this question, I will attempt to show that critics, editors and translators have attempted to reconcile the gulf between the perception of Daniel Owen's status as a great, even the greatest Welsh novelist, and the perceived actual literary quality of his novels, by improving Owen's image by the various means at their disposal: as critics by reading profound meanings into the texts, as editors, by changing and cutting Owen's text to fit their own ideals, and as translators by using their position as translators to re-write Owen's novels according once again to their own ideals when re-presenting Owen's work in English.

Finally, this thesis' third primary research question is: how have translations of Owen's novels been positioned in relation to Welsh writing in English, and functioned as commentary on the English-language literary tradition of Wales? Foundational texts in the field of Welsh writing in English, such as Raymond Garlick's *An Introduction to*

*Anglo-Welsh literature* (1970) and Glyn Jones' *The Dragon has Two Tongues* (2001), have tended to overlook Welsh-English translation, a trend continued by more recent studies in the field (Knight 2004, Bohata 2004). The research contained within this thesis suggests that successive translations of Owen's novels have responded to the fact of Welsh writing in English either by attempting to serve as a formative model, by ignoring its existence altogether or by attempting to distance themselves from that tradition and establish Welsh literature in English translation as a separate literary practice.

While engaging with these three main questions, this thesis will seek to answer a number of secondary research questions. It will introduce the translations which make up its case study by explaining who Daniel Owen's translators were (or are), why they chose to translate Owen's novels, and who they envisaged as the audience for their work. It will also describe how their translations were received, both in the periods in which they were published and ever since. Extracts from the text of each translation will give the reader a general impression of the character of the translations, and will be used as evidence in support of the critical arguments being put forward. However, the focus of this research will be primarily on the translations' wider historical, cultural and political contexts rather than on textual analysis or criticism of the translations themselves.

## **1.2 Critical debates in Welsh-English Translation**

The 1990s 'cultural turn' saw an increase in the attention paid to translation in peripheral and minority cultural contexts by scholars working in Translation Studies

(Branchadell & West 2005: 6), a field which had for many years tended to focus on translation between a relatively small group of hegemonic ‘world’ languages (Gentzler 2006: 365). (Post)colonial contexts and languages were one of the main beneficiaries of this shift, so much that by 1999 Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi would be able to claim that ‘it is, of course, now recognised that colonialism and translation went hand in hand’ (1999: 3). Academic work has since been carried out which focuses on translation to and from a variety of the languages spoken within the former European empires, including (but not limited to) Gbaya (Nama et al. 1995), Gĩkũyũ (Thiong’o 2009), Kanak (Ramsay 2004), Malayalam (Dvika 2008), Māori (Mutu 2004) and Sanskrit (Simon et al 1995), as well as projects taking as their subject multiple languages such as the indigenous languages of North America (Christie 2009) and Africa (Bandia 2008, Woodsworth et al. 1995), as well as creoles (Hendrik 1996, Gentzler 2006). Languages which are minorities within Europe have also come under scrutiny, particularly Catalan (Coll-Vinent 1998, de Torro 2005, Miguélez-Carballeira 2003); however, according to Branchadell & West ‘the most researched minority languages tend to be languages that are in contact with English: Irish in Ireland, Scots in Scotland, French in Canada’ (2005: 4). Irish translation history in particular has been well studied, having been used as a case study for much of the most important literature within the general subject area of translation and minority/postcolonial cultures, including work by Michael Cronin (1996, 2006) and Maria Tymoczko (1999, 2000, 2009) among others (such as Ní Chuilleanáin et al 2009, O’Connell 2003).

Considering this abundance of material—and the fact that it has been ‘in contact’ with English for longer than any other language—the Welsh language and Wales remain

relatively under-represented in Translation Studies: there are no extensive studies of Welsh translation history to compare with Michael Cronin's *Translating Ireland* (1996) for example, and Welsh has not been used in the same way as Irish has to illustrate broader arguments about translation in minority language cultures (such as Maria Tymoczko's 1999 study *Translation in a Postcolonial Context*). Most texts which explore Welsh translation history have come from outside Translation Studies, some examples of which will be explored in detail below. In recent years, however, this has begun to change, with Wales beginning to receive increasing attention from Translation Studies and vice versa, with an increasing number of articles and chapters appearing which combine the two, such as those by Wright (2005), Waldron (2008) Kaufmann (2012) and Baumgarten & Gruber (2013); these recent developments will be explored in detail later on. By further engaging with Owen's novels from a Translation Studies perspective, this thesis aims to show how the discipline can be useful in understanding this aspect of Welsh cultural history.

Although Welsh-English translation has a long history, discussion of the practice has been relatively scarce, at least until comparatively recently. Prefaces and introductions to volumes of translations have historically tended to focus on offering histories of Welsh literature rather than exploring Welsh-English translation itself as a cultural activity, for example those in H. Idris Bell's *Poems from the Welsh* (1913) and Tony Conran's *Welsh Verse* (1992; originally published in 1967). While these histories offer invaluable insights into the motives and values of translators, and Bell's in particular will be discussed in detail later on in this thesis, it was not until the 1990s that Welsh-English translation began to receive sustained critical attention in its own right.

One rare early text which does engage critically with Welsh-English translation was published in *Welsh Outlook* in 1917 under the title ‘English Minds and Welsh Translations’, by an author who only gave his or her initials. The article represents perhaps one of the first considerations of Welsh-English translation in general, systemic terms, rather than as in the context of presenting a specific translation. Principally, the article consists of a comparison of the cultural stock of translated Welsh literature within English criticism with that of other cultures. The author argues that no work of literature from Wales had attained the same fame and popularity in the English-speaking world as the literatures of many other nations, despite the translation of several ‘Welsh classics’ into English (H. M. V. 1917: 14). The author goes on to suggest that

the cause of this persistent English *No* to the claims of Welsh literature in translation is that the works hitherto presented are lacking in what I may call the œcumenical spirit, however racy they may be of national interest and colour... it would seem as if the Welsh works hitherto translated fail to attract for the reason that they are deficient in that vital element which appeals to humanity at large. (H. M. V. 1917: 15)

The author names several translated works in his/her article, including a novel by Daniel Owen (James Harris’ English *Rhys Lewis*, discussed in chapter three of this thesis), but he/she does not explain how exactly they are deficient in this regard. Although the author seems to be using the term ‘œcumenical’ in a secular, cultural sense, they may also (consciously or otherwise) be touching on the issue of religion. The dominance of

Protestant non-conformism within the Welsh religious sphere from the late eighteenth century onwards had a profound effect on Welsh culture during the period, particularly on Welsh-language literature (Davies 1994: 421). Despite the corresponding popularity of religious literature, there were concerns, as this article illustrates, that it might have rendered Welsh culture unpalatable to audiences beyond its borders. This concern was still being expressed many decades later (Thomas 1999: 149), and will be explored in greater detail in subsequent chapters of this thesis. When comparing the literary standing (in the target English-language culture) of works in various European languages, the author of the article in *Welsh Outlook* does not mention the varying power-relationships between each of these nations and England, although he/she does acknowledge that Wales is a ‘small nation’ (H. M. V. 1917: 14). However, I would argue that this article makes it clear that power-relationships play a key role in the perception of source cultures in the target literary system. The author mentions that ‘the national literatures of Italy, France, Germany and –of recent years– Russia’ have all found favour with English audiences; a list which consists entirely of early twentieth century political Great Powers. By contrast, ‘The newly-founded kingdoms of the Balkans and the Danube have as yet nothing to offer us.’ (H. M. V. 1917: 14). In a discussion ostensibly about literature and culture, the author’s description of these eastern European cultures as ‘newly-founded kingdoms’ –even though their actual literatures and cultures would certainly have been far older– seems to suggest that statehood and political power are considered necessary before a literature can begin to be considered of interest. As will be seen, in suggesting a relationship between a culture’s political standing and the prestige of its translations, this article touches on an issue central to any understanding of Welsh-English translation history.

From the second half of the 1990s, translation began to receive a greater degree of critical attention. In a 1996 lecture entitled *Wales: A Problem of Translation*, poet R. S. Thomas outlined what he considered the ‘untranslatability’ of Welsh. He also argued that this untranslatability is a desirable aspect of Wales, because it is necessary for it to exist as an independent object:

What I have been trying to say is that my country, Cymru, to be understood presents a problem of translation, and, if it is to maintain a separate and valuable identity, it must continue to do so. Even today let no-one who cannot read and speak Welsh fluently, and is unfamiliar with our history, our intimate life, our mythology and secret places, boast that he knows this land and its people. (Thomas 1996: 18)

Thomas’ comments are interesting in the light of his own position as a poet who wrote mainly in English, as well as occasional translator of poetry into English. Thomas often made the claim that he wrote in English not out of choice but out of necessity, because, he felt, it had been imposed upon him and many other Welshmen as part of the Anglicisation of Wales – a claim echoed by other Welsh writers including Christopher Meredith, as well as by writers in other postcolonial contexts such as Chinua Achebe (Bohata 2004: 114). Thomas’ closing statement, quoted above, might at face value be assumed to be a claim that Welsh-English translation (or any other kind) is futile, but the fact that Thomas himself translated poetry throughout his life (indeed, in the same



lecture he quoted an example of his own which he believed to be successful) would appear to contradict this.

In the late 1990s, two periodicals have produced special issues on the subject of Welsh-English translation: a Welsh issue of *Modern Poetry in Translation*, and a special issue of the Welsh-language periodical *tu chwith* taking translation and bilingualism as its subjects. It was in this period that academics and translators in Wales began to engage more critically with translation as a cultural activity, and while many of the articles in these two special issues are primarily concerned with translation criticism – analysing individual instances of translation and evaluating them on aesthetic grounds – others take a broader, theoretical approach. One such example is Joseph P. Clancy’s article ‘I Bwy ac i Be?’ (For Whom and for What?) in the special issue of *tu chwith* (1997: 77–80), which was later published in English under the title ‘The Value of Translation’ in his volume *Other Words: Essays on Poetry and Translation* (1999: 119–24). Clancy begins by describing his own experience of translating as a practice which has inspired his own original creative writing. He then cautions against writing with the expectation and intent that the text will be translated and consequently ‘not making the full use of the resources of one’s own language’ (1999: 120), before criticising the practice of self-translation (1999: 121–2). The practice was later criticised on similar grounds by Grahame Davies (2004: 61). Primarily however, Clancy’s article serves to put forward his argument that the primary audience for translations from Welsh into English should be the Welsh who cannot speak their country’s native language:

I had not realized that most of my English-language readers would be in Wales. This is, I suppose, the greatest difference between translating Welsh and translating other literatures into English –that one value of translation is that it enables Welshless Welsh readers to discover their own literature, and, one can hope, encourages them to acquire the languages in which to read the originals.

This is surely the most important reason for translating Welsh literature into English. It is one way of strengthening national identity and status within Wales itself. (1992: 122)

The suggestion articulated here that Welsh-English translation might be used as a way to strengthen Welsh national identity is one that one encounters often in the history of translation in Wales. Many translators have indentified and attempted to harness translation as a means of forging and strengthening ‘Welshness’. Nevertheless, the practice has also often been seen as having the opposite effect: that of suppressing Welsh national identity and rendering it unnecessary or invisible. This is recognised by Ned Thomas in his article *Beddladron Diwylliannol* (‘Cultural Grave-robbers’; 1997: 95–9), also in the special issue of *tu chwith*. Thomas’ short article provides a brief history of literary translation in Wales, describing what he considered the ‘cultural grave-robbing’ of nineteenth-century antiquarian translation. Like Clancy, Ned Thomas recognises that more recently Welsh-English translation has been used as a means to transmit Welsh-language culture to non-Welsh speakers within Wales. Thomas believes however that translators should prioritise the translation of non-English literatures into

Welsh, because, he believes, doing so will help instigate a shift in cultural outlook within Wales: ‘Rydym yn disgwyl cael ein cydnabod yn y byd –a chael adnabod ein llenyddiaeth a’n diwylliant drwy gyfieithiad– heb ein bod ni yn dangos fawr o ddiddordeb yng nghynnyrch diwylliannau heblaw yr un Saesneg cyfagos’ [We expect to be acknowledged in the world –and for our literature and culture to be acknowledged through translation– without having to express much interest ourselves in cultural outputs other than that of the adjacent English one] (1997: 98). Thomas’ desire and expectation that Welsh culture should be enriched by the translation of foreign texts reflects one of the oldest and most well established motivations for translation in any cultural context: to enrich a target culture by the import of foreign cultural capital (Even-Zohar 1990). However, Thomas’ suggestion that translators should focus on texts that were originally written in languages other than English reflects concerns which are more idiosyncratically Welsh. On a certain practical level, a focus on non-English texts makes sense because, with effectively all Welsh speakers also being English speakers, they already have access to the English originals: translations from English might thus be considered superfluous. In reading English the Welsh also have access to a wealth of world literature in translation. However, when it comes to literature in other languages there would theoretically be no particular reason for a Welsh speaker to prefer an English translation to a Welsh one, as noted by Grahame Davies (2004: 63). As well as this practical rationale, there may also be a more political motivation at work: because, in the British cultural context, the English language and culture are the majority to which Welsh is the minority, allowing English to exert a further cultural influence over Welsh culture through translation might uniquely be considered undesirable, generating a sense of cultural assimilation. By translating only non-English texts, Wales might be

said to benefit culturally from translation without risking cultural assimilation by English.

This sense that Welsh-English translation may represent a threat to Welsh-language culture is expressed by Angharad Price in her 2002 article 'Translating from Welsh into English' in *The European English Messenger*. Price describes translation from Welsh into English as a 'politico-cultural minefield':

for a language 'under siege' such as Welsh, struggling to retain its own voice next to the most powerful language in the world, translating into English may be viewed as cultural betrayal.

Translating into English is viewed by many as a double-edged activity. At best, the translator is a mediator and disseminator; at worst, a traitor, the *traddutore traditore* at its apocalyptic best.

For in rendering Welsh into English, the apparent result may be complete linguistic subsumption, quickening and crystallising centuries of colonial activity. (2002: 46)

Price devotes the bulk of her article to a review of the potential of bilingual (parallel-text) editions as a potential solution to some of these tensions. In such editions, according to Price, 'two languages achieve an equal co-existence, if only in aesthetic terms, and the imbalance of power between a minority and a majority language is momentarily rectified' (2002: 46). Her support for these editions is not unqualified however: she notes that *Blind Man's Kiss/Cusan Dyn Dall*, a volume of poetry by

Menna Elfyn released in a bilingual format, was criticised for having been the first publication of the poems (that is, they were not published in a purely Welsh edition first) and for containing typographical errors in the Welsh text, creating the impression that the Welsh was included ‘merely as a foreignising interest’ (2002: 47). She also notes that with such editions ‘a great deal of self-awareness and discipline are needed if one is to read one text only’ (2002: 47). She suggests that bilingual editions should always be published after an initial Welsh-only version of the text, so as to allow the Welsh version to exist in its own right and become established as the definitive original. As a model, she examines the case of English publisher Penguin’s bilingual edition of *One Moonlit Night/Un Nos Ola Leuad*, Caradog Prichard’s semi-autobiographical novel. Originally published in 1962, Prichard’s novel was long-established as one of the most important Welsh-language novels of the twentieth century by the time the bilingual edition was published in 1999. Despite noting their potential, Price feels she cannot ultimately be unanimously supportive of bilingual editions, which, she claims, ‘are a reminder of how very bilingual we have now become... The risk can be seen on every dual page: the risk of finding ourselves viewing the world dimly through the darkened glass of two languages’ (2002: 47). This suggestion that bilingual editions represent a compromise of a text’s Welshness is part of the broader concern that translation into English represents a threat to the integrity of Welsh-language literature, a concern either expressed or acknowledged repeatedly in Welsh critical writing on the subject (Thomas 1997, Thomas 1999: 114, Davies 2004: 61).

Whilst each of these articles recognises that translation from Welsh into English has something positive to offer the Welsh language and its literature, they also all

recognise that it has the potential to be a tool for their cultural oppression. The chronicling of this tension forms the basis for M. Wynn Thomas' chapter 'The Good Thieves? Translating Welsh Literature into English' in his book *Corresponding Cultures: The Two Literatures of Wales* (1999: 111–55), probably the most extensive study of Welsh-English literary translation to date. Thomas suggests that the tension was present in the earliest literary translations from Welsh into English, which, he claims, were attempts to simultaneously celebrate the literary wealth of the Welsh language while politically aligning Wales with the British state:

exercises in nation-building though these works consciously were, hidden in such scholarly researches was a commitment to contributionism: in other words, an emphasis on what Wales could offer Britain. (1999: 118)

Thomas' study is broad-ranging and will be an essential reference text throughout this thesis. Thomas provides a history of Welsh-English translation from Ieuan Brydydd Hir's 1764 volume *Some Specimens of the Poetry of the Ancient Welsh Bards* –quite likely the first translation of Welsh literature into English to be published– until the end of the twentieth century. Thomas' arguments will be discussed throughout this introduction and the following chapters, where they are relevant to the subjects at hand. To provide an overview, however, Thomas claims that the 'contributionism' described above was the dominant ideology of Welsh-English translation throughout the nineteenth-century (1999: 118), and that this only began to be seriously challenged in the twentieth century. Thomas also notes that as Wales became increasingly English-

speaking over the twentieth century, translations from Welsh began increasingly to be produced and marketed for readers *within* Wales rather than for export beyond its borders, something also noticed by Joseph Clancy as discussed above. Thomas begins and closes his chapter with a call that:

Welsh-English translation needs, deserves, and is certain amply to repay, serious, extended attention—the kind and quality of attention that have already been given, for instance, to translation from Irish into English... such a study is by now urgently needed, not least because, as Cronin has stated, ‘the history of translation... is a history of encounters.’ Indeed, in the history of Welsh-English translation may be found a history of those cultural encounters in which modern Welshness actually consists. (1999: 152–3)

This thesis seeks to go some way to answering that call by engaging with some of the issues which arise from its case study, as well as adding a Welsh voice to some of the cultural discourses within Translation Studies. Like the work of these critics, this thesis will aim not to function as translation criticism exclusively, and will avoid making prescriptive recommendations as to how Welsh-language texts should or should not be translated into English, focusing instead on the translations’ historical contexts and their ideological and cultural functions and aims.

### **1.3 Translation and (post)colonial discourse in Wales**

This thesis aims to show that translation from Welsh into English has been an under-appreciated aspect of Welsh cultural history, particularly with respect to the history of Welsh cultural nationalism. In her article ‘Translation and Political Engagement’ (2000) and elsewhere, Maria Tymoczko calls for more specialised and focused case studies to explore how translation functions in post-colonial contexts. The research contained in this thesis will answer this call by devoting much of its content to the analysis of the translations of Owen’s work through the theoretical frameworks of postcolonialism.

Any discussion of Wales as a postcolonial entity must however recognise the existence of a debate as to whether such theories are relevant or applicable to a Welsh context. ‘Traditional’ formulations of postcolonial criticism have focused on the Third World, the ‘colonial’ in the discipline’s name referring implicitly or explicitly to European colonisation of Africa, Asia and the Americas from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries (Fanon 2001, Said 2003, Bhabha 1983). In this context, it has long been controversial as to whether terms like ‘(post)colonial’ and ‘imperialism’ can be applied to the relationship between states within Europe, let alone between non-state cultures within European states, as is the case with England and Wales. Whether or not they subscribe to a definition of colonialism which exclusively applies to former European colonies, many critics have been sceptical of the degree to which postcolonial criticism is applicable to Welsh contexts (or those of Scotland (Stroh 2009), and less commonly Ireland), in some cases explicitly questioning the status of Wales, Scotland and/or Ireland as colonies (Ashcroft et al. 1989: 33, Bartlett 1988: 47, Kennedy 1996: 169, McLeod 2000: 243). Although it describes intra-British national relations as



colonial, Michael Hechter's designation in *Internal Colonialism* (1975) of this kind of colonialism as 'internal' marks it out as separate to the colonialism described by Fanon and Said. The fact that the United Nations list of 'Non Self-Governing Territories' (a list whose constituents once covered almost half of the planet) consists entirely of the territories of European states (or of their Western settler colonies), with only a single territory geographically within Europe (Gibraltar) suggests that, in mainstream international politics at least, the concept of colonialism continues to be defined exclusively as something visited by Europeans on the rest of the world.<sup>1</sup>

The case for excluding Wales from colonial status is not without its basis. Some critics have argued that the Celtic constituents of the United Kingdom cannot be colonies due to their own complicity in British Imperialism (Ashcroft et al 1989: 33). Certainly, many Welsh men and women participated enthusiastically in colonial activity: the unusual preponderance of surnames of Welsh origin among African Americans in the United States has sometimes been cited as evidence that Welshmen were well-represented among slave owners (Webber 2006).<sup>2</sup> Welsh non-conformists were particularly active in overseas missionary activity, which was covered extensively and enthusiastically in the Welsh-language press (Bohata 2004: 5). There is also the case of *Y Wladfa* ('The Colony'), the name given to a collection of settlements in Patagonia (southern Argentina) founded by Welsh migrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>3</sup> Despite these facts, others have maintained that the so-called 'Celtic fringe' can still be spoken of in colonial terms: Michael Hechter's book *Internal Colonialism* makes the claim that 'the similarities [seem] to be more striking than the differences' when it comes to comparing the Celtic nations with British imperialism

overseas (1975: xiii). Other critics have attacked the binary implicit at the centre of this debate, which holds that a culture is either colonising or colonised, and cannot be both. While accepting that the Welsh are to a certain extent complicit in British cultural imperialism, and criticising those who have argued otherwise, Kirsti Bohata maintains that

The categories of colonizer and colonized are, of course far more complex than the simple binary suggested by these two labels might suggest... Over-reliance on simplistic, if convenient, binaries is at the root of some of the principle objections which might be raised in the use of postcolonial theory in a Welsh context. (2004: 5)

Bohata draws a connection between the idea that Welsh complicity in British imperialism disqualifies Wales from colonial status with a 'hierarchical victimology' which she considers to be prevalent within Postcolonial Studies, in which different groups compete for the position of most-oppressed (2004: 4). This 'victimology' has also been criticised by Ken Goodwin, who suggests that 'the theory of postcoloniality ought to encourage the view that we are all colonial, imperialist, and postcolonial in various proportions' (1995: 23). Bohata also engages with and dismisses other arguments against Wales' colonial status as spurious, such as those based on Wales' geographical proximity to England or the fact that the two have a land border (and thus are not divided by a 'sea-space'), or that the military conquest of Wales by England took

place some time before what is traditionally defined as the colonial era. Ultimately, claims Bohata,

The use of postcolonial paradigms [in Welsh contexts], however, does not in fact rest upon proving that Wales is ‘post-colonial’ in the same way that India or Zimbabwe are ‘post-colonial’. For, of course, India and Zimbabwe were not colonial and are not post-colonial in the same way at all. Wales, as already observed, does not fit neatly into a linear-progressive model of colonization, anti-colonialism and decolonization/independence; but, as postcolonialism has the capacity to recognise, structures of influence and subjugation are not necessarily coterminous with formal colonization or decolonization. (2004: 9)

For those who remain unconvinced, Chris Williams, writing in *Postcolonial Wales*, offers an alternative: even if one maintains –as Williams does– that Wales cannot be considered a post-colony, this does not mean that the use of postcolonial theories to analyse and interpret Welsh history, literature and culture is necessarily precluded, nor that doing so will not be revealing and useful (2005: 3). The history of Welsh-English translation as presented by M. Wynn Thomas in *Corresponding Cultures* can be read in terms of this aim. Welsh-English translation, suggests Thomas, was from the beginning ‘an aspect of Wales’ relationship with England’ (1999: 127). As such it represents a continuous commentary on the relationship between Welsh culture, as a colonised culture, and the English culture which has colonised it –or is still colonising it.

The first translations from Welsh into English were part of the revival of interest in early Celtic literature throughout Europe which began during the eighteenth century and lasted in various forms through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Beginning with Evan Evans' *Some Specimens of the Poetry of the Ancient Welsh Bards* of 1764, most early translations focused exclusively on the poetry of the medieval and earlier periods (the oldest surviving poetry in Welsh is believed to have been composed as early as the sixth century, although this is difficult to claim with certainty as none of this poetry was written down until centuries later). Early translators like Evans (better known to posterity by his pen name, Ieuan Brydydd Hir) were attempting to

prove to even the most sceptical of the powerful English that Wales had a literary heritage and culture of great wealth and antiquity. They sought the approbation of the colonizer in an attempt to restore national self-respect and to assert an element of authority (Reynolds 2005: xiv).

For their part, the English were not unreceptive to the idea, and translations like Evan Evans' were often commissioned by wealthy English nobles and antiquarians already enthused by the contemporary Gaelic *Ossian* forgeries of James Macpherson (Stephens 1998: 243). Although this Celtic antiquarianism, which remained popular throughout the nineteenth century, was a European phenomenon with adherents in many countries, it was particularly prevalent in the English cultural sphere of the period. In some outward respects, the championing of Celtic culture by the antiquarians of the nineteenth century represented a considerable improvement in the manner in which the

people of the Celtic nations were perceived and represented in wider cultural discourse. By beginning to examine early texts from philological and literary perspectives, the antiquarians helped shift the cultural debate away from the ethnic, biological racialism which had concerned cultural anthropologists in the first half of the nineteenth century like John Pinkerton and Robert Knox, whose interpretations of Celticness generally boiled down to emphasising the supposed racial inferiority of the Celt when compared to the Nordic English. This ‘scientific’ racialism reflected and fuelled the mainstream conception of the hard-working, rational Saxon contrasted with the emotional, whimsical Celts, a binary which gained, according to Robert Young, ‘authority drawn from its very ubiquity’ (2008: 45).

As well as being part of a larger discourse about racial hierarchy, the Celts’ supposed irrationality served to justify English rule of the Celtic nations, particularly Ireland, on the grounds that they were incapable of ruling themselves: historian Charles Kingsley was keen to point out that the Irish were ‘happier, better, more comfortably fed and lodged under our rule than they ever were,’ (quoted in Hechter 1977: xvi). Set against the background of the Irish famine of 1845–52, the emphasis on the Celts’ racial inferiority was also an attempt to absolve the British state of responsibility for the state of the peoples under its administration:

While initially using the mixture of races in Britain as a way of attempting to refute Irish nationalism, it was not long before *The Times* itself began to utilize the opposition of Celt and Saxon as a way of blaming the Irish for their plight during the famine (‘we

do not doubt that, by the inscrutable but invariable laws of nature, the Celt is less energetic, less independent, less industrious than the Saxon. This is the archaic condition of his race'. (Young 2008: 99–100)

While it was usually the Irish which bore the brunt of *The Times*' contempt, the Welsh were also implicated because the use of the term 'Celt' in a racial sense necessarily included them (and the Scottish, although many lowland Scots like Robert Knox were keen to emphasise their Teutonism). The Welsh were additionally subject to racial stereotyping of their own, which tended to emphasise their supposed dishonesty and untrustworthiness (Parker 2007), as exemplified by rhymes like *Taffy Was a Welshman* and the expression 'to Welsh on a debt'.<sup>4</sup> Another popular idea was that the Welsh were sexually promiscuous, an idea that would have a prominent place in the so-called Blue Books, which will be described in detail shortly. These ideas reached their literary apotheosis in Arthur Tysilio Johnson's *The Perfidious Welshman* (Draig Las 1910), which made the claim that 'Taffy is none other than a low-bred mongrel of Mongolian origin' (1910: 9), and in T. W. H. Crosland's *Taffy Was a Welshman*, which took its name from the earlier rhyme (1912).<sup>5</sup>

The respect and appreciation that Celtic literature received from the antiquarians was thus a contrast to the scorn poured on the ethnicities which had produced it by other sectors of nineteenth century society. However, the antiquarians' attitude towards the Celtic peoples and their literature was in fact much more complex, and in many ways as essentialist as the attitude expressed by publications like *The Times*. Homi K. Bhabha

defines a stereotype as a ‘form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always “in place”, already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated’ (1983: 18), a definition which accommodates the popular images of the Celts as racially inferior and the Welsh as dishonest, but equally accommodates the typical antiquarian vision of the Celt. To the antiquarians of the nineteenth century the Celts ‘were somehow older, nobler, more spiritual than the Anglo-Saxons’ (Knight 2004: 10). This popular conception was articulated most extensively perhaps by poet and academic Matthew Arnold, who warned however that with these qualities came sentimentality and an attraction to emotion and excitement (Arnold 1867/1891: 81).

As well as implying that the Celts were temperamentally unsuited to the modern world of science and business, this antiquarian conception of Celtic nature was also feminising, in that most of the Celtic ‘qualities’ were those associated with femininity. In his essay *Sur la poésie des races celtiques*, (On the Poetry of the Celtic Races), Ernest Renan would explicitly make this connection and literally describe the Celts –especially, apparently, the Welsh– as ‘an essentially feminine race’ (1896: 8). In being described as emotional and whimsical the Celts were also being infantilised.

In this respect and others the antiquarian conception of Celtic nature is highly reminiscent of the way that some non-European cultures and races have historically been conceptualised in Western thought. Edward Said’s concept of Orientalism, in which East and West are juxtaposed as an essential and immutable binary (2003), provides a useful parallel. Just as with the Saxons and Celts, in India, according to Gyan Prakash, the contrast was between the ‘rational and materialistic British and the

emotional and spiritual Indian’, and India was constructed by Orientalist thought as ‘an eternal child detached altogether from time’ (Prakash 1990: 384–6). The ultimate effect of this conception is to justify the relationship between the two elements of the binary:

[European conceptions of India] made the colonial relationship –the enabling condition of British Orientalism– appear as if it were irrelevant to the production of knowledge. As a result, although colonial dominance produced the East-West construct, it looked as if this binary opposition not only pre-dated the colonial relationship but also accounted for it. In other words... [it] offered them as justifications for the British conquest .  
(Prakash 1990: 385)

By presenting the Celts/Indians as women or as children, the unstated implication was that the English/Europeans were therefore men or adults, thus establishing a paradigm in which it was ‘natural’ for the colonial relationship to exist, or even that the colonial relationship represented a kind of ‘marriage’ of the best qualities of both peoples, in which of course the English, as the ‘masculine’ culture, were the dominant partner: the idea was that ‘[The Celts]’ spiritual qualities should contribute to a better Britain when combined with the modern democratic know-how of [the English]’ (Knight 2004: 10). In this way, the antiquarian conception served to justify imperialism in much the same way as the less subtle stereotyping of popular racism, however much more palatable the former might initially appear.



Literary translation was an important part of this process of justification. Gyan Prakash implies that in India it was a ‘basic procedure of [Orientalist] knowledge,’ (1990: 385), in which texts were produced that would allow Westerners in positions of power to gain a greater understanding of the people who had been placed under their control –that is, to gain the established, Orientalist understanding. In Wales, the relationship between translation and the Orientalisation of Celtic culture is particularly evident in two ways. Firstly, translation allowed the target culture to be studied and described by those who could not speak the language, exemplified in the fact that, despite making a name for himself as an expert on Celtic literature, Matthew Arnold never learned to read either Welsh or Irish, modern or medieval. Arnold was not unique in this respect: Ernest Renan did not allow his ignorance of the Welsh language to prevent him from writing *Sur la poésie des races celtiques* (‘On the poetry of the Celtic races’), in which he felt qualified to praise Charlotte Guest’s translation of the *Mabinogion* for being the ‘faithful mirror of the original Cymric’ [sic] (1896: 16). Secondly, the antiquarian focus of translators can be clearly seen in the choice of texts to translate, as betrayed by the titles of many of the volumes, such as *Some specimens of the Poetry of the Ancient Welsh Bards* (Evans 1764), *The Musical, Poetical and Historical Relicks of the Welsh bards and druids* (Jones 1784), *The Myvyrian Archaiology of Wales* [sic] (Jones 1870), *The Bardic Museum* (Jones 1802) and so on. The relatively few translations from modern Welsh were often intended to reinforce established ideas of Celtic nature: John Jenkins’ 1873 collection of contemporary Welsh poetry in translation for example was, according to M. Wynn Thomas, ‘designed in part to confirm Arnold’s racial thesis that the Celts are spiritual and artistic while the Saxons and materialistic philistines’ (2000: 187).

The preference for medieval texts presented a nostalgic view of Celtic culture as something belonging to the past, as well as being essentially static –it was impossible for new texts to be added to the canon of Celtic literature (unless previously unknown medieval ones were rediscovered). Even the continued use of the terms ‘Celt’ and ‘Celtic’ removed the literature from the context of the modern Irish, Scottish and Welsh nations, as part of a rhetoric which dehistoricised and depoliticised texts (Reynolds 2005: xvii). This location of a colonised language and culture in the past (leaving the colonising language to occupy the present) can again be seen in the way Europeans essentialised non-Western cultures (Prakash 1990: 386, Said 2003). In the case of India, the focus was often on Indian (Aryan) culture as the ‘childhood’ of the modern West: ‘because it embodied Europe's childhood, India was temporally separated from Europe's present and made incapable of achieving “progress”’ (Prakash 1990: 386). The same eagerness can be seen with respect to Celtic cultures, where even as they repeatedly emphasised the Celtic/Anglo-Saxon binary, British theorists and antiquarians were keen to emphasise the Celts’ status as ancestors to modern ‘British’ culture –a connection which required translation to highlight and demonstrate. As Stuart Gillespie explains,

The appearance in the 1760s of James Macpherson’s collections of verse from the Gaelic had far-reaching consequences... for the ancestry British poets felt able to claim; and, quite directly, for views of the British literary canon. Shakespeare could now be thought of as a ‘countryman’ of Ossian’s, as John Ogilvie expressed it in 1765. (2005: 9)

Translation would, over time, allow Celtic literature increasingly to be thought of as part of a common British cultural inheritance, much in the way that classical literature had through repeated translation into English during the renaissance (Gillespie 2011: 9–10); translations thus ‘forged... a new past for English poetry’ (Gillespie 2011: 93). Welshmen –that is, in most cases, the translators themselves– were often willing participants in this process. Their contributionist intellectual model presented their work as ‘tributary offerings; that is, evidence of the (laudable, but previously invisible) contribution Wales had made to what had become a gloriously world-dominating British culture’ (Reynolds 2005: xv).

The attention of English cultural figures like Matthew Arnold may have legitimised the Celtic languages of the past as objects of study, but, as noted above, they offered them no place in the present. This was explicitly expressed in a lecture delivered at the national Eisteddfod for Wales in 1867 by Matthew Arnold, the figurehead of the antiquarian movement. Even as he extolled what he considered to be the cultural virtues of the Welsh, Arnold cautioned the Welsh not to give ‘offence to practical men’ by resisting cultural anglicisation (1867/1891: vi). This attitude was not confined to Arnold’s lectures but was implicit in the antiquarians’ whole methodology: if the literary genius of Welsh was something that had happened in the past, then there was no need to be concerned for the fate of the Welsh language in the present and future. The dismissive attitude towards Celtic languages as contemporary facts was not confined to the antiquarian movement, but was reflected in wider Victorian society and politics. In the case of Wales, this was perhaps best exemplified the publication of the notorious *Report into the State of Education in Wales* of 1847, a British government report widely

known in Wales as ‘Brad y Llyfrau Gleision’ (the Betrayal of the Blue Books), or simply the Blue Books.<sup>6</sup> The report portrayed a Wales where the children were almost entirely illiterate –in English at least– but the report’s notoriety stems not from its criticism of the state of education in Wales but rather from its tone, and the causes to which it attributed these problems:

What [the Welsh] had not expected—and what gave rise to the feeling of betrayal which the report’s nickname encapsulated—was that it would relate these educational deficiencies to Nonconformity, to the Welsh language and to the perceived characteristics of the Welsh people by methods which implied causal connections. They were prepared to hear they were poorly educated; they had not expected to hear that they were drunken, dirty, superstitious and sexually promiscuous liars and cheats. (Roberts 1998: 209).

Many Welsh figures reacted angrily to the Blue Books, and the notion that the report represented a ‘betrayal’ crystallised almost immediately. The portrayal of the Welsh in the Blue Books was based to a considerable extent on the popular stereotypes of the period, stereotypes which, in turn, were derived at least in part from the colonial discourse in which the antiquarians were engaged. The association of the English language with modernity and progress (and the corresponding marginalisation of Welsh as a language for the chapel and the hearth, if it was for anything at all) directly made by the report also mirror the antiquarians’ focus on Welsh as a language of the past. It is

therefore unsurprising that this period saw a significant shift in patterns of language use.

As John Rowlands describes:

Yr hyn a oedd yn graddol ddigwydd yn y bedwaredd ganrif ar  
bymtheg yng Nghymru, wrth gwrs, oedd tynhau'r cyswllt rhwng  
y Gymraeg a chrefydd a barddoniaeth, a gadael i'r Saesneg  
feddiannu'r byd gwyddonol, gweinyddol, llywodraethol a  
diwydiannol fwyfwy. (1992: 12)

What was gradually happening during the nineteenth century in  
Wales, of course, was the strengthening of the bond between the  
Welsh language and religion and poetry, and leaving English to  
increasingly take possession of the scientific, ministerial,  
governmental and industrial world.

Daniel Williams describes the Blue Books as having set in place a desire among the  
cultural leaders of Wales to encourage 'the people to become more like the dominant  
model of Englishness –practical, hard-headed and businesslike' (2012: 27). As they had  
been intended to do, the Blue Books had a direct influence on education, and in doing  
so on notions of what it meant to be Welsh: Hywel Teifi Edwards writes of how

Education in the post-1847 era was to play a leading part in the  
creation of a new national image depicting a forward looking  
people whose acquisition of the 'imperial tongue' would give

them possession of that ‘useful’ knowledge necessary to serve the empire. (1990: 23)

The acceptance of the report’s conclusions by many important Welsh men contributed to what Dewi Rowland Hughes has described as a national inferiority complex (2006: 191). This desire to contribute to the British Imperial project by becoming more like the English was especially manifest in the desire by some to shed themselves of the Welsh language. The translation of texts was one way of disengaging the two, allowing them to be part of the Imperial project while retaining their Welsh/Celtic identity. As Ned Thomas explains in *Beddladron Diwylliannol*,

Gallai’r Cymry o hyn allan fynegi eu Celtigrwydd drwy’r Saesneg a helpu i uno’r genedl Brydeinig yr un pryd. Roedd yn iawn i’r Gymraeg fod yn wrthrych astudiaeth ysgolheigaidd ond ffôl fyddai ceisio ei defnyddio yn gyfrwng... [swyddogaeth cyfieithu yn y cyd-destun yma yw] math o fedd-ladrad sydd yn cyfoethogi’r diwylliant grymus. (1997: 96)

The Welsh could from now on express their Celticness through English and help to unify the British nation at the same time. It was fine for Welsh to be the subject of academic study but it would be foolish to try and use it as a medium... [the function of translation in this context is as] a kind of grave-robbing which enriches the powerful culture.

The cultural prestige and status of translation into English was exemplified by its prevalence in Welsh academic and cultural activity during the period. While the existence of a course in 'Welsh' (as opposed to Celtic) at the University of Wales by the end of the nineteenth century was in some ways an indicator of a new, higher status for the language within the cultural hierarchy, in many ways the course reinforced rather than challenged the established view of Welsh culture being of the past. Even though Welsh would have been the first language of the bulk of both teachers and students, English remained the language of instruction on the course until after the First World War (Thomas 1997: 96), and a large part of the assessment consisted of the translation of literary extracts into English (Williams Parry 1915). These translations were intended to test students' understanding and compositional skill rather than to serve any aesthetic purposes. Considering that English would have been a second language for most of the students, the course was thus as much an assessment of students' mastery of the English language as of their knowledge or understanding of Welsh literature.

Similarly, for many years the National Eisteddfod of Wales held competitions for translation into English, a practice which further codified the idea that Welsh was at its best when mediated into English (Thomas 1999: 120). Indeed, although it had, according to Hywel Teifi Edwards, sprung 'from a determination to promote the Welsh language and its literature' (1990: 20), by the third quarter of the nineteenth century, and for much of the twentieth, the Eisteddfod had become a thoroughly anglicised institution. This was manifested in the reduced role the Welsh language played in the festival in the second half of the nineteenth century, when the number of competitions for which an understanding of Welsh was unnecessary (such as folk dancing and

musical composition) was increased, and more opportunities were provided for written compositions in English in fields such as Social Science (which further emphasised the association between English and scientific endeavour). This process has been explored and documented extensively by Hywel Teifi Edwards, who notes the telling lack of engagement by Victorian Welsh poets with the decline of their language (1990: 21, 27). Those poets who did discuss the language itself were apt to either proclaim its bright future or evade the subject, the ‘most important statement on the language problem’ according to Edwards being John Ceiriog Hughes’ call for Welshmen to speak both and to ‘refuse to state a preference’ (1990: 27). Translation was part and parcel of this process of anglicisation and the eisteddfod’s translation competitions can be seen as an attempt by that institution to redirect Wales’ literary efforts into English. By 1873 the magazine *Y Faner* would be able to note (with approval) that at least three-quarters of the speech at the Eisteddfod was in English (Davies 1998: 152).

This process was more than just a by-product of the decline of Welsh, however: it was a conscious and deliberate political strategy, which was, according to both Hywel Teifi Edwards (2000b: 294) and Charlotte Aull Davies (1998: 152), a direct response to the publication of the Blue Books in that it was an attempt to counter them by trumpeting the virtuousness of the Welsh and their loyalty to the British Empire. The aim was to make the Eisteddfod ‘a platform for projecting a Welshness that would find favour among the English’ (Davies 1998: 152). According to Edwards,

From the outset, [the Welsh language’s] value as the mother tongue of a virtuous, orderly people –a people content with their



lot– was widely proclaimed. Proof of its usefulness was that it merited the stamp of English approval in an eisteddfod.

(1997: 96)

Fortunately, for those who believed and who still believe that the Eisteddfod should be part of efforts to protect the language, this process was increasingly resisted in the twentieth century and more-or-less halted in the 1950s with the establishment of formal rules which restrict the use of languages other than Welsh in most Eisteddfod activities. However, it is clear that during the second half of the nineteenth century there was a concerted attempt to repackage Welshness for English consumption, and that translation was a central pillar of that process. Indeed, it is as part of this process that M. Wynn Thomas identifies the mainstream of Welsh-English translation during this period (1999: 118).

As the above historical outline has shown, it is clear that Welsh-English translation has been a practice inseparable from the baggage of intra-British imperialism. However, it will be an argument of this thesis that translation from Welsh into English can be, and has been, used as an instrument to *combat* this very same imperialism. M. Wynn Thomas identifies H. Idris Bell's 1913 *Poems from the Welsh* as one of the first translations into English to present Welsh poetry as 'vigorously contemporary in spirit and in idiom' (1999: 121). Bell notes in his introduction, that previous translations had tended to focus on earlier poetry; his volume by contrast included exclusively the poets of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with a particular focus on poets still living at the time of publication. While acknowledging the

existence of the long poetic tradition in Wales, Bell was at pains to point out that ‘the [Welsh] poetry of to-day is part of a long development, and is neither, on the one hand, the mere relic of an expiring tradition nor, on the other, an antiquarian revival’ (Bell 1913: 9). This distancing of his project from previous translations in this way marked a radical shift towards a new ideological ethos. Bell repeatedly stresses the inadequacy of translation as a means to convey the ‘genius’ of the Welsh language originals; this contrasts with the way earlier translations were often were praised as being faithful reproductions of the originals by commentators (Renan 1896: 16). ‘I [beg the reader] not to attribute to the originals, which he cannot read, the faults which he is only too likely to find in the work of the translator,’ wrote Bell (1913: 6). Bell’s apology for his own translations is about far more than just modesty: similar sentiments have been expressed by translators of Welsh poetry accross the twentieth century such as Tony Conran (1992: 14) and Glyn Jones (1997: 8). An emphasis on the faithfulness of translations was necessary to permit the professed ‘expertise’ of critics like Renan and Arnold, who were unable to access the originals. By contrast, in emphasising the *inadequacy* of translation Bell and other translators place the emphasis on the primacy of the originals themselves, while simultaneously protecting them from criticism because any perceived deficiencies in the poetry could simply be put down to the imperfection of the translation process. Furthermore, rather than presenting the poetry in racial terms as the product of ‘Celtic genius’, Bell presented his translations as evidence that ‘the Welsh language justifies its existence and is the vehicle of a real national culture, which, without it, would almost infallibly perish’ (Bell 1913: 15). It is clear, as observed by M. Wynn Thomas, that

[Bell] consciously presented his work as evidence –not only for the English but for the Welsh themselves, who had been persuaded otherwise– that, far from being outmoded and moribund, the Welsh language was capable of sustaining a literature of real modernity... Bell, therefore, deliberately conceived of his translations as a riposte to the Anglocentric and imperialist Arnoldian version of British contributionism. (1999: 118)

A second volume translated by Bell, 1925's *Welsh Poems of the Twentieth Century*, once again distanced his translations from those of his predecessors. Although, as indicated by its title, the volume contained exclusively contemporary poetry, Bell also included an historical essay on the Welsh poetic tradition from its roots in the sixth century, in which he once again emphasised the difficulty of Welsh-English translation (1925: 88) and his desire that the Welsh language should survive (1925: 139). However, he also discusses at length the popular notions of the Celtic racial character, and attempts to debunk them. He notes that those Welsh poems and stories which display most strongly 'a sort of feminine sensitiveness and refinement of feeling' are not in fact typical of Welsh literature, but rather are 'those in which Franco-Norman influence is most apparent' (1925: 93). He quotes poetry which he believes disproves the popular notion of Celtic romanticism and mysticism, and 'the idea that Celtic poetry is misty and loves subdued colours' (1925: 94). He concludes by declaring 'That there is a feminine delicacy in the Celtic genius may be admitted... but it is only one element in their poetry' (1999: 118).

Bell's arguments demonstrate again how postcolonial theories can be useful in understanding Welsh cultural history, in this case, Gyan Prakash's notions of nationalist and post-orientalist historiography (1990) –which will be referred to on multiple occasions in this thesis. According to Prakash, even as they attempt to subvert or counter Orientalist stereotyping, nationalist challenges to Orientalism tend to accept many of the assumptions, concepts, and ideological frameworks of Orientalism (1990: 388). In this case, Bell accepts the assignation of Welsh culture as part of a wider 'Celtic' culture about which generalisations can be made. Bell argued that rather than being sentimental, early Welsh poetry is often concerned with war, and can be quite graphic in its depictions of the battlefield, although he is keen to deflect criticisms of barbarism: 'They faced the facts of life; their attitude was that of men, proud, courageous, austere, perhaps a little scornful, and to contemplate them through a veil of modern sentimentalism is utterly to distort their spirit and that of Celtic poetry in general' (1925: 95). In other words, he simply swaps the feminine stereotype of Celticism for a masculine one. As noted by M. Wynn Thomas, Bell implicitly connects this masculinity to contemporary Welsh poetry by including a significant number of the poems of the First World War in his volume (1999: 122).

Considering how his translations were a challenge to more established English interpretations of Wales, it is perhaps ironic that H. Idris Bell was himself something of an outsider to Welsh culture. Born in England to a Welsh mother, he was educated in England and worked as a papyrologist at the British Museum, learning Welsh as an adult. It has been noted that translators in any cultural context are often displaced, minority culture and/or hybrid figures (Burke 2009: 100), however, in this particular

case, Bell's 'Englishness' may help to explain a second noteworthy feature which M. Wynn Thomas identifies in his translations. Bell's translations, according to Thomas, were part of a broad trend of reaction against modern democratic, industrial and consumer culture. His translations

appear to be part of that reaction by Modernist English writers and intellectuals against mass democratic society that John Carey has anatomized and anathematized. The anti-industrialism of Saunders Lewis was an instance of the same phenomenon, and Bell's account of Welsh literature and society, published the year previous to the Great Strike of 1926, is itself notable for lacking any reference to Welsh industrial society.

(Thomas 1999: 122)

If this is the case, Bell was using Welshness as a criticism of contemporary English culture in much the same way Matthew Arnold had done, providing a link with nineteenth century paradigms of Welsh-English translation and providing evidence for Gyan Prakash's theory that colonised peoples accept the frameworks of their colonisers (1990). Bell, however, also showed himself to be capable of moving beyond essentialist frameworks. He directly criticises Arnold's approach in his introduction, ascribing the melancholy prevalent in the poetry he had translated to the historic and social condition of the Welsh people rather than the inherent sentimentality of the Celtic race (Thomas 1999: 122). The fact that Bell makes this argument also establishes a link with contemporary Welsh nationalism, a link which M. Wynn Thomas identifies by noting

the similarity to Saunders Lewis' anti-industrialism.<sup>7</sup> This anti-industrialism was itself part of a broader nostalgia in which Lewis romanticised pre-conquest medieval Wales: this would have been a period when the Welsh language was dominant and the country was largely rural, agrarian and Catholic (an attraction for Lewis, if not the majority of Welsh nationalists). In projecting a vision of Welshness that challenged what he perceived as the values of English culture, rather than seeking to 'marry' or contribute to it, Bell realised that translation could serve a nationalist political agenda. As Englishness increasingly became associated with imperialism in Wales as well as in England (Young 2008: 235), this kind of critique took on an ever greater significance.

The way that translation has sometimes been used in colonial contexts as a form of national rehabilitation or resistance has been much analysed by Maria Tymoczko, in her book *Translation in a Postcolonial Context* (1999) and elsewhere (2000, 2009). Tymoczko analyses and interprets translation as a form of anti-colonial nationalist rhetoric, using as a case study the translations into English of the canonical mythological texts of Old and Middle Irish. In her words,

Translation of early Irish texts, including translation of early Irish laws, annals and other cultural documents, was central to the emergence of Irish cultural nationalism - essential to the ability of the Irish to claim a history and culture for themselves, for example, and the attempt to construct an identity for themselves that would free them from the English definitions of Irishness. (2000: 28)

Tymoczko focuses on the translation of Early Irish literature during the period 1875–1922, after which translation of early Irish literature almost completely ceases for half a century (2009: 32). This period is also the context for the earliest translations of Daniel Owen novels which are discussed in this thesis. In Ireland, this was of course a period of national struggle which culminated in political independence.

From a certain perspective, the situation in Wales could hardly be said to be the same –English political discourses sometimes differentiated between the ‘good’ Celtic Welsh and the ‘bad’ Celtic Irish, because of the former’s lack of violent political activism (Young 2008: 145), and the Welsh themselves often attempted to distance themselves from the Irish for fear of association (Thomas 1999: 119). Nonetheless, the late nineteenth century was a period of, to use Kenneth O. Morgan’s phrase, ‘National Revival’ (1982) in Wales. The parallels I have drawn with Ireland, and my use of terms like ‘nationalist’ and ‘nationalism’ with respect to Wales in this period, perhaps require some justification. Some of key cultural and political figures of this ‘Revival’ might not readily be considered nationalistic, at least, not in the same way as either their Irish contemporaries or their later Welsh descendants. These individuals may have been happy to see Wales remain as part of a British Empire. Advocates of Wales as a *politically* distinct entity in the nineteenth century –such as the proto-nationalist movement *Cymru Fydd* (about which more will be mentioned in chapter 3)– did not advocate an independent Welsh state but rather ‘Home Rule’, an arrangement which might, in the post-devolution twenty-first century, be considered mainstream rather than Nationalistic. Regardless, there was an undeniable increase in political and cultural

activity during the period which positively emphasised Wales' status as a contemporary entity, distinct from England, and it is in this sense that, in the absence of suitable alternatives, I use the terms 'nationalist' and 'nationalism' with respect to the nineteenth century. My later use of the term 'nationalist activism' to describe a kind of politically-motivated translation should be understood within this context. This definition is necessarily very broad, but as theorists of nation such as Benedict Anderson (1983) have laboured to argue, such concepts as nationalism are ultimately as nebulous as the concept of 'nation' itself. The key word in my definition is perhaps 'contemporary', in that the emphasis on the Wales of the *present* rather than of the past was the principal way in which it challenged the imperial, contributionist Arnoldian vision of Wales as a Celtic relic whose principal significance was as part of a common British historiography.

It is clear that H. Idris Bell's translations from the Welsh, coming at the end of this historic period, can be located as part of this process of what might be called 'national rehabilitation', in much the same way that the Irish nationalist translations Tymoczko describes were part of a parallel shift in Ireland. Bell differed from his 'contributionist' predecessors in that his translations were conceived to present Wales, as M. Wynn Thomas put it, as 'vigorously contemporary' (1999: 121). I will argue however that Thomas' implication that this kind of translation began with Bell's volume, is, incorrect, and that it can in fact be dated to some decades earlier, in 1888 when James Harris' radical translation of Daniel Owen's *Rhys Lewis* was published. This was the first translation of a Daniel Owen novel and it will be the focus of Chapter 3 of this thesis. In this way, this thesis seeks to readdress this aspect of Welsh translation



history, pushing back chronologically the point at which translation in Wales ceased to be mainly a tool of contributionist essentialism and became part of the national revival of the period.

If the period between 1880 and 1914 can be identified as one in which Wales' national status was being challenged and redefined, then a similar thing could be said of the period between the late 1950s through to the early 1970s. This period also saw the publication of a Daniel Owen translation, an English version of *Gwen Tomos* by T. Ceiriog Williams and E. R. Harries, published in 1963 and discussed in chapter four of this thesis. This chapter will argue that text too was being produced in order to challenge and redefine Welsh nationhood. This thesis will not, however, focus exclusively on questions of national status and identity, and as it moves on to discuss successive translations of Daniel Owen's novels it will cover a wider range of critical bases, as will be articulated in the rest of this introduction.

#### **1.4 Translation and the Welsh-language literary canon**

Translation is increasingly being regarded as a central concept in discussions of literary canon and reception (Gillespie 2011). Translation has been recognised as a means for 'fertilization', (Gillespie 2011: 8), that is, the import of new literary techniques and styles into a target culture. For minority and/or peripheral languages in particular, translation can provide a valuable source of new literary material, because of the comparative lack of alternative sources of literary texts. Translations are thus likely to form a larger share of the published material in minority languages, and are more likely to become canonical texts within those languages (Even-Zohar 1990; Hubbard 2006).

Historically, Welsh has been no exception in this regard, although translations do not form a particularly large share of the market for books in Welsh today (Hopwood 1997: 58), except within the sphere of children's literature (Thomas 1997: 97–8). This is probably attributable to the ability of the entire adult Welsh-speaking population to read English, allowing them access to the world's largest body of original and translated literature. In previous centuries however, translation into Welsh has had a central role in Welsh literary activity. The overwhelming majority of surviving medieval texts in Welsh are translations, usually of scripture or other religious texts. Without a doubt, the single most influential text translated into Welsh was the Welsh Bible, or, to be more specific, William Morgan's Welsh Bible of 1588 and its revised edition of 1620, the 'foundation stone on which modern Welsh literature has been based' (Stephens 1998: 48). Not only would Morgan's poetic style have a huge influence on literature in Welsh for centuries, his Bible had a significant standardising force on the language itself. Morgan presented Welsh in 'an intelligent, sensitive, up-to-date, consistent fashion' which avoided the archaic language of earlier translations (Stephens 1998: 48). In a period before dictionaries or other sources of standardisation, Morgan's Bible established the norms for modern Welsh spelling and orthography as well as giving the language a status and credibility which was denied to other Celtic languages such as Irish and Breton (Stephens 1998: 771–2). As S. Rhian Reynolds notes in the introduction to the *Bibliography of Welsh Literature in English Translation*, 'its rich idiomatic and literary Welsh was to be of inestimable value as a means of safeguarding literary and linguistic standards in a country without a government, a capital or institutions of its own' (2005: xii). Morgan's translation (periodically purged of archaisms) remained the basis of all Welsh versions of the Bible into the twentieth century. This dominance was further

consolidated during the Methodist Revival of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when almost all aspects of Welsh cultural life became increasingly dominated by religion. The Welsh Bible was and remains one of the central canonical texts in the language (Hallam 2007: 266).

While no other text translated into Welsh has been quite so central, other translations have also been very influential. The vigorous print culture of nineteenth century included a ‘thriving translation industry’ (Williams 2012: 25): two popular source texts, both translated multiple times into Welsh, were John Bunyan’s allegory *The Pilgrim’s Progress* and Harriet Beecher Stowe’s abolitionist novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Bunyan’s allegory had first been translated into Welsh as early as 1688, and was retranslated many times, becoming one of the most popular texts in Welsh after the Bible. Beecher Stowe’s abolitionist novel was translated into Welsh four times between 1852–4, a remarkable fact even within the context of the nineteenth century Welsh printing industry (Williams 2012: 25). The most interesting of the translations was Gwilym Hiraethog’s version, which he called *Aelwyd f’Ewythr Robert* [My Uncle Robert’s Household].<sup>8</sup> An ambitious literary experiment, Hiraethog’s version combines a Welsh text of Stowe’s novel with an original narrative describing a group of Welsh men and women who are reading and discussing the translation. It has variously been interpreted as a translation and as a novel and certainly had a significant influence on the development of the Welsh prose tradition (Millward 1991: 123, Williams 2000). Daniel Williams also suggests it served as an attempt at ‘uplifting the culture of the Welsh peasantry, making a case for the simultaneous modernity and respectability of both the emergent novel form and the residual oral tradition.’ (2012: 50).

While these translations into Welsh have played a significant role in the history of Welsh literature, this thesis focuses primarily on translation into English. While engaging with the subject of canonisation and canonicity it will therefore focus not on how translations like the Bible have assumed canonical status in Welsh, but rather on the ways that the continued translation, retranslation and non-translation of texts is itself a discourse on the canonicity of the originals (Gillespie 2011: 93). Stuart Gillespie explains:

Translations, then, do not merely *reflect* the status of any given work: in many cases they *establish* status, or help do so. This is by no means incidental to their purpose. [...]

The only permanent thing about [canonical texts'] place in the canon, it would seem, is the requirement to re-examine and reassess it; and in this process, translations can have, and can be shown to have had, a major role. (2005: 8–9, emphasis original)

From the perspective of the Welsh literary canon then, translation into English and other languages has been a means of emphasising the canonical status of particular texts. This thesis will explore the role the translations on which it focuses have played in this process of canonisation.

When a text is among the first translations from any particular language, its canonising effect can be especially significant. An interesting case is that of *Hao qiu*

*zhuan*, the first Chinese novel to be translated into English (in 1761), translations of which still perhaps outnumber any other single work of Chinese fiction. Although the reasons for its original selection for translation seem to have been more or less arbitrary, it has occupied a 'privileged position' in Europe ever since (St André 2003: 64). *Hao qiu zhuan* was particularly susceptible to this kind of canonisation because so few Europeans were able to read Chinese in the eighteenth century, and with so few potential translators any texts that did get translated gained authority and a special kind of authenticity by their very rarity. It could be argued that the Welsh language was no less inaccessible than Chinese to ordinary English audiences in the period: even 'experts' like Matthew Arnold could not read Welsh. Early Welsh translators' choices as to which texts to translate and which ones not to translate allowed them to define the Welsh literary canon according to their own values: as I have argued in the above section, in focusing mainly on translating medieval texts Celtic antiquarians in the nineteenth century established a canon which designated Welsh literature as something of the past. A university course which focused on the same medieval literature did little to challenge this, although as Welsh academics began to look at contemporary texts this situation began to change, and translation was, once more, central to the process. H. Idris Bell's decision to translate contemporary poetry was a direct challenge to the retrospective canon identified by the antiquarians. Indeed it is perhaps in this respect primarily that Bell's anthologies can be identified as radical. Bell was only one of a number of translators, preface-authors, publishers and editors in the twentieth century who, according to M. Wynn Thomas, colluded to reproduce texts which presented a conception of Welsh culture in opposition to contemporary consumer culture (Thomas 1999). As well as functioning as a criticism of how 'Englishness' was being construed

in the period, this simultaneously served to define the Welsh literary canon in a very specific way. The texts chosen for translation were those that best reflected the idea of ‘Welsh-language culture as a kind of counter-culture offering an “alternative” to modern mass, consumer society’ [sic] (Thomas 1999: 125). Prose now was being used as well as poetry to this end: Thomas mentions for example translations of Hugh Evans’s *Cwm Eithin*, ‘delicately nostalgic recollections of life in a disappeared rural culture’ (1999: 125); T. Rowland Hughes’s *O Law i Law*, ‘in which the main character relives and reconstitutes a vanished, communal past’, (1999: 125) the short stories of Kate Roberts and D. J. Williams’ ‘notably idyllic memoir of turn-of-the-century life in rural west Wales, *Hen Dy Ffarm*’ (1999: 125). The above section explored how the focus on these kinds of texts could be viewed as part of a strategy of anti-colonial resistance; however, they also served to further the notion that the Welsh-language literary canon was one in which these kinds of texts were dominant. The preference for these kinds of texts as source texts for Welsh-English translation is, according to Thomas, still prevalent today (1999: 125).

However, translations from Welsh into English have not functioned exclusively as part of attempts to project Welsh-language culture as a whole in a uniform fashion. They can also serve as means to shape the way individual writers are located within that canon. The very concept of a literary canon might be said to be dependent on the existence of individual ‘canonical’ authors around whom critics and translators can focus the processes of canon-formation. As Tudur Hallam explains in *Canon ein Llên*,

[mae'r] llenddulliau neu'r mathau gwahanol o ysgrifennu sy'n rhoi ffurf ar ganon llenyddol, fynychaf wedi eu dosbarthu mewn perthynas ag awduron. Er i destunau megis *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* ar un adeg fod yn dderbyniol heb angen cwestiynu identiti eu hawdur, canon o ysgrifenydd mawr, nid o ysgrifennu mawr yw'r un llenyddol mwyach. (Hallam 2007: 20)

[the literary methods or different kinds of writing which give form to a literary canon are most often categorised in relation to authors. Although texts like *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* were at one point acceptable without needing to question the identity of their author, the literary canon is now one of great writers, not of great writing.]

This drive to coalesce the Welsh-language literary canon around charismatic individuals is perhaps most striking in the work of writer and critic Saunders Lewis, who endeavoured to canonise certain literary figures such as Ceiriog and Dafydd Nanmor, with varying degrees of success.<sup>9</sup> While there have been no shortage of poets who have always held a central role within the Welsh literary canon –Aneirin, Taliesin, Dafydd ap Gwilym, Williams Pantycelyn– there have always been far fewer similar figures in the prose tradition, an issue which has been historically problematic for those who wish to emphasise the ability of Welsh authors to excel at all kinds of writing. It was perhaps for this reason that Saunders Lewis and others tried to speculate as to the author of *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* (Hallam 2007: 20).

This search for charismatic, representative individuals in each literary form by which to define Welsh literature was still implicit in the work of some late twentieth-century Welsh-language critics. For example, in his 1992 volume *Ysgrifau ar y Nofel*—a history of the Welsh-language novel told through a number of case studies—John Rowlands claims that, because of the focus by Welsh authors on religious prose and corresponding neglect of secular literature, during the nineteenth century ‘ni chawsom lenyddiaeth agos at fod yn gyflawn am amser maith’ [we did not have a literature close to being complete for a long time] (1992: 4). Rowlands’ conception of this literary ‘completeness’ can be inferred to rest upon the existence of charismatic individuals, betrayed by statements like ‘Fel ysgrifennwr rhyddiaith liwgar y rhagorai Gwilym Hiraethog, a phetai wedi sylweddoli’i gryfder, gallasai fod wedi rhoi inni nofelau o’r iawn ryw’ [It was as a writer of colourful prose that Gwilym Hiraethog excelled, and had he realised his strength he could have given us some genuine novels] (1992: 10–11).

To a certain extent, the Welsh language literary establishment found the great prose writer it desired in Daniel Owen. Owen was particularly suited for lionization as a great writer. His popular celebrity in the late nineteenth-century and his public career meant that a wealth of biographical material survived, in stark contrast to many Welsh writers of the past, about whom often little more than a name was known. This, along with the large stock of miscellaneous writings, drafts and notes that Owen had kept, allowed critics to engage in biographical criticism to an extent that had been possible with few other Welsh-language literary figures: as has been noted already, he is likely to be the most written-about Welsh-language writer even today (Williams 1999: 2).



It will be a suggestion of this thesis that Owen's cultural status as a central canonical figure in Welsh literature has often been more important to critics than his novels. As will be seen in the second chapter, as the twentieth century progressed, the very establishment which had lionised Owen as author began increasingly to criticise his literary output. In order to deal with the mounting criticisms of the books, editors and translators began to use their power to 'improve' Owen's novels so as to reinforce Owen's canonicity. To those interested in engaging with the literary status of an author, translation in particular provides a uniquely powerful tool for this kind of canonisation because of the ways it can be used to colour a reader's perception of a writer. Through a combination of editorial choices, selective translation and censorship, undesirable factors can be removed while foregrounding those aspects of a writer's work which critics wish to emphasise. This process need not necessarily be deliberate or even conscious (Harman 1996, Kimber 2009, Gillespie 2011). In the case of Daniel Owen translations, the attempt to use translation to 'reinvent' an author is particularly noteworthy in the the case of T. Ceiriog Williams & E. R. Harries' translation of *Gwen Tomos* (discussed in Chapter four). As will be seen, Williams & Harries translation departs significantly from the original in terms of length, content and prose style, all in ways which were calculated to counter established criticisms of Owen as a writer.

A further key consideration in this regard will be the subject of retranslations. One of the four main translations discussed in this thesis is a retranslation: published in 2010, *The Trials of Enoc Huws*, translated by Les Barker, is a retranslation of Owen's 1891 novel *Profedigaethau Enoc Huws*, which was first translated in 1892 by Claud Vivian and serialised between 1894–6 in the journal *Wales*; both these translations are

discussed in chapter five of this thesis. As retranslation is a highly significant practice when translations are concerned with the canonicity of specific authors, a discussion of retranslation will take up a significant proportion of the chapter which deals with these translations. Although the 2010 translation is the only actual retranslation among the texts discussed in this thesis (a translation of *Gwen Tomos* which predates the 1963 translation exists, but was unfinished), because all the translations discussed here are of the work of the same original author –and in each case the translators have almost certainly been aware of the work of their predecessors– each of them might be considered retranslations, in that they similarly consist of a commentary on the translation values, strategies and methodologies of their predecessors. They are also thus intrinsically concerned with the literary status of Daniel Owen. In his case study of the English translations and retranslations of Jules Verne, Kieran O’Driscoll describes how a series of retranslations chronicle Verne’s shifting literary status. Early translations of Verne’s work were impacted by his low prestige as writer in France (2011: 34): because Verne was perceived as a literary lightweight and a writer of popular rather than ‘serious’ literature, his early English translators thus felt empowered to bowdlerise and censor their translations as well as showing what O’Driscoll describes as a ‘rather cavalier approach to accuracy’ (2011: 45), an attitude further entrenched by the fact that their translations were being produced for a mass market in cheap magazines. Later translations reflected Verne’s improved critical status (2011: 39). The translations of Owen’s novels into English do not necessarily follow this pattern, because Owen’s literary reputation has not changed in the way Jules Verne’s has. Nevertheless, for one of the translations in particular there were some noteworthy parallels. T. Ceiriog Williams and E. R. Harries’ 1963 translation of Owen’s *Gwen Tomos* was produced after

a period in which Owen was being re-evaluated, and often being criticised for a variety of structural and stylistic flaws (as will be described in more detail in the second and fourth chapters of this thesis). As well as modernising Owen's sometimes archaic spellings, the editors of the Welsh-language editions of his novels felt compelled to cut large amounts of material in order to attempt to address these flaws. Williams and Harries' translation followed this lead and also cut large amounts of material, as well as making other changes which will be described in detail in Chapter Four, which focuses on that translation. It is hoped that subsequent chapters of this thesis will demonstrate how the translation of Owen's novels into English has both reflected and influenced his canonical status. Translations, particularly those produced a long time after Owen's death, have been used as a means not only of cementing Owen's place within that canon but also of engaging with and directly combating some of the criticisms which have threatened his canonical status.

### **1.5 Welsh-English translation and the English-language literature of Wales**

One of the most significant literary developments in Wales during the period covered by this thesis was the emergence of a new English-language literature distinct to Wales. This literature used to be widely known, including by its proponents and practitioners, by the term 'Anglo-Welsh', the 'Anglo-' prefix serving to differentiate it from writing in the Welsh language. More recently however this term has fallen out of favour in preference for 'Welsh writing in English', a term calculated to avoid the implication that such writing is necessarily culturally (as well as linguistically) English, as well as avoiding the potentially imperialistic connotations of the 'Anglo-' prefix.

Welsh men and women had been writing in English for centuries. However, the literary tradition to which ‘Welsh writing in English’ refers is generally agreed to be a phenomenon of the twentieth century, whose roots lie in the social and demographic changes Wales underwent during the nineteenth century (Garlick 1970: 6; Jones 2001: 2). It is estimated that in 1800 approximately 80% of the population of Wales were able to speak Welsh, with English dominant only in border areas or those which had seen significant English settlement in previous centuries (Stephens 1998: 772). This had declined to about 50% by 1900, with the decline particularly evident in the South Wales coalfield. Migration had played a part, with significant numbers arriving from England and Ireland, and significant numbers leaving for England and the United States, but the language also declined because it was abandoned by many Welsh, particularly the middle-classes (Davies 1994: 420).<sup>10</sup> This shift saw a corresponding decoupling of the Welsh language and Welsh national identity, which is highly visible today: speaking Welsh has remained the ‘supreme mark’ (Khleif 1979: 437) of Welsh national identity and its ‘most powerful source’ (Llobera 2004: 92), but many in Wales who cannot speak the language still consider themselves to be Welsh, as evidenced by the 2011 census which indicated that while only 19% of the Welsh population can speak Welsh, 66% self-identify as Welsh (Office for National Statistics 2011). English, by the beginning of the twentieth century, could be said to be ‘*a Welsh language that threatened to replace the Welsh language*’ (Thomas 1999: 127, emphasis added).

Mainstream academic discussions of Welsh writing in English have not, for the most part, explored its relationship with Welsh-English translation. Translation has been marginalised or even ignored in most of the canonical critical texts of Welsh writing in

English. It is barely mentioned, if at all, in Raymond Garlick's *An Introduction to Anglo-Welsh Literature* (1970) and Glyn Jones' *The Dragon Has Two Tongues* (2001); some more recent critical works such as those by Kirsti Bohata (2004) and Stephen Knight (2004) have continued this trend although M. Wynn Thomas' book *Corresponding Cultures* (1999) is of course an exception. This critical silence is in many ways quite surprising: there are a number of reasons to expect a link between Welsh writing in English and the translation of Welsh-language literature into English. Many practitioners of the former have also practised the latter to a greater or lesser extent, such as Gillian Clarke, Tony Conran, Glyn Jones, John Ormond, Leslie Norris, Meic Stephens, R. S. Thomas and Harri Webb, to name just a few. In some cases these writers' roles as translators have been fairly limited, consisting perhaps of occasional pieces in volumes dedicated mainly to original writing. Alternatively, they may have used translation as a means to practice writing early on in their career and largely abandoned it thereafter. In at least some cases however, such as with Tony Conran, translation was a significant part of their literary output and was a practice to which they would return time and time again throughout their careers. Secondly, translations from Welsh into English and original Welsh writing in English have frequently shared platforms in anthologies and in magazines, both historically, in publications like *Red Dragon* and the two journals entitled *Wales* –about which more later– and today in titles like *New Welsh Review*, *Poetry Wales* and *Planet*. These shared platforms imply a shared audience and possibly a shared ideological remit. Just as the linguistic anglicisation of Wales gave rise to a new literary tradition, it also shifted the focus of Welsh-English translation. While, during the nineteenth century, the mainstream of Welsh-English translation could be interpreted as being primarily a means to export

Celtic genius to the English intellectual market, in the twentieth century this changed and Welsh-English translation began increasingly to be marketed at non-Welsh speakers *within* Wales. As M. Wynn Thomas puts it, ‘Although Welsh-English translation was originally... an aspect of Wales’ relationship to England, it eventually developed into an aspect of Wales’ relationship to itself’ (1999: 105). This transition may be attributed to the same demographic forces which triggered the rise of Welsh writing in English.

Perhaps, however, the main reason to expect a link between Welsh writing in English and Welsh-English translation is that Welsh writing in English might itself, as post-colonial writing, be considered a kind of ‘translation’. Although many texts in Welsh writing in English focus on anglophone characters and communities, in many other cases, such as with Caradoc Evans’ *My People* (1915) and parts of Emyr Humphreys’ *A Toy Epic* (1953), the reader understands that he/she is reading the experience of Welsh-speaking Wales. Although the dialogue appears in English on the page, the understanding is that the reader knows these characters are speaking Welsh. The author is effectively ‘translating’ their dialogue for the reader, even if in this case there is no written original. Dialogue in these cases is often, though not always, written in non-standard English, in some ways explicitly or implicitly informed by the Welsh language. This use of non-standard English is not usually created in order to evoke actual dialects of English in use in Wales –as has sometimes been erroneously assumed by those critical of the technique– but rather ‘to create a sense of cultural specificity and difference’ (Bohata 2004: 107). Welsh writers using this technique include, among many others, Caradoc Evans, Mike Jenkins, Niall Griffiths and arguably Dylan Thomas (Bohata: 2004: 107). In other cases, even if the English they use is not inflected in this

way, Welsh writers pepper their texts with words or passages in Welsh, as can be seen in some or all of the work of writers like Glyn Jones, Margiad Evans (Bohata 2004: 119) and Emyln Williams (Williams 2004: 140), among others. These varieties of ‘bilingual writing’ are similarly visible in many Welsh-English translations, including, to varying degrees, all of those discussed in this thesis. It is also a common feature of postcolonial literatures and translations throughout the world. Samia Mehrez explains in *Translation and the Postcolonial Experience* how this practice means that such texts can be considered quasi-‘translations’:

By drawing on more than one culture, more than one language... these postcolonial plurilingual texts in their own right resist and ultimately exclude the monolingual and demand of their readers to be like themselves: ‘in between’, at once capable of reading and translating, where translation becomes an integral part of the reading experience. (1992: 122)

Paul F. Bandia makes a similar point in *Translation as Reparation* (2008: 3). Taken together, the nature of Welsh writing in English as quasi-translation, the fact so many Welsh writers using English have also been translators from Welsh, and the two literatures’ shared platforms all suggest a potential wealth of cross-fertilisations, mutual influences and exchanges that is crying out for critical attention.

Nonetheless, as will be seen, there have been some attempts, whether explicit or implicit, to segregate the two and play down any possible link. One argument this thesis

will seek to put forward is that, far from being separate and non-overlapping literary practices, Welsh writing in English and literary translation from Welsh have historically been closely interlinked and no full understanding of one is possible without an examination of the other. Each of the chapters in this thesis will thus necessarily discuss the relationship between the translations on which they focus and the developments in Welsh writing in English that were taking place at the same time.

As to the nature of the link between the two practices, Itamar Even-Zohar provides a theoretical framework. In 'The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem' Even-Zohar argues that when new literary systems –such, as, in our case, that of Welsh writing in English– are emerging, translation takes on an added significance:

In such a situation [translation] is by and large an integral part of innovatory forces, and as such likely to be identified with major events in literary history while these are taking place. This implies that in this situation no clear-cut distinction is maintained between 'original' and 'translated' writings, and that often it is the leading writers (or members of the avant-garde who are about to become leading writers) who produce the most conspicuous or appreciated translations. (1978/1990: 200).

Even-Zohar's suggestion that the leading writers of emergent literary traditions are often also translators squares with the long list given above of translators within the



tradition of Welsh writing in English. The suggestion that in these situations the distinction between original and translated material breaks down is corroborated by the idea articulated above that Welsh writing in English can itself be thought of as a kind of 'translation'. Even-Zohar goes on to suggest that

when new literary models are emerging, translation is likely to become one of the means of elaborating the new repertoire.

Through the foreign works, features (both principles and elements) are introduced... such as a new (poetic) language, or compositional patterns and techniques. (1978/1990: 200)

This thesis does not wish to suggest that specific linguistic and formal elements of Welsh writing in English necessarily have their origins in Welsh-English translation: I am not implying, for example, that Caradoc Evans had read Claud Vivian's translation of *Enoch Hughes* and used its style as a model for his use of non-standard English in *My People*. However, what this thesis will show is that translators from Welsh into English were experimenting with stylistic devices which bear some similarity to those later adopted by some Welsh Writers in English. Considering the overlap between practitioners and audiences outlined above, at least some cross-fertilisation between Welsh-English translation and Welsh writing in English seems likely. Regardless, the *potential* for Welsh-English translation to serve as a means for 'elaborating the repertoire' of Welsh writing in English, imparting to it a distinctly Welsh 'flavour', has certainly been realised by some literary figures whose work will be discussed over the course of this thesis; the most indisputed example perhaps being O. M. Edwards, who

explicitly outlined his intention to publish English translations of Welsh literature with this very objective (1894: iii).

However, the relationship between Welsh writing in English and Welsh-English translation has not necessarily always been about positive inspiration and the exchange of literary practice. In the postcolonial context of contemporary Wales, the decision by some Welsh writers to use English, the colonial language, is itself a loaded one. As Kirsti Bohata explains,

It might be argued that Welsh writers using the English language are particularly sensitive to [tensions concerning their ‘Welshness’] since their language use is inevitably self-conscious, and those writers who consider themselves Welsh rather than British must be aware of the ‘spectre’ of Welsh-language literature, as well as the politics of language, which looms over their endeavours. (2004: 105)

Because the translation of Welsh language-literature into English brings the ‘spectre’ into their own literary domain, Welsh writers who use the English language might consider Welsh-English translation as a threatening activity which undermines the ‘Welshness’, and thus the legitimacy, of their own literary endeavours. As M. Wynn Thomas put it, ‘English-speakers could suspect that such translation implied a condescending attempt to remedy the shortcomings of an anglophone culture deemed deficient in Welshness’ (1999: 114). While this thesis has already discussed the uncertainties and political complexities of Welsh-English translation in the context of

Wales as a postcolonial, minority language and culture in opposition to the dominant English majority, it will also be useful to consider Welsh-English translation in the context of the tension between the two linguistic and literary communities of Wales.

As the tradition of Welsh writing in English presupposes that a Welsh identity independent of the Welsh language is possible, it has sometimes seen hostility from those Welsh-speakers whose conception of Welshness is language-centric. The nationalist Saunders Lewis, who held a great appreciation for the work of Anglo-Irish writers like W. B. Yeats, answered his own question, *Is There an Anglo-Welsh Literature?*, with an emphatic negative. While he claimed to object to the idea on the grounds that the English language was too recent a newcomer to Wales, associated with industrialism and therefore not ‘the speech of an organic community’ (1939: 10), it seems clear that his objections were mainly political. Lewis saw Welsh writing in English as a symptom of the cultural Anglicisation of Wales, and thus indicative of the decline of the Welsh nation:

The growth of Anglo-Welsh writing in recent years is the inevitable reflection of the undirected drifting of Welsh national life. It will go on, becoming less and less incompletely English, unless there is a revival of the moral qualities of the Welsh people. (Lewis 1939: 12–3)

While Lewis conceded that many Welsh writers who used English may have been capable of producing literature of great worth and merit, they were not capable of doing

so as Welshmen. He claimed that the work of Dylan Thomas, for example, ‘belongs to the main stream of the English literary tradition... there is nothing hyphenated about him. He belongs to the English’ (1939: 5). Lewis’ objection to Welsh writing in English might be considered more than a little ironic, given the fact that his first play, *The Eve of St. John* – a farce reminiscent of J. M. Synge’s *Playboy of the Western World* but with a Welsh setting and characters – was written in English. Raymond Garlick, a central figure in Welsh writing in English, wrote a response to Lewis some years later in which he suggested that as Lewis had written his essay during the thirties, he would not have had the opportunity to read many of the canonical works of the tradition; he also suggested that Lewis’ views on the subject may have softened in later years (1972). Nevertheless, Lewis was not alone in being suspicious of Welsh writing in English and in questioning its claim to being truly Welsh. Writing in Keidrych Rhys’ journal *Wales*, W. Moelwyn Merchant claimed that while Welsh writing in English may appeal to English audiences, it ‘will not interpret the Welsh tradition in all its subtle complexity to the Welsh’ (1943: 18). W. J. Gruffydd offered less restrained criticism, simply claiming that ‘byddaf yn gwrido dros fy ngwlad wrth weled unpeth ohoni mewn argraff,’ [I blush on behalf of my country at seeing any of it in print] (1927: 2).

For those who questioned the extent to which Welsh writing in English can be considered truly Welsh, the translation of Welsh-language literature could be used as a means to attack and undermine the tradition by presenting an alternative that could claim to be more legitimate in its Welshness. In the foreword to the 1950 English translation of T. Rowland Hughes’ novel *O Law i Law* (‘From Hand to Hand’) by Richard Ruck, Emllyn Williams complains of the

pretentious school of bogus Welsh [writers]... Self-consciously psychological probings into earnest young moderns who are neither Welsh, English nor anything else, but the rag-doll offspring of Tchekov [sic] and D. H. Lawrence: but still with the same tormented syntax... (where do they get it from, Welsh people don't talk like that!).

But *From Hand to Hand* is the real thing. (1950: 114–5)

Williams' association of Welsh writing in English with a (presumably) distasteful literary modernism echoes Saunders Lewis' claim that writers like Dylan Thomas were English rather than Welsh, and once again reminds us of the idea that Welsh-language literature might be employed to serve as a counterbalance to the forces of modernity. Williams' foreword shows that, whatever mutual relationship of exchange may sometimes exist between Welsh-English translation and Welsh writing in English, translation has also been used to undermine and attack the English-language literary tradition of Wales. This knowledge informs the claim made by M. Wynn Thomas in *Corresponding Cultures* that

*both* linguistic communities had reason to mistrust Welsh-English translation. Welsh speakers could naturally see in it a strategy of colonial appropriation, a means of bankrupting the language of its assets prior to liquidating its entire culture. English-speakers could suspect that such translation implied a

condescending attempt to remedy the shortcomings of an anglophone culture deemed deficient in Welshness...

The result of the mutual suspicion between the two cultures as outlined above has been that Welsh-English translation has been implicitly or explicitly construed in terms of a tension of alternative tropes—colonization or freedom struggle; selling out or buying in; cultural betrayal or an honourable ambassadorial service; linguistic aggression or the healing suture of a linguistically divided nation. (1999: 114–5, emphasis original)

It is these alternative tropes that form the backdrop to the research presented in this thesis, informing its arguments and providing a conceptual framework.

## **1.6 Chapter outlines**

This first introductory chapter has explored the theoretical concepts that underpin the more empirical discussions contained in this thesis. Consulting a variety of secondary sources, I have outlined the contexts in which Welsh-English translation has taken place and mentioned some of the implications of the practice as well as the terms in which it has been described throughout the period under study in this thesis. This thesis will explore three interrelated research areas: the relationship between Welsh-English translation and Welsh national identity in the context of the unequal power relations between Wales and England; the use of translation as a tool by which translators have engaged with, commented upon and reinforced the canonical status of Daniel Owen the

author; and the relationship between the English translations of Daniel Owen's novels and the tradition of Welsh writing in English.

The second chapter is a review chapter which will primarily serve to outline the contexts of the original texts whose translations this thesis takes as its main subject. The chapter will open by providing some biographical background information about Daniel Owen the novelist, before describing his literary reputation as it has developed over the previous century and a quarter (2.1). It shows how the author was immediately popular in his own lifetime, and was widely (though not unconditionally) praised by early critics of Welsh-language literature writing in the decades after his death like Thomas Parry and Saunders Lewis. It then chronicles the development of a more nuanced approach by later critics like John Rowlands, Ioan Williams and Robert Rhys, who, while still recognising his influence and cultural significance, have found more to fault with Owen's novels themselves. This analysis relates primarily to the thesis' first two research questions, chronicling as it does Owen's status as a national icon and canonical figure in Welsh-language literature. It helps inform arguments made later on in this thesis that translators of Owen's novels have attempted to colour and influence his image and reputation through their own work.

The second part of this chapter will place Owen in his historical and cultural context by analysing some of the social pressures affecting the development of Welsh-language prose writing in Victorian Wales (2.2). It attempts to explain why Owen's predecessors and contemporaries have largely failed to capture the Welsh public and critical imagination. It does so by suggesting that two strong social pressures were

working in tandem to both discourage would-be novelists from writing and to profoundly affect the style and content of the novels they produced. The first of these pressures was a historic preference for poetry over prose within the Welsh-language literary tradition (a preference which, this thesis argues, is still clearly visible in the twenty-first century); the second was the cultural dominance of a Calvinist-informed religious doctrine that was at best lukewarm in its approach to fiction. This argument is supported with reference to one of Owen's rough contemporaries, Gwilym Hiraethog, as a case study. Hiraethog's failure as a novelist despite clear potential, this thesis suggests, can be attributed to the two factors described above. This context is significant because it suggests that, in choosing to translate hitherto-marginalised novels, rather than continuing the traditional focus on poetry, the translators described in this thesis –particularly those translating in the nineteenth century– were seeking to challenge the established view of the Welsh/Celtic literary tradition.

The next short section will describe in brief Daniel Owen's work as a translator (2.3). Although Owen was primarily a novelist, he also produced one unfinished translation, of Timothy Shay Arthur's temperance novel *Twelve Nights in a Bar Room*, and had at one point planned another. Although the focus of this thesis is the translations of Owen's own original Welsh-language work by other translators, a look at how the author perceived translation as a cultural activity helps inform the discussion by providing further contextual information.

The next section of the second chapter takes as its subject Daniel Owen's literary output, in chronological order, with a focus on their reception and their role in forming



his literary reputation (2.4). Subsequent chapters will go into more detail where relevant on the actual plot of each individual novel, however this section will cover Owen's evolving style over his career, the conflicting influences of his social and cultural contexts and the place of each of his different novel within Owen's literary career as a whole. This information will help inform the detailed discussion of the translations which takes up the subsequent chapters.

The fifth section of this chapter concludes the discussion of Daniel Owen the novelist by taking a brief look at how Owen's work has appeared in other forms, such as in theatrical and film adaptations (2.5). This section mainly focuses however on how Owen's novels were re-issued in Welsh during the twentieth century, in abridged versions which omitted large parts of the originals, a key factor to consider when discussing subsequent translations of the author's work. The sixth and final section of this chapter will introduce the translations themselves, with a focus on those translations which are not discussed in detail in subsequent chapters of this thesis (2.6). This section will explain why I have chosen to focus on four translations in particular in performing the research presented in this thesis.

The third, fourth and fifth chapters of this thesis form the bulk of the thesis proper and contain all of the empirical research which has gone into this project. Each takes in its turn a different translation (in one case, two translations) of a Daniel Owen novel and explores its text and context in reference to the research questions outlined in this introduction.

Chapter three begins the empirical analysis of the translations by taking a look at James Harris' 1888 translation *Rhys Lewis, Minister of Bethel*. In doing so, it engages primarily with this thesis' first research question, concerning the relationship between Welsh-English translation and Welsh national identity. An introductory section will present the chapter's main argument, namely that the perceived aesthetic failure of Harris' translation has obscured its political rationale and significance (3.1). This chapter focuses primarily on the first area of analysis outlined in this introduction, that is how Welsh-English translation has engaged with discourses of the nation-state in the context of Wales as a (post)colonial culture. The translation was, this chapter argues, part of an Anglophone Welsh nationalism whose wider emergence can be seen in contemporary developments in the Welsh press. Significantly, this chapter suggests that the counter-imperialist tradition of Welsh-English translation identified by critics like M. Wynn Thomas in individuals such as H. Idris Bell in fact began somewhat earlier, and can be seen in Harris' translation. Harris' translation, this chapter will demonstrate, is an attempt to present Wales in a different, more assertive light than that which had been used by earlier translators.

Following this introduction, the third chapter goes on to explore how a text like *Rhys Lewis* may have appealed to the sensitivities of a translator like Harris who wished to challenge and redefine the idea of Welsh culture as it had been presented in the established translation tradition (3.2). Harris' choice of *Rhys Lewis* as a text to translate was itself, this section suggests, part of the wider project of national redefinition in which Harris was engaged. This section offers an overview of the plot and content of *Rhys Lewis*, demonstrating how its themes appealed to Victorian Wales. Its setting in

bilingual, urban North-East Wales would have appealed more to contemporary English-speaking Welsh audiences than the more typically pastoral settings of other Welsh-language novels. Furthermore, the text would have been viewed as a challenge to some contemporary negative portrayals of religious non-conformity—a challenge, as has been argued, the original text had been intended to provide, a challenge which would have had connotations for the portrayal of Wales itself in a period when non-conformism was the *de facto* state religion of Welsh-speaking Wales.

The third section of the third chapter explores the context of Harris' translation (3.3). It describes the nature and content of *Red Dragon*, a magazine of which Harris was editor before publishing his translation, with a particular focus on Harris' own contributions, particularly his two-part historical essay *The Massacre of the Welsh Bards* (Harris 1885a, 1885b). Although some of the content of *Red Dragon* demonstrates the established 'contributionist' approach to Welsh nationhood, and many of the translations which appear in *Red Dragon* are of a style and nature similar to that which had dominated Welsh-English translation through the nineteenth century, Harris' contributions and the journal's complex political stance demonstrate the beginning of a more assertive approach. After discussing *Red Dragon*, this section then explores the reception of Harris' translation of Daniel Owen's novel. It demonstrates that this reception has been almost unanimously negative, both among contemporary critics and among later commentators; however, it also suggests that this denigration of the translation's aesthetic failure may have obscured the radical nature of the text. The fourth section provides evidence for this argument by drawing examples from the text itself (3.4). It demonstrates that many of the specific translation strategies which critics

had taken issue were in fact radical attempts by Harris to present Wales, its people, language and culture, in a particular way. The most prominent of these was his adoption of a highly stylised, pseudo-intellectual prose style, intended to lend the text an air of intellectual gravitas and sophistication; however a number of other strategies were used in response to specific elements of the source text, in each case making changes which influence the text's presentation of Wales and Welshness to be more assertive and contemporary. A concluding section summarises the arguments of this chapter (3.5).

Chapter Four takes as its subject the 1963 translation of Owen's last novel, *Gwen Tomos*, by T. Ceiriog Williams and E. R. Harries. It focuses again on this thesis' first research question, concerning Welsh-English translation and Welsh national identity, but also engages extensively with the second research question, namely how translations of Owen's novels have engaged with the author's status within the Welsh literary canon. As in the preceding chapter, I argue here that the translators were interested in presenting a particular vision of Welsh nationhood and cultural identity. However, I also argue that the translation was attempting to rehabilitate and reimagine Daniel Owen the novelist, in response to his shifting position in the Welsh literary canon. After stating its primary arguments, the chapter begins with a description of the state of Welsh nationalism by the 1960s: the cultural context for this translation (4.1). This section analyses how Welsh nationalism had become increasingly prominent by the time of the publication of this translation, not just in the political sphere but as an aspect of Welsh cultural life with the publication of literature and music inspired by Welsh nationalism. This will become significant over the course of the chapter as it is

demonstrated that Williams and Harries' translation can be viewed as a part of this cultural trend.

The second section of this fourth chapter begins with a brief exposition of the plot of *Gwen Tomos* before exploring the effect of Thomas Parry's editing efforts in the Welsh version first published in 1937 (4.2). The second chapter of this thesis brought up the fact that Owen's novels were published in abridged Welsh-language editions during the twentieth century; in this chapter, I analyse the specific effects of Parry's editing on Owen's novel, by exploring some of the material which Parry had cut from his edition. An exploration of these changes is vital to an understanding of Williams and Harries' translation, because they had used Parry's work as the basis for their own version of the novel.

In the third and fourth sections of this chapter, I examine Williams and Harries' translation, both the text itself and its contexts. In the third I explore how the cuts and omissions Williams and Harries made, added onto those already made to the source text by Thomas Parry, further distanced the finished translation from Owen's original novel (4.3). This section focuses on this thesis' second area of analysis, which concerns itself with Owen's status as a canonical author. I explore how Williams and Harries' translation was calculated to refine and streamline *Gwen Tomos* and restore some of the status the author had lost to the growing dissatisfaction critics were expressing with his novels. In the fourth section, I move on to discuss the ways in which the translation engages with Welsh nationhood and cultural identity (4:4). In this section I show how a series of censorships and paraphrases occurred within the text: elements which may

have presented the Welsh in an unfavourable light were omitted, and sections where in the original Owen presents ambiguously nationalist ideas are translated into clear expressions of pro-Welsh and/or anti-English sentiment. I also explore how the religiousness of Owen's novel was toned down, again through censorship and omission. This happened, I argue, because the translators saw these elements of the text as archaisms which would have made it appeal less to modern audiences. A concluding section summarises the arguments of this chapter (4:5).

Chapter 5 takes as its subject the two translations of Owen's second novel, *Enoc Huws*, and does so in relation primarily to this thesis' third research question—the relationship between Welsh-English translation as represented by these translations and the tradition of Welsh literature written in the English language. However, it also engages with this thesis' second research question, concerning translations' commentary on Owen's status as canonical Welsh novelist. After an introductory section (5.1), the chapter begins with an exploration of Owen's novel's changing reputation over the century since its original publication (5.2). I show how the novel, although considered by many of Owen's contemporary critics as an inferior novel to *Rhys Lewis*, has come increasingly to be considered Owen's greatest achievement. I ascribe this shift in reputation to a decline in the importance of religious elements in novels since the nineteenth century and a corresponding raising of expectations in terms of plot structure. This change is significant as it helps explain why, after almost fifty years since the publication of Williams and Harries' English *Gwen Tomos* and over a hundred since the original publication of *Enoc Huws*, Owen's second novel was chosen as the first to be translated in the twenty-first century.

The third section of this fifth chapter takes as its subject Claud Vivian's nineteenth century translation *Enoch Hughes* (5.3). As well as examining the translation and offering information concerning its context and style, in this section, I explore how Vivian's translation was intended by O. M. Edwards, the editor of the magazine in which it was serialised, to inspire his English-speaking Welsh audience to write novels of their own in English. I suggest that the prominence given to Welsh-English translation by early proponents of Welsh writing in English such as Edwards points to a link which has not been thoroughly explored.

The fourth section moves on to examine the 2010 translation of *Enoc Huws*, entitled *The Trials of Enoc Huws* (5.4). As well as offering a perspective on the context and reception of the translation, this analysis is primarily an exploration of the commentary the translation represents on Welsh-English translation as a general practice. Drawing on theoretical approaches in Translation Studies regarding the concept of retranslation, and the unique relationship between *The Trials of Enoc Huws* and its predecessor, Vivian's *Enoch Hughes*, this thesis suggests that the *The Trials of Enoc Huws* offers a criticism of the earlier translation. I also show how the style and presentation of the translation seek to enhance and contribute to Owen's canonical status as a Welsh novelist. Finally, I suggest that the translation's style offers a model for Welsh-English translation which distances itself from Welsh writing in English by avoiding some of the stylistic elements which feature in that literary tradition, while simultaneously offering a text whose nature as a translation is foregrounded rather than elided. As always, a concluding section summarises the chapter's arguments (5.5).

A sixth, concluding chapter re-summarises this thesis' arguments (6.1) and offers suggestions as to potential future avenues of research in Translation Studies in Wales (6.2).

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## Notes

- 1 See <http://www.un.org/en/decolonization/nonselvgovterritories.shtml>.
- 2 For example, Colin Powell, Miles Davis, Venus Williams, Condoleeza Rice, etc. Welshmen who are known to have owned slaves in the Americas include noted 18th-century poet Goronwy Owen.
- 3 A colony was established in the Chubut province of Argentina by Welsh dissenters, starting in 1865. The Welsh were given the right to settle (land already occupied by native peoples) in exchange for their loyalty to Argentina. Although the motivations of many settlers were economic, there was also a desire among many that the Welsh language and culture be allowed to flourish in the absence of English cultural domination. It is estimated that many tens of thousands of the modern inhabitants of the region are of Welsh descent, with a small group of perhaps a few thousand still speaking the language. Welsh involvement in the area is evidenced by place names such as Trelew, Trevelin and Puerto Madryn.
- 4 *'Taffy was a Welshman, Taffy was a thief, /Taffy came to my house and stole a leg of beef'* etc. The rhyme was first published in the late eighteenth century (Stephens 1998: 699). The derogatory use of the term 'Taffy' to refer to the Welsh is thought to originate from English attempts to pronounce the common Welsh name Dafydd (David).
- 5 Johnson's book was a flippant satire, to which he himself wrote a mock-indignant response, but to serve its inflammatory function it made deliberate use of tropes and stereotypes popular at the time.



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- 6 The Blue Books referred to the bound blue volumes in which government reports were generally produced at the time; the name ‘Brad y Llyfrau Gleision’ was a deliberate reflection of ‘Brad y Cyllyll Hirion’ (The Treachery of the Long Knives), an event in Welsh popular mythology that was supposedly the occasion on which the Anglo-Saxons first drew blood against the native Britons at a feast to which they had been invited (Roberts 1998: 216).
  - 7 Saunders Lewis (1893–1985), playwright, poet, novelist, critic, historian, politician and activist. He was a founding member of Plaid Cymru, the Welsh nationalist party, and was its first leader and (ultimately unsuccessful) parliamentary candidate and was a key figure in its history, although he was in many ways an atypical Welsh nationalist. Not only did his Roman Catholicism mark him out from his largely non-conformist peers, his own brand of nationalism was conservative and reactionary compared to his peers’ broadly socialist conception. He is undoubtedly the single most important figure in Welsh-language literary criticism, and perhaps the most significant Welsh cultural figure of the twentieth century. He will be mentioned many times in this thesis.
  - 8 Gwilym Hiraethog, pen name of William Rees (1802–1883), one of the Welsh novelists who preceded Daniel Owen and now a rather forgotten figure. He will be discussed in detail in chapter two of this thesis.
  - 9 John Ceiriog Hughes (1832–87) was one of the most popular Welsh-language poets of the Victorian period, though his poetry is now considered rather sentimental. Dafydd Nanmor (c. 15th century) is one of the best-known medieval Welsh poets; his reputation today owes much to Saunders Lewis’ canonising efforts.
  - 10 It is worth noting however that this decline from 80% to 50% masks the fact that the Welsh population had more than doubled in the same period, and thus the absolute number of Welsh speakers by the beginning of the twentieth century was almost certainly higher than it had ever been before. This helps explain why, for example, the Welsh language press was able to thrive over a period when English was spreading across the country.

## **Chapter 2: Daniel Owen: His work, its translations and reputation**

### **2.1 Introduction: Poor writer, great novelist?**

Daniel Owen (1836–91) was born, lived and died in Yr Wyddgrug (known in English as Mold), a small town in Flintshire. Throughout his life he was a member of the Calvinist Methodist Church, as were many of Wales' significant cultural figures during the period, including most of the Welsh-language novelists who preceded him.<sup>1</sup> Unlike these novelists however, who were generally from relatively affluent, middle-class backgrounds (Williams 1989: xi), Owen was born into poverty. The son of a collier and the youngest of six children, a mining accident killed Owen's father and two oldest brothers before Owen was a year old, leaving the family dependent on charity for the rest of Owen's youth. Owen had, in his own words, never been particularly healthy (quoted in Foulkes 1903: 4), which led to his being apprenticed at thirteen to a tailor rather than becoming a labourer or miner like his father and brothers. His apprenticeship turned into full employment on completion, and although he had intended to become a preacher, attending the theological college at Bala for two years and preaching in chapels throughout North Wales, Cheshire and Merseyside, he gave up on this path and remained a tailor throughout his life, eventually coming to own the business in which he had been apprenticed.<sup>2</sup>

Owen's business responsibilities meant that he was only ever a part-time writer. Although his work was unprecedentedly popular, the small audience to which he had restricted himself by writing in Welsh meant that he could never expect to sustain

himself by writing alone, like contemporary English novelists were able to do. Nevertheless, despite these restrictions, and although he began his writing career in earnest relatively late in his short life –his first novel began to be serialised in 1879, by which time he was already in his mid-forties, and was only sixteen years from his death– he was able to write four relatively lengthy novels over his career, which were instantly popular, to an extent which far outstripped any novel previously written in Welsh. His novels have remained popular ever since; indeed, for many decades after his death, a consensus existed that Daniel Owen was the greatest novelist in the Welsh language, and that other Welsh novelists so far failed to equal him. In his tellingly-titled *The Novel: The Development of the Welsh-Language Novel since Daniel Owen*, Dafydd Jenkins made the claim that

Nid symud ymlaen o'r fan a gyrhaeddasai Daniel Owen a  
wnaeth y nofelwyr Cymraeg a ddaeth ar ei ôl ef, ond graddol  
ymlwybro tua'r fan honno, a phrin y mae neb ohonynt eto wedi'i  
chyraedd. A champ Daniel Owen ei hun sy'n cyfrif am hynny...  
(1948: 7–8)

The Welsh novelists that came after him did not move on from  
the place that Daniel Owen had reached, but rather slowly  
wound their way toward it, and hardly any of them have reached  
it yet. And it is Daniel Owen's own achievement that is to count  
for this...

For Glyn Ashton, the central question of the Welsh-language novel during the twentieth century was ‘Pwy oedd i ddilyn Daniel Owen?’ [Who was to follow Daniel Owen?] (1976: 109). For Saunders Lewis he was the only significant novelist in Welsh literature (1936: 59). For Thomas Parry he was ‘ymhell ar y blaen i neb arall a fu’n ysgrifennu nofelau yn Gymraeg’ [far ahead of anyone else to write novels in Welsh] (1948: 85) and ‘not a development of anyone or anything... a great mountain on wide plains’ (1955: 353). Although it is acknowledged that he was not the first Welsh-language novelist, and that he was writing within an established tradition (Millward 1973, 1979), his novels are considered to have been so ground-breaking and influential compared with those of his predecessors –whose novels have remained almost universally out of print– that he is frequently credited with founding the tradition of the Welsh novel (Jones 1904; Ashton 1976: 147; Williams 1999: 1). As a result of this convention, it is common for discussions of the Welsh-language novel to begin by discussing him as the foundation on which the tradition is based (Rowlands 1992; Williams 1999). As a reflection of his importance, he has received extensive critical attention, at least by the standards of a Welsh-language writer: Gerwyn Williams suggests that more has been written about Daniel Owen than about any other novelist in the language (1999: 2). Owen’s strengths have repeatedly been claimed to include his talent at writing dialogue (Roberts 1909; Lewis 1936: 63; Stephens 1998: 551; Rhys 2000b: 164) and as a satirist and social commentator (Stephens 1998: 552), and principally of all his ability to create memorable characters (Lewis 1936: 63; Parry 1948: 86; Williams 1989: 102, Stephens 1998: 552). His influence on later Welsh novelists was considerable, both in the generation that immediately followed him such as W. Llywelyn Williams and Gwyneth Vaughan (Stephens 1998: 536), as well as T. Gwynn Jones (Ashton 1976: 108), but also

the more prominent novelists of the first half of the twentieth century, such as T. Rowland Hughes (Parry 1965:163), and even on later novelists like T. Glynne Davies (Rowlands 1979).

Academic appraisal of Owen's work was somewhat slow to appear, initially because the study of Welsh at university focused exclusively on pre-nineteenth century literature until after the First World War (Williams-Parry 1915). Despite the enduring popularity of his novels into the twentieth century, the critics who first began to discuss his work at an academic level were not entirely uncritical of Owen and his writing. Saunders Lewis, for example, criticised Owen's willingness to conform to the prejudices of his conservative, Calvinist background (1936: 63–4), and Thomas Parry considered all his novels to be too long (1955: 354) – a view that, as will be seen in the fourth chapter of this thesis, would have far-reaching ramifications. Despite these reservations, for the most part the consensus that Owen was a great novelist held until well into the second half of the twentieth century, by which time the author had been so firmly canonised that John Gwilym Jones would write of how:

Wedi darllen yn y cyfamser doreth fawr o nofelau a llyfrau yn  
damcaniaethu ynghylch nodweddion a sylfeini nofelau a  
dderbynnir fel campweithiau, mae dyn o'i gof niwlog yn pwysu  
Daniel Owen a'i gael yn brin. Mae'n gobeithio dathlu uchelwyl  
eiconoclastaidd a thanseilio edmygedd anneallus ac ymateb  
anfeirniadol a'r derbyn sanctaidd fu arno fel nofelydd o bwys.  
Ond ar y cyfan y mae'r profiad yn debyg iawn i un Oliver

Goldsmith yn *The Deserted Village*: I came to scoff and stayed to pray. (1970: 7)

Having read in the mean time a huge quantity of novels, and books discussing the features and foundations of novels that are accepted as masterpieces, a man with an unclear memory weighs Daniel Owen and finds him wanting. He hopes to hold an iconoclastic celebration and undermine the ignorant admiration, uncritical reaction and sacred reception he had as an important novelist. But on the whole, the experience is very similar to that of Oliver Goldsmith in *The Deserted Village*: I came to scoff and stayed to pray.

Jones' religious imagery emphasises the point that Owen's reputation owes more than a little to hagiography: the obsession is not so much with Owen's writing as the idea or myth of Owen himself, as canonical novelist and as founder of the Welsh-language novel. As noted in the introduction to this thesis, literary canons are frequently discussed in terms of authors rather than texts, and this is clearly illustrated in the Welsh context by the extreme terms critics like Parry, Lewis and John Gwilym Jones were using to describe Owen in general even as they criticised specific aspects of his writing. Owen's reputation as a major novelist in Welsh has meant that his novels have been a natural target for translation from the moment they were first published. Indeed, it is worth noting that the nineteenth-century translations discussed in this thesis are among the earliest, or are the earliest, translations of Welsh-language novels into any other

language, a factor whose significance will be discussed in greater depth in subsequent chapters.

In more recent decades, while Owen's influence and significance are still widely recognised, the hyperbole which dominated early discussion of the author has been replaced by more qualified acknowledgement of the author's strengths. A number of widely perceived flaws are frequently highlighted in his novels, especially in their plot and structure. Certainly, although his primacy over his predecessors remains undisputed (Williams 1989: xiii; Rhys 2000b: 164), few are now so eager to crown him as the language's greatest novelist, as earlier critics had done so readily (even if no clear alternative candidate exists). His novels' primary weaknesses are widely considered to be structural, as even John Gwilym Jones was forced to admit: 'Y gŵyn fwyaf a ddug ei feirniaid yn erbyn Daniel Owen yw diffyg adeiladwaith, diffyg ffurf ei nofelau, ei fethiant i lunio cynllun' [The biggest complaint his critics direct at Daniel Owen is a lack of structure, a lack of form to his novels, his failure to draw up a plan] (1970: 79). *The New Companion to the Literature of Welsh*, for example, notes that although Owen could tell a gripping story, and was a talented writer of dialogue and social commentary, he 'could not construct a novel' (Stephens 1998: 551). Frequently, whole chapters of Owen's novels are seen as entirely irrelevant to their plots (Lewis 1936: 46, Jones 1970: 81). Some critics, such as John Gwilym Jones, have attempted to argue that Owen's ill-disciplined writing style was conscious or even deliberate (1970: 79); John Rowlands implied a similar argument in his own analysis of Owen's novels:

Nid yw'n hawdd penderfynu bob amser ai er gwaethaf eu diffyg cynllun neu o'i herwydd y mae'i nofelau cystal. Yn sicr mae'r diwedd glo gorgyfleus sydd i bob nofel yn wendid, ac eto fe erys y portreadau o gymeriadau'n gofiadwy er gwaethaf hynny. (1992: 23)

It isn't always easy to decide whether his novels are as good as they are despite their lack of planning or because of it. Certainly the over-convenient ending that each novel has is a weakness, and yet the portraits of characters are memorable despite that.

The existence of these arguments however show just how universally acknowledged the lack of structure in Owen's writing is: even his defenders make no attempt to suggest Owen's novels are well-structured. As well as their structure, the content of Owen's novels has also been criticised, perhaps most scathingly by Ioan Williams, writing of Owen's second novel *Rhys Lewis*:

O'r dechrau mae darllenwyr wedi cydnabod *Rhys Lewis* fel un o'r llyfrau mawr. Dyma Daniel Owen yn codi uwchlaw comedi a melodrama'r *Dreflan* ac yn efelychu camp uchaf y nofelwyr Saesneg yn ei gymysgedd o fanylder, dyneiddiwch ac arucheled. Eto, mor isel y syrth ar brydiau, o'r safon uchaf i ddyfnderoedd melodrama, a sylwer mor ddiffygiol a gwael yw'r llyfr pan feirnedir ef yn ôl y safon uchel honno! (1989: 102)



From the start, readers have recognised *The Autobiography of Rhys Lewis* as one of the great books. Here, Daniel Owen rises above the comedy and melodrama of *Y Dreflan* [Owen's previous novel] and emulates the English novelists' highest achievement with his mix of detail, humanity and profundity. Yet, how low he sinks on occasion, from the highest standard to the depths of melodrama, and notice how flawed and poor the novel is when judged by that high standard!

The tone of frustration in Williams' words is obvious and perhaps reflects the impossibly high expectations set by earlier critics. This was summed up in the question asked by one commentator: 'Pam –ac yntau'n nofelydd mor fawr– y mae Daniel Owen yn nofelydd mor wael?' [Why –and him being such a great novelist– is it that Daniel Owen is such a poor novelist?] (quoted in Rowlands 1992: 219). This sense of frustration stems from the incompatibility of critics' eagerness to designate Owen as a great novelist with their fundamental dissatisfaction with his novels. It was becoming increasingly difficult to hold onto the notion of Owen the pioneer, Owen the great novelist, 'the great mountain on a wide plain.' If Owen was to remain relevant it would become necessary to take a different approach, and there have in fact been a variety of responses to the growing consensus that Owen's novels are not, after all, works of unqualified genius.

One fascinating response has been a series of attempts to repackage, re-invent and/or rehabilitate Daniel Owen's novels. A series of editions published during the

twentieth century abridged Owen's originals to varying degrees, as will be described in greater detail later on in this chapter. The more recent translations of Owen's novels have also been a part of this process, as will be described in detail in the fourth and fifth chapters of this thesis. An understanding of the translations' role and significance thus requires an understanding of Owen's status in the Welsh canon, and of the ongoing processes of canonisation of which they are an aspect.

Another response to criticisms of Owen's writing has been to put aesthetics to one side and discuss Owen's work from alternative critical perspectives. E.G. Millward, for example, has laboured to contextualise Owen within a pre-existing literary tradition (1970, 1973, 1979) and to dispel the notion perpetuated by Saunders Lewis (1936) and Thomas Parry (1955) that Owen was a lone pioneer entirely without precedent. Similarly, Ioan Williams' *Capel a Chomin* (1989) is an exploration of the conflict between religious and secular values in Daniel Owen and other Victorian Welsh novelists, focusing on the effects of their backgrounds on their work. More recently, Robert Rhys has indicated a need for the debate on Daniel Owen to move beyond aesthetic evaluation, pointing out that 'rhaid cofio unwaith eto na osodai nofelwyr y bedwaredd ganrif ar bymtheg bwyslais mawr ar drefn ac uniolaeth yn eu chwedlau' [one must remember once again that novelists of the nineteenth century did not place a great emphasis on order and unity in their novels] (2000a: 122). However, even Rhys' biography –probably the most comprehensive single work on the author– examines Owen's work to a considerable extent from a perspective of aesthetic evaluation. Thus, even though he is the most-studied Welsh-language novelist, studies of his work which put aside aesthetics remain comparatively rare. Furthermore, this traditional approach

has also meant that other objects of study have been largely ignored, such as the English translations of Owen's novels which are the subject matter of this particular study.

Through looking at these translations, this thesis will largely avoid the question of Owen's novels' aesthetic merit and instead focus on the position the author has held within Welsh literature.

## **2.2 The State of the Novel in Victorian Wales**

To understand how Daniel Owen came to occupy such a significant place in the Welsh imagination, one must first take a look at the state of the Welsh-language novel during his lifetime. Novels had of course been appearing in other European languages for centuries by the time Owen would start writing seriously in 1876, and the genre was particularly popular in England. However, given the fact that novels in English would not have been difficult to obtain in Wales, it is perhaps surprising that it was not until 1830 (just six years before Owen's birth) that the work most often recognised as the first Welsh-language novel was published: Ellis Jones' *Y Bardd, Neu y Meudwy Cymraeg* (Rowlands 1992: 6). E. G. Millward has emphasised repeatedly (1973, 1979, 1992) that Daniel Owen was not, as often assumed by earlier critics, without contemporaries or predecessors. As well as Ellis Jones, to Owen's name we can add those of William Rees (1802–83, better known by his bardic name, Gwilym Hiraethog), Roger Edwards (1811–86), Edward Matthews (1813–92) and Llew Llwyfo (1831–1901) to name but a few. With the exception of Owen however, none of these novelists' works are in print and they are virtually unknown outside academia. Whatever the quality of their literary endeavours, the failed posterity of Owen's contemporaries might to a large extent be attributed to the cultural and social context under which they laboured. The atmosphere

of Victorian Wales was one which clearly discouraged novel-writing, a claim which can be justified with reference to two primary factors. The first of these was the dominance of poetry and the marginalisation of prose within the Welsh-language literary tradition, and the second was the dominance of a Calvinist religious puritanism in wider Welsh cultural life.

Although there exists prose in Welsh from as early as the eleventh century, the earliest surviving poetry in Welsh has been dated to the sixth. The poet has long had a pivotal role in Welsh society and poetry has traditionally been the backbone of the Welsh language literary tradition (Williams 1953; Rowlands 1992: 2); poetry has ‘the strongest and most consistent of all traditions in Welsh’ (Jones: 1998: 277). Its continuing popularity in modern times (relative to the status of poetry in England) is a ‘vestige of a popular appreciation of poetry that can be traced back to the Middle Ages and our earlier Celtic inheritance’ (Davies 1995: 120). The particular cultural dominance of strict metre poetry ‘means that in Welsh literature all other genres have existed in tension with it, and have had to resist marginalisation by it,’ (Reynolds 2005: x). With reference to prose in particular, as will be shown, there are signs that this marginalisation continues to some extent today, but it was particularly prevalent in the nineteenth century and was both reflected in critical writing of the period (Thomas Stephens’ *The Literature of the Kymry* (1849) contained only a single chapter on prose) but also in the priorities of writers. According to John Rowlands, in the nineteenth century,

Ymysg y criw dethol a gymerai lenyddiaeth o ddifri, Goronwy  
Owen oedd yr arwr, a bu'r beirdd eisteddfodol yn y bedwaredd  
ganrif ar bymtheg yn erlid ei ddelfryd seithug ef o arwrgerdd  
Filtonaidd. Yn y fath awyrgylch doedd dim lle i'r nofel anadlu.  
(1992: 4)

Amongst the select few who took literature seriously, Goronwy  
Owen was the hero and the Eisteddfod poets of the nineteenth  
century pursued his futile ideal of a Miltonian epic. In such an  
environment there was no space for the novel to breathe.

The relative prominances of poetry and prose in the Eisteddfod tradition have always reflected the marginalisation of the latter, described by Hywel Teifi Edwards as 'something of a country cousin' at that institution (1990: 68). Two of the three main prizes ceremonially awarded each year at the National Eisteddfod, *Y Gadair* (the Chair) and *Y Goron* (the Crown), are awarded for poetry –in the strict metres and in other forms respectively– and they are much older than the third, *Y Fedal Ryddiaith* (The Prose Medal), which has only been awarded since 1937. These prestigious awards which poets could compete for and win allowed poets to profit from public exposure (Edwards 2000: 212). Although theoretically putting prose on an equivalent footing to poetry by offering an award of equal prestige, *Y Fedal Ryddiaith* was in fact established as much to maintain the supremacy of poetry as to increase the prestige of prose. Reformers had wanted to award *Y Goron* for prose, thus having one significant award each for poetry and prose. By establishing a third award instead, a compromise was

reached which ensured that poetry as a whole continued to receive more attention (Llwyd 2006: 28). As if to emphasise its lower status, the awarding ceremony for *Y Fedal Ryddiaith* has always been less elaborate than for the other two (Edwards 1990: 68, Llwyd 2006: 29) and it did not come fully under the jurisdiction of *Gorsedd y Beirdd* (thus attaining the same status of the other two awards) until 1992. While *Y Gadair* in particular features very specific rules on the kind of entries allowed, *Y Fedal Ryddiaith* encompasses all kinds of prose writing: letters, essays, and short stories as well as novels, despite efforts by some to have the award apply to the latter only (Edwards 1990: 68–9). Although all three awards are awarded for different kinds of writing and are theoretically equally prestigious (Stephens 1998: 607), commanding an identical monetary reward, the idea of a hierarchy between the three persists to this day: the awarding of *Y Gadair* remains the ceremonial climax of any Eisteddfod. A fourth award for writing, *Gwobr Goffa Daniel Owen* –named, of course, after the novelist upon whom this thesis focuses– has also been awarded at the Eisteddfod since 1978, specifically for unpublished novels. However, it is not accompanied by a ceremony, nor are entrants required to write on a specific topic as with the others, thus it is a prize of a rather different character to that of the three ‘traditional’ prizes described above.

Prose’s relative lack of prestige, although reduced since the nineteenth century, has been visible in patterns of literary production in Welsh ever since. In his chapter *Victorian Stocktaking* in *A guide to Welsh literature c.1800–1900*, Hywel Teifi Edwards notes that by the end of the nineteenth century even some contemporary commentators were beginning to link the Eisteddfod’s focus on poetry with an obsession for form over content. He describes the claim of one critic, David Adams (1845–1923), that ‘all too

often the literary merits of a work went unremarked as the adjudicators bent to the task of enumerating errors of grammar and metrics.’ (2000a: 215). Nonetheless, although Daniel Owen had done much to legitimise prose, particularly novel-writing, many of the significant novels of the generation which followed him were penned by writers who devoted much of their time to poetry, such as T. Gwynn Jones and T. Rowland Hughes. Even in the second half of the twentieth century, novelists like Caradog Prichard and T. Glynne Davies, devoted considerable effort to poetry and may well have considered themselves to be poets first and novelists second even though they are now remembered primarily for their work as novelists. While prose has occupied a more prominent place in the Welsh literature of the last fifty years, its relative lack of status within the literary canon can be demonstrated, with an analysis of the gender-associations that still permeate the question of genre in Welsh literature. Feminist criticism has typically criticised the notion of a literary canon as male-centric, because women are typically substantially (if not completely) excluded from the canon (Robinson 1983). The relationship between gender and the decision to write poetry or prose in Wales can be strikingly illustrated by the winners of the Eisteddfod prizes. *Y Fedal Ryddiaith* has been awarded to a woman on 11 occasions since 1990; it has been won only 9 times in the same period by a man. Similarly, winners of *Gwobr Goffa Daniel Owen* have been divided fairly evenly in recent times between men and women, with 11 and 9 awards respectively since 1990. *Y Gadair* by contrast has been won by a woman only twice out of the hundreds of times it has been awarded; *Y Goron* has been won by a woman on six occasions (again, out of hundreds). The prizes are judged anonymously, so the lack of female winners is better explained by a lack of female entrants rather than prejudice on the judges’ part. Mererid Hopwood (the first woman to win *Y Gadair*, doing so in 2001)

has suggested that women are not encouraged to write in the strict metres and that there is even a perception among some that to do so is somehow too difficult for women (quoted in Price 2001: 18). This gender-genre association is indicative of the historical hierarchy between them, a hierarchy which has undoubtedly had a suppressive effect on the development of Welsh prose.

The prestige offered to poetry was not, however, the only factor detrimental to novel-writing in Welsh during the nineteenth century. Another significant factor was the religious puritanism which dominated Welsh cultural life at the time. The first half of the nineteenth century saw an enormous growth in the proportion of the Welsh population that no longer attended the established church, a fact that is testified by the huge number of non-conformist chapels of various denominations that were built in the country during that period—a new one completed somewhere in Wales every eight days between 1801 and 1851 (Davies 1994: 359). By 1851 there was a seat available at a Sunday religious service for 76% of the Welsh population, compared to 51% in England; and in many parts of Wales this figure was over 100%. According to the 1851 census there were 976,490 attendances on 30 March 1851 out of a population of 1,163,139, 80% of these attendances in non-conformist chapels. John Davies notes that in many areas the attendances were higher than the population, suggesting that some were attending two or even three different services that Sunday but also that some ministers may have been exaggerating the size of their congregations. These figures therefore perhaps overstate the dominance of the non-conformist denominations: nevertheless it is clear that Victorian Wales was a highly religious country relative to



England in the same period, and that Wales' religiousness was largely non-conformist in character (census figures quoted in Davies 1994: 423–7).

The non-conformist tradition that had first come to dominate Wales during the eighteenth century produced a large body of literature. Its most famous son was perhaps William Williams Pantycelyn (1717–91), a poet and hymn-writer whose place in the Welsh-language literary canon is unquestionable according to Tudur Hallam (2007: 266). It also produced Ann Griffiths (1776–1805), the only female poet to appear in the *Oxford Book of Welsh Verse* when it was first published in 1962. However, it has been suggested that this religious dominance had a negative effect on secular forms of artistic expression in the Welsh language: as a result of the non-conformists' cultural dominance 'almost nothing was published... that was not acceptable to the denominations' (Davies 1994: 421). John Rowlands elaborates:

go ddu oedd y rhagolygon am lenyddiaeth seciwlar, felly ni  
chawsom lenyddiaeth agos at fod yn gyflawn am amser maith.  
Bu deffroad mawr y Diwygiad Methodistaidd yn gyfrwng i  
sianelu egnïon diwylliannol y Cymry Cymraeg bron yn gyfan  
gwbl i'r byd crefyddol: âi'r actorion i'r pulpud, ysgrifennai'r  
beirdd emynau, a chyhoeddwyd toreth o gofiannau ac  
esboniadau Beiblaidd. (1992: 4)

the outlook was very black for secular literature, so that we did  
not get a literature near to being complete for many years. The

great spiritual awakening of the Methodist Revival was a medium through which almost all Welsh speakers' cultural energy was channelled to the world of religion: the actors went to the pulpit, the poets wrote hymns, and a torrent of biographies and Biblical interpretations were published.

Saunders Lewis saw the period in harsher terms, famously describing the nineteenth century as a 'Philistia' on many occasions, going so far as to claim that 'odid y bu erioed yn hanes gwledydd modern Ewrop gyfnod ac amgylchedd creulonach i ddoniau celfyddyd' [it is doubtful there was ever in the history of the modern nations of Europe a period and environment crueller to the talents of artistry] (1929: 9). Lewis' distaste for the period perhaps reflects his own religious prejudices, yet it is undeniable that there was in Victorian Wales a certain hostility towards fiction (as opposed to the truth of the gospel, or of the biographies of preachers that were popular in Wales at the time), stemming perhaps from a Calvinist aesthetic, manifested in a preference for 'simplicity, sobriety and measure' (Davie 1978). Novels in particular were regarded with suspicion. As the American Calvinist theologian R. L. Dabney explained in 1849:

*All men* who read novels will confess that usually they read them *as an indulgence*, and not as a means of improvement. Now, it is an indulgence which *is not recreation*, for it excites, wearies and emasculates the mind even more than excessive mental labor. But every man is responsible to God for the improvement of every hour which is not devoted to wholesome

recreation. *Novel-reading is the murder of time*, and on this simple ground every mind which professes to be guided by religious principles is sternly challenged by God's authority to forego it. (1849, emphasis original)

E. Tegla Davies recalls an old Welsh man as late as the 1890s, who, on finding that the book he is enjoying so much is, in fact, a novel, flings it straight into the fire in disgust (1936). T. Gwynn Jones remembers a similar experience (1936: 37). Not all the denominations with significant numbers of followers in Wales were theologically Calvinist, but the Calvinist Methodist church was one of the largest and one of the most culturally active, counting many of the period's most well-known artistic figures, including Daniel Owen, among its ranks. Owen himself recognised the partial responsibility of Wales' religiousness for the state of the Welsh-language novel. In his foreword to his novel *Profedigaethau Enoc Huws*, the author claimed with characteristic modesty that

In other countries, such as England, France and America, the greatest men gain their learning and philosophy amongst the storytellers. But in Wales, up to now, this branch of literature has been left to low grade writers like myself. How do we account for this? There is currently, as I write this, only one reason that offers itself to my mind. Wales is, from the Methodist Revival—and we should be thankful for this—a religious country, and has been steeped in its puritanical element. Our heroine is Ann

Griffiths and not George Eliot. And I can easily imagine the true old non-conformist deacon, religious and godly, with Bunyan's Pilgrim open on his knee, and the tears in his eye as he read it, and at the same time looking—quite sincerely—at the Welsh novelist as a man who tells lies to please simpletons! (2010: xii)

The hostility towards fiction within his culture has only added to the myth of Daniel Owen, with some using it as an excuse for his shortcomings: Saunders Lewis claimed for example that in a more appreciative environment he would have grown to become 'un o gewri llên' [one of the giants of literature] (1936: 63). A similar sentiment lies behind Thomas Parry's claim that Owen was 'a great mountain on a wide plains' (1955: 353). This ahistorical analysis of Owen's cultural context however no longer holds sway and represents an example of the contrast between Owen's reality and the romantic persona that has been constructed around him. Lewis and Parry's image of Owen the pioneer, boldly challenging the prejudices of his society, is an attractive one and has led to Owen sometimes erroneously being described as the first novelist in the Welsh language. This image is not one that bears up to any real scrutiny however, as has been mentioned already. As critics like E. G. Millward (1973) and Ioan Williams (1989) have laboured to demonstrate, Owen was merely the most prominent of a large number of Victorian novelists with similar values and aims. Were Thomas Parry's claim that he was without precedent true, counters Millward, 'buasai'r awdur... yn wyrth unigryw ymhlith llenorion y byd' [the author would be... a unique miracle amongst the world's writers] (2002: iii). John Rowlands also warns 'Peidiwn, fodd bynnag, â syrthio i'r trap o sôn am Ddaniel Owen fel petai'n llenyddol ddiberthynas' [Let us not, regardless, fall

into the trap of speaking of Daniel Owen as if he had no literary relatives] (1992: 5). The presence of Owen's many contemporaries –not to mention the warm reception Owen's own novels received– undermines Saunders Lewis' image of Owen labouring alone against the prejudices of a hostile audience, and adds credence to Robert Rhys' claim that, in fact, by the time Owen was writing his novels, 'any genuine resistance to fiction within Methodist circles was marginal and insignificant' (2000b: 152).

While accepting that Welsh Calvinism did not suppress novelists altogether, there is no doubt that the content and style of nineteenth-century Welsh novels were profoundly affected by the puritan atmosphere. It was not the publication *per se* of novels that was objected to, but rather that there was considerable pressure on Welsh authors to make their work conform to the ideals and values of the religious establishment. This resulted in a novelistic ideal that differed markedly from the conventions of the English-language novels of the period. As Hywel Teifi Edwards puts it, 'The belief that literature should unquestionably be a force for Christian moral good was central to the conception of its function in Victorian Wales.' (2000a: 229). Victorian Welsh novels are often excessively didactic: 'There is some degree of anxiety to teach a moral behind the majority of the novels... Fundamentally there is little difference between one and another.' (Parry 1955: 327). Matters of plot, story and realism were secondary considerations to the desire for the novels to be of spiritual benefit to the reader. Potentially controversial subjects such as romance are almost completely avoided (Rowlands 1992: 11), while matters of theology or morality take centre-stage. John Rowlands writes:

Mae'r ysfa i gyfiawnhau trafod pynciau 'amheus' yn mynd yn syrffedus ar brydiau ac yn arwydd o ddiffyg ffydd yr awduron yn eu cyfrwng. Sawl gwaith yn eu rhagymadroddion y protestiant werth moesol eu gweithiau, gan ddadlau fod llenyddiaeth fwyaf dyrchafol yr oesau ar ffurf storïau neu ddamhegion (gan awgrymu am wn i mai Iesu Grist oedd y nofelydd cyntaf)? ... Go brin bod yr obsesiwn gyda defnyddioldeb a buddioldeb yn creu'r hinsawdd orau ar gyfer llenyddiaeth y dychymyg. (1992: 9)

The desire to justify the discussion of 'dubious' subjects grows tiresome on occasion and is indicative of how little faith the authors had in their medium. How many times in their introductions did they protest the moral value of their works, arguing that the most elevating literature across the ages has taken the form of stories and fables (suggesting for all I know that Jesus Christ was the first novelist)? ... An obsession with function and benefit hardly forms the best climate for the literature of the imagination.

Inevitably, the church itself plays a significant role in many of these novels, with preachers and ministers often being central characters and religious conversions being a favourite subject. Many novelists were ministers or preachers themselves and saw their

novels as extensions of their sermons, or of the theological discourses that were published and read avidly in the Methodist press.

One example of how the dual forces of the low status of prose and religious conservatism may have suppressed the Welsh-language novel is to be found in Gwilym Hiraethog (William Rees, 1802–83), one of the most prolific of the novelists before Daniel Owen. Gwilym Hiraethog was ‘a natural story-teller’ (Stephens 1998: 536), capable of a ‘narrative complexity unprecedented in [Welsh-language] Victorian fiction’ (Williams 2000: 62) and whose works show ‘manifest proof of imaginative integrity’ (Williams 2000: 68). The son of a Calvinist preacher, Hiraethog produced several novels and many volumes of poetry, but despite the promise showed in the former the latter was ‘uninspired and less lively than his prose’ (Stephens 1998: 623). His enormous poem *Emmanuel* is probably the longest ever written in the Welsh language, and, according to Ioan Williams, ‘quite possibly one of the worst in any language’ (2000: 58). John Rowlands highlights Hiraethog’s poetic ambitions as an obstacle to Hiraethog the novelist:

Yr hyn sy’n rhyfedd yw yr ysfa a oedd gan Wilym Hiraethog i fod yn fardd—er bod ei dueddfryd naturiol tuag at ryddiaith. Y mae hynny’n syntomeiddio hinsawdd ddiwylliannol y cyfnod, ac yn awgrymu un rheswm dros arafwch datblygiad y nofel Gymraeg. (1992: 10–1)

The strange thing is the desire that Gwilym Hiraethog had to be a poet—despite the fact that he had a clear natural talent for prose. This symptomises the cultural climate of the period, and suggests one reason for the slow development of the novel in Welsh.

The huge amount of time that Gwilym Hiraethog devoted to poetry rather than prose clearly implies that he considered the former both more desirable and more aesthetically significant, and that he had, as Rowlands suggests of many Victorian novelists, correspondingly little respect for novel-writing (1992: 9). However, his development was also stunted by religious conservatism, both his own and that of the society in which he lived. Ioan Williams' hypothesis in *Capel a Chomin* (1989) is that Hiraethog and other Victorian novelists were unable to reconcile their orthodox Calvinist backgrounds with their romantic outlooks and liberal politics. In his chapter on Hiraethog in Hywel Teifi Edwards' *A guide to Welsh literature c.1800–1900*, he summarises his argument:

The explanation of Hiraethog's imaginative failure is to be found in the nature of the compromise which sustained his whole career. As a young student, William Rees had taken one step beyond the borders of the divided world which sustained his father's desperate energy, but only one. His early studies in geography and astronomy showed him that there was a world outside Llansannan, but he refused to abandon the belief that



whatever he discovered about it would be compatible with the literal interpretation of the Scriptures which sustained the psychological metaphors informing Calvinistic discourse.

(Williams 2000: 57)

John Rowlands has made a similar argument about Victorian Welsh novelists, claiming that the novel is an essentially a secular genre (1992: 13), and that the obsession with the discussion of religious matters at the expense of portraying human beings with psychological depth is a fundamental problem in their novels, which would have benefited from a greater focus on the realistic portrayal of humanity and of the world.

How, then, does one explain the success of Owen's novels where his predecessors contemporaries had failed? After all, Owen was operating within a similar intellectual framework to novelists like Gwilym Hiraethog (Williams 1989: xiii), from whom he was not, after all, so different. Owen too had shown poetic aspirations as a younger man, submitting his poetry to magazines and entering them into local Eisteddfods. Owen came from the same Calvinist Methodist background as Hiraethog, Edward Matthews and Roger Edwards –although as mentioned earlier, unlike these Owen grew up in poverty. This key difference might explain one aspect of his novels' appeal: Owen had made a conscious effort to appeal to a wide audience by writing in a style that evoked the ordinary language of the nineteenth-century Welsh population, rather than the often excessively formal language of the pulpit (Foulkes 1903: 163). Owen himself claimed to have written for the 'dyn cyffredin' [common man] (2002: i), a claim which would later be engraved on the pedestal on which his statue stands in his

home town. However, Owen's use of ordinary language was about more than simply appealing to a mass audience: it was also part of his agenda of satirising the hypocritical, superficial 'respectability' he perceived in his society. In Robert Rhys' words,

As the official Welsh of Victorian Wales became increasingly bombastic and prone to circumlocution, Daniel Owen was one of many writers who saw that the unaffected, graphic dialect of ordinary people could be used as a subversive, liberating tool with which to make a moral, as well as a stylistic point. (2000b: 155)

From a translation perspective, Owen's satire of Victorian social conventions as well as his championing of the working class may have given his novels a particular appeal to translators wishing to transmit these values into English (or English-speaking Welsh) culture. As subsequent chapters will argue, the potential of translation as a means to transmit cultural values has been a key concern of translators of Owen's novels.

One of the most important and significant of these cultural values was religion. As has already been mentioned, many nineteenth-century novels had been envisioned by their creators as a means to convey a religious message, such as the evil of drink (as do novels by Llew Llwyfo and Gruffydd Rhisiart), or to portray an individual's religious conversion (as do all three of Gwilym Hiraethog's novels). By modern, secular standards, religion also plays a huge part in all of Owen's novels –most of his characters

are (nominally at least) non-conformists, and they have religious debates which sometimes dominate entire chapters. The chapel is the social centre of the communities portrayed in three of his four novels (the fourth portrays an earlier period when the chapels were less well established). Several characters have religious conversions, and alcoholism is portrayed as a straightforward path to death for at least three different characters. John Rowlands claims that this emphasis on religious themes was inevitable, given Owen's background:

Yr oedd ei brentisiaeth lenyddol... wedi'i osod yn grwn yng  
nghanol diwylliant a gâi ei lywio gan anghydfurfiaeth  
grefyddol, ac ni allai fel nofelydd lai na chychwyn wrth edrych o  
gwmpas ei draed. Cyfleustra a synnwyr cyffredin oedd hynny,  
nid arwydd o fwriad i fod yn llenor crefyddol. (Rowlands 1992:  
21)

His literary apprenticeship... had been firmly located within a  
culture that was steered by religious non-conformity, and as a  
novelist he could do no less than begin by looking around his  
feet. That was convenience and common sense, not a sign of any  
intent to become a religious author.

In light of this, the nature and extent of Owen's personal religiousness has been hotly debated, with some critics such as R. M. Jones (1977) believing him to be a born-again orthodox Calvinist but others, such as John Rowlands (1992) and J. E. Caerwyn

Williams (1984, 1986) believing he was more of a moderate. It is known for example that, despite the generally negative portrayal of alcoholism in Owen's novels (and the starkly anti-alcohol message of *Twelve Nights in a Bar Room*, a novel he translated), Owen himself was not teetotal (Williams 1989: 57, Rowlands 1992: 16, Rhys 2000a: 181). These arguments can be viewed in the wider context of an ongoing debate about religion and Welsh culture throughout twentieth century Welsh literary criticism.

Literary critics' opinions of Owen are often shaped by their view on the extent to which the effect of religious non-conformity on Welsh culture was positive or negative. Welsh Non-conformity has sometimes been regarded as being necessarily tied up with the language, the fate of one depending entirely on the other (Davies 1994: 500–1); this is a view articulated by R. Tudur Jones in *Ffydd ac Argyfwng Cenedl* [Faith and the Crisis of a nation] (1981). Certainly, the chapels provided a centre around which Welsh-language culture could coalesce in a cultural isolation –driven by religious isolation– from English. This may help explain the continued survival of the Welsh language despite its proximity to the very epicentre of linguistic globalisation. As R. Tudur Jones observed, the chapels' decline during the twentieth century mirrors that of the Welsh language; however it also mirrors that of organised religion generally throughout the West.

Without necessarily disputing Jones' hypothesis, others have criticised non-conformist society for suppressing artistic expression in Welsh—as has been suggested above in the context of the slow development of the Welsh-language novel. According to John Davies,

To those concerned with the traditional culture of Wales, this  
Methodist advance, whether Calvinist or Wesleyan, was highly

unwelcome. The Methodists were barred from participating in the worldly activity of the Welsh societies, and on becoming a focus for Methodism Bala ceased to be a centre of *eisteddfodau*.  
(1994: 343)

Davies goes further and suggests that, while Nonconformity and the Welsh language did indeed become inextricably linked, rather than ‘saving’ Welsh-language culture, the dominance of the chapels meant that

Nonconformity succeeded in ‘hijacking’ Welshness and a secular Welsh-language culture did not therefore emerge. As a result, the interconnection between chapel-going and Welshness was confirmed, for those who did not sympathise with the values of Nonconformity could turn their backs upon both.  
(1994: 343)

Critics of Methodism have taken particular interest in the question of Owen’s religiosity, whether they seek to explain his success as a consequence of his moderation or to ascribe his failures to his conservatism. If the pro- and anti-chapel standpoints articulated above represent two different conceptions of ‘Welshness’, then we can begin to see that the debate over Daniel Owen’s personal religion can be read as conflicting attempts to claim Owen on behalf of one or the other of these contradictory narratives. Translators who wished to claim Owen for the moderate camp –as was the case with T. Ceiriog Williams and E. R. Harries, whose translation of Owen’s *Gwen Tomos* is

discussed in chapter four of this thesis— were not above using their work as a means to emphasise Owen’s secular credentials, while downplaying the religious elements in his work (through omission or judicious translation). The debate on Owen’s religiousness can be said to have had a cumulative effect on Owen’s canonisation: if it were easier to conclusively identify Owen as orthodox or as a moderate, the opposing camp would be less positively inclined towards him. As it is, the ambiguity sustains his simultaneous appreciation by both.

Daniel Owen’s success where others had failed mark him out as ‘undoubtedly the major literary figure of his century’ (Rhys 2000b: 164). The idea that Owen was the brightest star in an otherwise drab and uninteresting firmament is a significant one from the perspective of Owen’s canonicity and literary status. This is especially so in the light of statements like that of John Rowlands quoted above, where critics express their concern that Welsh literature required figures like Owen in order to be ‘complete’ (1992: 4).

### **2.3 Daniel Owen the Translator**

Owen’s first attempts at writing stem from his period at tailor Angel Jones’ shop, and take the form of a number of poems which are, according to Robert Rhys (2000b: 146), of ‘moderate value’. Some of these poems would be entered at various *Eisteddfodau* and some would also appear in print. Owen described his time in Angel Jones’ shop as a kind of college: he, the other workers, the customers and any other visitors who happened to drop in would discuss politics, theology (the workers belonged to various different non-conformist denominations) and literature while they worked; as well as

reading to one another from newspapers and journals; discussing and reading aloud the latest books, including novels by English, Welsh and American authors; and singing hymns together (Foulkes 1903: 4–5; Rhys 2000a: 13–22). Among the novelists whose works Owen is known to have read include Sir Walter Scott, Charles Dickens and George Eliot (Rhys 2000a: 14, 159).

In 1859, while still at Jones's shop, he embarked on his first large-scale writing project, *Deng Noswaith yn y Black Lion* [Ten Nights in the Black Lion], a translation into Welsh of Timothy Shay Arthur's temperance 1854 novel *Ten Nights in a Bar-Room and What I Saw There*. The translation is somewhat abridged relative to the original; it also remained unfinished, following a financial dispute with the publisher. The translation is an obscure text, never republished outside the magazine in which it originally appeared, and to date most critics exploring Owen's work have tended to view it at best as an interesting side-note in Owen's career, a milestone by which his literary progress can be measured rather than a subject of genuine interest in its own right. Robert Rhys for example claims that beyond teaching Owen the discipline to write for the press there is little to indicate that the translation was of particular significance in Owen's literary career (2000a: 22). Many discussions of Owen's career do little more than mention it in passing; however it is analysed in more depth by Jones & Millward (1964–5) and Ioan Williams (1989).

While there may be a case for arguing that the translation is of little significance purely from the perspective of Owen's writing, the text is of obvious significance when discussing Owen and translation and it offers a unique opportunity to gain an insight

into the author's attitude towards the practice. The fact that Owen chose to translate a novel in the first place points to his awareness that there was a lack of such material available to readers of Welsh: later on he would justify his own literary endeavours by pointing to the lack of novels in his own language (2010: xvi). His choice of subject matter –a temperance novel– would doubtless have appealed to his contemporary audience (the temperance movement in nineteenth-century Wales was powerful and influential, and the supposed evil of drink was a popular subject for early novels in Welsh, as has been noted) even if his own views on the subject, as noted above, were more complex. Whatever its significance for Owen's later writing, Owen took a flexible approach to the text and made many changes. His treatment of the text suggests that he considered his translation to be much more than just a showcase of a foreign work of literature, and that he did not either consider it to serve a purely didactic purpose (as seems unlikely anyway considering his own ambivalence toward temperance). Owen's most obvious change to the text was to locate it specifically in a Welsh pub rather than an American bar, changing the setting, character names and other cultural indicators. Furthermore, the aforementioned abridgement seems to have been more than a mere desire for brevity: Owen frequently makes cuts which reflect his own philosophical perspective on the issues raised by the text. Ioan Williams explains:

Gwelwn ef yn gyson yn diddymu geiriau sydd yn awgrymu fod gwerth a gogwydd mewdol dyn i'w darllen ar ei wyneb. Tuedda i docio disgrifiadau a chymeriadau sydd yn felodramataidd a lleihau'r elfen ddelfrydiaethol lle bynnag y delo ar ei thraws.  
(1989: 77)



We see him consistently removing words which suggest that man's internal value and tendencies can be read in his face. He tends to cut descriptions and characterisation that are melodramatic and to reduce the idealistic element whenever he comes across it.

These changes would reflect Owen's later obsession with hypocrisy, a recurring theme in his novels which reached its apotheosis in his novel *Enoc Huws* where the popular and respectable Captain Trefor turns out to be a villainous fraud. Ioan Williams' view however is that despite these changes, Owen's translation pales in comparison to the original in terms of overall quality (1989: 78). Whatever its quality, it seems likely that in translating Shay Arthur's novel Owen wished to suggest that Welsh, too, could be a medium for novels and that Wales and Welsh culture were suitable subjects for literary fiction: the same argument he would make with his novels over the next twenty years.

Although *Deng Noswaith yn y Black Lion* was to be Owen's only large-scale translation project, towards the end of his career he expressed a desire to translate Thomas Hardy's novel *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (quoted in Foulkes 1903: 124) into Welsh. Had it come to fruition, this would have been a considerably more ambitious translation project than *Deng Noswaith yn y Black Lion*. Nothing came of this, however: Owen's correspondence with his editor Isaac Foulkes indicates that permission for the translation was not received from Hardy's publishers, but it is also possible that Foulkes wanted to encourage Owen to write another novel instead, as Owen eventually did. Whatever the reason Owen did not ultimately translate Hardy's novel, his continued

interest in the practice even after he had become well-established as a novelist in his own right shows that he continued to consider it a viable and worthwhile artistic endeavour, and not merely a way to practice writing.

## 2.4 Daniel Owen's Novels

If Owen's writing career had ended with *Deng Noswaith yn y Black Lion*, as may have seemed likely in his thirties, it is likely he would have become an entirely forgotten figure. The illness he suffered in 1876, which forced him finally to give up preaching and to rekindle his writing career, was, in retrospect, a significant event which led directly to his becoming the best-known of Victorian Welsh novelists. Owen was forty years old at this point, yet his literary reputation rests entirely on the work he produced after 1876. It is the work he produced during this period that has received the attention of translators, and an understanding of this work will help inform the discussion of the translations which follows.

Owen's first work of original prose fiction, *Cymeriadau Methodistaid* ('Methodist Characters'), appeared in Edwards' journal *Y Drysorfa* in 1878, and appeared along with some earlier written sermons in book form a year later as *Offrymau Neilltuaeth* ('Offerings from Seclusion,' a reference to Owen's illness). Although some critics, such as Saunders Lewis (1936: 60–1), have argued that it stands with Owen's best work, *Cymeriadau Methodistaid* has tended to be seen primarily as a formative work which nonetheless shows some signs of what was to come (Rowlands 1992: 17–8; Rhys 2000a: 80). Both parts of *Offrymau Neilltuaeth* (the sermons and the story) proved popular with *Y Drysorfa*'s readership, sufficiently so to encourage Roger Edwards to

advertise that there would be a novel of Owen's authorship appearing on its pages during 1879 –although it appears he declined to consult Owen on the subject before publishing the advertisement (Foulkes 1903: 6–7). Regardless, Owen pressed on with the novel, entitled *Y Dreflan* ('The Township'), spending the next two years publishing one chapter per month, taking for his subject a fictional town and its inhabitants. The plot of *Y Dreflan* certainly evokes that of *Cymeriadau Methodistiaidd*: both focus on the election of chapel officials, a subject to which Owen would return for a third time in his later novel *Enoc Huws*. However, Owen also felt confident enough to discuss darker subjects, including a villainous character who attempts insurance fraud by committing arson. The various story-lines of *Y Dreflan* are only loosely connected and to the modern reader the novel resembles more a collection of vaguely interconnected character portrayals, meditations, dialogues and sketches than any kind of coherent whole. Many have debated the extent to which it can even be referred to as a novel –even Saunders Lewis, usually one of Owen's strongest defenders, essentially dismisses it, saying 'Beth bynnag yw'r *Dreflan*, nid stori mohono.' [Whatever *Y Dreflan* is, it's not a story] (1936: 5)– however, this thesis will follow convention and refer to it as a novel regardless of its controversial status. Although, like all Owen's novels, *Y Dreflan* was popular with the public at the time of its publication, it is generally perceived today as a prototype for his later work, of interest mostly in that it charts the author's development as a novelist. Lewis noted that although it contains what seem like attempts to begin stories, these are all aborted before taking full form (1936: 5). *Y Dreflan*, Lewis concludes, is a scenario for a novel rather than a completed work (1936: 10). John Rowlands writes that although *Y Dreflan* was an important milestone in Welsh literature, as a novel it is untidy and disorganised (1992: 32). Robert Rhys notes that

Owen's general tendency to digress and the lack of order to his writing is obvious from the first chapter (2000a: 85). The tendency to view Owen's early work as formative, crude and/or unrefined probably explains why, with the exception of *Y Dreflan*, none of it has appeared in translation, and *Y Dreflan* is the only novel of Owen's never to have appeared as a translation in book form. Although some of these early works have received a relatively large amount of critical attention by scholars of Daniel Owen and of the development of the novel in Welsh, they have been relatively neglected in the Welsh-language press: neither *Deng Noswaith yn y Black Lion*, *Cymeriadau Methodistaidd* nor *Y Dreflan* have remained in print as Owen's three later novels have.

In both *Cymeriadau Methodistaidd* and *Y Dreflan* Owen had portrayed the chapel-based society of which he was a part, and although there are no particularly shocking revelations within, their tone is light-hearted and fondly satirical. Their popularity, suggests John Rowlands, implies that Welsh chapel-goers were more receptive to being playfully mocked and were less uptight than is suggested by the 'official' religious literature of the period—the biographies, sermons and magazines (1992: 20). It also suggests that Owen's predecessors might have been allowed to exercise more creative freedom in their novels than they did, had they only realised this. On the contrary, Owen's scathing attack on the hypocrisy he believed to be rife in Welsh society earned him at least one letter of approval and encouragement in *Y Drysorfa* (Rhys 2000: 104). Owen's first pieces of published fiction had been popular enough for Roger Edwards to insist on a new novel, which Owen began in 1882 and would turn out to be a rather more ambitious work than anything he had written to date.

In his new novel *Hunangofiant Rhys Lewis, Gweinidog Bethel* (The Autobiography of Rhys Lewis, Minister of Bethel) as in *Y Dreflan*, Owen portrayed a fictionalised version of Mold (Bethel is the name for the fictional chapel in the book, rather than the town, which remains nameless). Although he lived in Mold all his life, and is not known to have travelled further than his previously mentioned stay at the theological college at Bala, and to preach in Liverpool and Manchester, within those confines he led an extraordinarily active life. Indeed, John Rowlands has suggested that the fact Owen lived in a border region may have been instrumental in his development (1992: 13). Owen's home town, Mold, was most obviously a border in that is on the literal border between Wales and England, and the different cultures and languages of the two nations. In describing the linguistic border that ran more or less through the town, Isaac Foulkes wrote in 1903 of how the frequently bilingual Welsh were at an advantage:

Gan ei bod yn sefyll ar derfynau y ddwy iaith, y mae'n ddwyieithog, ac yn yr ystyr yma yn aros bron yr un fath o ran cyfartaledd ei thrigolion sy'n siarad y ddwy ers o leiaf hanner canrif. Os eir ddwy filldir o'r dref yng nghyfeiriad y dwyrain – dyweder Bwcle, nid oes odid neb a ddeall air o Gymraeg; neu ddwy filldir i'r cyfeiriad arall – dyweder Gwern-y-mynydd, ni chlywir ond anfynych air o Saesneg. Y mae yno lawer o Saesneg uniaith, dyfodiaid gan mwyaf, ond ychydig Gymry heb fod yn ddwyieithog – mantais y Cymry ydyw hyny (Foulkes 1903: 50–1)

As it stands at the edge of both languages, [Mold] is bilingual, and in this respect has stayed almost the same in terms of the proportions of its residents that speak the two languages for at least half a century. If one goes two miles from the town toward the east –say to Buckley, almost nobody understands a word of Welsh; or two miles to the other direction– say Gwernymynydd, only rarely is a word of English heard. There are many monoglot English speakers, mostly migrants, but very few of the Welsh are not bilingual –this is to the advantage of the Welsh.

This advantage that Foulkes describes was illustrated by a letter from Owen (who was often very disparaging of his own work) in which the author expresses how pleased he was that his publisher is a monoglot English speaker, as it means that he has no idea how bad the material Owen was providing was (quoted in Foulkes 1903: 128). Owen's ability to exploit his own bilingualism in his commercial dealings (he was an articulate speaker and writer in both of his languages) shows how much it was an every-day part of life in the region at the time. The border region's linguistic diversity is reflected in the casts of Owen's novels, which include English visitors unable to speak Welsh, as well as monoglot Welsh speakers and bilingual characters that speak both languages, freely switching between the two in the middle of sentences (something which Owen's translators have had to deal with in various ways, as will be noted later on in this thesis). In addition to national and linguistic borders, Mold's location on the north-east Wales coalfield placed it on a third border, being comparatively close to heavily

industrialised urban areas such as Liverpool, Manchester and the West Midlands of England, and rural areas such as Clwyd and Powys to the south and west. Industry had brought immigration from outside Britain to the region as well; in particular from Ireland. Translators seeking to produce English texts for the Welsh market may have hoped that the fact Owen's novels were located in a more English-speaking area (rather than, for example, the largely Welsh-speaking slate quarrying villages of Gwynedd) would give them a particular appeal to their target audiences.

Although the town in *Y Dreflan* is widely regarded as having been a surrogate for Mold, in his new novel, *Rhys Lewis*, Owen was to make far more explicit use of his own background and of these borders and juxtapositions. Written as a fictional minister's autobiography, it tells the story of the eponymous Rhys's childhood, religious conversion and his brief time as minister before his early death. In an opening introduction, Owen (writing as himself) claims to have found the manuscript of Rhys Lewis' autobiography and decided to publish it, despite the fact that its author had, while writing it, never intended for it to be published. There are obvious parallels between Rhys Lewis' story and Daniel Owen's own life: Rhys's father is absent and he is brought up by his mother, and he is apprenticed to a shopkeeper but eventually attends the theological college in Bala. He has a brother who dies in a mining accident, as did Owen's brothers, and his mother dies during the course of the novel –just as Owen's had shortly before he began to write *Rhys Lewis*.

While he was drawing on his own experiences, Owen was also adopting a contemporary literary convention by using the autobiographical form: biographies and

autobiographies of (real) preachers and ministers were a popular and widely read form of literature in Victorian Wales. Much has been written of Owen's decision to write *Rhys Lewis* as a fictional autobiography. E. G. Millward (1970) and Robert Rhys (2000a: 105) have pointed out that fictional autobiographies or memoirs were common forms used in novels by English writers during the period and that Owen was merely utilising a conventional narrative framework for his novel. Other critics have read more into his use of the autobiographical format. To Saunders Lewis, his decision to do so represented an appropriation of a popular native form: 'gafaelodd yn nhraddodiad llenyddol ei gymdeithas a'i gyfnod, a rhoes iddynt ddibenion newydd a chyfeiriad newydd' [he took the literary tradition and the main literary form of his society and age, and gave them a new purpose and direction] (1936: 15). Regardless of Owen's primary motivation for writing *Rhys Lewis* as an autobiography, both arguments above might increase the novel's appeal as a text for translation into English, particularly in the nineteenth century. As an autobiography, an English *Rhys Lewis* would be in a form familiar to readers of Dickens, Eliot and other Victorian English novelists. In being specifically a minister's autobiography, however, *Rhys Lewis* was also taking a popular Welsh form and may have been calculated to serve as a representative example.

Using the autobiographical form also allowed Owen to describe Rhys Lewis' childhood (Rowlands 1992: 37; Rhys 2000a: 107). Robert Rhys draws parallels between *Rhys Lewis* and William Hale White's 1881 English novel *The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford*, in which a Calvinistic upbringing is presented as oppressive environment for a child. Rhys suggests Owen had read White's novel and wanted to provide a positive but realistic portrayal of a similar upbringing (2000a: 108), indeed, it is



possible to read much of Owen's fiction in terms of a reaction to the portrayals of non-established Protestant denominations in contemporary English fiction. Although there were some exceptions, such as George Eliot (McConnell 2007) –who is known to have been a major influence on Owen (Owen 2010: xii; Rhys 2000a: 159)– they were often negative, and while not always taking quite so critical an approach as in White's novel, they were frequently 'almost categorically dismissive of Methodism as a rather hypocritical or distasteful sect' (McConnell 2007: 244). While Owen is frequently critical of hypocrisy within Methodism and certainly not above making good-natured fun of preachers and other senior Methodist figures, the portrayal of Methodism itself in Owen's novels is certainly a positive one. This aspect of his writing may have attracted nineteenth-century translators to his work, particularly *Rhys Lewis*: in the absence of native English defences of Methodism, an English *Rhys Lewis* may have been calculated to form a counterbalance to novels like White's. It may also have been intended to rehabilitate Methodism for English-speaking Wales: all of the non-conformist denominations were considerably less well represented among the English speaking population than they were among Welsh speakers, despite considerable attempts, particularly by the Calvinist Methodist church, to broaden its appeal to non-Welsh speakers.

While Owen's earlier work had been popular enough, *Rhys Lewis* represented a watershed in its author's career in terms of critical and commercial success. The first print run of two thousand, financed mainly by subscription, sold out quickly, and Owen received enough money from selling the rights to a second edition to be able to build a house for himself in Mold (1903: 101), which still stands today. The novel had won the

approval not only of the various Methodist publications but the wider Welsh public. It far outstripped the popularity of any novel previously written in Welsh, and it is probably reasonable to suggest that, had Owen never written another word, he would still have become a well-known author on the success of *Rhys Lewis* alone:

er bod enw da iddo yn y cylchoedd llenyddol cyn cyhoeddi'r  
nofel hon, *Rhys Lewis* a'i gwnaeth yn ffigwr cenedlaethol ac yn  
arwr cenedl, yn wŷr y byddid yn codi cofgologn iddo wedi ei  
farw. (Rhys 2000a: 130)

although he had a good name in the literary circles before  
publishing this novel, *Rhys Lewis* is what made him a national  
figure and the hero of a nation, a man of whom a statue would  
be erected after his death.

Despite this success, in many ways *Rhys Lewis* also demonstrated many of its author's limitations in terms of plot, plan and structure. Owen's initial vague plan had been to write a series of twelve chapters portraying a methodist childhood, serialised over a year. However, this initial idea was quickly abandoned and the final novel ran to forty-two chapters, serialised over three years. While it is not as long as many novels by contemporary English authors, Owen's novel remains one of the longest ever to be written in Welsh. It is a sprawling work which, many have claimed, loses much of its psychological drive and interest with the death of two of its main characters at the mid point of the novel, a shift which is frequently cited as an example of Owen's poor

planning (Williams 1989: 104, Stephens 1998: 491). Nonetheless, just as it had made his reputation while he was alive, in the first decades after Owen's death, *Rhys Lewis* was frequently cited as Owen's greatest work. However, this reputation was to diminish in later years, as will be seen.

As the novel had been such a sensational success in Welsh, it was perhaps an unsurprising choice for translation, and indeed it was the first of Owen's works to be translated into English. The resulting translation, *Rhys Lewis, Minister of Bethel: An Autobiography*, published in 1888, will be the focus of the next chapter of this thesis. As has been suggested earlier, this work is of some historic significance as it is quite probably the first translation of a Welsh-language novel into English. The work was presented at the 1888 national *Eisteddfod*. Translator James Harris had been editor of a magazine called *Red Dragon*, one of the first publications specifically aimed at a Welsh audience to be written in the English language. This thesis will argue that Harris' translation was a systematic attempt to challenge the established 'contributionist' model of Welsh-English translation in favour of a nationalist methodology. By choosing a contemporary work and a novel—a work thus outside the traditional sphere of Celtic literature as established by the antiquarian tradition—Harris was challenging the dominant backward-looking model of Welshness in favour of a radical, modern conception, much as translators like H. Idris Bell were to do with poetry in the twentieth century.

*Rhys Lewis* had appeared in 1885, but Daniel Owen's eager audience would have to wait until 1890 before the appearance of his next novel, *Profedigaethau Enoc Huws*

[The Trials of Enoc Huws]. He did not stop writing, however, and to satisfy the clamours for more, a small volume entitled *Y Siswrn* [The Scissors] was published in 1886, consisting mostly of previously published material (including *Cymeriadau Methodistaid*). Saunders Lewis suggested that the long wait before the publication of *Enoc Huws* was because Owen was hesitating before making the leap he was planning to make with his new novel (1936: 34). There is evidence however that as early as 1885 Owen was thinking about his next novel, and sketches exist of many of the early chapters that were written in 1886 (Rhys 2000a: 139–41). Clearly, then, the author of *Enoc Huws* was carefully planning his new novel before writing it, in stark contrast to his previous novels. It is perhaps unsurprising then that the first eighteen chapters of *Enoc Huws* are frequently cited as being among their author's greatest achievements. Saunders Lewis considered them one of the finest pieces of prose in the Welsh language (1936: 43–4). To John Gwilym Jones they are a '[g]wyrth o grynhoi sydyn... deunaw pennod gyntaf *Enoc Huws* yw ei gogoniant,' [a miracle of swift summary... the first eighteen chapters of *Enoc Huws* are its glory] (1970: 81); in the *New Companion to the Literature of Wales* they are described as 'masterly' (Stephens 1998: 221). Of course, such praise for the first part of a novel begs the question as to why these critics are not referring to the novel as a whole. After the eighteenth chapter, the focus of the novel changes onto its two sub-plots, without returning to the main plot until the thirty-second chapter. This change in tack has proved unpopular with many critics: after the first eighteen chapters, for Saunders Lewis, 'ni cheidw gweddill *Enoc Huws* na safon nac undod y deunaw pennod gyntaf' [the rest of *Enoc Huws* keeps neither the standard nor unity of the first eighteen chapters] (1936: 45–6), for J. Gwilym Jones the novel loses force because many of the later chapters are irrelevant to the plot (1970: 81). Similarly,

*The New Companion to the Literature of Wales* notes that ‘the novel lapses into chapters of discussion, largely irrelevant to the plot’ (Stephens 1998: 221). Nonetheless, it is clear that when compared to *Rhys Lewis*, *Enoc Huws* represented a significant step forward in terms of structure and planning.

*Enoc Huws* was also a departure from Owen’s earlier works in terms of content. Owen had embarked upon *Y Dreiflan* and *Rhys Lewis* at the suggestion of his mentor Roger Edwards, editor of *Y Drysorfa*, the Methodist journal in which these novels had been published. After Edwards’ death in 1886 Owen’s work would appear in the Isaac Foulkes’ secular magazine *Y Cymro* (‘The Welshman’).<sup>3</sup> Robert Rhys warns against reading any great significance into the change from a religious to a secular journal, suggesting that it was only loyalty to Edwards that had made *Y Drysorfa* Owen’s medium in the first place (2000a: 145). However, the change of publication undeniably coincides with a change towards a more secular kind of novel: Owen himself claimed in his introduction to *Enoc Huws* that ‘This work will not assume as religious an aspect as the Autobiography’ (Owen 2010: xvii). One obvious manifestation of this new freedom and secularisation is the abandonment of the autobiographical format Owen had used in *Rhys Lewis*, a change which some have suggested is significant. For Saunders Lewis, having obeyed the demands of his society’s traditions and conventions in *Rhys Lewis*, Owen was now following his own creative imagination (1936: 35). For Robert Rhys, ‘Onid oes yma ymwroli ar ran Daniel Owen... i ddefnyddio’r ysgrifbin yn onestach byth, yn fwy ciaidd a chaled os oes rhaid?’ [Is there not here an assertiveness on Owen’s part... to use the pen more honestly, and harsher and more brutally if necessary?] (Rhys 2000a: 141). Certainly, from the very start of the novel, Owen demonstrates willingness

to include content that would have been considered controversial: the first sentence announces that the titular character was born out of wedlock (Owen 1995: 11). Although the novel is a sequel of sorts to *Rhys Lewis* in that it is set in the same town and features some of the same characters, while *Rhys Lewis* had focused largely on religious issues, *Enoc Huws* is a social comedy. This fact notwithstanding, it would be a mistake to assume that it lacks the psychological depth of *Rhys Lewis*. Although the novel does not contain the extensive introspective soul-searching that dominates the second half of *Rhys Lewis*, its central characters are far more complex than any that Owen was to create either before or afterwards.

Owen's more careful preparation and his unwillingness to avoid 'dubious' subjects contributed to *Enoc Huws*' increasing reputation among critics in the second half of the century, to the extent that it had eclipsed *Rhys Lewis* as Owen's greatest novel, at least in the eyes of critics like Ioan Williams (1984: 33) and Robert Rhys (2000a: 173). While it was the second of Owen's novels to be translated, in an 1894–6 serialisation in the magazine *Wales*, it was the first to be retranslated in the twenty-first century, a fact which certainly reflects its superior reputation in modern criticism. These two English translations of *Enoc Huws* will be the focus of the fifth chapter of this thesis. *Wales*, edited by O. M. Edwards, was another early English-language journal which included stories and articles from and about the eponymous country. It also had a distinct literary bent and its editor made clear his explicit intention to publish Welsh-English translation –of which the *Enoc Huws* translation, the work of English aristocrat Claud Vivian, was a major example– in order to inspire and encourage the production of original Welsh writing in English (Edwards 1894: iii). This chapter will thus explore the

relationship between Welsh-English translation and the Welsh-language literature of Wales, and show how Edwards hoped to exploit the former so as to foster the latter. In 2010, a version of Vivian's translation was published by a small publisher in Mold hoping to issue translations of all Owen's novels; this version, 'revised and updated' by Les Barker, is sufficiently different from Vivian's however that I have chosen to discuss it as a translation in its own right. As a retranslation, the Barker translation raises the question of retranlations in the Welsh context. I will argue that the Barker translation attempts to set a new paradigm for Welsh-English translation, that attempts to mark itself as something different to Welsh writing in English. I will also explore how aspects of the way that Barker's translation was produced and marketed constitute a reinforcing of and commentary on the canonicity of Daniel Owen as a Welsh writer.

The consensus that *Enoc Huws* is Owen's finest novel is comparatively recent. By contrast, there has been a lasting consensus that Owen's next and final novel, *Gwen Tomos*, is an inferior work –at least compared to *Rhys Lewis* and *Enoc Huws*. To Robert Rhys, after writing his masterpiece, *Enoc Huws*, Owen was 'barod i ddifyrru ei gynulleidfa awchus gyda deunydd llai angerddol ac uchelgeisiol' [ready to amuse his eager audience with less inspired and ambitious material] (2000a: 173). Although Owen was always modest about his achievements, he was particularly dismissive of *Gwen Tomos*. His correspondence with his editor, Isaac Foulkes, expresses the frustration and difficulty he experienced while writing it, and his eventual dissatisfaction with the finished product:

Gofynnwch pa fodd y mae y nofel newydd yn dod yn mlaen?  
Sâl. Hyd yn hyn, nid oes lliw na llun nofel arni. Yr wyf wedi  
ysgrifennu amryw ddesgrifiadau [sic] o gymeriadau ac  
amgylchiadau, ond nid oes gennyf eto idea sut i'w clymu â'u  
gilydd, nac un dychymyg sut i roi ffurf stori arnynt. (quoted in  
Foulkes 1903: 123)

[You ask how the new novel is coming on? Poorly. So far it  
does not even resemble a novel. I have written several  
descriptions of characters and circumstances, but I do not yet  
have an idea of how to tie them together, nor the imagination to  
give them the form of a story.]

Owen's analysis touches on some of the issues that critics have found in Owen's work as a whole: that he could create characters and vivid descriptions but could not write an effective plot. Interestingly however, while critics since Owen's death have usually accepted its author's evaluation of it as an inferior work, they have often claimed that its plot is one of its stronger points and that its inferiority stems from the fact that it lacks the emotional depth of Owen's earlier work (Jones 1959, Rowlands 1992: 71, Rhys 2000b: 164). Robert Rhys for example sees the novel as part of the 'llai angerddol ac uchelgeisiol' [less inspired and ambitious] (2000a: 173) material that Owen produced at the end of his career. Nonetheless, it has found favour with other critics such as Saunders Lewis (1936), *The New Companion to the Literature of Wales* (Stephens 1998: 300) and E. G. Millward (1990a), who praise in particular its tighter plot. Lewis



considered it his favourite of Owen's novels, described it as 'y dawelaf, y sicraf, y llyfnaf' [the quietest, the surest, the smoothest] of Owen's novels (1936: 56), claiming that in it 'fe ddefnyddia Daniel Owen holl ddyfeisiau technegol ei lyfrau eraill yn ôl fel y gwêl yn dda. Y mae bellach yn feistr arno'i hun ac ar ryddid y nofelydd llawn.'

[Daniel Owen uses all the technical devices of his other novels as he sees fit. He is now a master of himself and of the novelist's full freedom] (Lewis 1936: 57). An example Lewis presents is the way in which, although like *Rhys Lewis* the novel has a named first-person narrator, it is not an autobiography and the author shifts back to a position of omniscience when he deems it necessary. Although *The New Companion to the Literature of Wales* claims that this literary device 'tends to blur the focus and make for some awkwardness in the development of the plot'; he agrees with Lewis that the novel is Owen's most carefully planned (Stephens 1998: 292). While John Rowlands also describes the novel as being smoother than Owen's others, he claims that

Dyna efallai sy'n dramgwydd trwy'r nofel. Lle'r oedd y llinyn storiol naill ai'n wan neu'r rhy artiffisial yn y nofelau eraill, a'r thema'n gref, yn *Gwen Tomos* mae'r stori'n llyfnach ac esmwythach ar y cyfan, ond calon ystyrol y nofel yn wag. Mae'r cymeriadau'n fwy unochrog, a'r olwg ar fywyd yn fwy arwynebol. (1992: 71)

That perhaps is a problem throughout the novel. Where the plot-thread in the other novels was either weak or too artificial, and the themes strong, in *Gwen Tomos* the story is smoother and

more comfortable on the whole, but the novel's meaningful heart is empty. The characters are more one-sided, the vision of life more superficial.

While both Saunders Lewis (1936: 56) and *The New Companion to the Literature of Wales* (Stephens 1998: 292) have claimed that Owen's skills at characterisation had not been exhausted by the time he was writing *Gwen Tomos*, John Gwilym Jones believed that the storytelling elements had been emphasised to the detriment even of the characterisation, complaining that

Mae'r toriant pendant yma rhwng da a drwg, symleiddio cymeriadau gymaint nes iddynt golli'r cysylltiad agos â bywyd, yn peri nad ysgrifennu nofel a wnaeth Daniel Owen yn *Gwen Tomos* ond rhamant (1950: 58).

This decisive division between good and evil, the simplification of characters to the point that they lose all connection with life, means that in *Gwen Tomos* Owen was not writing a novel but rather a romance.

Robert Rhys agrees that *Gwen Tomos* lacks the depth of Owen's earlier work, claiming that although other critics have attempted to read deeper messages from the text,

Daniel Owen once expressed concern that *Gwen Tomos* would rob him of his literary reputation; he was aware of its weaknesses and his self-assessment was basically correct. For that reason it is likely that recent critics have displayed too much ingenuity in attributing to the text a depth of thematic and psychological import which it cannot sustain. (2000b: 164)

Similarly, Rhys is relatively dismissive of the novel's perceived 'smoothness', saying of the fast-paced series of events that bring *Gwen Tomos* towards its end:

Ar yr wyneb dyma chwedl boblogaidd yn carlamu'n hyderus at esgynneb o ddiwedd glo. Ac eto teimlir bod rhyw symudiad arall yn tynnu'n groes i fomentwm y naratif, neu hwyrach yn cael ei guddio ganddo. I'm tyb i, nid argraff o awdur yn llywio'i greadigaeth ddychmygus at ddiwedd glo buddugoliaethus a gawn o gwbl, ond yn hytrach o nofelydd sy'n blino ar ei nofel ac yn mynnu ei dwyn i ben, doed a ddelo. (2000a: 187)

On the surface this is a popular story galloping confidently toward a climactic conclusion. And yet one feels that there is another movement moving against the narrative's momentum, or rather being hidden by it. In my opinion we do not get the impression of an author steering his imaginative creation toward

a victorious conclusion at all, but rather of a novelist who is tiring of his novel and wants to end it, no matter what.

Certainly, this view is supported by Owen's correspondence with Isaac Foulkes, who had asked him to re-write the novel's ending prior to the publication of the last chapters in *Y Cymro*. Owen refused, claiming to have lost all interest in the novel and blaming it on his ill health (Foulkes 1903: 128). By this time, Owen had been ill for some time, and *Gwen Tomos* would prove to be his final novel before his death in the following year.

Nonetheless, he did not stop writing. In his final year he penned his last published work, a volume of short stories, *Straeon y Pentan* ('Fireside Tales'). Some of *Straeon y Pentan* had already been published, however most of the material was new. Although the stories are quite short –the longest being little more than fifteen pages long and some being little more than character portraits– they are quite varied in scope and deal with a variety of themes which were new or unusual for Owen, such as a number of ghost stories. They are perhaps a taste of what Owen might have achieved had he lived another decade or two, although–along with most of Owen's shorter fiction–they have enjoyed little critical attention compared to his novels, and are rarely treated as more than a footnote in the author's career. In 1895, at the relatively young age of 59, Daniel Owen died in Mold, the town where he had been born and had lived for his entire life. An appeal for a memorial proved successful and in 1901 a statue of the author was unveiled in Mold, where it still stands. Although the house where he was born has long been demolished, its location has been commemorated with a large

memorial stone (about which more later). While the house he lived in as an adult remains a private home, his shop has been turned into a pub (named *Y Pentan* after his final work), and a large collection of artifacts relating to the author is on display in Mold library.

## **2.5 Daniel Owen's Afterlives: Adaptations and editions**

Considering their popularity, it is perhaps unsurprising that Daniel Owen's novels have been adapted, edited and translated as much as, if not more, than those of any other Welsh-language author. In his critical study of the author, Saunders Lewis expressed his belief that, had he been born in the twentieth century, Daniel Owen would have chosen to write plays rather than novels. Lewis claimed evidence for his theory by pointing to Owen's widely recognised talent for writing lively and engaging dialogue (1936: 63). Although Owen never attempted writing a play himself, nor seemed interested in doing so, a stage adaptation of *Rhys Lewis* first performed during his own lifetime enjoyed a popularity that endured for half a century (Rhys 2000a: 137). Several other stage adaptations have appeared of the main novels, most of them reasonably popular (William, 1983: 9). Owen's works have been adapted for the television at least twice, first in 1974 when *Enoc Huws* was made into a television drama, and later in 2002 when parts of *Y Dreiflan*, *Rhys Lewis* and *Enoc Huws* were dramatised as *Treiflan*. Both these adaptations took interesting liberties with the source material. Although otherwise a relatively straight adaptation, the 1974 version of *Enoc Huws* inserted Daniel Owen himself as a minor character who interacted with his creations, thus playing with the idea that Owen based his novels on his experiences and that his novels represented the truth about his society. By combining material from several of Owen's novels into a

single overarching narrative, *Treflan* emphasised the continuity (real or imagined) between Owen's works and allowed several plots to be simultaneously compressed or stretched out according both the demands of the new format and the editorial preferences of the writers and producers. Each of these adaptations, whether for stage or television, automatically dealt some of the perceived problems of Owen's writing –specifically, his rambling prose style– because they omitted the narrative and presented only the plot of their source material.

The increasing perception as the twentieth century progressed that Owen's novels were flawed led to efforts to address the structural and stylistic flaws of Owen's writing in the novels themselves, not just through adaptation. New editions of *Rhys Lewis*, *Enoc Huws* and *Gwen Tomos* published in the 1930s and 1940s modernised Owen's often-archaic spellings but also abridged significant portions of the original text. *Gwen Tomos* and *Rhys Lewis* were edited by Thomas Parry in 1937 and 1948 respectively, at the same time that Parry was arguing in *A History of Welsh Literature* (originally published in Welsh in 1944) that Owen's novels were too long (1955: 354). These editions cut *Gwen Tomos* from 326 to 259 pages and *Rhys Lewis* from 455 to 341. In 1939 an edition of *Enoc Huws* similarly abridged by T. Gwynn Jones was published which cut the 392-page original to 383 pages –but far more material was cut than these figures suggest due to the use of a much larger typeset. A second set of the three novels was produced in 1967, edited by E. Curig Davies, and even more heavily abridged than Thomas Parry and T. Gwynn Jones' editions: each one is only about a quarter as long as the novels as they had originally been conceived by Daniel Owen, with whole chapters reduced to single paragraphs. Curig Davies' editions appear to have been aimed at

children, and they clearly indicated on their covers that they were abridged versions: however, although Thomas Parry and T. Gwynn Jones were credited as editors in their editions, the fact they had abridged the texts was not advertised.

What narrative of Owen's shifting literary status can be gleaned from comparing the edited versions of Owen's novels and his own originals? Thomas Parry and T. Gwynn Jones' editions of *Gwen Tomos* and *Enoc Huws* were well received, as evinced by the positive review they received by W.J. Gruffydd (1939), a key figure in Welsh cultural life. Parry's later edition of *Rhys Lewis* received a similarly glowing review by Kate Roberts (1949), who could also boast considerable critical influence as one of the foremost novelists of her day.<sup>4</sup> Both these reviews recognised that cutting material as these editors had done was a controversial practice. W. J. Gruffydd asks whether an editor has the right to make such changes (1939: 263) and Kate Roberts asks whether the 'literary value' of a novel is reduced by this process (1949: 300). Nonetheless, in both cases the reviews conclude that these editions are an improvement on Owen's originals, and, as has been mentioned already, Gruffydd even goes so far as to claim that Owen himself would have approved of the abridging of his novels (1939: 264). These contemporary reviews, and the fact that these abridged editions of Owen's novels each went through several editions –Parry's edition of *Gwen Tomos* was reprinted in 1962, 1967 and 1978 (Millward 1992a: iii)– are testimony to the approval with which they were met. The editions are a reaction to Owen's perceived shortcomings as a novelist, as W.J. Gruffydd wrote in his review:

mae'r ffaith bod Mr. Parry a'r Dr. Gwynn Jones wedi gweled yn dda cwtdgi cryn lawer ar y nofelau yn feirniadaeth hefyd ar gelfyddyd Daniel Owen, oherwydd ni all neb wadu bod rannau beichus a diflas ynddynt, a daeth y ddau olygydd o hyd iddynt yn ddi-ffael. Mae'r nofelau, fel ag y maent yn awr, ym mhob ystyr yn haws i'w darllen, ac mae'n sicr mai'r argraffiadau hyn yn unig a ddarllenir gan Gymry yn y dyfodol... Y darnau a adawodd Mr Parry allan o *Gwen Tomos* oedd y rheini y gellid tybio amdanynt eu bod yn hirwyntog a dibwynt... (1939: 263–4)

that Mr. Parry and Dr. Gwyn Jones saw it necessary to cut the novels down considerably is a criticism of Owen's artistry, as nobody can deny that there are parts which are burdensome and tedious, and the two editors found them without fail. The novels, as they now are, are in every sense easier to read, and it is certain that these editions alone will be read by Welsh people in the future... The parts that Mr. Parry left out of *Gwen Tomos* are those that can be considered long-winded and pointless...

He went on to express his expectation that the novels would never be read again in their original form now that these superior editions were available (1939). Parry's edition of *Rhys Lewis* was similarly well-received by Kate Roberts (1948). For many years, W. J. Gruffydd's prophecy was correct: Parry and Jones' versions became the 'standard' editions, being reprinted several times from their original publication until the 1990s



when new editions of the full versions of *Rhys Lewis*, *Enoc Huws* and *Gwen Tomos* were finally made available again.

The fact that Owen's novels were only available to the general public in abridged form –and that this was, to a certain extent, hidden from the audience, as well as being tacitly encouraged by members of the Welsh literary establishment– must inevitably have profoundly effected the way his writing has been received by the generations without access to his originals, yet comparatively little attention has been paid to this by critics discussing Owen's novels. The abridged editions are mentioned only once by Robert Rhys (2000a: 110), and although the prevalence of the abridged editions was a significant motivation behind the publication of new, complete versions of the novels in the 1990s, the effect of the abridging is examined with depth only in the introduction to *Gwen Tomos* (Millward 1992a).

Although, as noted above, the abridged editions were well received on their publication, both Robert Rhys and E. G. Millward are critical of them. Rhys for example described Parry's cuts to *Rhys Lewis* as 'merciless' (2000a: 110). According to Millward (1992a), the cuts to *Gwen Tomos* make both the characterisation and story less convincing. Nevertheless, the enthusiasm with which the editors went about their work, and the positive reception the abridged editions received, are vivid illustrations of the lengths to which some have been willing to go to modify Owen's novels so as to win them greater critical or popular acceptance. As has been established at the beginning of this chapter, the most frequent and most serious criticism of Owen's novels has always been their lack of structure; that the author frequently digresses, bringing in material of

peripheral relevance to the plot. By offering their abridged versions of Owen's work these editors were 'improving' the novels and thereby elevating Owen's literary status. The note at the start of each of the E. Curig Davies editions (presumably penned by the editor himself) offers an insight into how this process was considered necessary:

Yn ôl barn llawer un sy'n cymeradwyo'r gyfres newydd hon yn eiddgar, mae mawr angen addasu clasuron Cymru a'r byd at anghenion y gynulleidfa gyfoes, nid yn unig i'r bobl ifanc, ond hefyd ar gyfer myfyrwyr a'r cyhoedd darllengar. (Owen 1967: 2)

In the opinion of many who enthusiastically praise this new series, there is a great need to adapt the classics of Wales and the world to the needs of the modern audience, not only for the young people, but also for students and the reading public

Although, as has been noted, Curig Davies' editions appear to have been produced to be read by children, the idea that there was a perception of a 'great need to adapt the classics of Wales to the needs of the modern audience' illustrates the prevailing attitude of the time, and helps explain how the work of a supposedly great novelist like Owen was for many years presented only in an severely edited form.

The effect of the different Welsh-language editions of Owen's novels is significant to a discussion of the English translations of his work in two key respects. Firstly, the editions remain literary facts which translators working after their

publication have had to engage with in one way or another, whether by using them as the basis of their translations, as was the case with the 1963 translation of *Gwen Tomos*, or by rejecting them and referring back instead to Owen's originals, as was the case with the 2010 English translation of *Enoc Huws*. Secondly, because translators are in a sense editors in that they choose what material to present and how to present it, the translations themselves can be viewed as further editions of Owen's work that continue the tradition of repackaging Daniel Owen as novelist, presenting him anew to successive generations and linguistic cultures. In fact, translators could be said to have even more power than editors over the texts, as greater changes could be excused as an inevitable part of the translation process and because they could operate under the assumption that their readers had no knowledge of the originals. Just as the successive editions of Owen's novels in Welsh, each successive translation represents a commentary on Owens' original work.

## **2.6 Daniel Owen's afterlives: Translations**

To the present author's knowledge, there are six complete translations of Daniel Owen novels or short story volumes into English, along with a seventh unfinished translation and a small number of translated excerpts in anthologies. These include the translations listed in the *Bibliography of Welsh Literature in English Translation (BWLET)* (Reynolds 2005) along with a further two translations published since the *BWLET* was compiled. These translations cover a period of one-hundred and twenty-three years and represent probably the largest corpus of English translations of any single Welsh-language novelist. They are thus testimony to the author's continuing appeal to

translators, and their quantity alone is an indicator of their significance within the history of Welsh-English literary translation.

The earliest of these translations was the 1888 translation of *Rhys Lewis* by James Harris, published as a book which was launched at the National Eisteddfod held that year in Wrexham. This translation was probably the first Welsh-language novel to appear in English, and the fact it did so within three years of the novel's original publication in 1885, and before Owen's next novel had been published in Welsh, is testimony to the unprecedented popularity of the Welsh original. Harris' translation was followed a few years later by a serialisation in the literary magazine *Wales* of an English version of Owen's second novel, *Enoc Huws*, from 1894–6, the work of Claud Vivian, an English aristocrat. Owen's other novels would have to wait until much later to be translated: an English version of *Y Dreiflan* would eventually appear from 1916, once again as a serial, in the Methodist journal *The Treasury*, the English equivalent to the Welsh journal in which Owen's original had been serialised; no translator was credited for this version. The serial was completed in 1917 and was immediately followed by a serialisation of *Gwen Tomos*, this time credited to the Revd. J. Talog Davies, however this second serial was aborted slightly before the half-way point of the novel had been reached. It would be decades before *Gwen Tomos* would finally appear in something resembling a complete English edition, in a book published in 1963 translated by T. Ceiriog Williams and E. R. Harries. A second translation of *Enoc Huws*, translated by Les Barker, appeared in 2010 as part of a project hoping to eventually release English versions of all Owen's novels and short stories: this project was continued in 2011 with the release of an English version of Owen's short story volume *Straeon y Pentan*,

translated by the present author, which is as of 2014 the most recent Daniel Owen translation to be published.

In answering this thesis' research questions, I have chosen to focus mainly on four of these translations, namely the 1888 translation *Rhys Lewis, Minister of Bethel*, the 1894–6 translated serialisation of *Enoch Hughes*, the 1963 translation of *Gwen Tomos* and the 2010 translation *The Trials of Enoc Huws*. Although the other translations will all be discussed at least to some extent, a decision was made to focus on these four translations for a variety of reasons. Primarily, it is my belief that these four are the most interesting from a research perspective. They exhibit the more radical and/or unusual translation strategies, and they are located within cultural contexts that are well-suited to the discussion of this thesis' research questions. These strategies and contexts will be explored extensively in the chapters dedicated to these translations. Secondly, these four translations are all of Owen's major three novels –*Rhys Lewis*, *Enoc Huws* and *Gwen Tomos*– and are therefore translations of the novels on which Owen's reputation was built. With the exception of Claud Vivian's 1894–96 serial, each of these translations appeared in book form; they are thus relatively easy to find and are likely to have been read by more people than some of the other translations, which often appeared only in journals with low circulations and were never reprinted. The four translations focused upon in subsequent chapters of this thesis might therefore be assumed to be the more culturally significant.

The two translations which are not the focus of chapters of this thesis were both of some of Owen's less well-known work. Owen's first, formative novel, *Y Drefflan*, was

translated and serialised in the magazine *The Treasury* between 1916 and 1917, under the title *The Hamlet: Its People and its Doings*. *The Treasury* was the English-language version of *Y Drysorfa*, the magazine in which Owen's first two novels had originally appeared. Although this translation was uncredited, its style is very similar to that of a translation which began serialisation in the journal immediately afterwards. This second, unfinished translation, of *Gwen Tomos*, was credited to J. Talog Davies, who had been editor of the journal during the publication of *The Hamlet*. Davies' credit only appears on those parts of the serial which appear after he was no longer editor of the magazine; if he had been unwilling to credit himself while still editor of the paper then it is quite possible he was responsible for *The Hamlet* as well. The translation of *Gwen Tomos* was, as has been indicated, unfinished: its last installment, chapter 25 (of the original fifty-two), appears in June 1919; an editor's note in a subsequent issue apologises for this and explains that the serial was discontinued due to space constraints. The translations which appear in *The Treasury* are conservative ones which stick closely to the style of the originals; if the Revd. J. Talog Davies harboured the same grandiose literary ambitions for his translations as James Harris had for his, or that editor O. M. Edwards harboured for Claud Vivian's translation *Enoch Hughes*, then he did not express them: no commentary on the translations appears in *The Treasury* and they are not widely known at all, even by the standards of the other translations mentioned in this thesis. As a magazine, *The Treasury*'s primary objectives were religious rather than literary, and in the absence of radical translation strategies or commentary it is difficult to make arguments about the translations' political or cultural aims without resorting to conjecture.

Owen's last work, his volume of short stories *Straeon y Pentan*, was translated by the present author as *Fireside Tales* in 2011, part of the same series as Les Barker's *The Trials of Enoc Huws*, published by Brown Cow. I chose to translate *Straeon y Pentan* primarily because it had not been translated into English before. From a purely practical perspective however Owen's volume is short –less than a hundred pages– and thus represented a more manageable investment of time and effort than one of his lengthy novels would have been. I also felt that Owen's shorter fiction had been marginalised, and that a translation might be a means to raise the profile of the work –it was not reprinted in Welsh in the 1990s when the full editions of *Rhys Lewis*, *Enoc Huws* and *Gwen Tomos* were made available again. Given the degree to which Owen's literature has been criticised for its lack of structure, it is perhaps surprising that his short stories (which, because of their brevity, do not generally suffer from this problem) are not better known. Aware that the stories are not considered Owen's most important work, and also that some of them are little more than brief character portraits rather than genuine narratives, I was eager that the translation should include some form of disclaimer so as not to appear as over-stating the importance of a relatively minor work. Correspondingly, the claim was included in my translator's note that

Readers may perhaps feel that some of these stories lack plot or structure, a flaw Owen himself acknowledged; these readers should view this volume in the knowledge that Owen had little formal education and was treading a path that no writer in the Welsh language had trodden before. Regardless, this volume has

been presented in full without presuming to decide for the reader which parts may or may not be of interest. (Owen 2011: ix)

As the volume was to be part of the same series as *The Trials of Enoc Huws* both the publishers and myself were eager that there be some sense of continuity between the two. Part of the aim of the series has been to provide full English editions of the original Welsh texts, thus, as with *The Trials of Enoc Huws*, the text was included in full without abridgement. Additionally, a similar approach was adopted to that of *The Trials of Enoc Huws* towards both untranslated words and footnotes, although, as noted by one reviewer, I did not attempt to match Les Barker's wit in the latter (Collins 2012). In terms of linguistic style, it follows Barker's translation it taking a broadly domesticating approach, although as with Barker's I do not feel that this makes it a domesticating translation when considered as a whole. As with all the post-nineteenth century English translations it retains the Welsh spellings and place-names as originally used by Daniel Owen.

As well as the Welsh-English translations described through this thesis, the present author is aware of two further translations of Owen's work. Gearóid Ó Nualláin, an Irish priest, produced Irish versions of *Straeon y Pentan* and *Gwen Tomos* in 1954 and 1956 respectively as part of a series of translations into Irish sponsored by the Irish government. With two completed translations to his name, Ó Nualláin is actually the single most prolific translator of Owen's work; his translations also pre-date the English versions of their respective texts (J. Talog Davies' aborted *Gwen Tomos* notwithstanding). The inclusion of Owen's work in a series alongside the likes of



Chekhov and Dumas represents an interesting commentary on Owen's canonical status. The fact that the Irish government paid for the publication demonstrates, once again, the political potential of translation in minority language contexts. The present author is entirely unqualified to discuss Irish translations, but Ó Nualláin's translations may provide fascinating further information on how Daniel Owen has been presented in other languages.

In this chapter, I have presented the author Daniel Owen as a central canonical writer within the Welsh-language literary tradition, and have introduced the translations of his work which make up this thesis' case study. Daniel Owen's canonicity is a vitally important consideration when it comes to any discussion of his translations: as the first significant Welsh-language novelist he has been a natural and obvious target for translators, but his sheer degree of canonicity has been an unavoidable fact for each of these translators. As will be seen, they have all had to engage with Owen's literary status, and have done so in a variety of ways which provide an insight into the relationship not just between Daniel Owen and the translations of his work, but between the Welsh language literary canon and the tradition of Welsh-English translation.

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## Notes

- 1 A uniquely Welsh branch of Methodism now known as the Presbyterian Church of Wales, it was the largest of the non-conformist denominations in Victorian Wales.
- 2 For a more detailed overview of Owen's career and work in English, see Robert Rhys (2000b). The most comprehensive analysis of Owen in Welsh is also by Robert Rhys (2000a).

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- 3 Not to be confused with the modern weekly Welsh-language newspaper of the same name.
  - 4 W.J. Gruffydd (1881–1954); poet, academic and politician. He was an important early member of Plaid Cymru, the Welsh nationalist party; although he later left the party following disagreements with Saunders Lewis. Kate Roberts (1891–1985); short story writer and novelist widely acknowledged as one of the most important of Welsh-language prose writers. Daniel Owen was an influence, particularly early on, although her work is generally much darker in tone than anything Owen wrote.

## Chapter 3: Owen's *Rhys Lewis*: Translation as Nationalist Activism

### 3.1 Introduction: Translation and nationalism in nineteenth-century Wales

This chapter's subject will be *The Autobiography of Rhys Lewis, Minister of Bethel*; James Harris' 1888 translation of Owen's second novel. As detailed in the previous chapter, Owen's *Rhys Lewis* had achieved a popularity unprecedented for a Welsh-language novel, making its author famous throughout Wales. This novel was thus a natural target for translation. James Harris' translation differed from those Welsh-English translations typical of his age in many key respects. As a novel and a contemporary text, *Rhys Lewis* was a departure from the medieval texts and poetry favoured by most translators of the period. Additionally, rather than being an academic or intellectual exercise intended to be used in universities or to appeal to the English intelligentsia, this translation was a commercial project. Owen's original had been very successful and it seems likely that the publishers –Hughes & Sons, who had the rights to Owen's original novels– had every hope that a translation would prove popular as well. Despite its pioneering status as the first translation of a Welsh-language novel, the translation was very poorly received. Although it was apparently popular enough for a second edition to be printed in 1915 –to date, the only translation of Owen's novels to receive a second edition– those critics who have paid attention to it over the last century have tended to dismiss it, or bring it up only to criticise, as will be seen.

This chapter seeks to show that –regardless of whether or not it succeeds on an aesthetic level– the *political* significance of Harris' translation has been under-

appreciated. Radically so, considering its vintage, 1888 Harris' translation was a unique attempt to challenge some of the cultural assumptions prevalent in his society. His translation can be contextualised within an emerging discourse of Anglophone Welsh cultural nationalism, sharing elements with (if less advanced and popular) than that of contemporary Ireland, where, as described by Maria Tymoczko in *Translation in a Postcolonial Context*, translation was frequently used as a political tool to 'resist and challenge English stereotyping and English cultural spoliation' (Tymoczko 1999: 20–1).

Harris's translation is contemporaneous with the short-lived movement *Cymru Fydd*, occasionally referred to in English as Young Wales (in reference to Young Ireland) but now better known by its Welsh name, which translates more literally to 'Wales that will [be]'. Arguably the first political manifestation of 'Welshness' since Owain Glyndwr's rebellion in the early fifteenth century, *Cymru Fydd* was not an independent political party but rather a faction within the Welsh part of the Liberal party, albeit 'barely distinguishable' from the latter in many parts of Wales (Morgan 1991: 105). The movement called for a greater recognition of the Welsh language and Welsh culture as well as so-called home rule for Wales, and as its English name suggests it drew its inspiration from the Irish national revival (Morgan 1991: 69). Its spectacular rise in the late 1880s was matched only by the abruptness of its disintegration from within after 1895, caused ultimately by infighting between regional branches (Morgan 1991: 163–5), which Dewi Rowland Hughes suggests may have been symptomatic of the fact that the Welsh have showed more attachment to their respective regions than their country as a whole (2006: 190). The significance of *Cymru Fydd* is difficult to accurately judge because it was so short lived, and because it was ultimately unsuccessful in its core objective of obtaining home rule for Wales: Kenneth Morgan

has suggested that the considerable role of the Liberal party on the movement, in particular the involvement of known unionists from the Liberal party, exposed it as ‘sepratism in only a nominal form’; Morgan also questions the degree to which Home Rule truly interested the wider Welsh public at the time (1991: 164). In his comprehensive history of the movement, Dewi Rowland Hughes suggests that the movement fell apart not just because of the infighting cited by Kenneth Morgan, but because its participants –many of them careerists– gained a taste for imperial power (2006: 191). Hughes also draws attention to the fact that *Cymru Fydd*’s vision for Wales had always been vague: they lacked policies for agriculture and industry and had not adequately defined what Home Rule even meant (2006: 190). I would argue, however, that a focus on the failure of Welsh political nationalism in the late nineteenth century may obscure the radical nature of some of the period’s *cultural* expressions of national identity. The meteoric rise of *Cymru Fydd* was a result of a growing sense that Wales was being unduly ignored by the British establishment and is yet another manifestation of –to use Kenneth Morgan’s phrase once again– the national revival of the period. It may be possible to say that the significance of *Cymru Fydd* was not the success or failure of its stated aims but in the fact that it meant that Wales could no longer be ignored, as had been the case beforehand: the movement as Hughes suggests, succeeded in obtaining ‘hunan-barch os nad hunanreolaeth,’ [self-respect if not self rule] (2006: 192).

It is in a similar same sense that I describe James Harris’ translation as a work of ‘nationalist activism’. I am not suggesting that Harris was advocating Welsh home rule through his translation or through any other piece of writing: to my knowledge he never expressed support for the concept in writing (although equally there is no reason to

think he did not support it and it is entirely possible, even probable, that he was involved in *Cymru Fydd*), but rather that he was, through his translation, emphasising the status of Wales as an independent cultural entity. His vision for Wales may well have been every bit as vague as *Cymru Fydd*'s, or even more so, however, we should not allow this to diminish our appreciation of his radicalism.

In attempting to demonstrate this, I will begin by exploring why a novel like Daniel Owen's *Rhys Lewis* might be it attractive to a translator engaged in such a project. Although James Harris is a rather peripheral figure in Welsh history about whom relatively little is known, by exploring some of his other published work in his capacity as contributor to, and subsequently editor of the journal *Red Dragon*, I will show that Harris was concerned with the idea of Welshness as a separate identity to Englishness. I will then explore the text of the translation, using empirical examples to provide further evidence for Harris' nationalist approach and to show how it has influenced the text. I will show that Harris made small changes that nonetheless suggest a subtle attempt to avoid invoking some of the stereotypes about the Welsh that were widespread during the nineteenth century, such as the idea that the Welsh were somehow immoral (these criticisms were often tied into criticisms of Methodism). Most significantly, I will demonstrate the ways in which it can be considered a 'foreignising' translation, to use the term as articulated by Lawrence Venuti (1991, 1995).

In Venuti's paradigm, translations are divided into two broad categories: domesticating translations attempt to create the impression that the text was originally written in the target language, favouring such aesthetic concepts as fluency and readability. Foreignising translations by contrast avoid creating this impression, usually

by sticking closely to the source text and allowing the patterns of the source language to affect the translation. For Venuti, both approaches are politically loaded: he calls domesticating translation ‘ethnocentric violence’ (1995: 61) and advocates foreignising translation as a form of resistance in opposition to this violence. Venuti’s binary has been criticised from a variety of perspectives. Douglas Robinson argues that it is an elitist paradigm, favouring the kind of difficult, footnote-laden translations which appeal to cultural studies academics at the expense of those translations which will have widespread popular appeal (1997: 112). Maria Tymoczko argues that while Venuti’s paradigm may apply to many translations between English and other hegemonic languages (which Venuti can read), it does not apply so easily in postcolonial contexts or with minority languages (2000: 35–7), which are arguably the exact situations where domesticating translations’ ‘ethnocentric violence’ might be expected to be most potent. Does, for example, a Welsh-English domesticating translation still commit ethnocentric violence if it is produced not for the English market, but for non-Welsh speakers in Wales? Many Welsh-English translations were explicitly produced for just such a market. Furthermore, individual translations, Tymoczko argues, may simultaneously demonstrate both foreignising and domesticating elements, and if one insists on a binary it merely begs the question how many domesticating or foreignising elements a text needs to be considered to be domesticating or foreignising *as a whole* (2000: 37). Tymoczko also suggests that translations which demonstrate domesticating elements can still function in ways which resist colonial aggression. In order for translation to function as a means of political engagement, argues Tymoczko, translators must in fact show a ‘willingness to manipulate texts in translation, so as to adapt and subordinate the texts to political aims... no single approach or strategy is likely to suffice, whether it is free, “domesticating” or “foreignising”’ (2000: 41–2). While accepting that these

criticisms are valid and that Venuti's paradigm does not effectively describe the whole texts of any of the translations discussed in this thesis, I would argue that Venuti's terms still provide a convenient shorthand with which to describe some of the elements used in Harris' translation and in some of the other translations examined here. The foreignising/domesticating binary provides a framework for discussing the ways in which Harris' translation specifically functions as political activism: as will be shown, Harris deliberately eschewed the (fluent) model provided for him by the Celtic antiquarian tradition of translation and produced a text which was non-fluent; he did so, I will argue, in order to achieve the same broad aims which Venuti suggests are the rationale behind foreignising translation.

The most prominent of Harris's foreignising strategies was his use of a highly complex, ultra-formal linguistic style and vocabulary. This use of erudite English produces an atmosphere of reflective sophistication and intellectualism that would have served as a challenge to nineteenth-century English stereotypes of the Celts/Welsh as being irrational, emotional and whimsical. It also challenged the idea that the Welsh were uneducated, as had been established within the popular imagination of the time by the Blue Books. Venuti's paradigm is also helpful because it explains why Harris' translation was so poorly received: a lack of translational 'fluency', Venuti argues, has often led to translations receiving a poor critical response (1991, 1995). In this particular case, it appears that the critics who have lambasted Harris' translation for its language have to an extent missed the point: his use of language was a deliberate attempt to make a political statement about the intellectual prowess of the Welsh by producing a text which deliberately challenged conventional notions of fluency and



literary accessibility. These elements will be described in the fourth section of this chapter.

### **3.2 *Rhys Lewis*: a nationalist's novel?**

By 1882 Daniel Owen was an established novelist. His first novel, *Y Dreflan*, had been well received. However, the novel whose first chapters began appearing that year in *Y Drysorfa* (the same magazine that had serialised *Y Dreflan*) would turn out to be a considerably more ambitious work, although Owen's initial conception had been much more modest. *Rhys Lewis* had originally been intended to be a series of twelve chapters, to be serialised over a year. The idea was to produce a series of sketches from a Methodist childhood of the kind familiar to Owen himself and many of his readers (Rhys 2000a: 86–7); this would have been a book much more like *Y Dreflan* than *Rhys Lewis* would eventually become. Although the first few chapters reflect this, each dealing with a different aspect of, or anecdote from, the eponymous Rhys' childhood, the novel's characters seem to have quickly captured their creator's imagination and the planned twelve chapters eventually became forty-two. The serialisation thus continued well beyond the originally-planned year and lasted three years, with the novel later published by the author in its entirety in 1885. The novel proved hugely popular by the standards of nineteenth-century Welsh novels, with the first edition quickly selling out, and Owen received enough from the sale of the publishing rights to a second edition to build himself a house in Mold. The role of *Rhys Lewis* in establishing its author's reputation and status as a national figure (Rhys 2000a: 132) would make the novel especially appealing to translators who viewed their work as part of a national discourse.

As well as taking the form of a literary autobiography, *Rhys Lewis* is the most obviously autobiographical of Owen's novels. Like Owen, the eponymous Rhys lives in a working class household, is brought up by his mother, and decides to become a preacher and attends the theological college in Bala, although unlike Owen, Rhys completes his studies. Despite these obvious correlations there are many differences between Daniel Owen and Rhys, such that it would be a mistake to treat *Rhys Lewis* simply as Owen's own autobiography. As was noted in the previous chapter, considerable critical attention has been paid to Owen's use of the autobiographical form. The biographies and autobiographies of preachers and ministers were the most prevalent prose works of the nineteenth century in Welsh, and were avidly read by a public that, as has been explained, were wont to regard fiction with suspicion. Additionally however, fictional autobiographies were very common in the English literature of the nineteenth century (Millward 1970; Rhys 2000a: 105). In English translation *Rhys Lewis* would therefore simultaneously be a typical example of a popular Welsh literary form as well as one familiar to English readers, a dual-function which Harris and the publishers may have hoped would increase its appeal.

Although the first half of *Rhys Lewis* describes the title-character's childhood, the second half of the novel largely concerns Rhys' spiritual development from a wayward youth (although his exact transgressions are never described in any detail) to an upright Methodist, through a religious conversion inspired by his guardian, a chapel elder. This shift in focus to what would, by the standards of Victorian Welsh non-conformist culture, have been considered more conventional subject matter has led many critics since Owen's time to consider the novel's second half inferior to the first. Saunders Lewis claimed that this was because Owen had said what he had intended to

say: having completed his portrait of Methodist society in the first half of the novel, he was continuing merely because of the book's popularity with its audience (1936: 28–9). *The New Companion to the Literature of Wales* claims that the novel loses pace and interest after the departure of Bob and Mari Lewis, its most interesting characters, who drive the action and take up a considerable part of the reader's attention in the first half (Stephens 1998: 491). Ioan Williams agrees with this assessment:

Fel yr â'r nofel yn ei blaen dechreuwn deimlo nad oes pwysedd seicolegol y tu ôl i ddull Rhys o ddethol a threfnu ei ddeunydd. Tra fo Mari a Bob yn dal yno mae yna symudiad cryf. Er eu bod nhw'n cipio blaen y llwyfan, gan wthio Rhys ei hun yn ôl, derbyniwn hyn oherwydd eu bod mor bwysig iddo ef. Cyll y nofel beth o'r ynni hwn ar ôl marwolaeth Mari, yna cyll ragor ar ôl diflaniad Abel Hughes, sydd wedi'i gysylltu mor agos â phrofiad Rhys. Gydag ymddangosiad Niclas y Garth, a'r symud i'r Bala, mae cryfder y symudiad yn pallu'n gyfan gwbl. (1989: 104)

As the novel goes on we begin to feel that there is no psychological pressure behind Rhys' method of choosing and arranging his material. While Mari and Bob are still there there is strong movement. Although they steal the centre stage, pushing Rhys himself back, we accept this as they are so important to him. The novel loses some of this force after Mari's death, then loses more after the disappearance of Abel Hughes,

who is closely connected with Rhys' experience. With the appearance of Niclas y Garth, the force dissipates altogether.

The killing off of Bob Lewis in particular caused frustration for some twentieth-century readers (Williams 1975: 11), no doubt because the young, politically aware and active collier who defies the religious orthodoxy of his elders had a special appeal for more secular twentieth-century audiences. R. Williams Parry suggested that Owen was forced to kill off Bob Lewis as he had no real understanding of the politics the character represented (quoted in Williams 1975: 11). Owen himself admitted he allowed Bob to die as he did not feel able to complete his portrait (quoted in Edwards 1913). With many other characters dead, the remaining chapters focus by necessity on Rhys Lewis himself, a character unable, in some critics' view, to sustain the reader's interest, because of a lack of characterisation on Owen's part. In Saunders Lewis' words, 'un cymeriad yn *Hunangofiant Rhys Lewis* sy'n aneglur ac anfoddhaol; a hwnnw yw Rhys Lewis' [one character in *The Autobiography of Rhys Lewis* is unclear and unsatisfactory, and that is Rhys Lewis] (1936: 19). Other critics, however, have disagreed: Robert Rhys has suggested that those who believe the author had lost interest in his novel by its second half are viewing the novelist from a secular twentieth-century perspective that fails to recognise what the author himself would have considered important:

Y mae'n deg dyfalu na fyddai cynulleidfa gyfoes y nofelydd o'r farn fod y nofel yn gwanio ac yn colli cyfeiriad ar ôl marw Bob a Mari Lewis. Bu darllenwyr yr ugeinfed ganrif yn fwy diamynedd o dipyn, gan ei chael yn anodd derbyn i Daniel Owen wneud y cyw-bregethwr lleddf ac ofnus braidd yn brif gymeriad

ei chwedl... I lawer o ddarllenwyr diweddar, yn enwedig y rhai hynny sy'n darllen Daniel Owen drwy sbectol wrth-grefyddol, merfeidd-dra diflas sy'n nodweddu'r adrannau hynny sy'n troi o gylch y traethydd wedi iddo ddod i oed... [Mae'r penodau sy'n disgrifio troedigaeth a datblygiad crefyddol Rhys] yn llai nodweddiadol o waith Daniel Owen, ac mae hynny ar ryw olwg yn beth annisgwyl. Wedi'r cyfan, gan mai llenor Methodistaidd ydyw yn ysgrifennu mewn cylchgrawn Methodistaidd, fe ddisgwyliem fwy o ysgrifennu cyffesol, hunan-ddadansoddol nag a gafwyd ganddo, fwy o adrodd troeon gyrfa bywyd mewnol y cymeriadau... (2000a: 122-123)

It is a fair guess that the novelist's contemporary audience would not have been of the opinion that the novel weakens and loses direction after the deaths of Bob and Mari Lewis. Twentieth Century readers have been much more impatient, finding it had to accept that the Daniel Owen made the mild-mannered and rather timid preacher-in-waiting the main character of his novel... to many recent readers, especially those who read Daniel Owen through anti-religious lenses, those sections which discuss the narrator once he has reached adulthood are characterised by an insipid tediousness... [The chapters which describe Rhys Lewis' conversion and spiritual development] are less characteristic of Daniel Owen, and to a certain extent this is surprising. After all, as a Methodist writer writing in a Methodist

magazine, we might expect more confessional, self-analytical writing than we find, more describing of the turns of the characters' internal lives...

The idea that *Rhys Lewis*' reception has been dependent on shifting patterns of religious adherence and the importance of religion in Welsh society helps explain its changing critical stature over time. Unquestionably the most popular of Owen's novels during his own lifetime, it has been substantially downgraded by more recent critics (such as Williams 1989, Rowlands 1992, Rhys 2000a). Those twentieth century critics who have argued for its supremacy have usually been writing from a religious background, and it is usually the religious elements of the text which earn their praise (for example Davies 1925, R. M. Jones 1959). If the religious focus of *Rhys Lewis* has alienated readers in its original language, then it has perhaps also been problematic for the text's export beyond Wales through translation. Although modern Wales is certainly more secular a society than Victorian Wales was, the same was true of Victorian England. While discussing the translation of Welsh literature into English in *Corresponding Cultures*, M. Wynn Thomas notes that:

One of the problems of... Welsh language literature, from today's militantly secular point of view, is that it has been so heavily marked, not to say 'stained' and 'disfigured', by religious zeal. Consequently, many of the greatest Welsh-language texts are religious classics which would be unpalatable to most English readers. (1999: 149)

It is certainly significant that although *Rhys Lewis* was the first of Owen's novels to be translated, the first of Owen's novels to be re-translated in the twenty-first century was the rather more secular *Enoc Huws* (this translation will be discussed in Chapter 5 of this thesis) –Harris' translation remains the only English *Rhys Lewis*. To nineteenth-century translators, however, *Rhys Lewis* would perhaps have been a more appealing text. The Welsh language and its literature in that period were, as has been established, closely intertwined with religion. As the most obviously religious of Owen's novels, as well as raising the profile of Welsh literature a translation of *Rhys Lewis* could have provided an effective vehicle for the export of Welsh religious culture and values, a pressing concern during Owen's own time. Daniel Williams identifies an 'ethnic conception of Welshness' which developed in the nineteenth century rooted in religious non-conformism (2012: 28) and describes this using Dale Peterson's (2000: 37) term as 'missionary nationalism' (Williams 2012: 28–9). This variety of nationalism can be seen expressed in the 'English Cause', the Calvinist Methodists' attempts to establish English-speaking chapels and gain followers outside Welsh-speaking communities. The time and effort invested in establishing English chapels suggested an enthusiasm on the part of Welsh-speakers to see their religion, and thereby their values, exported. The popularity of *Rhys Lewis* in nineteenth-century Wales, and more importantly its religious tone, meant it would have had a particular appeal as a cultural export that powerfully expressed Welsh social and religious values.

As well as their religion, Welsh speakers in the late nineteenth century were interested in spreading and safeguarding their culture and national identity. In particular, such efforts were directed at those areas of Wales where the Welsh language was no longer the primary spoken language. It was in this period that the first English language

periodicals aimed at a Welsh audience began to appear. In his introduction to the first volume of one such journal, *Wales*, editor O.M. Edwards explained how:

One aim of *Wales* is to foster the literary awakening which is evidently spreading to English Wales. It is to be hoped that, some day, the Radnorshire farmer will be as fond of reading as the Lleyn farmer, the working man of the Montgomery borders will be as intelligent as the working man of Cardigan or Merioneth, that the peasant of eastern Monmouth will be as intelligent as the peasant of Arvon or the Vale of Towy. Why should the land of Henry Vaughan and George Herbert be less fond of literature than the land of Islwyn and Ceiriog? (Edwards 1894: iii)

It is worth remembering here that the idea that the Welsh have an inherent respect for literature was a typical aspect of the popular racialist discourse of the period: Matthew Arnold considered this a highly desirable aspect of the Celtic peoples, when compared to the philistinism he believed was typical of the English (1867/1891: x). The evocation of the same idea by a nationalist like Edwards shows how in Wales as in other colonial contexts, nationalists often accept and even embrace some Orientalist ideas about their cultures (Prakash 1990). *Red Dragon*, another slightly earlier periodical of the period also aimed at English speakers in Wales, was edited by *Rhys Lewis* translator James Harris. These periodicals would be a valuable outlet for Welsh nationalists in the period, and, as will be detailed later on in this chapter, translation was a significant tool which



they would use extensively: *Wales*, for example, would go on to serialise a translation of Daniel Owen's novel *Enoc Huws*, which will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Owen's introduction to *Enoc Huws* expresses his desire to portray in his novels 'the history and customs of Wales' (2010: xii). For those wishing to showcase Welsh-language culture and literature to an English speaking audience, *Rhys Lewis* would be an appealing choice for a translation. As a contemporary text, it spoke to Wales in a way that would have appealed to those wishing to portray the nation as modern, dynamic and existing in the present rather than as purely historical. Because the immigration into Wales triggered by the industrial revolution was mainly to the south, as these areas became urbanised they were also becoming increasingly anglophone, particularly by the beginning of the twentieth century (Davies 1994: 419). This division would prove problematic for nation-building projects, by imposing a rural/urban cultural divide on groups already divided by geography and language. Daniel Owen was an exception to this trend in that, despite having been written in Welsh his novels were urban in setting, making them perhaps more appealing to the urbanised anglophone Welsh of the south than much of the more pastoral literature of Owen's contemporaries.

If its urban setting marked *Rhys Lewis* as different from much of the Welsh-language literature of the nineteenth century, then its subject matter and form were certainly no less Welsh for it. As well as having taken its original Welsh-speaking audience by storm, the novel contains portraits of a Welsh childhood and Welsh chapel life, is populated by Welsh characters, all packaged in a popular Welsh literary form (the autobiography of a preacher). Crucially, the novel offers positive portrayals of all of

these that do not necessarily conform to the negative stereotypes about the Welsh popular at the time.

In certain respects, *Rhys Lewis* can itself be read as a nationalist challenge to some of the claims that had been made about the Welsh during the period. Issues of morality for example –for which the Welsh had been fiercely criticised in the Blue Books– are central to the novel. Bob Lewis must make a difficult decision between challenging the authority of a teacher and defending his brother. Bob and Mari Lewis debate the conflict between religion and modern science and politics. Another character, Wil Bryan, experiences a conflict between his love for his home and religious background, with his desire for material wealth and success. Rhys himself experiences religious doubts and seeks aid from his guardian, Abel Huws. All these are examples of moral questions being raised and debated within the novel. The fact that the characters in *Rhys Lewis* are expressly concerned with questions of morality represents a challenge to the the morally-backward and ignorant vision of the Welsh represented by the Blue Books, and by the popular negative stereotypes of the time.

The idea that translation from Welsh has been used as a way to challenge supposedly-English cultural values has been brought up by M. Wynn Thomas, and is explained in greater detail in the introduction to this thesis. There are some reasons to suggest that *Rhys Lewis* itself was intended partially to challenge some of these cultural values. Robert Rhys has suggested that Owen had conceived *Rhys Lewis* in part as a response to the often negative portrayals of Calvinist society in contemporary English literature: as noted above, Robert Rhys suggested that Owen had intended to serve as a counter to novels like William Hale White's *The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford*,

which negatively portrayed Calvinistic society as an oppressive background for a child (Rhys 2000a: 108). Although portrayals of non-conformist religious culture like White's were not specifically portrayals of Welsh culture, the strong association between non-conformism and Wales meant that the reputation of the two were closely linked, to the point that it could be argued that Owen intended his novel to be a defence of a Welsh childhood as much as a Calvinist one. Indeed, Owen's portrayal of Calvinist Methodism in general is light-hearted and entertaining, and while there are certainly examples of oppressive religious orthodoxy in the novel, it is often being satirised. Owen's portrayal is of a morally upright society that is nonetheless neither oppressive nor incapable of humour, and this stands in stark contrast to both the negative portrayal of the Welsh in the Blue Books and to critical portrayals of Calvinism presented in English literature. Conversely, the novel's portrayal of English characters is also often satirical or humorous. The Parson speaks in broken, uneducated Welsh (reflecting his imperfect grasp of his parishioners' language), and the odious, self-important, Welsh-hating Mr. Strangle is a deliberate satire of English businessmen (Rhys 2000a: 116). The portrayals of Welshness and of non-conformism offered in Owen's novel were positive contrasts to the popular negative stereotypes of the time, and the novel also offered a light-hearted satire of English values.

### **3.3 Rhys Lewis, Minister of Bethel: An autobiography: Contexts**

No doubt eager to capitalise on their financial investment, Hughes & Sons, the publishers who had bought the rights to further editions of *Rhys Lewis* from Owen, brought out Harris' translation –*Rhys Lewis, Minister of Bethel*– in time for the National Eisteddfod in Wrexham in 1888. James Harris was a native of Merthyr Tydfil who

between 1885–87 had been editor of *Red Dragon*, a historical and literary journal published in Cardiff. The short-lived journal (it lasted only from 1882 until 1887) was established by Charles Wilkins and marketed mainly at the English-speaking parts of Wales, which in the nineteenth century primarily meant the South Wales coalfield. Under Wilkins' editorship, the journal included articles on aspects of Welsh history, biographies of notable Welsh figures (particularly writers), as well as poetry, character sketches, stories and serials. It is notable for being one of the first English-language periodicals to be produced in Wales by Welsh writers, and aimed at a Welsh audience.

Although some of the content of *Red Dragon*, particularly the original literature, was of only peripheral relevance to Wales, the journal was expressly concerned with the issue of Welsh nationhood, proudly proclaiming itself on the cover of each edition to be 'The national magazine of Wales'. Although not himself native to Wales, its founding editor Charles Wilkins had made his home in Merthyr Tydfil and had become enamoured of Wales, wishing to encourage similar feelings among his new countrymen (Stephens 1998: 616, 767). Sarah Yoder describes *Red Dragon*, along with other English-language Welsh journals of the nineteenth century, as a vital product of Welsh nationalism in the period whose significance has been under-appreciated (2008). Although the magazine did not advocate political separatism and its contributors frequently expressed sympathy with the British imperial project (outside Wales at least), its editors' attempt to delineate a national identity on Welsh rather than British lines remained a form of resistance to British cultural hegemony that was radical within its cultural context (Yoder 2008: 17). The journal appeared at a time when Wales had begun once again to be a meaningful political concept, following centuries in which it had 'ceased to exist as a political problem for London' (Hechter 1975: 71), thus it can

be viewed as part of a wider trend of national revitalisation that took place in Wales during the period.

Thus, although *Red Dragon* frequently claimed to be non-political, as a conscious attempt to offer a new definition of Welshness no longer based on language it was an expressly political project. Indeed, these claims of political neutrality could in themselves be read as part of a political strategy to foster a national identity which transcended existing social affiliations (Yoder 2008: 19). Many of the texts in *Red Dragon* could push the agenda of Welsh nationhood while avoiding the subject of politics, for example by emphasising the global significance of Welsh literature or the importance of Welsh contributions to history. A regular feature in each issue was *Notable Men of Wales*, a biographical piece about a Welshman which generally sought to emphasise his contributions to the Welsh nation, but also the wider world and particularly to the British Empire. Occasionally, as in the case of James Harris' own *The Massacre of the Welsh Bards*, which will be discussed in greater detail below, articles published in *Red Dragon* would expressly challenge the historical record with regards the relationship between Wales and England. The most important aspect of the kind of Welshness advocated by *Red Dragon* however was in emphasising the status of Wales as a literary nation, which valued stories, poetry and song. Michael Hechter claims that 'Group consciousness among the Welsh and Scottish in the nineteenth century arose around cultural symbols which differentiated these regions from England' (1975: 310). Although there were many cultural 'symbols' which became associated with Wales during the nineteenth century, a focus on literature had the advantage firstly of intellectual status and, secondly, that it was able to transcend the social divisions

inherent in religion and, through the help of translation, language. Welsh literature was effectively being used as a means to push forward a Welsh national identity.

However, as predicted by Gyan Prakash's *Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World* (1990), the national focus of *Red Dragon* was not without its contradictions. Even as they tried to establish the importance and significance of the Welsh, many of the proto-nationalist texts which appeared in the magazine implicitly or explicitly accepted some of the established conceptual paradigms of the imperial culture. Victorian racialism for example was openly embraced by many contributors to *Red Dragon*, as shown in this extract from *The Old Welsh Gentleman*, one in a series of sketches of Welsh characters:

At a time when the slim, dark-haired, and sallow-faced Norman was winning himself a home here, and the tawny-haired Dane and Saxon and the square-faced Fleming were intermarrying, and fusing themselves, with other nationalities, into the "British Race", the old Welsh, or, more properly-speaking, British gentleman, displayed that genial, hospitable nature which has ever since become associated in our mind with the representatives of the ancient race. We all know the chief traits of the races that have made up the present Englishman. We know the Saxon to be sluggish, with a good deal of staying power; we also know that the British had a good deal of *élan*, were more poetic, and shorter-tempered, and that chivalry and

courtesy to women came in with the Norman. (Ap Adda 1883:  
257–8)

The only real difference between this particular brand of Victorian racialism and that of the likes of Matthew Arnold was its attempt to foreground the Welsh ‘virtues’ as the most congenial and desirable of any race. This extract also features a fine example of M. Wynn Thomas’ ‘contributionism’, in its suggestion that the English owe some of their virtue to the quite literal contribution of British (i.e. Welsh) blood. The signature of this piece’s author, Ap Adda –‘son of Adam’– is a pen name; these were particularly popular among contributors to *Red Dragon*: according to Yoder (2008: 41) Ap Adda, the author of *Welsh Character Sketches*, was in fact Charles Wilkins, the magazine’s first editor. As well as allowing them to express more controversial opinions anonymously, by using pen names the contributors to *Red Dragon* were claiming continuity with a wider Welsh tradition, where pen names are used in order to ensure the neutrality of competition judges at the Eisteddfod (and often end up being used more widely, in some cases, such as with Gwilym Hiraethog, Islwyn or perhaps most famously Hedd Wyn, becoming better known than their owners’ real names).<sup>1</sup>

Although the vast bulk of the literary contributions to *Red Dragon* were original, there were a few translations from Welsh (and a few more from Latin and Greek) in earlier volumes. By far the most prominent translated author was Dafydd ap Gwilym.<sup>2</sup> The translations of ap Gwilym’s poetry, like many which appeared in *Red Dragon*, show the deliberate use of archaisms and romantic language, as shown in this translation of *Yr Alarch*, a poem usually attributed to ap Gwilym:

Thou Swan, upon the waters bright,  
In lime hued vest, like Abbot white,  
Bird of the spray, to whom is given  
The raiment of a child of heaven.  
[...]  
Oh! 'tis a noble task to ride  
The billows, countless as the snow;  
Thy long fair neck, thou thing of pride,  
Thy hook to catch the fish below.  
Thou guardian of the fountain head  
By whom Syvaddon's waves are fed,  
Above the dingle's rugged streams  
Intensely white thy raiment gleams. (Johnes 1883)

The recasting of Dafydd ap Gwilym in the style of romantic English poetry parallels developments in Ireland, where some nationalist translators deliberately reproduced old Irish legends in styles reminiscent of established European epic poetry (Tymoczko 1999: 74). The function of these changes is to demand a place for Irish/Welsh literature within the European and classical tradition by adapting it to the expectations of that tradition. Furthermore, the romantic language and the archaisms are examples of a strategy common in Welsh-English translation of the time, designed to replicate 'the antiquity and supposed mysticism of the original texts' (Reynolds 2005: xvii). As with much of the original writing in the journal, the translations seem to be attempting to reinforce preconceived notions about the romantic mysticism of the Celts. Notably absent, considering the number of Dafydd ap Gwilym translations that *are* included, is



any translation of *Trafferth Mewn Tafarn* ('Trouble in a Tavern'), ap Gwilym's bawdy, comic poem about an intended sexual tryst which ends in disaster and embarrassment. This was doubtless because the poem's subject matter was deemed inappropriate by the standards of Victorian society. However, sensitive to the Blue Books' suggestions that the Welsh were sexually promiscuous, a claim which *Trafferth mewn Tafarn* might be thought to reinforce, it is also quite possible that the translators had no desire to translate the poem, or that the magazine's editors would not have wished to publish it if they had. This selective translation can be viewed as part of a strategy to deliberately omit material which presented the Welsh as licentious or otherwise impure, just as their Irish contemporaries had done (Tymoczko 2009: 34).

Charles Wilkins, the first editor of *Red Dragon*, stepped down in 1885 and was replaced by James Harris. Both before and after assuming the editorship, Harris contributed content to the journal on several occasions. A contributor to earlier issues of the journal, credited only as 'J.H.', may also be Harris. Under Harris' editorship the literary content of *Red Dragon* declined in favour of a more historical focus (Stephens 1998: 616). Despite this, Harris himself was also interested in producing his own literature: he occasionally contributed poetry to the journal and his translation of *Rhys Lewis* credits him as the author of several stories. However, it is Harris' preoccupation with Welsh history and historiography that informs much of his writing, particularly his single most substantial contribution to *Red Dragon*: *The Massacre of the Welsh Bards* (1885a, 1885b). The two-part article consists of an analysis and criticism of historian Thomas Stephens' *The Literature of the Kymry* (1849), in which Harris particularly criticised Stephens for his suggestion that the massacre of Welsh bards by Edward I—a popular and enduring legend—had no basis in historical fact. Stephens had concluded

that there was no evidence that the massacre had taken place; Harris claimed that such a conclusion was based on the assumption that the English were incapable of such barbarism and that Stephens was therefore taking an 'English view' (1885a: 536). Harris went on to suggest that the popular tradition that it had happened was itself evidence for its truth.

Popular tradition is the music of the ages, the idealised echo of truth. Upon it all history is built. A safe rule to adopt with regard to it is to accept it in the same way that parole evidence is accepted in a court of law. The original document having being lost, secondary evidence is always admissible (1885a: 536–7)

This is an interpretation of history with which it is unlikely many modern historians would agree, but it gives an insight into the way in which Harris was willing to adapt his reading of history according to his own political agenda. Thomas Stephens has been praised by modern critics for his commitment to historical accuracy and though he has been recognised as essentially patriotic in his assessment of Welsh history (Stephens 1998: 691), Harris' criticisms of Stephens also clearly emanate from a nationalist perspective. His concern is that Stephens' work trivialises or denies the suffering inflicted on the Welsh at the hands of the English. Charles Wilkins had opened the first edition of *Red Dragon* with a deferential biography of Thomas Stephens which reflected the high esteem in which he had been held in Wales (Stephens 1998: 691). Harris by contrast is scathing in his criticisms of the historian, making his article relatively controversial for its period. His challenge to consensus is thus in its own way quite a radical piece of criticism, as well as demonstrating how matters of Welsh history were

being debated within nationalist circles as well as between different schools of historiography. Harris promises to write another instalment about *The Literature of the Kymry*, which was to include a criticism of Stephens' translations of Welsh poetry. Frustratingly, for scholars of Welsh translation history, Harris' article, if he ever wrote it, was not published, but from the preview he offers in *The Massacre of the Welsh Bards* it is possible to gain some insight into his view of translation methodology:

I shall correct what my notes show to be a perfect swarm of inaccurate quotations. I shall show that barely in a single instance do the translations convey the meaning of the originals, while in very many instances they actually pervert it. I should not, for example, think of quarrelling with him for manipulating his original as Pope manipulated Homer. There it was one poet dealing with another. Here –but enough. The reader will see my meaning. With regard to particular errors, they traverse the whole range of the book from cover to cover. (1885b: 65)

It is interesting to read Harris' criticising translations, especially for failing to 'convey the meaning of the originals', in the light of the strenuous criticism his own translation was to receive a few years later. Regardless, Harris demonstrates here an awareness of the creative potential and political importance of translation. His concern is that Stephens' translations are not of sufficient literary quality compared to the originals from which he had worked, thus giving the impression of Welsh literature as inferior. However, and perhaps more importantly, he also explicitly accepts the idea that faithfulness to the original is not necessarily important to a translation, and that the

translator is an active figure rather than simply a copyist. He makes a similar claim with regards to his own work, in his preface to his translation of *Rhys Lewis*:

It has long struck me that there are more things in Welsh literature than are dreamt of in the average English reader's philosophy. One of the best of such things, in its own particular line, that I have come across, is the story of which I here present a not very rigidly textual translation, my aim having been to act as the author's interpreter rather than to cling, with undeviating fidelity, to the extreme niceties of a literal rendering. (Owen 1888: 3)

There are several significant points to be drawn from Harris' preface. He demonstrates his intent to manipulate the text through his translation. He also emphasises the primacy of Daniel Owen as one of the language's greatest writers and of *Rhys Lewis* as a masterpiece of Welsh literature. Most interestingly, however, it is also made clear that he has intended his translation for an English audience, not necessarily for those in the English-speaking parts of Wales: further on in the preface he refers to 'that large English public to which I appeal' (Owen 1888: 3). This implication is further emphasised by the reference to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* with which he opens the preface (calculated perhaps to provide the text with an air of intellectual sophistication as well as familiarity to the 'average English reader'). Harris was eager that his translation appeal to the English and offer something of value to the English world.

Whether or not Harris was successful in appealing to his audience, the translation remains relatively unknown. This is perhaps unexpected, given the significance and the enduring popularity of *Rhys Lewis*, although critical neglect is by no means unusual for translations of novels from Welsh into English. What is noteworthy however is that the attention it has received has been almost unanimously critical. A few of the reviews it received on publication were broadly positive, such as the one in *The Morning Post* which claims that Harris had ‘happily caught the spirit and rhythm of that ancient tongue’ (1888: 3). The review in the *Western Mail* (1888: 6) is full of praise, although mainly of the novel rather than the translation, and suggests that Harris’ translation, though not flawless, is unlikely to be improved upon. The majority of the reviews are negative, however. An anonymous reviewer in *Y Goleuad* penned a particularly vitriolic tirade in which Harris is accused, among other things, of ignorance of both the Welsh and English languages, an ignorance of Methodist practices and an ignorance of the Bible, for all of which the reviewer cites evidence (the specific instances which this and other reviewers criticise will be discussed in greater detail in the next part of this chapter). The following extract from the *Y Goleuad* review provides a flavour of the damning criticism contained within.

Teimlwn ei bod bron yn ddarostyngiad arnom fyned ymlaen i feirniadu llyfr a gynwysa y fath wallau echrydus. Gwir fod y cyfieithydd wedi gorfod prysuro gyda’r gwaith, ond nid prysurdeb yw yr achos o honynt. Ni phigasom ond yma ac acw o’r rhai mwyaf amlwg. Pe cawsai yr awdwr hwn gan’ mlynedd o amser, heb iddo feddu rhyw gymwysderau amgenach na dim

sydd ynddo yn awr, credwn mai tebyg a fuasai y gwaith. (*Y Goleuad* 1888: 11)

We feel that it is almost degrading for us to continue to criticise a book which contains such horrific errors. It is true that the translator had to work quickly, but haste is not their cause. We have picked only here and there amongst the most obvious. Were this author given an hundred years, without attaining some additional qualifications to any he currently possesses, we believe that the work would be similar.

Negative reviews of the translation were not limited to the Welsh-language press. Two negative reviews appeared in the *Liverpool Mercury*, the first of which claimed that:

We regret that we cannot speak with unqualified praise of the translation. Mr Harris seems to lack some of the qualifications which might be deemed essential in a translator of this work, though we have no desire to treat him with the severity manifested by some of his reviewers. (*Liverpool Mercury* 1888a: 2)

The second reviewer however had no such reticence:

In justice to Mr. Daniel Owen, the gifted author of the original, it must be said that the translation is a ludicrous travesty of his

work. In Welsh the work in its portraiture of character is on a par with the best fiction in any language, in Mr. James Harris' English it is the dreariest and most colourless book... It was certainly to be expected that a literary man of Mr. Harris' reputation would have produced something better than the very poor work before us. He betrays an ignorance of Welsh religious life unpardonable in a man who should dream of attempting a translation of *Rhys Lewis*. Mr. Harris should have left the book alone (*Liverpool Mercury* 1888b: 7)

Daniel Owen's biographer Isaac Foulkes noted that Owen himself, being typically modest, considered it a compliment that *Rhys Lewis* was considered worthy of a translation (1903: 122), although he did not record what Owen thought of the translation itself. Foulkes himself was as critical as the reviewers in magazines and newspapers had been, calling it a 'methiant galarus' [mournful failure] (1903: 182), and stating his preference for Claud Vivian's translation of *Enoc Huws* (discussed in the next chapter).

Despite its poor reception, the translation was apparently popular enough that a second edition of the translation was published in 1915. In fact, it is likely that it was this very reception which encouraged the publication of the 1915 edition, which is billed as a 'revised edition'. The publishers' note included in the 1915 edition alongside Harris' original 1888 preface is anonymous but almost certainly not written by Harris himself, describing as it does how the first edition indeed contained the 'slips' that Harris had originally feared might have been included (Owen 1888: 3). The 1915 edition promises a 'more faithful rendering into English of the idioms peculiar to certain

districts in North Wales' (Owen 1915: 4), and while the new edition does make some minor changes (no longer referring to the *seiat* as 'communion' for example) it does nothing to modify the general character of the translation as it had been penned by James Harris.

The translation's standing has not improved with time and has been ignored altogether by studies of Daniel Owen. To the present author's knowledge, neither it nor any of the other translations of Owen's novels are mentioned in any biography or critical discussion of Owen's work after Isaac Foulkes' 1903 biography, apart from in the entry on *Rhys Lewis* in the *The New Companion to the Literature of Wales*, where it is noted that an 'inept' English translation by James Harris appeared in 1888 without further comment (1998: 636). While it has been ignored by scholars of Daniel Owen, Harris' translation has been noticed by those exploring literary translation in Wales. It receives a brief mention in the article on translations in *Welsh Outlook* which was covered in greater detail in the opening chapter of this thesis (H.M.V. 1917), however beyond noting that the novel was not well-known beyond the Welsh border, the author offers no criticism of the translation itself. Often, on the occasions that Harris' translation is mentioned it is usually dismissed. M. Wynn Thomas' criticism in the *Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation* is slightly more detailed (though he does not mention the translator by name), but the translation is still essentially dismissed as an 'attempt' to translate the novel:

When translated into painfully correct English, even the dialect-enriched novels of a genius like Daniel Owen –the first and perhaps still the greatest of Welsh novelists– could seem



intellectually inbred, technically laboured and whimsically homespun. Fortunately, however, the 1963 version of Owen's *Gwen Tomos* is appreciably better than 19th-c. attempts to translate *Rhys Lewis* and *Enoc Huws*. (2000: 187)

The author of the article on English translations of Welsh novels suggests that the nature of the source texts used by translators provides the main explanation for their lack of popularity (H.M.V. 1917), thereby implicating the nature of *Rhys Lewis* itself as the cause for the critical and commercial failure of Harris' translation. As the quotations above indicate, however, it is clear that the consensus among literary critics and historians is that the translation itself was an artistic failure.

In certain respects it should not be surprising that the translation was poorly received. Lawrence Venuti (1995) has clearly established the link between translational fluency and the reception of translations, particularly in nineteenth-century anglophone cultures. Wales of course is not strictly anglophone but the influence of English cultural values was widespread and all-pervasive; we should thus not be surprised to find Welsh speakers claiming that translations should be fluent, as is indeed the case in the review of Harris' translation in *Y Goleuad*. That the reception of Harris' translation has not improved in the century since its publication merely shows how these values and expectations continue to be widespread. As a non-fluent translation in its cultural context, *Rhys Lewis, Minister of Bethel* might be said to have been doomed from the start. However, there is a second factor that may have contributed to its poor reception. In her analysis of nationalist English-language periodicals in Victorian Wales, Sarah Yoder notes that:

Since these magazines were, in essence, working to re-imagine and thus *redefine* Welsh identity, we should not be surprised that their visions of Welshness did not always meet with a positive reception. In fact, we should actually see instances of readerly resistance (and perhaps even falling circulation figures) as evidentiary indicators of the radical nature of these magazines.

(2008: 17; emphasis in original)

When it is considered as an extension of the nationalist project represented by *Red Dragon*, it can similarly be argued that the anger Harris' translation appears to have caused among many of its original readers is a reflection of its radical nature. To a certain extent, the reviewer's flippant suggestion in *Y Goleuad* that the translation should be used by teachers –as an example of how not to translate literature– was prophetic: in the pages of the *New Companion to the Literature of Wales* and the *Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation* Harris' translation is essentially defined as a failure, an example of bad translation practice. These texts implicitly discourage others from producing translations in a similar vein.

Whether or not the translation fails artistically is of course a subjective matter. However, in simply dismissing the translation's idiosyncrasies as evidence of the translator's ignorance or ineptitude these critics have missed the opportunity to examine the translation as the radical political project it in fact constituted. The objective of the following analysis is to show that Harris' translation was envisaged as a political project and thus its aesthetic success or failure can be considered tangential to its cultural and political agenda. It will demonstrate how the very factors which have likely contributed

to the translation's poor reception were in fact deliberate translation strategies as part of a nationalist agenda on the translator's part.

### **3.4 Textual Analysis of Rhys Lewis, Minister of Bethel: An Autobiography**

In the introduction to this thesis I discussed how translation was used as a resistance strategy for Irish cultural nationalists in the eighteenth century (Tymoczko 1999: 20). One way in which this was achieved was by purging their source texts of material that could have undermined their ideological aims. Such material either portrayed the Irish negatively, or in a way that invoked the negative stereotypes that had been used against them (Tymoczko 1999: 75–6). To a lesser extent, a similar process takes place in Harris' translation of *Rhys Lewis*. Harris makes minor changes in certain locations in order to deliberately avoid invoking negative Welsh stereotypes. The following quotation from Owen's novel is followed by a close translation of the original Welsh, then Harris' translation of the same section:

Yr oedd Mr. Brown, y person, yn ŵr dyngarol a charedig dros  
ben wrth ei blwyfolion, yn enwedig y rhai nad oeddynt yn  
hereticiaid. (Owen 2002: 36)

[Mr Brown, the parson, was a humanitarian and very kind to his  
parishioners, especially those that were not heretics.]

Parson Brown was wondrously kind and charitable towards all  
his parishioners, especially the orthodox. (Owen 1888: 39)

In this section, Harris avoids describing those to whom the parson is less charitable (in other words, Methodists like Owen and Owen’s characters, as well as the bulk of Welsh-speaking Wales) as heretics. Instead, Harris merely describes the Anglicans as being orthodox, conveniently avoiding having to disparage chapel-goers and suggesting that the Methodists could be considered heretical –an accusation sometimes levelled at the Welsh (by non-Methodists, of course). Elsewhere, a man who is described in the original as ‘anfoesol’ [immoral] (Owen 2002: 95) is described in Harris’ translation as ‘worldly-minded’ (1888: 95) –again, avoiding invoking a stereotype about the moral dubiousness of the Welsh (which had received considerable attention in the Blue Books). The character of the parson, in fact, deserves further mention as the critical review of the translation in *Y Goleuad* had explicitly singled out his portrayal in the translation for special criticism. In the original, when the parson speaks, it is in a deliberately faltering Welsh which serves to highlight his incompetence and his apathy towards his parishioners (he has made only a token effort to learn their language). By doing so Owen both satirises the Anglican clergy in Wales (who were often ignorant of Welsh) as well as calling to question his ability to see to his parishioners spiritual needs as well as the Methodist elders (all Welsh natives) are able to. It is also a source of humour, juxtaposing the parson’s education and bearing with his faltering speech:

chi yn yn scolor –chi yn medryud darllen a scyfenu a deud y  
catecism– chi dechre ysgol yn yr hen *office* gwag–finne helpio  
chi. Llawer o plant heb dysg, Bobyt, chi *chargio* ceiniog yr  
wythnos –gneud *lot* o pres–byw yn fforddus– fi gneud ’y ngore i  
chi. (Owen 2002: 36; italics in original)

In his translation, Harris replicates the Parson's broken Welsh in his dialogue (now in English of course):

you scholar, you able to read and write and say catechism –you  
start school in old empty office there– me help you –many  
children without learning hereabouts Robbit; you charge penny  
week, make lot coin, live comfortable, I do my best to you.

(Owen 1888: 39)

This replication of broken language seems to have confused the reviewer in *Y Goleuad*, who criticises the decision:

Mor ddisynwyr ydyw i'r person siarad Saesneg drwg ag yntau  
yn Sais ac ysgolhaig, oblegid na fedrai siarad Cymraeg cywir. (*Y  
Goleuad* 1888)

[It is so nonsensical for the parson to speak poor English with  
him an Englishman and scholar, simply because he could not  
speak correct Welsh.]

The reviewer seems to have missed the point. It is clear to the reader, both of the original and the translation, that the parson, no matter how educated his English might be expected to be, is understood to be speaking Welsh when he speaks like this (in fact, Harris points this out explicitly in the text, which Owen had not needed to do). By doing so Harris, like Owen before him, gets an opportunity to satirise the Anglican clergy. The

inability of many in positions of authority in Wales (clergy, landlords, business owners) to speak Welsh is a theme which appears several times in Owen's novels, and represents a turning of the tables on the Blue Books-derived idea that the Welsh were uneducated: the English, Owen suggests, are themselves ignorant in some spheres. If Harris had, as the reviewer in *Y Goleuad* suggests, simply had the Parson speak in ordinary English, he would have lost the opportunity to make this point.

As suggested in the opening section of this chapter, the heart of *Rhys Lewis* is the religious-political debate between the title character's mother and brother. Stretched over several chapters, Mari Lewis is an orthodox Methodist of the old school, while Bob Lewis represents the liberalism, even socialism, of a more modern and urban mindset. Critics are divided over which of the two Owen himself felt closer to; with many critics in the 20th century, such as John Rowlands, believing he was closest to the young revolutionary Bob Lewis (1992). More recently however Robert Rhys has suggested that while Owen writes about both characters in turn in both a satirical and sympathetic light, Owen does sympathise with Mari's simplicity and honesty and if his ultimate sympathies are unclear he certainly does not unquestioningly agree with Bob (2000a: 116–21). A nationalist like James Harris might well have wanted to emphasise Bob's side of the argument, because by doing so he would be portraying the Welsh as active rather than passive and 'capable of relating to reason' (Prakash 1990: 388) –Mari Lewis is uninterested in reason (preferring the authority of the Bible and those who preach it) and certainly not in enlightenment ideals like Progress, itself a preoccupation of nationalist historiography (Prakash 1990: 386). She considers it unwise for example to educate children beyond making them able to read the bible, and dislikes the thought of reading anything else. In some respects, Mari evokes familiar stereotypes of the

Welsh in that she is interested only in the chapel and actively rejects everything outside it (she is also entirely ignorant of the English language). By strict contrast to Mari Lewis, her son Bob, although only a collier, is intelligent, sophisticated and widely read (and a fluent speaker and reader of English). It would be imperative therefore for a nationalist like Harris to make it clear that Mari Lewis is a figure of comedy and consequently politically harmless, and that Bob by contrast more closely represents the Wales that Daniel Owen intends to encourage and foster—Bob Lewis might be a perfect example of the kind of intelligent, educated working class Welshmen that nationlists like O. M. Edwards wished to create (1894: iii).

In Owen's original, Mari's dialogue is more informal and colloquial compared to the narration and to Bob's language, in a way that reflects her lack of education rather than any lack of intelligence—it is a conscious attempt to reflect the spoken dialect of Mold in the nineteenth century. Bob's speech by contrast is rather formal and correct:

“Yr ydych bob amser yn rhagfarnllyd yn erbyn y *students*, ac yn wir yn erbyn addysg, Mam,” ebe Bob; “ond nid wiw ichwi wingo; mae'r dynion gorau a feddwn yn ysgolheigion gwych, ac yn gwneud eu gorau dros addysg, ac yn enwedig dros roi addysg i bregethwyr. A beth a ddaethai ohonom erbyn hyn oni bai am ein dynion dysgedig, rhai ohonynt yr ydych chwi eich hunan yn meddwl yn uchel iawn amdanynt?”

“Y fi yn erbyn addysg, Bob; nac ydw i, yn neno dyn. [...] Mae addysg yn dda lle mae ei heisie, ac os bydd hi wedi ei sancteiddio â gras, ne' melltith ydi hi i bawb, 'goelia i.”

“Yr oedd Paul,” ebe Bob, “eich ffrind mawr, yn ysgolhaig gwych; ac ni fuasai byth yn gallu gwneud yr hyn a wnaeth oni bai ei fod yn ysgolor mor dda.”

“Sut wyt ti yn gallu profi hynny?” gofynnai fy mam; “dydi ‘i fod o wedi bod yn eistedd wrth draed Galamiel ddim yn deud ei fod yn ysgolor mawr. Paid ti â meddwl, os wyt ti yn dallt *politics*, dy fod di yn dallt dy Feibl yn well na dy fam. [...]”

(Owen 2002: 60–1)

Robert Rhys has suggested that this contrast is significant: it is to be seen between the protagonists of debates in some of Owen’s earlier work where a presumptuous hypocrite is challenged by an honest but uneducated opponent who can see through his hypocrisy. The contrast between the two’s language does therefore support the argument that Owen favours Mari of the two (2000a: 113). In the translation, while Mari’s less formal language is to a certain extent reflected in the text, it is characterised by grammatical mistakes and mispronounced words:

“You have always gone against the ‘Students’, and indeed, against education generally, mother,” returned Bob. “But it is not meet for you to kick; the best men we have are splendid scholars, and do all they can in the interest of education, particularly the education of preachers. And what would have become of us by this time but for our learned men, some of whom you yourself think very highly of?”

“I gone against learning, Bob! No, name of goodness. [...]”



Education is all well enough where it is wanted, and if sanctified by grace, but a curse, otherwise, to my way of thinking.”

“Paul, your great friend,” observed Bob, “was a great scholar, and he would never have done what he did unless he had been.”

“How can you prove that?” asked my mother. “That he sat at the feet of Galamiel does not show he was a great scholar. Don’t you fancy, even if you do understand polikits [sic], you understand your Bible better than your mother. [...]” (Owen 1888: 62)

The Mari Lewis of Harris’ translation is not speaking in a regional dialect but rather mispronouncing English words and using odd grammatical turns of phrase. In the original, it is emphasised that Mari Lewis is not stupid, and if she is a figure of satire it is for her orthodoxy and extreme severity, not any lack of intelligence. However, it is difficult to conclude from the translation that the character is intended to be anything other than ignorant and anti-modern. By default, Bob is thus elevated to the fore in terms of the author’s, and the reader’s sympathy, identifying Owen with a younger politics and philosophically distancing him from the old-fashioned orthodoxy he might otherwise have been thought to sympathise with.

Although the aspects of the translation described above are examples of the ways in which Harris was attempting to push forward a nationalist agenda within his translation, the book did not earn its highly critical reception for its censorship of the text, or its more negative portrayal of the parson and Mari Lewis (notwithstanding the

criticism of the parson's English by the reviewer in *Y Goleuad*). The critics focused overwhelmingly on the translation's style, frequently drawing attention to specific instances where they believed that Harris had translated incorrectly. The reviewer in *Y Goleuad* described what he considered to be the general rule Harris had followed:

Fel pob un anghelfydd, defnyddia Mr. Harries [sic] y geiriau hwyaf fel rheol, pa rai sydd weithiau o fewn terfynau cywirdeb, neu yn y gymdogaeth honno, ond yn swnio yn ddieithr ac anystwyth. Gwelwn 'divers' yn fynych am 'amryw' yn lle 'several', 'reckon' yn lle 'count'... (*Y Goleuad* 1888)

Like all the unartistic, Mr Harries uses the longest words as a rule, those which are sometimes within the boundaries of correctness, or in that neighbourhood, but sound unfamiliar and cumbersome. We see 'divers' frequently for 'amryw' instead of 'several', 'reckon' instead of 'count'...

The reviewer dismisses Harris' style as an attempt to hide a lack of artistic ability, but also recognises that Harris' decision to use these unusual verbs and adjectives is clearly deliberate. As has been described in the second chapter of this thesis, a great many Welsh prose writers in the nineteenth century were also preachers, and their written language often emulated the rarefied language of the pulpit. One of Owen's distinguishing features, by way of contrast, was his deliberate attempt to recreate the ordinary, everyday language of his area (Foulkes 1903: 163), famously declaring 'Nid i'r doeth a'r deallus yr ysgrifennais, ond i'r dyn cyffredin.' [I did not write for the wise

and intelligent, but for the common man] (Owen 2002: i). In his translation Harris seems however to have deliberately avoided reflecting this, and instead elevates Owen's language into highly formal structures:

Pe dechreuai'r robin goch a'r ysnosen felen draethu ar  
brydferthwch anian, deuai tlysni y friallen wyllt am ran helaeth  
yn eu canmoliaeth, er mai'r cloddiau anamaethedig a addurnir  
ganddi hi. (Owen 2002: 4)

Did the robin redbreast and the gold-finch begin to descant upon  
the beauties of nature, the modest primrose would come in for a  
goodly share of their praise, although it is but the untrimmed  
hedge-row which the flower adorns. (Owen 1888: 10)

Notice how the verb 'traethu' (to relate; to relay through speech) becomes the rather unusual verb 'descant', and the the adjective 'helaeth' (considerable, extensive) becomes 'goodly'. In some cases, Harris' language seems to be attempting to reflect the Welsh word-order:

Sicr wyf nad fy ngorawydd i am addysg fu'r cymhelliad. (Owen  
2002: 36)

Sure I am that no burning desire of mine towards education gave  
the inducement. (Owen 1888: 40)

Fy mhenderfyniad ar y pryd oedd rhoddi heibio am byth y meddwl am bregethu; a gweddïais lawer am gael ymwarded o'r awydd. (Owen 2002: 320)

My resolution, at the time, was to relinquish, for ever, the idea of preaching, and I prayed much to be rid of the desire (Owen 1888: 304)

Similarly, elsewhere Harris uses the form 'thou' to reflect the use of 'ti' in the original, the less formal form of the second person personal pronoun in Welsh. This archaism also serves to make the text appear more formal and erudite:

Er mor hoff oeddit o'r Parch. –, oni ddarfu i ti hanner digio wrtho pan ddywedodd ef ar bregeth fod eisiau newid ychydig ar eiriad ryw adnod? ac oni ddywedaist di amdano ar ôl hynny wrth Abel Hughes dy fod yn ofni fod llawer o ddysg yn ei yrru'n ynyfyd? (Owen 2002: 217)

Partial though thou wert to the Rev. –, were thou not half offended with him when he said, in his sermon, that that a few words in a certain place wanted altering a little? And didst thou not tell Abel Hughes about him afterwards that thou feared'st much learning had made him mad? (Owen 1888: 208)

Although Harris appears to have been trying to evoke Welsh-language syntax in these examples, for the most part, he does not arrive at the stylistically formal language of his translation by literally translating the structures of the Welsh language, as had been implied by M. Wynn Thomas when he described the language of the translation as ‘painfully correct English’ (2000: 187). Indeed, Harris had claimed in his preface that his translation was ‘not very literal’ (Owen 1888: 3). In many cases, as noted above, where a literal translation would produce a much less stylistically formal tone, he seems to have deliberately chosen a more rarefied vocabulary. A further illustrative example is the way that ‘gan ddatgan yn effeithiol’ (Owen 2002: 69), which might most directly be translated into English as ‘revealing effectively’ or ‘effectively explaining’, becomes ‘extipating forcibly’ (Owen 1888: 70). This kind of language’s erudite pseudo-sophistication creates an atmosphere of education and intelligence, which arguably works against the desire of the original to appeal to ordinary people but also challenges stereotypes of the Welsh as uneducated, rural peasants. It seems that Harris was attempting, as Daniel Williams claims Gwilym Hiraethog had done in *Aelwyd F’Ewythr Robert*, to ‘[uplift] the culture of the Welsh peasantry’ (2012: 50). As I hinted in the introduction to this chapter, Harris’ translation exhibits some translation strategies which would be described by Lawrence Venuti as foreignising (1991, 1995): the language it uses does not conform to what would have been contemporary stylistic expectations and conventions. The translation does not achieve its foreignisation by a close literal translation of the source text; however, in *The Translator’s Invisibility* Venuti notes how this is not a necessary feature of foreignising translations. Venuti’s paradigm allows for:

Foreignising translations that are not transparent, that eschew fluency for a more heterogeneous mix of discourses, [that are] equally partial in their interpretation of the foreign text, but [...] tend to flaunt their partiality instead of concealing it. (1995: 34)

Harris' translation could well be said to 'flaunt its impartiality' –the translator's claim not to have translated the text literally and merely to act as Owen's 'interpreter' works as a self-exoneration, a confession that permits his manipulations of the text. Elsewhere, in an article in *Red Dragon*, Harris implies that it would be impossible for any Welshman to take an impartial view toward Welsh literature (Harris 1885c: 584).

It seems thus that the poor reception of *Rhys Lewis, Minister of Bethel* was a by-product of its style, itself an attempt to make the Welsh seem educated and sophisticated. Harris himself hints at this in his brief translator's note, in claiming that 'It has long since struck me that there are more things in Welsh literature than are dreamt of in the average English reader's philosophy' (Owen 1888: iii). Harris' claim in his preface to act as the author's interpreter is a clever rhetorical tactic, allowing him to claim some of the author's authority even as he excuses his deviations from the original text, by suggesting that these very deviations in fact provide a better impression of the author's original intent than a literal rendering would have done (Owen 1888: iii). As well as explaining his translation strategy, he describes his intended audience: the objective is to wow and impress the 'average English reader', who would, presumably, not imagine that a Welshman could have produced such literature. This attempt to formalise Owen probably goes some way to explaining the translation's poor reception: the novel had been so popular in the first place at least partially because it had been

accessible and down-to-earth by the standards of much Welsh Methodist literature. A ‘painfully correct’ translation (to use M. Wynn Thomas’ words) would seem to have gone against that principle altogether. Venuti notes that foreignising translations are frequently criticised on aesthetic grounds, in the context of a cultural expectation for accessibility and fluency in translations. It is thus possible to read the case of Harris’ translation and its early criticisms as a textbook example of a foreignised text being criticised for its lack of fluency. Indeed, in the review in *Y Goleuad* the reviewer explicitly states:

y mae yn bosibl troi *Rhys Lewis* i Saesneg mor naturiol a  
chymwys ag ydyw y Cymraeg [sic], ond cael meistr at y gwaith.  
Dylai llyfr cyfieithedig ddarllen mor rwydd ac ystwyth ag y  
gwna yn y gwreiddiol. [sic] (1888: 11)

it is possible to turn *Rhys Lewis* to an English as natural and  
appropriate as it is in Welsh, only to have a master for the work.  
A translated book should read as easily and flexibly as it does in  
the original.

This statement establishes a standard for translations that Harris’ inevitably failed to meet, because of the lack of fluency exhibited by its prose style. Venuti notes that the preference for fluency in translations is particularly prominent in anglophone cultures. The reviewer in *Y Goleuad* was not, of course, a member of an anglophone culture in a literal sense, however it should not be surprising to see the values of the anglophone mainstream being reflected in a culture which was, after all, so profoundly influenced

by its neighbouring culture. Although he does not directly mention the idea of fluency, Isaac Foulkes' stated preference for Claud Vivian's translation of *Enoc Huws* (discussed in the next chapter) over Harris' version of *Rhys Lewis* (1903: 182) is likely a reflection of a similar preference, as Vivian's translation is more fluent and readable than Harris'. Daniel Owen's own claim that Vivian's translation was too literal (quoted in Foulkes 1903: 182) also indicates that the author himself expected and desired fluency in translations of his work. There was so much at stake in translating the work of a 'national' character like Daniel Owen that it is also possible that Harris' view of Welshness also ultimately played against the translation. In a society dominated by what M. Wynn Thomas has called 'contributionism' (1999: 118), Harris' more assertive and resistant position was unlikely to find favour: the pseudo-intellectualism of his linguistic style was perhaps at odds with the romantic, passionate stereotype of the Celt which was dominant in nineteenth-century national discourse. While it might have been expected to find more favour in the twentieth century once racialist discourses were less fashionable, the preference for fluency in translation seems to have still been working against *Rhys Lewis, Minister of Bethel* over a hundred years later: M. Wynn Thomas' stated preference for the 1963 translation of *Gwen Tomos* over the 'painfully correct English' of Harris' translation is presumably because the former is far more fluent (as will be shown in the next chapter of this thesis) than Harris'.

### **3.5 Conclusions**

This chapter has aimed to demonstrate the ways in which James Harris' translation of *Rhys Lewis* can be read as the work of a translator interested in challenging and redefining established notions of Welsh cultural and national identity. *Rhys Lewis* was



an attractive text from the point of view of a translator with just such a cultural project, as it provided an example of significant literature being written in Wales by a contemporary writer, rather than merely being another medieval legend or poem. Harris would have wanted to use a contemporary text so as to avoid locating Welsh culture exclusively in the past, as the antiquarians had done through their reliance on medieval texts. Other contemporary prose works in Welsh would not have been so desirable, because none of them had caught the imagination of the Welsh audience in the same way. Despite its popularity, *Rhys Lewis* was also decidedly Welsh in character and so a translation would also provide an opportunity to produce a text that emphasised what Harris considered to be Wales' desirable national traits. Furthermore, as a text that espoused Methodist values as well as presenting Methodism itself in a positive light, *Rhys Lewis* could prove a vehicle to promote what was essentially the national religion of Wales –at least, of Welsh-speaking Wales.

My analysis of *Red Dragon* allows us to place Harris in a wider community of people engaged in nation-building projects in Wales but using the English language. Although Harris seems to have marketed his translation at English readers, he would also have been aware of a potential audience for the translation in English-speaking Wales. Analysis of Harris' own contributions to *Red Dragon* identify him as a nationalist as well as providing evidence from a Welsh context supporting Gyan Prakash's hypotheses with regards nationalist historiography (1990). Analysis of the contributions that others made to the journal provide further evidence that Prakash's theory is relevant to a Welsh context.

Close textual reading –as well as historical contextualisation– of Harris’ translation provides supporting evidence for the claims in this chapter. Material which would have reinforced established stereotypes about the Welsh was subtly changed, and the balance of the debate between Bob and Mari Lewis was shifted in Bob’s favour, in order to make Daniel Owen appear more sympathetic to modern political thought than to old-fashioned religious orthodoxy. Harris’ use of highly formalised, intellectual language served as a challenge to the idea that the Welsh were flighty and incapable of intellectual sophistication. The translation’s poor reception can be directly attributed to Harris’ attempt to formalise the language of the novel. This contributed to the translation’s unpopularity firstly because it was in direct contrast to the accessible everyday prose of the original, and secondly because it went against established expectations that prose translation should be fluent and readable. As noted above, Owen’s editor Isaac Foulkes had preferred Claud Vivian’s translation of Owen’s second novel *Enoc Huws* to Harris’ translation on the grounds that it did not stick so rigidly to the text and was therefore more fluent (1903: 182).

If, as this thesis suggests, James Harris was using Welsh-English translation as a means to further a nationalist political agenda, then he was one of the first to do so and this fact has not been widely recognised. If he was the first however, he certainly was not the last, and was not even the only one to do so with a translation of a Daniel Owen novel, as the next chapter will show.

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## Notes

- 1 Gwilym Hiraethog; bardic name of Rev. William Rees (802–1883), Welsh novelist discussed in chapter 2 of this thesis. Islwyn: pen name of William Thomas (1832–1878), one of the foremost Welsh-language poets of the nineteenth century. Hedd Wyn: bardic name of Ellis Humphrey Evans (1887–1917), poet killed in the First World War shortly before being awarded the Chair at the national Eisteddfod, and probably the most famous example of a poet better known by his bardic name.
- 2 Dafydd ap Gwilym (c.1315–c.1370), the most celebrated of medieval Welsh poets. Although much of his surviving poetry is in *genres* typical for Welsh poets of his age—praise poetry and the occasional religious poem—he is best known for a body of love and nature poetry. These subjects were doubtless what attracted antiquarians and translators in the nineteenth century for whom romanticism was a dominant cultural influence.

## **Chapter 4: Re-inventing the classics through translation: *Gwen Tomos***

### **4.1 Introduction: Welsh nationalism in the 1960s**

The previous chapter made the argument that James Harris' translation of *Rhys Lewis* was a work which was intended to foster feelings of Welsh national identity. This chapter will offer a similar argument about the 1963 translation of Owen's *Gwen Tomos* by T. Ceiriog Williams and E. R. Harries. However, as will be shown, the cultural context of the two translations was very different. The translations themselves, in terms of the translators' methodologies, were also very different and this chapter will approach the subject of translation and nation from the perspective of a very different text. In doing so this chapter will be focusing in part on the first of the three main areas of analysis described in the introduction to this thesis. However, this chapter will also move onto the second area of analysis, that of translation as commentary on the Welsh literary canon. As will be seen, the 1963 translators of *Gwen Tomos* appear to be attempting to radically re-invent Daniel Owen himself as a novelist within the canon. Of all the translations discussed in the thesis, the English *Gwen Tomos* is probably the most radical in terms of the departures it makes from the source text: it is also very different from the others in terms of style and tone. That such radically different translations as the English *Gwen Tomos* and James Harris' version of *Rhys Lewis* might serve a similar ideological function –this thesis argues that they were both intended to serve a nationalist agenda– is a reflection of the huge variety of potential translation strategies and aims available to all translators, and of how translators engaged in political activism must be willing to use a variety of varied translation strategies rather than a single

overarching methodology (Tymoczko 2000: 42). It also shows that the historical and cultural context of any translation is a vital factor in any understanding of the text itself.

If modern Welsh nationalism can be considered to have been ‘born’ in the late nineteenth century, then it might be considered to have come of age –in the sense that it began to be taken seriously as a political force– in the 1960s. The national political party for Wales, which had been a dream of early nationalists like Emrys ap Iwan, was finally realised in 1925 with the establishment of Plaid Cymru. It achieved little initial success and it was not until the 1960s that it truly began to take a prominent role in Welsh politics, winning its first parliamentary seat in a 1966 by-election and coming close in several others during the decade. As well as these successes in formal political nationalism, there was also an increase in less formal and more direct manifestations of nationalism and language activism within Wales. Particularly, there was a rise in protests and other acts of resistance, and even violence with occasional arson and bomb attacks in response to the flooding of the Tryweryn Valley and the investiture of the Prince of Wales. These activities were only one indicator of a growing sense of Welsh national identity during the period which had many manifestations, such as the establishment of a National secretary for Wales and a number of other Welsh institutions which, though usually by no means independent of their parent UK-wide institutions, acknowledged a need to treat Wales as a separate entity in at least some respects (Davies 1994: 666). Other manifestations were the renaissance of Welsh-language literature in the period and the rise of Welsh-language popular music, often taking Welshness and the Welsh national struggle as its subject.

This renaissance of Welshness in the 1960s had a variety of sources which were often mutually reinforcing. The establishment of the Wales Office by the Labour government of 1964 for example was motivated at least partly by a concern for the party's electoral longevity in Wales in the face of Plaid Cymru's growing support (Davies 1994: 664). External factors certainly contributed: the youth activism of movements like *Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg* in the 1960s can certainly be read as part of the narrative of worldwide youth protest and activism in the 1960s, or even the anti-colonial movements across the former European empires after the Second World War.<sup>1</sup> Closer to home, similar, even more striking political movements were taking place in Scotland with the parallel rise of the Scottish National Party: Michael Hechter suggests that the parallel development of Celtic nationalism in Wales and Scotland has ultimately been a product of the economic inequality present within Britain (1975: 302). Two specific events must be mentioned which galvanised support for Welsh nationalism in the period and were exclusive to Wales. The first was the flooding of the Tryweryn valley in Gwynedd to construct a reservoir for Liverpool, permitted by an act of parliament in 1957 despite massive public opposition and protest in Wales. The protests were ignored and the flooding was carried out in 1965, despite some attempts at sabotage. The event produced a sense of alienation from the British state in Wales, and the ineffectual protests of the Welsh MPs who voted against the flooding 'confirmed one of the central tenets of Plaid Cymru –that the national Welsh community, under the existing order, was wholly powerless' (Davies 1994: 664). The other significant event which galvanised support for Welsh nationalism in the 1960s was the 1962 broadcast of Saunders Lewis' famous radio lecture *Tynged yr Iaith* ('The Fate of the Language'), in which Lewis predicted the extinction of Welsh by the end of the century unless drastic action was taken to prevent it (Lewis 1985). Although its aim was to draw attention to a

decline that had been evident for decades in the census figures, Lewis' lecture had a considerable influence, contributing to an explosion in efforts to arrest the decline in the number of Welsh speakers, particularly in the fields of education. Lewis' intent had been to encourage Plaid Cymru to focus on safeguarding the language rather than electioneering; in this respect he failed, rather than changing that movement's priorities the lecture led to the establishment of *Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg*, a language advocacy pressure group. Gwyn A. Williams has claimed that Lewis's lecture even led to the establishment of the Welsh Office two years later (1985: 292), although this seems unlikely, as it had been a Labour Party manifesto promise already in 1959, three years before *Tynged yr Iaith* was broadcast.

From the perspective of this thesis, perhaps the most important aspect of the 1960s national revival was the renaissance in Welsh literature and cultural expression that took place in the period. Although nationalism had been a theme in Welsh-language literature in the past, much of the best-known writing of the 1960s was explicitly nationalist in tone such as the poetry of Gerallt Lloyd Owen, the novels of Islwyn Ffowc Elis or the popular songs of Dafydd Iwan.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, there has been a strong historic link between Welsh-language culture and political Welsh nationalism, which is perhaps most explicitly demonstrated in the long list of Welsh literary and cultural figures who at some time or other have stood for election on behalf of Plaid Cymru, including but not limited to such names as Pennar Davies, Islwyn Ffowc Elis, Dafydd Iwan, Saunders Lewis and Waldo Williams (Craig 1968, 1970). Some well-known authors held official positions in the party, such as W. J. Gruffydd and D. J. Williams (McAllister 2001: 28–9), and others such as Kate Roberts (McAllister 2001: 160) were active in the party to various other degrees. Not all of these writers produced explicitly

nationalistic literature, but a great many did, and it is clear that writing was viewed as a means of both expressing and fostering political and cultural nationalism. This trend was not confined to Welsh-language writers either, with R. S. Thomas, Emyr Humphreys and Harri Webb among the English-language writers of Wales whose work has been described as nationalistic (Thomas 1999: 31, 52). In this context, that translation should also be viewed as another potential avenue for nationalist expression is unsurprising.

Ten years before *Gwen Tomos* was translated in 1963, a selection of extracts from Owen's novels appeared in translation in D. Myrddin Lloyd's anthology *A Book of Wales* of 1953. These seven extracts –one drawn each from *Enoc Huws* and *Gwen Tomos* but the rest from *Rhys Lewis*– are all very short at fewer than three pages each, and in all but one instance are showcases of Owen's descriptive style (the seventh is a short anecdotal narrative). The anthology in which they appeared was one of the 'Collins National Anthologies' (Stephens 1998: 59), which included other volumes dedicated to English-speaking countries including Australia, Ireland and Scotland among others. Lloyd included many translations in his anthology, many by his own hand but he just as frequently used others' work, including that of H. Idris Bell. The fact he used his own translations of Owen may therefore suggest that he considered his predecessors' (including James Harris' *Rhys Lewis*) work inadequate. Lloyd's introduction allows us to place *A Book of Wales* alongside H. Idris Bell's early twentieth-century translations as a reaction to nineteenth-century racialist portrayals of Welshness:



The varying racial proportions probably have some bearing on national temperament, modes of feeling and artistic gifts, but in the main our distinctive national characteristics are the fruits of age-long common experiences, the results of having inhabited the same corner of the earth, the incalculable effects of the natural scene and the affinities born of it, of having spoken a common tongue, created our own institutions, shared the same responsibilities, felt the same community sense, and borne the effects of the same national development. (Lloyd 1953: 26)

Similarly, like some of the other translations which M. Wynn Thomas describes, it is clear that Lloyd envisioned the view of Welsh culture that his volume presented to be an antidote to English globalisation:

A soul-less cosmopolitanism is making ugly inroads into the life of Wales, but it is not going to gain an uncontested victory. The young Welsh University has fostered a new Welsh scholarship and a literary renaissance which have meant a rediscovery of our native heritage with its fourteen centuries of literary tradition... The pride born of this new knowledge of the rock from which we are hewn should serve us well in the struggle against the disintegrating forces of modern vulgarity. (Lloyd 1953: 21–2)

Lloyd's anthology contains texts from a wide variety of sources. Although there is a certain amount of the medieval poetry which had been the focus of translators in earlier centuries, there is also a large quantity of more recent and contemporary material, in keeping with the intent to portray Welsh culture as contemporary and vital. The inclusion of the extracts from Owen's novels in the anthology suggests that Lloyd saw Owen's writing as being particularly well-suited to achieving his anthology's aims. The vision of Wales as a kind of antidote to English urban globalisation is reflected Lloyd's choice of extracts to translate, which include two which criticise financial greed (both from *Rhys Lewis*) and others which extol the virtues of simple Christian life.

Owen's inclusion in Lloyd's anthology reflects the fact that, despite the criticisms of his style by academics during the 1930s and 1940s (as described in Chapter 2), his central place in the Welsh-language literary canon was still secure by the 1950s. Discounting *A Book of Wales*, no translation of Owen's work had appeared in book form since the second edition of James Harris' *Rhys Lewis* in 1915: the J. Talog Davies and Claud Vivian translations of Owen's novels had all appeared as serialisations only. A new translation of a Daniel Owen would finally appear as a book in 1963. It was the work of T. Ceiriog Williams, who at the time was headmaster of what was then known as Daniel Owen Secondary School in Mold and E.R. Harries, County Librarian of Flintshire (Owen 1963: 3). T. Ceiriog Williams is an important figure in Daniel Owen scholarship, being remembered for having produced a series of tape-recorded interviews during the 1940s with people who had met the author in person. These recordings are valuable historical artefacts that give a fascinating insight into Owen, especially those aspects of his life that were not mentioned in writing by Owen himself or his contemporaries, such as his habit of gathering stories in pubs

(taking his notebook with him) as well as his romantic interests (as described by Rhys 2000a: 189–92). Williams played a key role in efforts to maintain the connection between Mold and Owen: he himself had suggested that the school of which he was headmaster take the author's name (Williams 1975: 9).<sup>3</sup> He was also involved in the placement of a monument to mark Owen's birthplace, to go with the statue of Owen in the centre of town that had been erected after the author's death; this monument will be remarked upon in greater detail later on in this chapter. Williams also personally collected a number of artefacts belonging to the writer (mostly now present in the Daniel Owen exhibition at Mold library), and wrote a short book about Owen, *Yr Hen Ddaniel* (1975) which is a mixture of biography, literary criticism and personal reflection. Although Williams' book does not mention the translation, it nevertheless offers an insight into the mind of Williams the translator and his view and opinions on Owen, which helps inform the following discussion. As something of a specialist on the subject of Daniel Owen, it seems highly likely that Williams was aware of James Harris and Claud Vivian's translations; and so the fact that the previous translations existed almost certainly played a factor in the decision to translate *Gwen Tomos* as opposed to one of Owen's other, more popular novels.

This chapter argues that the 1963 translation of *Gwen Tomos* was envisaged by its translators as a piece of nationalist activism, like James Harris' *Rhys Lewis* before it. However, it will also argue that the translation constitutes the translators' attempt to engage with Owen's canonicity and reputation as a 'great' writer. As noted in Chapter 2, by the middle of the twentieth century Daniel Owen had begun to be regarded less highly than had previously been the case, as commentators increasingly criticised the structural and stylistic flaws they perceived in his novels. This perception resulted in the

production of a set of abridged editions of Owen's three main novels: by abridging his work editors could directly address these perceived flaws and reinvent the author's work in a manner they found more satisfactory. The translation process similarly allowed the re-writing or removal of material to address the same problems: editors and translators were concerned with salvaging Owen's threatened reputation and maintaining his place at the centre of the Welsh canon.

The next section of this chapter will discuss Owen's novel *Gwen Tomos* and explain its relationship to Owen's output as a whole, as well as exploring its shifting reputation in the century since its publication. The third will argue that the translators were using their translation as a means to rehabilitate Owen's canonicity in Welsh literary history and engage with contemporary criticisms of his style and ability to plan his novels. The subsequent, final section will show that this veneration and rehabilitation of Daniel Owen was part of the translation's broader nationalist project in which Wales and the Welsh were presented as a living, contemporary culture actively resistant to British cultural subsumation. The hagiography of Daniel Owen as a literary genius was a part of this broader cultural project.

#### **4.2 *Gwen Tomos* in the Twentieth Century: Thomas Parry's abridged edition**

*Y Dreiflan* and *Rhys Lewis*, and to a slightly lesser extent *Enoc Huws*, had all seen Owen draw heavily on his background and personal experiences for inspiration and source material. With his final novel, he would take the somewhat unexpected step of turning his back on these and setting the story in the Wales of several generations before his own. Although few concrete details are provided in the novel about the exact setting of

*Gwen Tomos*, the action appears to take place in north-east Wales at around the turn of the nineteenth century, when the non-conformist culture which would come to dominate public life in Wales and of which Owen was himself a member was not yet firmly established, and was viewed by many with suspicion and mistrust. If *Y Dreiflan*, *Rhys Lewis* and *Enoc Huws* were urban in their setting then *Gwen Tomos* is pastoral; and although Robert Rhys warns against making too firm a distinction between the two (2000: 180) what is clear is the absence of industry from *Gwen Tomos*: the book is devoid of any mention of the mines and factories which feature in his other works. Structurally, the novel follows the pattern set by Owen's earlier novels. The author begins by introducing the reader to the characters around whom the novel revolves. At the centre of the story are the Tomos family of Wern Ddu; consisting of the eponymous Gwen; her brother Harri and their father Edward, a notorious miser who has amassed a small fortune from his farm. Gwen Tomos has always been the favourite of her father; and although he is an infamous miser she is always able to persuade him to part with his money on her account. The narrator of the novel is Rheinallt, a distant relative of the Tomos family who comes to live with them following the death of his mother. Other characters include the fortune teller and former midwife, Nansi'r Nant, and her son Twm Nansi, a poacher; the local landowner and his villainous son Ernest Griffith; and the Wynn family of Pant-y-Buarth, staunch Methodists. Twm Nansi is caught poaching and faces prison unless he can pay a fine, which Edward Tomos mysteriously pays, following a meeting with Nansi'r Nant (it is implied that Nansi has told him that, as their midwife, she had switched Edward's child for her own, meaning that Twm is in fact Edward's son, and that Gwen is in fact her daughter. Whether this is actually true or merely a lie told by Nansi to save her son from prison is left deliberately ambiguous). Following his meeting with Nansi, Edward Tomos no longer favours his daughter and

following his death leaves all his wealth to his son Harri, leaving Gwen with nothing and therefore financially dependent on Harri. Harri however lacks his father's miserliness and begins to squander his inheritance foolishly, during the course of which he comes into conflict with Ernest Griffith, a conflict which culminates in a violent showdown where Harri defeats Ernest in a fist-fight. Under the influence of the Wynn family, Gwen Tomos converts to Methodism, and is courted by Ernest, much to the chagrin of Harri. It has been suggested by some critics, such as R. Elwyn Hughes (1982) and E. G. Millward (1992: vii), that this is because Harri and/or Gwen harbour incestuous feelings toward one another; although there is nothing in the text itself which conclusively proves that Owen had intended to suggest this (Rhys 2000a: 164). Harri has wasted his fortune, turning to alcoholism and eventually dying penniless. Rheinallt and Gwen—who in the meantime have decided to marry—are facing eviction from the farm when they happen across a secret stash of gold left behind by a long-dead ancestor. After some years of happiness, they emigrate to the United States, however they are ultimately unhappy there. Gwen dies in America and Rheinallt returns home an embittered man, full of regret for having left Wales.

As was noted in the second chapter of this thesis, *Gwen Tomos* has never enjoyed the same level of critical acclaim as Owen's previous two novels, *Rhys Lewis* and *Enoc Huws*. The novel was not popular with its author either, who worried it might ruin his reputation as an author (quoted in Foulkes 1903: 123–8). It seems likely that the critical consensus against it, as well as Owen's own dislike of the book, played a role in the fact that while translations of *Rhys Lewis* and *Enoc Huws* appeared during Owen's own lifetime it would be almost seventy years before Owen's final novel appeared in English. However, *Gwen Tomos* has certainly avoided the marginalisation that the

untranslated *Y Dreflan* has suffered: to the present author's knowledge, *Y Dreflan* has not been reprinted in Welsh since 1922 and is correspondingly difficult to find, while Owen's other three novels have all been reprinted multiple times in modern Welsh-language editions. The second chapter of this thesis briefly mentioned how, during the middle decades of the twentieth century, Owen's novels were heavily edited and re-issued in much shorter forms than they had been originally conceived. That this was done reflects the idea discussed in the second chapter that Owen was flawed as a novelist and in need of improvement; the most common criticism being the novels' lack of structure and excessive length. When it came to reissuing Owen's novels, editors could address these concerns through abridgement. Owen's aforementioned modesty and self-criticism, in particular when it came to *Gwen Tomos*, perhaps gave those editors who wished to modify his work a sense of legitimacy—the claim is even made in a review of some of these editions that Owen would have approved of the editors' actions (Gruffydd 1939: 264). Although at least two sets of abridged versions of Owen's three main novels appeared during the twentieth century, the most widely available were the two abridgements by Thomas Parry –*Gwen Tomos* in 1937 and *Rhys Lewis* in 1948– and the 1939 abridgement of *Enoc Huws* edited by T. Gwynn Jones. Although T. Gwynn Jones' version of *Enoc Huws* makes occasional use of paraphrasing as well as omission in order to reduce the book's length, Parry's editions for the most part only omit material, though paraphrasing also takes place on at least one occasion in Parry's *Gwen Tomos*.

Although the translations of *Rhys Lewis* and both translations of *Enoc Huws* discussed in the rest of this thesis are based on the complete original texts, the translation of *Gwen Tomos* by T. Ceiriog Williams and E. R. Harries is based on Parry's

1937 edition and consequently any understanding of how the novel appears in its English translation must be informed by and understanding of the changes first made to the novel made by Parry's edition. There is sufficient similarity of content between the edition and translation as to leave no doubt that Williams and Harries were taking their cues from Parry's edition: almost all of the material omitted in Parry's edition is also omitted in the translation, down to the level of individual sentences in the midst of material otherwise retained; additionally, Parry's paraphrasing of Owen at the start of chapter 43 is clearly used in the translation. However, the small amount of material that Parry cut but the translators reinstated makes it clear that they had access to the full original text. This fact, perhaps counter-intuitively, means the translation is an implicit endorsement of Parry's changes, because the translators deliberately decided to use Parry's changes (in almost all cases) despite having access to the original: they did not simply base their translation on his edition because it was the only text of the book available to them. Whether through omission or paraphrase, a considerable proportion of Owen's original novel is absent in both the Parry edition and translation, though the latter goes even further in cutting down on Owen's original text. Parry's 1937 edition runs to 259 pages and the translation to 222, while the most recently published version of the full original text in Welsh runs to 326 pages; nonetheless neither text informs the reader that it is an abridged version of the original, suggesting instead that the reader is in possession of the complete novel. Although the plot of *Gwen Tomos* remains largely intact despite the omissions, large descriptive sections and many of the author's personal reflections are cut. E. G. Millward concedes that while the story moves more quickly in Parry's edition, he also criticises Parry's edition for reducing the novel's individuality, as well as for censorship:



Ni chynhwysodd gryn nifer o'r darnau disgrifiadol sydd mor nodweddiadol o waith [y nofelydd]. Yma a thraw ceir awgrym o sensoriaeth: er enghraifft, hepgor hanes yr ysgwïer gyda merched ym Mhennod XXXII a barnwyd nad priodol oedd cynnwys y disgrifiad o'r modd y bu Twm Nansi a Rheinallt yn trafod fferetau ym Mhennod VI a'r drafodaeth ar brydferthwch Gwen ym Mhennod XXII. (1992a: iii)

He did not include many of the descriptive passages which are so typical of [the novelist's] work. Here and there there is the suggestion of censorship: for example, cutting the story about the squire's involvement with girls in chapter 32 and it was decided that the content of the description of Twm Nansi and Rheinallt's discussion of ferrets in chapter 6 as well the discussion of Gwen's beauty in chapter 22 were inappropriate.

Millward also claimed that 'Un o ganlyniadau'r cwtogi yw teneuo cymeriadaeth *Gwen Tomos* a pheri bod y stori yn llai argyhoeddiadol' [A consequence of the abridging is a reduced amount of characterisation in *Gwen Tomos*, which makes the story less convincing] (1992a: iv). Millward describes one character, Doctor Huws, as becoming particularly marginalised by his diminished role in Parry's edition, but many of the novel's supporting characters roles are similarly reduced, and their characterisation is thus inevitably affected. By omitting a section in chapter 37 where Nansi'r Nant reveals that she has discovered that Gwen and the narrator are secret lovers, the Nansi of Parry's version appears less cunning and perceptive. Parry also omits sections

describing Elin and Beti Wynn, including a section where Elin speaks her mind on her own wedding. Also diminished in Parry's edition is the role of Mr. Thomson, a *deus ex machina* character whose appearance toward the end of the novel helps bring events to a head. Perhaps most strikingly of all however, many of the narrator Rheinallt's own reflections are omitted, causing him to be much less of a presence in the novel than was originally intended, and reducing his role to that of observer rather than active participant in events. As narrator, Rheinallt's views assume a certain significance by their association with Daniel Owen as author; and so by omitting his comments on other characters the reader's impression of Owen's own attitude is changed. In Parry's edition for example the narrator appears less sympathetic towards some of his characters: a section in chapter 37 for example is omitted where the narrator praises the parson –who is otherwise denigrated as a hypocrite– for his consideration for the town's youth, with the result that the parson comes across as a more negative and one-sided character in Parry's edition.

Millward proposed that Parry's edition may have censored *Gwen Tomos*. Whether there was a deliberate effort on Parry's part or not, there is certainly an ideological shift in the book's focus following Parry's omissions. With a frequency that cannot be put down to coincidence, Parry omits sections which emphasise the religiosity of the book's characters, and consequently the author seems less interested in this aspect of his characters. Omission is particularly likely when characters express more extreme religious views. In chapter 22, for example, chapel elder Robert Wynn –spokesperson in *Gwen Tomos* for strict, traditional, old-fashioned Methodism– is sceptical as to whether salvation is possible for the fortune-telling mystic Nansi'r Nant. He discusses the matter with his daughter Elin and Gwen Tomos, who believe that the old woman can be shown

the error of her ways. Although Parry does not omit nor change any of Elin and Gwen's arguments, he omits many of Robert Parry's lines, including a section where he describes Nansi and those like her as

Plant y felltith ydyn nhw, wyddost, a phlant y felltith fyddan  
nhw byth,—mae nod Cain ar eu talcennau,—y diafol piau nhw  
heddiw, a fo fydd piau nhw i dragwyddoldeb, ac am wn i y fo  
ddyle'u cael nhw,—ei bobl ef ydyn nhw a defaid ei borfa. (Owen  
1992: 142)

children of damnation, you know, and they'll always be children  
of damnation—the mark of Cain is on their foreheads—the devil  
owns them today, and he will own them for eternity, and for all I  
know he should have them—they are his people and sheep on his  
pasture.

Later on in the same chapter, the characters discuss a man whom Robert Wynn caught stealing sheep. It is made quite clear in Owen's original that Robert Wynn only refuses to persecute him because he believes the man's wife and children would suffer if he were deported as punishment: for the man himself he has nothing but contempt as one of the damned (Owen 1992: 143). In Parry's edition, however, the detail about the wife and children is omitted, which makes Robert Wynn appear to be genuinely sympathetic to the man himself. Once again this serves to make him seem more forgiving, tolerant and moderate. Many other sections in the novel where religious matters are discussed in less colourful terms are also omitted, again, often with subtle effects on characterisation:

for example, by omitting a section in chapter 39 where Rheinallt describes his religious conversion prior to his joining the chapel, Parry makes it look as if he joins merely in order to marry Gwen (who, as a chapel member, would otherwise be expelled for marrying an outsider). In the section Parry omits however Rheinallt explicitly denies that this is the case, and instead expresses a sincere religious conviction (Owen 1992: 266–7).

Whether or not Parry explicitly intended to have these specific effects on the text, the overall impression is that his omissions strive to emphasise the story and plot of *Gwen Tomos* at the expense of introspection, commentary and characterisation. This is at odds with the idea of Daniel Owen as an author whose most widely acknowledged strength has always been characterisation, as claimed by Parry himself (1948: 86) among many others (including Lewis 1936: 63, Williams 1989: 102, Stephens 1998: 552). This contradiction seems paradoxical but has its parallels in other translational contexts where concepts central to the critical reception of the original are elided or suppressed in translation, whether that be the style of an original author's language (Parks 2007: 56) or the political connotations of an original text (Castro 2009, Miguélez-Carballeira 2005, Seruya & Moniz 2008).

If the influence of the translator is considered to be subtle and hidden, then the influence of the editor on whose work the translation is based is doubly so. A well-known example within Translation Studies is the case of translations of Franz Kafka, many of which were based on German versions which had been heavily edited by Max Brod, who regularised Kafka's idiosyncratic punctuation and paratactic prose style. Brod's changes were carried over into many translations, however in more recent years

they have come to be considered unnecessary and even detrimental and more recent translations have worked from Kafka's original writings (Harman 1996: 294). The cumulative effect of this kind of heavy editing and translation can lead to the creation of a text so removed from the original as to produce a radically different reception of the original text in the target-language, especially if the reader is not expected to have access to the original. Another example, which will be looked at again in greater detail, can be found in the French versions of the letters and journal of English writer Katherine Mansfield, which are based on the English editions edited by Mansfield's husband, who

included nothing which would stain his own already tarnished image in England, or anything which would seriously condemn his dead first wife. There was a deliberate editing out of things distasteful, shocking, anti-French, colloquial, political, cruel, blasphemous and especially humorous. (Kimber 2009: 164)

The result is that Katherine Mansfield has (or at least had) a very different reputation in France to that she had in English-speaking countries, which had access to 'the complete, unexpurgated versions of her letters' (Kimber 2009: 164). A similar process takes place with the reader of Williams & Harries' version of *Gwen Tomos*: although the most widely available version at the time of the translation's publication would have been Parry's edition, Welsh readers could read the original nineteenth-century edition of Owen's novel and, since 1992, a new edition of the complete text. Williams and Harries' version of *Gwen Tomos* however is the only available English edition of the novel at

present, and gives a very different idea of the kind of novel *Gwen Tomos* was intended to be.

Despite its considerable omissions, the positive reception of Parry's edition meant that by the time T. Ceiriog Williams and E. R. Harries came to produce their translation in 1963 it was very much the 'standard' *Gwen Tomos* and this is reflected in the translators' decision to use it as the basis for their translation. However, from the translators' perspective Thomas Parry's editing had also set a precedent. By using it as the basis of their translation, Williams and Harries had implicitly endorsed extensive editing of a text as an acceptable response to the perception of flaws in a novelist's work; it is unsurprising therefore that the translators felt empowered to make their own substantial editorial changes to the text. These changes, as will be seen in the rest of this chapter, were at least in part calculated to rehabilitate Daniel Owen as a canonical writer and to reinforce his place in the canon.

### **4.3 *Gwen Tomos* in English: Re-imagining Daniel Owen**

Perhaps the most immediately obvious set of changes are those the translators made to disguise the novel's original serialisation. As the novel had originally appeared chapter by chapter each week on the pages of *Y Cymro*, the chapters occasionally begin with an allusion to the events of the previous chapter or ended with a promise of what was to come in the next instalment. Parry's edition did not cut these sections; the translators however edited and cut much of this material. These changes can be seen at the beginning of chapter 35 (Owen 1963: 176) and the ending of chapters 24 (Owen 1963: 133) and 27 (Owen 1963: 145) among others. The translators presumably considered

these allusions and promises unnecessary as their version was being published in a single volume, and so cut them, no doubt aware that critics had criticised Owen's novels for their length (Parry 1944: 278, Lewis 1936). The translators also removed the chapter titles, leaving only numbers for each chapter, further disguising the serialisation of the original. While these changes might seem superficial, they do more than merely reduce the length of the novel. If serialisation is seen as being a mark of a story's low status or literary inferiority, being associated with market-driven and/or 'low' fiction (Heyward 1997), then by removing these tell-tale signs of the novel's serialisation then the translators were also positively influencing perceptions of the book's literary prestige.

Other changes made in the translation are both more striking and more controversial. If Parry's edition contains 'the suggestion of censorship;' (Millward 1992a: iii), then the Williams/Harries translation contains clear evidence of such activity. As well as omitting by default all the potentially offensive sections Parry had omitted, sexual references in the remainder of the text are either also omitted or made milder and more acceptable in the translation, even when such references are incredibly mild or in the original. For example, when Doctor Huws flirts with Gwen, nondescript 'closeness' is substituted with more socially appropriate marriage:

petaswn i yn iengach o ryw ugain mlynedd mi faswn yn treio  
closio atat ti.

(Owen 1992: 192)

[If I were younger by some twenty years I'd try and get close to  
you]

If I were some twenty years younger I'd want to marry you.

(Owen 1963: 151)

In chapter 31, when Rheinallt must inform Gwen that her brother Harri will soon be dead, Owen subtly implies the sexual tension between the two by mentioning how Rheinallt makes a point of ensuring that he is sitting very closely to her in case she should faint (1992: 208). On understanding how bad the situation is Gwen is distraught and Rheinallt observes how 'chwyddai a gostyngai ei mynwes' [her bosom swelled and subsided] (1992: 209) as she weeps; both references are omitted in the translation. In chapter 29 of the original, in order to prevent him from going out drinking, the narrator Rheinallt blackmails Harri by threatening to tell his sister Gwen, if he should go, of Harri's misdemeanours:

a thra y byddi di yn y dref yn ysloian, mi ddefnyddiaf innau yr  
amser i egluro i Gwen dy holl amgylchiadau—fel yr wyt, yn ôl  
dy addefiad dy hun—wedi gwario'r arian i gyd, ac fel yr wyt  
mewn gwirionedd yn gymharol dlawd—heblaw'r tipyn pethau  
yma, ac fel yr wyt mewn ychydig amser wedi difetha, gamblo,  
talu i ferched—"

"Taw, Taw," ebe fe, "da' i ddim..." (Owen 1992: 194)

and while you're in town getting drunk, I shall use the time to  
explain to Gwen about all your circumstances—how you have,  
by your own admission—spent all the money, and how you are in  
fact relatively poor— besides these few things, and how in a



short time you have spoiled yourself, gambled, paid girls to—"

"Shush, shush," he said, "I won't go..."

Although Harri interrupts Rheinallt before he can say what he has been paying girls to do, this is clearly a reference to prostitution. It is omitted in the translation, along with the rest of the details, and replaced with the word 'everything':

and while you're in town drinking, I'll take advantage of the opportunity to tell Gwen everything."

"No! No!" he said, "I won't go..."

(Owen 1963: 153)

Although the reader is fully aware of how Harri has wasted his inheritance on drinking and on scams and foolish investments, this is the only place in the novel where it is mentioned that Harri's vices also include gambling and visiting prostitutes. As well as sanitizing the text, the omission of these references in the translation have the effect of suggesting that the *only* symptom of Harri's moral decline is alcoholism, rather than the more general deterioration that Owen's original suggests. Elsewhere, the translators' censorship sanitises Owen himself as well as his characters. They remove, for example, some of Owen's occasional sexism:

Nid oedd ddadl am gyfoeth mawr Mr. Vaughan, Plas Uchaf, ac yr oedd ei unig ferch erbyn hyn yn dechrau mynd ar y silff.

(Owen 1992: 230)

[There was no argument about Mr. Vaughan Plas Uchaf's great wealth, and his only daughter was now beginning to go on the shelf]

There was no doubt about Mr. Vaughan's great wealth and his only daughter was approaching an age when her chances of marriage were becoming more remote. (Owen 1963: 151)

Owen offers further details about how unpleasant Mr Vaughan's daughter apparently is, including that her parents are willing to part with her 'for any price'; these details are omitted altogether in the translation. Just as they censored sexist references, the translators censor racist ones: in chapter 48 Owen describes Rheinallt and Gwen's fellow migrants as 'y cwmni afreolus, budr, rheglyd –gan fwyaf yn Wyddelod' [the disorderly, filthy, swearing company –mostly Irish] (Owen 1992: 320); in the translation, however, they become 'the undisciplined fellow passengers, for the most part foul-mouthed Irishmen' (Owen 1963: 217). This changes the sentence from suggesting that unpleasantness is only to be expected of the Irish to the suggestion that the association is coincidental. Furthermore, in the translation the swearing is confined to the men, and none of the migrants are filthy. In a similar manner, a character referred to in the original as 'rhyw dramp o Sais' [some English tramp] (Owen 1992: 117') is referred to in the translation as 'an English visitor' (Owen 1963: 100). Characters do not normally swear explicitly in the text of *Gwen Tomos* and when they do they are usually rendered by the author simply as '–', for example when the Doctor swears in chapter 27 (Owen 1992: 179); yet in the translation these marks of omission do not appear at all. In

this example the doctor simply finishes his sentences before reaching the swear words (Owen 1963: 144).

Translation and censorship are two interconnected practices which have an extremely complex relationship and history which has been thoroughly explored within Translation Studies (for example in Asimakoulas et al 2011, Ní Chuilleanáin et al 2009, Santaemilia 2008, Seruya et al 2008). According to Susan Bassnett and Andrew Lefevere, translation necessarily involves ‘a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way’ (1995: vii). Because of this, ideological interpretation in translation—which can result in self-censorship—might even be considered inevitable, an unavoidable part of the translation process itself (Vasquez 2008: 133; Ó Cuilleanáin 2009). As José Santaemilia explains

there are a series of ‘censorships’ whose exercise does not depend upon forceful imposition by an external ‘institution’ but rather upon ideological, aesthetic or cultural circumstances. Even in historical periods of political stability, there are institutions, hierarchies or schools which manage to impose their cultural criteria and, what is more, what is acceptable or unacceptable to translate. More often than not, it is the translators themselves who consider their options and, accordingly, exercise an indeterminate series of ‘self-censorship(s)’ (2008: 222–3)

Santaemilia emphasises that this kind of censorship is ‘quite often involuntarily produced’ (2008: 229). Whether voluntary or not, censorship in translation necessarily plays a role in the way in which a text and its author are received in the target culture, and can be used as ‘a tool for shaping and delimiting culture’ (Ben-Ari 2006: 127).

What, then, could have been the translators’ motivation for the censorship which is clearly evident in the English *Gwen Tomos*? One possible explanation is that the text was intended to be read by children. As noted, T. Ceiriog Williams was a headteacher, and in fact in his introduction Jac L. Williams states his desire that the translation ‘find its way into the schools of Wales’ (1963: 5). If this is the case, it might also help explain the degree of abridgement of the text, if the translators considered Owen’s originals to be too long to appeal to children. There are however, a number of reasons to suspect that this explanation is too simple to explain the censorship which appears in the Williams/Harries translation. Firstly, with the exception of the single line in Jac Williams’ introduction quoted above, there is nothing else about the translation which suggests that it was intended exclusively for children, nor is there anything in the newspaper articles which advertised the translation’s publication. By way of comparison, E. Curig Davies’ contemporary Welsh language childrens’ editions, as well as being the most heavily abridged of any editions of Owen’s work, contained illustrations and were described as being ‘i’r bobl ifanc’ [for the young people] in their covers (Owen 1967: 2). Daniel Owen’s novels had not been intended as childrens’ literature –Owen even said this explicitly in *Enoc Huws* (1995: 350)– and although the existence of E. Curig Davies’ childrens’ editions indicate that Owen’s stories were considered suitable for children, the originals have never been marketed in this way and there is nothing to suggest that Thomas Parry’s editions had been intended for this

function either. Even allowing that Williams & Harries might have wanted their translation to be read by younger readers, there is no reason to believe they did not also intend for it to be read by adults. Regardless, even if the suggestion that the translation were a children's book might explain the censorship of the sexual material it is harder to see why the religious elements would have been censored in this way.

An alternative argument is that the censorship in the Williams/Harries translation was not intended to protect the audience, but rather to shape readers' interpretation of the author and the text. Gerri Kimber (2009) describes the case of the French translations of the letters and journals of English writer Katherine Mansfield, whose reputation in France is, Kimber claims, far greater than her reputation in England, to the extent that French critics created what Kimber has called a hagiography about her persona: 'As an antidote to the notoriety of such home-grown writers as Rachilde and Colette, a saintly young literary maiden was exactly what was sought by the overwhelmingly male, reactionary, literary and critical establishment in France' (2009: 164). As part of this hagiography, French translations of Mansfield's letters deliberately omitted those aspects which might have negatively effected her perception, such as her risqué humour and anti-French sentiments (2009: 166–7). If the French establishment wanted a 'saintly young maiden', then how much more pressing the need by the Welsh establishment for a significant novelist, to stand alongside the great prose-writers of the nineteenth century and to demonstrate the suitability of the Welsh language as a medium not just for poetry but for any literary form? Indeed, the word 'hagiography' is quite an appropriate one to describe the terms in which Owen has been interpreted in the past by some, as explored in Chapter 2 of this thesis. Could it be that, as an extension of this, censoring those aspects of Owen's writing that might damage his reputation in his

readers' eyes was a deliberate act on the part of the translators of *Gwen Tomos* as part of their participation in the process of Owen's canonisation? As well as the censorship that takes place in the editions and translation of Owen's novels, Welsh literary critics have, like the French critics described by Kimber, seized upon biographical details in order to portray him in a positive light, such as his status as a self-made man from an impoverished background. Parallels have repeatedly been drawn between the events portrayed in his novels and real events in Owen's life, in particular for example by Edwards (1913b), Morgan (1951) and Williams (1975). When it comes to the texts themselves there are the critics who have read messages in the novel that the text 'cannot sustain' (Rhys 2000b: 164), perhaps in their eagerness to import to the novel and its creator an attractive creative daring. As was argued in the introduction to this thesis, critics have been eager to use Daniel Owen as an example of a 'great' Welsh-language novelist. Considering how willing critics and editors have been to collude in the shaping of the Daniel Owen mythos, it is perhaps unsurprising that censorship to the same purpose is to be found so widespread in the English translation of *Gwen Tomos*.

#### **4.4 Language and Nation in the English *Gwen Tomos***

The potential of translation as a tool for nation-building has been widely discussed within Translation Studies (see for example Nama *et al* 1995; Woodsworth *et al* 1995; Meylaerts 2006; Tymoczko 1999, 2000). The kind of translation usually discussed in the context of nation-building involves source texts from the wider world being translated into the national language. However translating from a national language into a 'global' language such as English can also serve the purpose of nation-building by raising the profile of a minority culture (Hopwood 1997; Bensmaïa 2003). Some commentators

such as Gwyn A. Williams have suggested that the strong association between the Welsh language and the Welsh national movement has come at the price of alienating the English-speaking majority of Wales (1985: 293). In this context, translation from Welsh (the language of the few) into English (the language of the many) has also been recognised as having the potential to act as a unifying force in a nation where the majority speak only English (Edwards 1894: iii–iv; Clancy 1997). This is a situation that has parallels for example in post-colonial Africa, where European languages such as English and French –the languages of Empire and Imperialism– have been appropriated by African authors and translators and used to foster a pan-African unity. This unity would be difficult to cultivate if writers restricted themselves to African indigenous languages, few of which are widely spoken outside the home-areas of particular ethnic groups (Bandia 2008). Similarly, in Ireland, translation from Irish into English was pursued by many members of the national movement as part of the process of nation-building (as described extensively by Tymoczko 1999, 2000, 2009). It is likely that Williams and Harries, translators of *Gwen Tomos*, saw their translation fulfilling a similar role; in fact, in his foreword to their translation Jac L. Williams describes it as being intended to serve such a function:

in this present period of linguistic instability it is of vital importance that means be found of bridging the gap that exists, or is alleged to exist, between those of us who speak Welsh and those who, through past negligence and lack of foresight on the part of others have had no real opportunity to acquire a knowledge of their national language. The translation into

English of books written in Welsh can form one valuable bridge  
across that unfortunate gap. (Williams 1963)

Daniel Owen is not normally considered a nationalist writer in that his novels do not explicitly deal with the concept of Welsh nationhood. Nonetheless, his centrality to the Welsh literary canon has given him a certain appeal to Welsh nationalists: Saunders Lewis' interest in Owen provides one example. Another is to be found in Islwyn Ffowc Elis' nationalist propaganda novel *Wythnos yng Nghymru Fydd* (A Week in Wales that Will Be), in which an idealised Wales of the future features the recognition of *Gwen Tomos* as a work of genius via a Hollywood-style film adaptation (Elis 1957). There is also evidence that at least one of the translators saw Owen in a nationalistic light: In *Yr Hen Ddaniel*, T. Ceiriog Williams describes his attempts to secure a memorial to mark Owen's birthplace in Mold:

Tybiem mai carreg yn syth o'r graig heb ei naddu na'i saernio a  
weddai i dad y nofel Gymraeg. Aed i'r chwarel yn Nhrefor yn  
Llŷn, lle cafwyd maen Cilmeri, oherwydd credem mai carreg fel  
honno'n coffau arwr o'r gorffennol a fyddai hefyd yn symbol  
teilwng i goffau arloeswr y nofel Gymraeg. (Williams 1975: 26)

We considered that a stone straight from the rock that hadn't  
been hewn or fashioned would be appropriate for the father of  
the Welsh novel. We went to the quarry in Trefor in Llŷn, from  
where the stone at Cilmeri had come, as we believed that a stone



like that which remembered a hero from the past would also be a fitting symbol in memory of the pioneer of the Welsh novel.

The hero in this case is the Welsh prince Llywelyn ap Gruffydd (c. 1223–1282), the last native prince of Wales, a heroic figure in Welsh nationalism somewhat analogous to Scotland's Robert the Bruce. Llywelyn was killed by English soldiers near Cilmeri in mid Wales, where a stone in his memory was erected in 1956: the similarity with Owen's is immediately obvious, although Llywelyn's is rather larger. By drawing the comparison between Llywelyn and Daniel Owen Williams was implicitly suggesting that there was a nationalistic element to Owen's cultural activity. There is evidence in the text itself to support the hypothesis that the translators saw their translation as a nationalistic enterprise, and that they accordingly sought to give the text a nationalistic spin relative to both Parry's edition and Owen's original. In a rare example of the translators reinstating a section of the original that Parry had omitted, the translators include a part of the description of the old Methodist Robert Wynn:

He had had no schooling except that provided at the Sunday School and he could not speak a word of English. He did not regret his ignorance of that language, because he believed that every new sin that entered the country had its origin in England, and I am rather inclined to agree with him. (Owen 1963: 116)

That the translators chose to depart from Parry –whom, as has been noted, they had been by and large content to follow– by including this reference indicates that they considered it particularly desirable to include in the text, which would be likely if they

were attempting to portray Owen in a nationalistic light, and certainly if they intended their translation to serve as a criticism of English cultural values. Furthermore, the manner in which they translated this section subtly shifts Owen's view on the subject to a firmer position relative to the original, where Owen is more non-committal:

Ni chawsai erioed ddiwrnod o ysgol ond Ysgol Sul, ac ni fedrai air o Saesneg. Ni ofidiai Robert Wynn am ei anwybodaeth o'r Saesneg, oblegid credai fod pob pechod newydd oedd yn y wlad o darddiad Seisnig, ac *nid wyf yn sicr nad oedd efe yn lled agos i'w le.* (Owen 1992: 137, emphasis added)

He had never had a day of schooling except Sunday School, and could not speak a word of English. Robert Wynn did not worry about his ignorance of English, as he believed that every new sin in the country was of English origin, *and I am not sure that he was not broadly correct.*

As Owen implies in this extract, in nineteenth-century Wales, the ability to speak English was seen as a mark of education as almost all schools in the country operated through the medium of English only: most monoglot Welsh speakers would have been those who were for whatever reason unable to attend school. Owen makes a reference to this attitude in chapter 3 of *Gwen Tomos* when the narrator claims 'Yr oeddwn innau, yr wyf yn gorfod cydnabod, trwy nad oeddwn yn deall gair o Saesneg, yn hynod o ddiniwed' [I was, I must admit, because I could not understand a word of English, very simple] (Owen 1992: 19). In the translation, the translators again subtly change the

wording of the sentence: ‘I must admit that I was a very simple boy, and I understood not a word of English’ (Owen 1963: 26). Given the strong association between the Welsh language and Welsh nationalism, it would be difficult to present any man as a nationalist hero who explicitly associated ignorance of English with general ignorance. Accordingly, the translators subtly shifted the value-judgement in Owen’s statement by breaking the correlation between a knowledge of English and education in the translation, and removing the narrator’s sense of shame.

As well as these more direct nationalist references, it is also possible to read the translators’ censorship of *Gwen Tomos* –as described in the preceding section– as evidence for their attempt to use translation as nationalist activism. In removing sexual and other references, Williams and Harries were acting in a similar manner to the translators of Old Irish texts into English during the period before the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922. These Irish medieval tales were considered vitally important assertions of the cultural and therefore national validity of Ireland and the Irish; however, they also contained subject matter that might be considered lewd or otherwise offensive, and were consequently omitted in the English translations:

much of the content of the Ulster Cycle, for example, was suppressed in the early translations, ranging from depictions of the louse-ridden heroes and the sexual elements to the wildness and violence, the scatology and drunkenness. All these things had to be omitted because they confirmed nineteenth-century English stereotypes of and prejudices about the Irish that had

been used to justify English rule and exploitation of Ireland.

(Tymoczko 2009: 34)

Although nothing in *Gwen Tomos* or anywhere else in Daniel Owen's output is as potentially controversial as many of the scenes to which Tymoczko refers, the Welsh have also historically been the victims of stereotyping (Roberts 1998, Parker 2007) and the translators were facing an essentially similar dichotomy between the text as it is in the original and the text as they wished it to be presented in their translation. Like the Irish translators in Tymoczko's example, Williams and Harries chose to either omit the potentially offensive material altogether or translate in such a way as to neutralise it. Although Williams and Harries were operating in a rather different cultural context to the the translators Tymoczko describes, in both cases the translators were contributing in their own way to a burgeoning cultural-political movement and the character of the translations they produced reflects this.

The debate concerning Owen's religiousness was described in detail in the previous chapter: different critics have argued that Owen was a strict Calvinist whose writing reinforced the cultural norms and values of his religious background, or that he was a moderate or even a radical whose views diverged significantly from established orthodoxy. Like almost all cultural products in Welsh from their period, Owen's novels certainly reflect the staunchly religious cultural context in which they were produced and correspondingly include many religious elements; the debate revolves however around how important Owen considered these elements and whether he included them because he wanted to or because he felt obliged to because of the expectations of his society. M. Wynn Thomas has suggested however that the religious character of some

Welsh literature may have been an obstacle in its appreciation by more secular cultures outside Wales (1999: 149–50). The perception that Owen’s novels might appeal only to a specifically non-conformist religious audience had, as has been noted, been a concern for Thomas Parry as editor of Owen’s novels as evidenced by the way he suppressed these elements in his edition. As has been noted above, many sections where Owen’s characters debate religious questions are omitted in Parry’s edition, as are some of the more extreme pronouncements by the narrator or other characters on the subject. This was not necessarily a deliberate attempt to censor or secularise the text, although that is certainly a possibility. Alternatively, because he held a particular opinion on the role religion played in Owen’s world-view, he may have been more likely to consider sections of the text where the author discusses religion ‘long-winded and pointless’, and therefore to omit them. As Williams and Harries’ translation of *Gwen Tomos* is based on Parry’s edition, religion plays a diminished role in the translation in comparison with the original; however, as will be seen, the translators go even further than Parry did in marginalising the religious aspects of Owen’s writing.

In *Yr Hen Ddaniel*, T. Ceiriog Williams clearly expresses his own view that Owen was no orthodox Calvinist:

[mae] cymaint o’n beirniaid llenyddol cyfoes wedi ysgrifennu’n helaeth ar weithiau Daniel Owen... Mae pob un ohonynt yn ei ddehongli yn ei ffordd ei hun, weithiau’n cytuno, weithiau’n anghytuno, ond y mwyafrif yn ei gael yn ‘Fethodyn cil, rhagfarnllyd’. Yn fy myw, ni welaf Daniel Owen yn y golau yma (1975: 49)

Many of our modern literary critics have written extensively on Daniel Owen's works... Every one of them interprets him in his own way, sometimes agreeing, sometimes disagreeing, but the majority find him a 'Narrow-minded, prejudiced Methodist'. In my life I do not see Daniel Owen in this light.

A significant proportion of *Yr Hen Ddaniel* is, in fact, dedicated exclusively to discussing what Williams considers to be evidence for his argument. Williams cites many scenes in Owen's novels that he claims support his view of Owen as a tolerant radical who was not the prejudiced zealot other critics have made him out to be, as well as biographical details, drawing particular attention to the fact that Owen is known to have drunk alcohol in a cultural environment where teetotalism was the respectable ideal (if not always observed in practice):

Cofier bod dirwest erbyn canol y ganrif (ac ystyr y gair hwnnw i'r Cymry ydoedd llwrymwrthodiad ac nid cymedroldeb), wedi dod yn fater llosg, yn un o achubiaeth enaid. Credaf fod y Mostyn Arms wedi rhoddi inni ein nofelydd mawr cyntaf, ac wedi gwaredu'r Methodistiaid rhag meddu pregethwr digon cyffredin. Yn sicr fe gadwyd Daniel Owen rhag bod yn 'fethodyn cul', 'dyn un enwad'... yr oedd dirwest yn gyfystyr â chrefydd a disgwylid i bob pregethwr fod yn ddirwestwr, ac ni wnâi cymedroldeb y tro, ond ni fynnai Daniel Owen gydymffurfio â'r rheolau. (1975: 21)

It should be remembered that by the middle of the century, temperance (and that word's meaning to the Welsh was teetotalism and not moderation) had become a burning issue, a matter of salvation. I believe that the Mostyn Arms had given us our first great novelist, and had denied the Methodists a fairly ordinary preacher. Certainly, it kept Daniel Owen from being a 'narrow Methodist', a 'man of one denomination'... religion meant temperance and every preacher was expected to be a teetotaler, moderation alone wouldn't do, yet Daniel Owen was unwilling to conform to the rules.

It is interesting that Williams draws particular attention to the subject of alcohol when arguing that Owen was a more secular writer than has sometimes been claimed. Right at the start of the novel, Owen light-heartedly defends the practice of drinking alcohol, by way of an anecdote about a respectable preacher who used to enjoy his half pint after a sermon (Owen 1992: 1–2). Like most of Owen's peripheral anecdotes Parry had omitted this section; yet it is present in the translation (Owen 1963: 9–10), presumably because it corresponds with Williams' view of Owen's fondness for alcohol as key evidence for his secularism. Although the anecdote is light-hearted, it is also an example of Owen criticising the Methodist establishment, something which Williams may also have wanted to foreground.

Religious themes have often been the subject of censorship in translation, including self-censorship; with the censorship or banning of translations which contain religious material (Pokorn 2010) as well as translations in which religious values are

challenged (Castro 2009, Camus 2010, Gutiérrez Lanza 2011). Earlier in this chapter it was discussed how the translators of *Gwen Tomos* censored the text in order to protect the Daniel Owen as an hagiographical ideal, and to enhance his appeal as an ambassador on behalf of the Welsh language and the Welsh novel-writing tradition. Some of the ways in which the text was censored have been described above; however, one of the most obvious of the censorships which take place in the novel is the secularisation of the text. If Williams believed that others had been too ready to brand Owen a ‘narrow-minded Calvinist’ then he was evidently determined that nobody could come to that conclusion by reading the English translation of *Gwen Tomos*. Much had already been done in this direction by Parry, who as noted earlier in this chapter had made a particular point of omitting religious references from the text, including a section where Owen vividly describes Gwen’s religious conversion (Owen 1992: 70–1); the translators continued this process, occasionally replacing sections of text that Parry had omitted when they emphasised Owen’s moderate credentials, such as Owen’s anecdote about the alcoholic minister described above (Owen 1992: 1–2; 1963: 9–10), and another section where a character expresses his belief that people ought to worship at whatever establishment they might choose (Owen 1992: 132; 1963: 113). The following extract provides another example:

erbyn hyn yr oedd rhieni yn dechrau rhoi gorchymyn caeth i’w plant nad oeddynt i gymdeithasu â Thwm Nansi. Yr wyf yn cofio yn dda y byddai y pechod gwreiddiol yn dangos ei hun yn amlwg iawn tua’r adeg honno, canys po fwyaf a waharddai ein rhieni i ni gyfathrach â’r hogyn drwg, mwyaf oedd ein hawydd am gwmni Twm. (Owen 1992: 17–8)



by now parents were beginning to give their children strict orders not to socialise with Twm Nansi. I remember well that the original sin would show itself very clearly around that time, as the more our parents forbade us to fraternise with the evil boy, the greater was our desire for Twm's company.

Parry had omitted the entire second sentence. The sentence makes a return in the translation but the explicit reference to original sin remains absent:

parents were now warning their children not to associate with Twm. The more our parents tried to stop us being friendly with this wicked boy, the more we craved for his company. (Owen 1963: 24)

As well as censorship by omission, the translators often reword Owen's writing on religious subjects to make the author seem more moderate:

Gŵr yr oedd crefydd wedi ei wneud yn hanner sarrug oedd Robert Wynn, tad Elin. Bod ganddo grefydd, a honno yn un bur, nid amheuai neb a oedd yn ei adnabod. Ar adeg diwygiad crefyddol cawsai'r fath olwg ar ei bechod a'i gyflwr nes creu ynddo hunan-ffieiddiad, a ffræe, a drwgdybiaeth yn ei fynwes yn erbyn y byd a'i bobl. (Owen 1992: 137)

Religion had made Robert Wynn, Elin's father, half-surly. That he had religion, and that it was pure, nobody that knew him doubted. During a religious revival he had had such a view of his sin and his state as to create within him a self-loathing, quarrelsomeness and a suspicion in his heart of the world and its people.

Religion had given Robert Wynn the rugged appearance of an embittered man. No-one doubted his godliness, but after coming under the influence of the religious revival he had become conscious of his sinfulness, and this had made him introspective and morbid. (Owen 1963: 116)

In the original, the implication is that the religious revival has taught Robert Wynn some essential truths about himself. In the translation, the revival itself is implied to have been the cause of these doubts. The net effect of the omission of Robert Wynn's more extreme outbursts (a legacy of the use of Thomas Parry's edition, as noted earlier) and the modification of his less extreme ones is that the character appears more moderate in the translation than he had done even in Parry's edition. By contrast, none of the arguments of Elin Wynn and Gwen Tomos, with whom Robert Wynn is debating, are modified in any significant way, presumably because they are religious moderates and broadly disagree with the fundamentalist Robert Wynn. Neither set of arguments necessarily matched Owen's own views, and the fact that Robert Wynn is used as a figure of fun in other contexts suggests both there is meant to be an element of humour to his outbursts and that Owen himself did not share his opinions. However, by modifying the more

extreme elements of the character the translators make it impossible for the reader to suggest that Owen himself might have shared some of those views. Other minor changes throughout the text are further evidence of the secularisation that takes place in the translation: many minor references to religion, god or Christianity are omitted (such as those that occur in Owen 1992: 151–2; 177; 192). Elsewhere, religious language is secularised through the translation, for example, ‘troedigaeth’ [conversion] (Owen 1992: 208) is translated as ‘reform’ (Owen 1963: 162) and ‘rhagluniaeth’ [providence] (Owen 1992: 213) becomes ‘fate’ (Owen 1963: 166).

This seemingly deliberate ‘secularisation’ of Owen’s novel serves a dual function. Firstly, the translators were attempting to make the text more appealing and more relevant to secular, modern audiences. This served a nationalistic aim by presenting a view of Wales as modern and dynamic rather than being associated with the old-fashioned religious conservatism (religious observance had declined across the West during the twentieth century but this was perhaps even more noticeable in Wales than elsewhere, because of the way religion had defined Welsh cultural experience in previous centuries). Additionally, it served to shape a new vision of Daniel Owen the author as one less shaped by his cultural context and perhaps more ‘universal’ in his appeal –something which had been a concern of those interested in the translation of Welsh literature into English for many years (H. M. V. 1917).

## **4.5 Conclusions**

This chapter has suggested that T. Ceiriog Williams & E. R. Harries’ translation of Daniel Owen’s *Gwen Tomos* was an example of translation acting as both literary

commentary nationalist activism. Translator T. Ceiriog Williams had a lifetime fascination with Owen, as shown by his naming the school of which he was headmaster after the author as well as his work collecting Daniel Owen memorabilia and the tape-recordings he made of those who had met the author. Williams clearly perceived Owen to be a great novelist and may have been concerned that his legacy was threatened by the growing criticisms of the author; he also believed Owen was a religious moderate and disagreed with those critics who had argued that Owen was a conservative. Translating one of Owen's novels allowed him a unique opportunity to represent Owen in a way that addressed both these concerns: by offering an abridged text he could address the structural criticisms of Owen's novel and by leaving out other sections from his translation he could reposition Owen into a more moderate light. The translation appears to have been marketed for readers within Wales rather than for export, and thus represents a radical attempt to reinvent one of the 'classic' authors of the Welsh language. The critical consensus at the time was that it was acceptable to 'improve' Owen's novels by editing and cutting material; the translators followed this example but also used the opportunity to suppress those elements of the text which undermined the image of Daniel Owen's novel –as a representative sample of Welsh literature– that the translators wished to convey. Williams & Harries' position as translators put them in a uniquely powerful position to realise their ideological aims because most of their readers would have no access to the originals. These included parts of the text which could be construed as racist or sexist, as well as those parts where the traditional, conservative, Calvinist context of Owen's original was most strongly apparent.

The translators were also attempting to use the translation of Owen's novel as a way to pursue a nationalist political agenda. The translation was produced during a

period of increased nationalist activity and language activism in Wales, when literature was frequently used as a means to express and encourage feelings of national identity, by writers like Gerallt Lloyd Owen and Islwyn Ffowc Elis. In this context it was unsurprising that some would be inspired to use translation to a similar purpose. At least one of the translators considered Owen to be a nationalist icon because of his contribution to Welsh-language literature. Although Williams & Harries' *Gwen Tomos* is a very different translation to James Harris' *Rhys Lewis*, I have made the argument here that both works were engaging in promoting and foregrounding ideas of Welsh nationhood. While Harris' *Rhys Lewis* exhibited some foreignising translation strategies, the English *Gwen Tomos* is the most 'fluent' of the translations studied in this thesis. Although, unlike in the Harris' translation the Welsh spellings of names are kept –in fact, on at least one occasion, a Welsh spelling is used where an English one appears in the original– many of the cases where informal or dialectal language are used in the original are removed from the translation without comment. To give just one representative example, in the following extract the narrator is describing his mother's attitude towards Cobynd, their cockerel:

Nid wyf yn siŵr nad oedd ar fy mam arswyd lladd Cobynd,  
oblegid dirgel gredwn fod ynddi ymwybyddiaeth y gwyddai  
cobynd ormod o hanes y teulu ers blynyddoedd, ac y gallai, pe  
gwnaethid cam ag ef, “ddŵad i drwblo”. Edrychai fy mam  
hefyd, mi wn, ar cobyn fel un oedd yn wasanaethgar iawn i  
gadw trefn ar y “pethau ifinc” (Owen 1992: 4)

I suspect that my mother was afraid of killing him because I secretly believe that she had some intuition that he knew too much about our family history and that he could, if he were wronged, return to haunt us. I also know that my mother valued his services in keeping the young cockerels in order... (Owen 1963: 12)

The informal language used by the narrator's mother is quoted directly in the original, and contrasts with Owen's formal narration. She uses the northern-dialect word 'dŵad' (to come) and the English loan-word 'trwblo' (to (cause) trouble), and Owen offers an unusual spelling of the word 'ifanc' (young) to further demonstrate the narrator's mother's thick accent. None of these idiosyncrasies is preserved in the translation. The argument was made in the previous chapter that the non-fluent prose style of Harris' *Rhys Lewis* may be evidence of a nationalist objective. An explanation is therefore perhaps warranted as to how Williams & Harries' translation –which avoids many foreignising opportunities in favour of presenting an easily read, fluent text– can serve a similar objective. In the context of what might be considered the 'standard' model of nineteenth-century translation from Welsh into English, James Harris' decision to translate *Rhys Lewis* in a foreignising style was a radical departure from the norm. But by the 1960s the political and cultural context had changed. In the light of the publication of translations like H. Idris Bell's and Tony Conran's, the dominant model of Welsh-English translation was no longer the same as it had been in the nineteenth century and a foreignised translation style would not have constituted the same kind of challenge to translation norms as Harris' text had done. It is likely also that the extent to which Daniel Owen's originals had already been manipulated by editors of the

Welsh-language editions of their texts played a part: these editors had legitimised the manipulation of texts in the interests of their ‘improvement’, such that the priority was no longer to present an author’s work as it actually was, but as his translators/editors wished it to be.

This chapter has attempted to demonstrate that the changes made in the English translation of Owen’s *Gwen Tomos* are evidence of a cultural and political agenda on the part of the translators. The translators wished to produce a text which portrayed the Welsh as a nation in a positive light, but they were also concerned with the cultural rehabilitation of Daniel Owen as an author. As well as further canonising Thomas Parry’s abridged edition by using it as the basis of their translation, they went even further than he had done by abridging the novel even more so as to counter claims that the story was slow-moving and unstructured. The translation’s cultural and political contexts directly effected the nature of the text itself. The next chapter will explore one of the more recent translations of a work by Daniel Owen, and will demonstrate how the evolving cultural and historical context of Wales has continued to influence of the translations it has produced.

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## Notes

- 1 *Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg*—lit. ‘The Language Society’—is a pressure group advocating the Welsh language, typically targeting institutions that refuse to acknowledge or provide services in the language with protests and non-violent activism.
- 2 Gerallt Lloyd Owen (1944–2014), poet whose most famous volume, *Cerddi'r Cywilydd* (‘Poems of Shame’, 1972), is one of the most enduring cultural statements of Welsh nationalism. Islwyn Ffowc Elis (1924–2004), one of the best-known Welsh-language novelists. His novels occasionally referenced Welsh nationalist themes, most prominently 1957’s *Wythnos yng Nghymru Fydd*. Dafydd Iwan (1943–), folk-singer and possibly the most well-known figure in Welsh popular music, his songs ‘for the most part, make political points about the history, language and present condition of the Welsh people’ (Stephens 1998: 354).
- 3 The Daniel Owen Secondary School merged with Alun grammar school in 1967 and bears the name Alun school today; the author’s legacy is still recognised by their main hall, named after the author.



## Chapter 5: *Profedigaethau Enoc Huws*: Retranslation, canon, and the English-language literature of Wales

### 5.1 Introduction: Retranslation in Wales

The preceding two chapters have shown how the translation of Daniel Owen's second and fourth novels has been used to pursue various political agendas. This chapter will move on to discuss Owen's third novel, *Profedigaethau Enoc Huws*, and its two existing translations into English: Claud Vivian's translation of 1894–6 and Les Barker's translation of 2010 (despite the significant chronological gap between these two translations' publications, as will be explained, the two are closely linked, thus I have decided to discuss them together). Some of the points raised in the previous chapters may also be relevant to these translations, particularly Vivian's, which bears some similarities with James Harris' translation of *Rhys Lewis*: they were both produced during the author's own lifetime, and Vivian's translation was serialised in *Wales*, a spiritual successor to Harris' magazine *Red Dragon* which had a similar nationalist agenda. While the previous chapter explored the ways that translation can engage with the canonicity of an author and his or her literary works—that being the second of this thesis' main areas of analysis, as articulated in the introduction—these questions will be more prominent in this chapter. This chapter will also focus extensively on the third area of analysis described in the introduction: it will explore the relationship of Welsh-English translation with Welsh writing in English.

Although one hundred and fourteen years separate the publication of the final chapter of Vivian's translation in 1896 and the publication of Barker's translation in 2010, the two translations are closely linked. Not only are both translations of the same

original novel, Barker's translation is in fact a reissue of Vivian's, and is explicitly marketed as such: Claud Vivian receives the sole translator's credit and with Les Barker credited as editor rather than translator. Although he is not credited as translator, the book is described as having been 'revised and updated for the modern reader by Les Barker' (Owen 2010: iii). However, although it is explicitly presented as a revised edition and not a retranslation, the changes made are extensive and almost every sentence of the translation differs in at least some way from Vivian's text. The changes are such that it can to all intents and purposes be considered a retranslation (and Les Barker to be a translator rather than editor) and this work will be discussed as such here. Nonetheless, in certain places Vivian's words are used unchanged and this chapter will endeavour to highlight this when it is significant.

Like the previous two chapters, this one will begin with an analysis of the novel on whose translations it focuses: in this case, *Profedigaethau Enoc Huws*. The discussion will focus primarily on the novel's place in relation to the rest of Owen's literary output, with the aim being to explain why the novel has been attractive to translators: it is, to date, the only novel of Owen's to have been translated into English more than once (and thus one of few Welsh language novels to receive such a treatment). It has been mentioned in previous chapters that contemporary critics seem to have reached a consensus that *Enoc Huws* is its author's best novel: this idea will be explored further here.

The two translations will then be described in turn, beginning with Claud Vivian's 1892 translation. This part of the chapter will discuss first the translation's historical and literary context, as well as detailing what is known regarding the

translator, before going on to offer a close textual reading of some parts of the translation. In this chapter I will argue that Vivian's text was published to meet a perceived demand for Welsh-centric prose stories in English, but also to foster and inspire the nascent literary tradition of original Welsh writing in English, an idea which was explored more thoroughly in the introduction to this thesis. Itamar Even-Zohar has suggested that translated texts can become central parts of a literary system in contexts of a perceived literary vacuum, or when a literary system is new or being formed (1990). As noted by Tom Hubbard, 'new literature establishes itself partly by importing foreign works on the basis of permanent loan' (2006 : 271). This chapter will suggest that this model fits the cultural context of the first English *Enoc Huws*. As will be demonstrated, the magazine in which it was serialised, *Wales*, attempted to foster and influence the development of an English-language Welsh literature, and the translation of texts into English was envisioned as a means to achieve this by editor O. M. Edwards (1894: iii). A close reading of the translation reveals the use of some foreignising approaches to language within the text, such as the use of Welsh-language derived syntax in dialogue and a literal approach to the source text, which show Vivian's attempt to distance the translation from contemporary English-language novels and to suggest a stylistic framework for future Welsh prose works in English.

The third part of this chapter will discuss the second translation, Les Barker's *The Trials of Enoc Huws*. The translation will be discussed as a retranslation of Vivian's work, and the discussion will utilise theoretical concepts in Translation Studies on the subject, such as Antoine Berman's so-called retranslation hypothesis (1990). The translation will be compared and contrasted with Vivian's, with reference once again to strategies of foreignisation and domestication. On first glance, there are many overtly

foreignising translation strategies at work in Barker's translation, such as for example the retention of Welsh name spellings (which had been Anglicised by Claud Vivian, following the precedent by James Harris in *Rhys Lewis, Minister of Bethel*), but most notably the numerous instances of terms which are left in Welsh and explained by means of a liberal use of often quite extensive footnotes. As well as offering background information on concepts and individuals that might be less familiar to modern English readers than to Owen's original Welsh Methodist audience, these footnotes provide the translator himself (who is a comedian and poet by trade) with a strong and distinctive voice within the text. The footnotes' presence in the translation emphasises the role of the translator as mediator between the source text and the reader, thus emphasising the distance between the reader and the Welsh-language source and maintaining a sense of its 'otherness'. However, compared to Vivian's, the prose itself is more obviously influenced by the conventions of English-language prose, and there is much evidence of a deliberate attempt to make the translation more readable and fluent for an English-reading public than Vivian's had been. While Vivian's prose may have served as a model for original Welsh writing, I will suggest that Barker's more domesticating prose has something of the opposite effect: it emphasises the translation's independence of that tradition. Finally, this chapter will seek to demonstrate how Les Barker's translation was conceived as an attempt to further canonise the author in his native Welsh language literary tradition. Aspects of the production seek to emphasise the novel's status as a 'Welsh classic' and its author's status as a canonical writer, and these are further emphasised by the domesticating prose style which evokes that of canonical Victorian novelists in English. A concluding section will re-summarise the points raised and point the way to the next chapter.

## 5.2 *Enoc Huws*: Daniel Owen's most English novel?

Although *Enoc Huws* was a critical and commercial success and has always been highly regarded as one of Daniel Owen's principal novels, it was not as immediately popular as its predecessor *Rhys Lewis*. Typically, articles on the author or his output that pre-date 1950 –many of these were later collected in Urien William's *Cyfres y Meistri* series (1983)– will emphasise the superiority of *Rhys Lewis*. This is not always done explicitly, but often implicitly, as in the case of J. Breese Davies' article which measures the standards of Owen's other novels by comparing them to Rhys Lewis:

O ran celfyddyd, y mae *Rhys Lewis* yn well na'r *Dreflan*...  
Disgrifio crefydd y Diwygiad yn newid a wneir yn *Enoc Huws*.  
Nid ydyw'r disgrifiad mor nodedig o bersonol â'r disgrifiadau a  
geir yn *Y Dreflan* a *Rhys Lewis*, ond y mae'n fwy cosmopolitan a  
beirniadol. Oherwydd hyn, prin efallai fod y cymeriadau mor  
fyw a diddorol â'r rhai yn y ddau lyfr cyntaf. (1926: 168–72)

In terms of artistry, *Rhys Lewis* is better than *Y Dreflan*... In *Enoc Huws* the changing religion of the Revival is described. The description is not so notably personal as the descriptions that are had in *Y Dreflan* and *Rhys Lewis*, but it is more cosmopolitan and critical. Because of this, the characters are perhaps barely as alive and interesting as those in the first two books.

If characterisation was always one of Owen's perceived strengths, then it is the characters of *Rhys Lewis* on which this reputation seems to rest, according to critics writing before 1950. In an article that purports to discuss Daniel Owen in general (1913a), O. M. Edwards mentions only those characters which appear in *Rhys Lewis* and makes no reference at all to the rest of the author's work. A second article by the same author (1913b) discusses these same characters in more depth, but again as if the novel in which they appear was the author's only literary work. Implicit in Llew G. Williams' naming of the characters Wil Bryan, Tomos Bartley and Bob Lewis as Owen's 'greatest triumphs beyond any doubt' (1919: 209) is the suggestion that *Rhys Lewis*, the novel in which they all appear, is Owen's finest. A similar view is implied by J. T. Jones (1930), who also prioritises the characters in *Rhys Lewis*; he does not explicitly name *Rhys Lewis* its author's best, but does so implicitly by criticising his other novels. Although these articles do not explicitly argue for the supremacy of the characterisation in *Rhys Lewis*, taken together they add to a critical consensus to that effect. Other aspects of the novels also afforded the opportunity for critics to implicitly evaluate them in relation to one another. J. T. Jones, for example, also criticised *Enoc Huws* and *Gwen Tomos* from a morally conservative standpoint, claiming that:

Yn rhyfedd, er cymaint Piwritan oedd, medrodd wyro fwy nag unwaith i ysgrifennu pethau sydd heb fod yn gwbl chwaethus. Y mae blas annymunol, er enghraifft, ar y bennod gyntaf o *Enoc Huws*, ac ar un paragraff o leiaf yn *Gwen Tomos*. (1930: 185)

Strangely, though he was such a Puritan, he managed to deviate more than once to write things that are not entirely tasteful.

There is an unpleasant taste, for example, to the first chapter of *Enoc Huws*, and to one paragraph at least in *Gwen Tomos*.

The first chapter of *Enoc Huws* describes the bastard Enoc's birth and his mother's death in labour. Doubtless such candid material offended the taste of some conservative readers, and the lack of any such material in *Rhys Lewis* (or at least, the less controversial nature of the material that does exist) was doubtless another factor in the novels' relative popularity at the time.

If, then, the consensus in the first half of the twentieth century was that *Rhys Lewis* was Owen's *magnum opus*, in more recent decades *Enoc Huws* has been increasingly recognised as its author's crowning achievement, to the detriment of the earlier novel. To Robert Rhys, *Enoc Huws* is the 'uchafbwynt gyrfa llenyddol ei hawdur' [highpoint of its author's literary career] (2000a: 173); the first eighteen chapters in particular have been well received, as was noted in the second chapter of this thesis. The perception of the novel as Owen's best may have made it a priority for translation; certainly this was a motivation for the 2010 translation (John Mainwaring 2012, personal correspondence). In the case of the nineteenth-century translation, the perception that *Rhys Lewis* was its author's greatest achievement would presumably have made it the most attractive immediate choice for a translation; but given that a translation of *Rhys Lewis* was already available by the 1890s *Enoc Huws* –the sequel to *Rhys Lewis*– would have been a natural second choice.

Although sharing a setting and some characters with *Rhys Lewis*, the two stories' plots are not linked and the protagonists of *Enoc Huws* are all new, with characters from

*Rhys Lewis* generally appearing in cameos rather than playing a significant part in the action. Owen's preface distances the new novel from his previous work, promising to discuss characters 'less noted for their religiosity' than those of *Rhys Lewis* (Owen 1995: 6). The plot of the novel concerns Captain Trefor, a smooth-talking con-artist who cheats investors out of their money by persuading them to invest in mining enterprises that are doomed to failure. Following the closure of his previous enterprise, Trefor seeks to ensnare the upright but naive Enoc, a shopkeeper and bastard orphan, into a new scheme. Enoc agrees, but only in order to get closer to the Captain's pampered daughter, Susan Trefor, with whom he is hopelessly in love. The Captain approves of the match as a means to ensure Enoc's continued participation in his scheme; Susan herself, disillusioned upon realising that her father is a criminal, eventually agrees to marry Enoc, whom she had previously rejected. However, a mysterious man who turns out to be Enoc's grandfather returns and unmask Captain Trefor as Enoc's father, who had left Enoc's mother to die in childbirth. Racked by guilt but unrepentant to the end, Trefor drinks himself to death. Because Susan has been revealed to be Enoc's half-sister, the wedding cannot go ahead; fortunately however all is made well by the return of Susan's former suitor Wil Bryan (a central character in *Rhys Lewis*) and the appearance of an alternative suitor for Enoc to marry. Enoc and his new wife emigrate to the United States to be with Enoc's grandfather, and Wil and Susan take over the shop in the happiest ending to a Daniel Owen novel. Two sub-plots also run through the novel: through his naivety Enoc accidentally allows his repulsive housekeeper to think that he is romantically interested in her; and members of the local chapel seek a replacement minister for the Rhys Lewis, who had died at the end of the previous novel.



As the above summary indicates, the novel's plot(s) are much more elaborate and carefully planned than those of Owen's earlier novels, almost certainly a result of the fact that he had planned at least some of the novel carefully before writing it: there are sketches of some of the earlier chapters dating from as early as 1886, four years before they began appearing in *Y Cymro* (Rhys 2000a: 139–41). Whatever the reasons, of all Owen's novels *Enoc Huws* has the most structured plot. It is also the least introspective, a social comedy and sometimes a comedy of manners that little resembles the inward-looking and slow-paced *Rhys Lewis*, the book to which it is ostensibly a sequel. In many ways it resembles more closely the plot-driven comedic novels or plays of some of his English-language contemporaries, like Charles Dickens or Oscar Wilde, than anything that had appeared in Welsh beforehand. Certainly, it was different from the prose typically published in Welsh during the period, the most popular prose works of the time being the biographies and autobiographies of preachers and other religious figures.

As well as its elements of comedy, *Enoc Huws* is further distanced from what was typical of Welsh-language prose in the nineteenth century by being the least overtly religious of Owen's novels. In clear contrast to *Rhys Lewis*, fundamentally an introspective religious work, *Enoc Huws* is a social comedy. Religious conversions were a favourite plot-device of Victorian novelists in Welsh (Rowlands 1992), and they appear in some form or other in three of Owen's four novels, the sole exception being *Enoc Huws*. With that in mind, there is introspection in the novel too, and Susan Trefor's reassessment of her superficial values could be considered a conversion of sorts, and has been discussed as such (Rhys 2000a: 161). The novel's secularity was noted by the author himself, who claimed that the novel would 'not assume as religious

an aspect as [*Rhys Lewis*]' (Owen 2010: xvii). Although a sub-plot does involve the search for a replacement minister for Rhys Lewis, this is used more as a setting for comedy and as a means to explore similar themes of hypocrisy to the main plot than to make any particular religious argument, although some found just such an argument in the novel (Jones 1905). Owen's previous work had been serialised in the Methodist journal *Y Drysorfa*, but from *Enoc Huws* onwards his writing would be published in *Y Cymro*, a secular newspaper. Robert Rhys has played down the significance of this change, suggesting Owen had only written for *Y Drysorfa* in the first place out of loyalty to its editor, his mentor Roger Edwards; nevertheless he notes that the move would have given Owen a sense of freedom that he would not have felt at *Y Drysorfa* under Edwards' wing (Rhys 2000a: 145). This freedom meant that he felt able to write about a wider range of topics than he had done before, such as romantic relationships between characters, as well as portraying a villainous character in considerable detail. Owen had portrayed villainous characters before, but characters like Rhys Lewis's uncle and Jeremiah Jenkins of *Y Drefflan* are one-dimensional and simplistic when compared to Captain Trefor; furthermore they are far less important parts of their respective novels and far less central to the plot.

It is quite possible that the novel's secularity goes some way to explain why it was not as popular as *Rhys Lewis* when first published: Owen's conservative-religious audience would have preferred another novel with a stronger religious element. Some may even have considered elements such as the romantic material socially or morally harmful: even as late as 1930 J. T. Jones would argue that *Enoc Huws* contained distasteful elements (1930: 185). Conversely, however, the novel's secularity may also go some way to explaining its subsequent popularity: as Welsh society became more

secular so the appeal of *Enoc Huws* increased. M. Wynn Thomas' claim that the religious elements which are so prominent in nineteenth-century Welsh literature have been an obstacle in a secular age to its appreciation beyond Welsh-speaking Wales was mentioned in the previous chapter (1999: 149). The same argument might be made for the appreciation of nineteenth-century Welsh literature among modern Welsh-speaking audiences. The author of the article on Welsh-English translation in *The Welsh Outlook* seemed to be implying that the Calvinist-methodist perspective of *Rhys Lewis* –by not being 'œcumenical' enough– may have contributed to the lack of success attained by its English translation (H.M.V. 1917). The anomalous position of *Enoc Huws* as the most secular of Owen's novels might make it more attractive than the others, and the novels of other nineteenth-century Welsh authors, to translators seeking to produce a work whose style and content would be more familiar and accessible to their target audiences, whether those audiences were in the nineteenth or the twenty-first century.

Owen's claim to that he wrote for the common man rather than for intellectual elites is sometimes used to claim Owen on behalf of a socialist political persuasion; however they are almost never quoted in their original context, in which Owen makes it clear that he is attempting to deflect literary criticism of *Rhys Lewis*:

Gallwn ddweud rhywbeth am yr amgylchiadau anfanteisiol dan  
ba rai y cyfansoddwyd y llyfr, oni bai y byddwn felly yn  
ymddangos fel un yn ceisio pylu min beirniadaeth. Rhaid i'r hwn  
a gyhoeddo lyfr ddysgu bod yn ddiodefgar erbyn y daw  
diwrnod y rhostio. Nid wyf finnau yn disgwyl cael bod yn  
eithriad; yn hytrach dywedaf wrth y rhai sydd yn teimlo hynny ar

eu calon, fel y dywedasai Wil Bryan, “fire away!”—ni ellwch nodi mwy o ddiffygion yn y gwaith nag y mae’r awdur ei hun yn ymwybodol ohonynt. Nid i’r doeth a’r deallus yr ysgrifennais, ond i’r dyn cyffredin. (Owen 2002: i)

I could say something about the disadvantageous circumstances under which the book was composed, except that in doing so I would appear to be trying to blunt the edge of criticism. He who would publish a book must learn to be forbearing when the day of his roasting comes. I do not expect to be allowed to be an exception; instead I shall say to those who feel an urge to do so in their hearts, as Wil Bryan had said, “fire away!”—you will not be able to note more flaws in the work than those of which the author himself is aware. I did not write for the wise and intelligent, but for the common man.

It is clear that Owen intended his words to be a shield against criticisms of his writing rather than any kind of statement of political intent. If there is a political connotation to the quotation, I would argue, it is one of anti-intellectualism rather than socialism.

Whatever the subsequent status of his work in academic and literary circles, Owen was ultimately a part-time amateur novelist from a working class background. Owen’s novels were ‘full of linguistic crudities and errors’ and constitute part of a literature that ‘bore the hallmarks... of a peasant culture’ (Morgan 1982: 98). After *Y Mabinogion* and before Daniel Owen, the significant prose works in Welsh are usually didactic, whether the end they serve is religious as in the case of *Llyfr y Tri Aderyn* (1653) and Ellis

Wynne's *Gweledigaethau y Bardd Cwsc* (1703), or historiographical as in the case of Theophilus Evans' *Drych y Prif Oesoedd* (1716). Thus, however important he would later become, inasmuch as there was an extant prose tradition in the Welsh language at the time, Daniel Owen's novels were outside it. As with all works, as noted by Even-Zohar (1990), the canonisation of Owen's work has been the result of its reception and treatment by critics, editors, and, as this this thesis shows, translators.

### **5.3 Claud Vivian's *Enoch Hughes*: translation as inspiration**

The first translation of *Enoc Huws* was completed by Claud Vivian some time in 1892, although, as noted, it would not be published until it began appearing in the pages of *Wales* a few years later. Having completed his translation, Vivian sent the manuscript to Daniel Owen, who, according to a letter he wrote to Isaac Foulkes, at first assumed it to be some kind of joke, believing that nobody would undertake such a monumental task as the translation without any guarantee of recompense (quoted in Foulkes 1903: 122). Foulkes notes that, once he had been assured of the translator's sincerity, the author was very flattered, considering the translation to be superior to James Harris's version of *Rhys Lewis*. However he also noted that the author criticised it for being too literal in places (Foulkes 1903: 182).

At first glance, the Rt. Hon. Claud Vivian (1849–1902) might seem an unlikely candidate as translator for a Daniel Owen novel. A second son of Charles Crespigny Vivian, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron Vivian, Claud Vivian was not himself in line for the baronetcy and worked as a Barrister in Chester (Charles Vivian 2012, personal correspondence), but as a member of the English upper class an interest in Welsh literature and culture might be

considered somewhat unusual. However, as has been noted elsewhere in this thesis, the nineteenth century was a period in which Celtic antiquarianism became quite popular, and the Vivian family appear to have exhibited a certain amount of Celtophilia. They were originally from Cornwall, and although there seems to be little beyond this to connect them to any native Celtic culture, their family plot in the graveyard at St. Winnow is dominated by elaborate Celtic crosses which emphasise the family's personal identification with a kind of fashionable Victorian neo-Celticism. Although Claud Vivian himself worked in Chester for most of his life, he was made High Sheriff of Anglesey in 1899 and held the position there until his death (*Who's Who* 2007), a fact which certainly suggests a long-standing connection with Wales. The existence of his translation is clear evidence that he could read and presumably speak Welsh, however it is unclear whether he had learned the language to facilitate his work or purely as a hobby –the proximity of Chester to the Welsh border would have made the language a useful skill for a barrister in his position, especially in the nineteenth century when monoglot Welsh speakers were still common and the language was more widely spoken.<sup>1</sup>

It was not unusual for members of the upper class in the nineteenth century to undertake translations as amateur diversions, and the activities of Celtic scholars like Matthew Arnold had legitimised this in the case of Welsh texts: *Y Mabinogion*, first translated into English in the 1830s by Lady Charlotte Guest, is perhaps the best-known example of a Welsh text receiving such a treatment. However, the translation of contemporary texts was more unusual. Although he lived in England, Chester is less than fifteen miles from Mold and it seems likely that Vivian would have become aware of the new cultural sensation of a popular Welsh-language novelist living nearby. As a

member of the established church, it seems unlikely that Vivian would have related to Owen on religious grounds. However, it is possible that Owen's politics appealed to Vivian. The Vivian family were Liberals; Claud's father and grandfather had been Liberal MPs; and it is possible that Owen's own activity in Liberal politics (towards the end of his life he occupied a number of positions in local government) had endeared him to Vivian (although *Enoc Huws* is not a particularly political novel).

Regardless of Vivian's personal motivations as regards his own translation, O. M. Edwards, the editor of the journal in which Vivian's translation was serialised, had a very specific function in mind for the translation. In his editorial to the first volume of *Wales*, he explained the role he foresaw for the translation:

Another aim of *Wales* is to bring the influence of Welsh literature to act on the thought of English Wales. It is a purifying, ennobling, strengthening influence. My ambition is, before my working day is over, to give English Wales translations of the hundred best Welsh prose works. Why should not the English literature of Wales have characteristics of its own –like Scotch literature or American literature? It is not by slavishly imitating the most worthless and ephemeral productions of an English period of decadence that a Welsh literature is to be formed. It must be characteristically Welsh before it will be of value to England and to the world. (Edwards 1894: iv)

This quotation establishes a number of things. Firstly, it shows that Edwards envisioned the function of translations from Welsh to be to inspire and inform an English-language Welsh literature. In this he differs notably from the stated aim of James Harris for his translation of *Rhys Lewis*, which was to impress the English with the quality of Welsh literature (Owen 1888: 3). Secondly, although he expresses an intention to foster an English-language Welsh literature, Edwards seems to see the value of that literature in terms of its value to the English –once again we see M. Wynn Thomas’ contributionism in action. Thirdly, he explicitly states his desire that this should not be a popular literature, in which he sees little cultural value, but rather a literature which appeals to more artistic sensibilities. He goes on to elaborate both the second and third of these points:

To give the best of Welsh thought to other nations is a noble work, to ape the shallowest manners of the poorest English thinkers is despicable. We could undoubtedly produce a luxurious hothouse crop of W. T. Steads and Conan Doyles, but has not England too many of these already? Our aim should be higher, to give the world a Sir Walter Scott or a Nathaniel Hawthorne. The Scotchman or the American gives his own contribution to English literature, and not a weak echo... Let us give the Englishman our own, not a feeble imitation of what he has already. (Edwards 1894: iv)

If Edwards intended to inspire writers by translating the ‘hundred best Welsh prose works’, then considering his contempt for popular literature, it seems likely that he



would have chosen only those works which he considered high literature. As *Enoc Huws* was the first Welsh prose work to appear in translation in *Wales* then Edwards clearly considered it to be high literature, or at the very least he intended to present it to his readers as such.

While Daniel Owen's popularity with the general public was almost immediate, as has been noted, the point at which he began to be considered as 'high literature' and thus central part of the Welsh literary canon is difficult to pinpoint. O. M. Edwards' words, quoted above, imply that at least some were thinking of him in those terms during his own lifetime. By 1915, R. Williams Parry was arguing for him to be studied in the Welsh Universities. Williams Parry accepted that the study of Victorian Welsh literature might be objected to 'on the ground that much of our recent literature is unsound and inartistic in matters of language and style', he also claimed that

The answer to this objection is that the best in our Victorian writers is also the best in the whole of our literature; and that their orthographical and other defects should interest rather than repel the young critic, who is too often disposed to mistake high grammar for literature. (Williams Parry 1915: 436)

Parry-Williams clearly recognised the obstacles that the 'defects' in Owen's novels posed for his canonisation. Although he was not referring to Owen specifically in the above quotation, earlier in his article he listed Daniel Owen as one of several Victorian literary figures he believed worthy of study, and it seems reasonable to suggest –given the spelling and other errors which indeed littered Owen's work– that he had Owen in

mind. Some critics tried to argue, as R. Williams Parry was doing, that Owen's linguistic inconsistencies were an important element of his novels' appeal (Morgan 1982: 98). Certainly, they could be viewed as a mark of the era in which the novels were produced, as written Welsh was only just beginning to be standardised via the work of academics like John Morris Jones (1913), although subsequent editions of Owen's novels in Welsh have always standardised the language. If, however, the linguistic inconsistencies could be thought to cast doubt on Owen's greatness, then at the very least a translation (which would not be obliged to reflect these) could do his reputation no harm. Indeed, it could even strengthen it. The contributionist attitude to which M. Wynn Thomas alludes was that Welsh cultural products should be evaluated by the interest they aroused among the wider British/English cultural sphere. This is the attitude espoused in the article on translation into English in *The Welsh Outlook*, which asks 'If the translation into English be the true test of success, what amount of success do we note amongst the English-speaking population of the earth concerning Welsh literature?' (H.M.V. 1917: 14). From this perspective a translation into English would not only be helpful to reinforce Owen's literary credentials, but might even be considered essential for their establishment.

However, as has been noted, by publishing Vivian's *Enoch Hughes* O. M. Edwards was not only commenting on the canonicity of Daniel Owen. He was also interested in establishing a new literary tradition, that of Welsh writing in English. Usually, this literature has been considered to be a phenomenon of the twentieth century (Jones 2001, Garlick 1970). However, there were plenty of attempts in the nineteenth century to write stories and poetry in English which revolved around Wales: the pages of *Red Dragon* provide many examples. Attitudes towards the idea of Welsh writing in

English among Welsh-language literati have often been mixed, as noted in the introduction to this thesis, with such eminent figures as Saunders Lewis among those who questioned the extent to which any such writing could exist. However, despite this hostility, other Welsh speakers have been far more positive. O. M. Edwards was an early proponent of the tradition, and though Saunders Lewis' considered Welsh writing in English to be a symptom of national decline, O. M. Edward's magazine, *Wales*, which encouraged and disseminated Welsh writing in English, was a nationalist project similar in scope to *Red Dragon* (Yoder 2008). As they were among the first cultural manifestations of this linguistic shift, containing as they do some of the earliest examples of Welsh writing in English, it is surprising that *The Red Dragon* and *Wales* have received so little critical attention.<sup>2</sup> A key concern of these magazines, which they were attempting to remedy, was the lack of English-language reading material written from a Welsh perspective and/or expressing a Welsh national identity. They were sensitive to the potential for Welsh writing in English, but also aware that very little of it existed at that time. In this context the literary tradition of Welsh writing in English might be considered to be coming into existence, or at least still in its formative years; thus it might be considered to be what Itamar Even-Zohar refers to as a 'polysystem [that] has not yet been crystallised' (1990: 200). In this context, Even-Zohar notes, translation can often cease to be a peripheral literary activity and become central to the emerging polysystem, and can become a means by which new literary techniques can become established (1990: 200).

Although, as noted in Chapter 3, the earlier journal *Red Dragon* contained occasional translations of Welsh poetry, *Wales* made far more considerable use of translation. In his editorial to the first issue, editor O. M. Edwards had expressed his

desire to provide translations of the hundred greatest prose works in Welsh (1894: iv). Unfortunately (for scholars of Welsh-English translation) Vivian's *Enoch Hughes* was the only large-scale translated prose work to appear in its pages, perhaps indicating an absence of translators keen to take up his challenge. Although translated prose, then, was not as prevalent in *Wales* as Edwards had intended it to be, each issue contained a section dedicated to translations of Welsh poetry, thus translation remained a significant part of the journal: the dissemination of translations was clearly considered to be a central pillar of the journal's strategy. According to Edwards' editorial, the primary function of these translations was to inspire original writing that was English in language but Welsh in content and character; in other words to import foreign values and elements into a nascent literary system.

To this end, one would expect Vivian's translation to exhibit some of the features described by Even-Zohar, 'such as a new (poetic) language, or compositional patterns and techniques' (1990: 200). In accordance with Edwards' expressed intent in his editorial to the journal, these strategies would be those which emphasised the 'Welshness' of the text, the means by which it could be differentiated from contemporary English literature. To a certain extent this is true: the text exhibits several foreignising features which emphasise its 'Welshness'. For example, Welsh place names are left untranslated, such as the name of Captain Trefor's mine, 'Pwll y Gwynt', which is kept as 'Pwlllygwynt' rather than being translated literally ('the pit of the wind,' or 'the windy pit'); similarly 'Tŷ'n yr Ardd' becomes 'Tynyrardd' rather than being translated ('The house in the garden'). These might be unremarkable in themselves, except that James Harris's earlier translation of *Rhys Lewis* had set a precedent by tending to translate such place names (for example, 'Twmpa' as 'The Tump'). Parts of

some characters' dialogue is marked by a Welsh-derived word order, as can be seen when passages are compared to the way they appear in Owen's original:

achos i be'r ewch chi at y doctor pan fedra i neud cystal fffisig  
ag yntau a gwell (Owen 1995: 59)

for why should you go to the doctor, when I can make as good  
physic as he can, and better too. (Owen 1894–6)

Mi glywi ryw bobol yn deud mae'r peth gwiriona ar chwyneb y  
dduar ydi cadw mochyn. A rydw i wedi notishio wastad mae  
pobl ddiog, ddi-sut ar fyw, yw'r rheini sy'n deud felly (Owen  
1995: 120)

You hear some folk say that the silliest thing on the face of the  
world is keeping pigs. And I've always noticed that those who  
talk like that are lazy people, untidy in their living (Owen  
1894–6)

Vivian deals with the use of personal and impersonal pronouns in Welsh (*ti* and *chi*) in a similar way to that adopted by James Harris in *Rhys Lewis, Minister of Bethel*, namely by using 'you' and 'thou', although he only does so when Owen draws attention to the distinction, such as in the novel's seventh chapter, where Captain Trefor starts referring to his daughter as *ti* because he is angry. As well as with dialogue, Vivian often

translates certain Welsh idioms and expressions literally, producing results that would be unfamiliar to non-Welsh speakers:

ef a'r capten un o bopty'r gwrych (Owen 1995: 77)

he and the captain were on different sides of the fence. (Owen 1894–6)

yn neno'r annwyl (Owen 1995: 85)

in the name of goodness (Owen 1894–6)

a welodd Ned byth eu lliw na'u llun nhw (Owen 1995: 121)

and Ned never saw the colour or the shape of them again (Owen 1894–96)

cyn dwlled â bol y fuwch ddu (Owen 1995: 137)

as dark as a black cow's belly (Owen 1894-96)

In one particular case Vivian draws attention in the text to the fact that his translation is a literal one from the Welsh:

Pan ddeuai'r Saboth yr oedd fel un yn lladd nadroedd, neu'n

bwrw pridd ar gorff, fel a dywedir. (Owen 1995: 146)

When the Sabbath came he would be like one killing snakes, or throwing earth on a body, as is said.

When the Sabbath came, he was like one killing snakes, or  
covering up a corpse, as the Welsh saying goes. (Owen 1894–6)

Although it is possible that these literal translations are what caused Owen himself to criticise Vivian's translation for being too literal (quoted in Foulkes 1903: 122), these may provide examples of a translation suggesting a 'new (poetic) language' (Even-Zohar 1990: 200) for an incipient literary system. The idea that Welsh writing in English has made use of 'new forms' of the English language has been widely acknowledged but has not, according to Kirsti Bohata, been systematically analysed and discussed (2004: 105). In a work such as Caradoc Evans' *My People*, 'the syntax and choice of language are highly stylized so as to render the English language unfamiliar, foreign even, to a speaker of standard English' (Bohata 2004: 106). This use of unusual syntax—particularly in dialogue—is not universally present in Welsh writing in English, and certainly cannot be said to conform to any particular set of rules: different authors have used radically different styles, similar only in their deviation from standard English. Nevertheless, as was claimed in the introduction to this thesis, this strategy of utilising a nonstandard 'english' has been widespread among Welsh Writers using the English language. As I noted in the introduction, I am not suggesting that this methodology necessarily has its origins in Welsh-English translation: considering it is prevalent in other postcolonial literatures in European languages (Bohata 2004: 105–6), as well as in English translations from colonial languages (Tymoczko 2000: 35), it may well be an inevitable byproduct of the colonial condition. It is worth noting however that Vivian's translation predates *My People*, 'generally regarded as the first example of a distinctive Anglo-Welsh literature' (Bohata 2004: 106), by twenty years. Certainly, the prevalence of these stylistic elements in translation published in a journal specifically intended to

inspire Welsh men and women to write creatively in the English language suggests that O. M. Edwards at least intended these specific elements to become characteristic of the new literary tradition.

While the above quotations provide examples of what Venuti would call foreignising translation strategies used in the text by Vivian, it is important to note that *Enoch Hughes* cannot be simply characterised in such terms. In many other respects, the translation is quite a domesticating one. For example, Vivian followed the practice James Harris had established in *Rhys Lewis, Minister of Bethel* of offering Anglicised spellings of Welsh names. The title *Enoch Hughes* provides an obvious example; others include the translation of Dafydd Dafis as David Davies, Marged as Margaret and Sem Llwyd as Sam Lloyd (although the latter is not strictly an anglicisation but rather a renaming, as Sem is not a Welsh form of Sam but rather a biblical name in its own right). While it is not certain that Vivian had read Harris's translation it seems reasonable to assume that he had, or that at very least he was aware of it –as has been noted already, *Rhys Lewis* was considered Owen's masterpiece in the nineteenth century and would have been the natural text to translate first. While some place names are kept in Welsh, others are not ('Siop y Groes' becomes 'The Cross Shop'), and even when they are kept in Welsh syntactical changes have often taken place, such as the examples 'Pwllgywynt' and 'Tynyrardd'. Vivian's translation of the verse that appears in chapter 19 is a fluent one that maintains the original's rhyme but significantly rearranges the lines of the verse, and for the sake of the rhyme introduces new content.

Y mae chwech o oriau'n ddigon

I bob un o'r *miners* mwynion,



I fod rhwng y dyrys greigiau

Mewn lle myglyd yn llawn maglau - (Owen 1995: 124)

[Six hours are enough

For each of the gentle miners,

To be between the difficult rocks

In a smoky place full of traps -]

We poor humble miners say

That six hours in a day

Are quite enough to risk our lives

‘Midst dang’rous rocks and smoking drives - (Owen 1894–6)

Although, as noted above, some characters’ dialogue in Vivian’s translation reflects Welsh-language syntax, this is only occasionally the case. There is not a concentrated effort to produce a new, foreignised, Welsh-inflected language, as is the case with some Welsh writers who used English (Caradoc Evans, for example). Vivian does make a significant effort to reproduce the variety of registers present in Owen’s original: there is a large difference between, for example, the informal language used by a character like Thomas Bartley, and the stylised formality of Captain Trefor. However, this kind of contrast was not unusual in English novels of the period (those of Charles Dickens, for example). If the language used by Vivian is an active attempt to reflect a kind of ‘Welsh English’ then it is a nascent one compared to the more developed language of later twentieth-century Welsh writers in English.

In at least one case, the text is changed so that a different political view is expressed than in the original. Owen describes how Dafydd Dafis' inability to speak English is a source of consternation to his landlord (who is unable to speak Welsh). Owen is sympathetic with Dafydd Dafis, asking 'Pa fwy o raid oedd ar Dafydd i fedru Saesneg, nag i'r mistar tir fedru Cymraeg?' [What more need was there for Dafydd to be able to speak English, than for the landlord to be able to speak Welsh?] (Owen 1995: 169). In Vivian's translation this passage is changed subtly: 'why was it more incumbent on David to speak English than upon the landlord to speak Welsh?' By translating *rhaid* ('must', 'need') as 'incumbent', Vivian avoids having to suggest that speaking English might be unnecessary and instead seems to imply that the landlord should have mastered Welsh simply out of politeness. In a period when knowledge of English was being promoted and encouraged throughout Wales (often to the detriment of Welsh) perhaps Vivian was unwilling to suggest that there was no 'need' for a Welshman to learn English, as Owen had suggested in the original. A step like this was not so surprising, considering that the anglicisation of Wales was frequently being promoted in the period: its necessity was one of the main conclusions of the Blue Books, and it had had been promoted by Matthew Arnold in his public lectures (1867/1891: 4). Such was the prevalence of the association between the ability to speak English and education and social advancement that the desirability of anglicisation was rarely challenged, even by those who might have been thought to be its most fervent opponents. Early Welsh nationalist movements, like so much significant public activity in nineteenth-century Wales, were dominated by the influence of the non-conformist chapels. However much they were dominated by and depended on the patronage of Welsh speakers, individuals within the chapel establishment sometimes took a more ambivalent attitude. Although

there were dissenting voices, notably that of Emrys ap Iwan, who has been mentioned already, many early Welsh nationalists were resigned to the extinction of Welsh:

non-conformists were steeped in Utilitarianism, a creed which deplored everything which might hinder progress. Among such hindrances was the Welsh language. Leaders of the Welsh-language community could not pour scorn on the language as did *The Times* or *The London Review*, but the convictions of most of them precluded them from having faith in its future. As a result, from the midst of the vitality of Welsh-language activity in the period 1850–80 came a deluge of statements voicing the conviction—occasionally, indeed, the hope—that the lifespan of the Welsh language was swiftly drawing to a close. As the leaders of Nonconformity had an unshakeable belief in competition... to resist the effects of competition, whether between men or between languages, was to flout one of the ordinances of Creation. (Davies 1993: 419–20)

If the demise of the Welsh language was considered inevitable, then this made it all the more important for the language and Welsh identity to be decoupled. This was indeed one aim of the English-language periodicals, which –whatever their politics– were a side-effect of the anglicisation of Wales. Whatever their past role had been in providing a vital social and cultural context for the Welsh language, the non-conformist chapels were participants in this anglicisation. This was manifested in the use of English as the language of education in the Methodist theological college at Bala (as depicted by

Daniel Owen in *Rhys Lewis*) despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of the staff and students would have been native Welsh-speakers. A more outward expression were the so-called ‘English causes’ mentioned in Chapter 3 of this thesis. Established in Welsh-speaking areas, they were ostensibly intended to broaden the churches’ audience but also represented the anglicisation of what had hitherto been almost entirely Welsh-language institutions. The ‘English causes’ were harshly criticised by Emrys ap Iwan (Lloyd 1979: 12–3); another who criticised them was Daniel Owen, whose 1888 miscellany *Y Siswrn* included a satirical essay on their futility disguised as a letter from a cousin (1939: 117–23). Ironically, perhaps, English translations of Owen’s novels would later appear in *The Treasury*, the English magazine of the Calvinist Methodist Church. The ‘English causes’ controversy notwithstanding, they were reflections of a desire to decouple the fate of non-conformism in Wales from the uncertain future of the Welsh language, part of a wider desire among some to decouple the language from other aspects of Welsh identity. As explained by John Davies,

Welsh patriots could console themselves with the theory that the demise of the language would not lead to the disappearance of those values which were implicit in Welshness. They had been assured by Matthew Arnold in 1867 that the genius of the Celts lay in their imagination and in their awareness of enchantment and magic, and that Celtic spirituality was an essential element in the ‘eclectic imperial graces’ (to quote Tecwyn Lloyd) which were at the root of Britain’s greatness. Side by side with the honourable contribution which the Welsh could make to the

British empire, the Welsh language could be considered an irrelevance—indeed, an impediment. (Davies 1993: 420)

The rise of Welsh writing in English can thus be contextualised in an environment of increasing anglicisation that affected many levels of Welsh society. However, it was not *purely* a symptom of that anglicisation, and the fact it was embraced by some of the leaders of the Welsh intellectual community did not mean that they had abandoned the Welsh language. Many of those who encouraged Welsh writing in English also wanted to preserve and encourage Welsh-language culture: *Wales* was O. M. Edwards' second journal, a counterpart to his original Welsh-language journal *Cymru*, which featured broadly similar material. The Welsh journal was more popular in its day, and is probably the better remembered today. In this light it is clear that at least some viewed the new English literature as no challenge to Welsh-language literature and culture. These people saw the potential for translations into English like Vivian's *Enoch Hughes* to serve as a kind of 'proving ground' for the styles that would be employed in the new literary tradition. This points to a reappraisal of the hitherto under-appreciated influence of translation on the Welsh writing in English literary movement.

#### ***5.4 The Trials of Enoc Huws: Retranslating the 'Classic'***

As was noted at the beginning of this chapter, by the end of the twentieth century *Enoc Huws* was increasingly considered to be Owen's finest literary achievement. Although translations of Owen's novels have not generally remained in print after their initial publication, despite its high status *Enoc Huws* has been the most difficult of Owen's novels to find in an English translation for most of the last hundred years (excepting the

untranslated *Y Dreflan*): Vivian's translation as it appeared in *Wales* was not subsequently printed in book form, despite the journal's claim on the publication of the last chapter that this would happen, and *Wales* ceased publishing in 1897.<sup>3</sup> It was this difficulty in obtaining translations of Owen's novels, and *Enoc Huws* in particular, that inspired a new venture begun in 2010 by a small Mold-based publishers called Brown Cow (John Mainwaring 2012, personal correspondence). The publishers hope eventually to produce new editions of all Owen's novels (and his short stories *Straeon y Pentan*) in both English and Welsh. *Enoc Huws* was chosen as the first to be published because of the perception that it was Owen's best novel (John Mainwaring 2012, personal correspondence). At the time of writing, two translations have been published by Brown Cow: *The Trials of Enoc Huws* and *Fireside Tales*, an English version of Owen's volume of short stories, *Straeon y Pentan*.

*The Trials of Enoc Huws* (a literal rendering of Owen's full original title for the novel, *Profedigaethau Enoc Huws*) was the first translation of a novel by Daniel Owen to be released in almost fifty years. As noted at the beginning of this chapter it is not strictly speaking a retranslation (which this thesis defines as a new translation of a work previously translated into the same language), but rather reissue edition of Claud Vivian's translation with Les Barker as editor. However, as noted by Paloposki & Koskinen the boundary between a retranslation and a reissue of a previous translation is not always clear (2010), and this is one of those cases: the changes made in Les Barker's edition are so wide-ranging and significant as to render the substrate of Vivian's work difficult to detect, unless the reader compares the two, and the original, side-by-side. Thus, although it is not, by strict definition, a retranslation, *The Trials of Enoc Huws* will be treated here as if it were. If it can indeed be considered a

retranslation, *The Trials of Enoc Huws* is one of the few examples of a novel to have been translated from Welsh more than once, the only other example of which the present author is aware being Caradog Prichard's 1961 novel *Un Nos Ola Leuad* (that is, if we disregard *Gwen Tomos* on the grounds that J. Talog Davies' 1918–9 translation was never finished). Lawrence Venuti notes that repeated translations are often an indicator that a text is considered canonical within the receiving culture:

The sheer cultural authority of [a canonical text] is likely to solicit retranslation because diverse domestic readerships will seek to interpret it according to their own values and hence develop different retranslation strategies that inscribe competing interpretations. (Venuti 2004: 26)

Venuti's statement is corroborated in the Welsh context by the fact that retranslations of poetry are much more common, which is what one would expect from a literary tradition where poetry is held in higher esteem.<sup>4</sup> The very existence of *The Trials of Enoc Huws* thus entrenches Owen's position as *the* canonical Welsh novelist, and *Enoc Huws*' position as his finest novel. As well as being a factor in the canonisation of a text, retranslations provide a commentary on the act of translation itself. In 'Retranslation as Argument', James St. André describes how the retranslation of a text provided an opportunity for early translators of Chinese literature to put forward their own views on how a text should be translated:

...early nineteenth-century Sinologist(e)s were dissatisfied with the quality of [an earlier] translation and advanced this as a major

reason to retranslate (not relay) the text. In effect, the earlier translation became a point d'appui, allowing them to establish themselves as more knowledgeable while at the same time allowing them to make arguments as to how Chinese texts should be translated. They established norms of fidelity, accuracy and learnedness. [Some translators included] a facsimile of one page of the original Chinese text as frontispiece to their translations, signalling that their translations are also going to be facsimiles of the original text. In addition, lengthy prefaces, footnotes, and appendixes all became staples of Sinological translation.

(St. André 2003: 69)

Retranslations, St André implies, are a commentary on those translations which have preceded them. However, as St. André notes, this is particularly true while few translations between two given languages have been produced: in these cases the fact that earlier translations were 'the first' gives them a disproportionate importance for those with a view on the subject (2003: 68). This was the case with many of the eighteenth and nineteenth-century translations from Chinese which St. André describes; and even in the twenty-first century I would argue that a parallel situation exists in Wales, particularly when it comes to prose: there are very few texts which have multiple translations. Thus, as a retranslation of a Welsh literary work *The Trials of Enoc Huws* inevitably represents a commentary on both Vivian's *Enoch Hughes* and on Welsh-English translation as a general practice, and the fact that it directly based on Vivian's translation only further emphasises this. In his foreword on the translation, translator/editor Les Barker wrote of Vivian's translation 'It's a very odd translation, but



has been a very useful template. I converted it, chapter by chapter, to what I thought it should be' (Owen 2010: xiv). The text on the reverse cover of the book claims that this 'revised and updated translation... reinstates for the modern reader the wit and colloquial colour of the novel's original Welsh' (Owen 2010: back cover), a statement which clearly suggests that Vivian's translation had failed to reflect these qualities.

The idea that retranslations are produced in response to deficiencies in previous translations was articulated by Antoine Berman, who formulated what became known as the Retranslation Hypothesis. The Retranslation Hypothesis suggests that retranslations are generally superior to first translations, because the first translation has prepared the ground for the retranslation, and the retranslation is able to avoid the mistakes of the first (Berman 1990). Critical to Berman's hypothesis was the idea that while first translations will be domesticating, retranslations will be increasingly foreignising (1990: 1). The Retranslation Hypothesis also appears to take as given the assumption that foreignising translations are desirable, because the 'success' of a translation is based on its ability to reflect the original. Berman also suggested that failure was, to degree, inherent in translations, particularly first translations. The Retranslation Hypothesis has been criticised by several critics for a variety of reasons (Koskinen & Paloposki 2004, Susam-Sarajeva 2006), and while there are some case studies which conform to the hypothesis' predictions there are others which do not (Koskinen & Paloposki 2004). These criticisms notwithstanding, in the case of *The Trials of Enoc Huws* it is clear that the translation was produced from the perspective that there were limitations or problems with Vivian's translation, a view corroborated by the translator (Les Barker 2012, personal correspondence).

However, in order to support the Retranslation Hypothesis *The Trials of Enoc Huws* would be expected to be a more foreignising translation than Vivian's *Enoch Hughes*, first translations in Berman's formulation being always more domesticating than their successors. On first glance, *The Trials of Enoc Huws* is indeed the more obviously foreignised of the two texts. As indicated immediately by their titles, the later translation restored the spellings of characters' names as they had appeared in the original (namely, in their Welsh forms). Indeed, the most immediately obvious foreignising translation strategy employed in *The Trials of Enoc Huws* is the quantity of Welsh text which is left untranslated. As noted above, Vivian had occasionally left some phrases in Welsh. *The Trials of Enoc Huws* carries this practice much further however. There are ten examples in the first three chapters alone, varying from 'Pwll y Gwynt' and 'Tŷ'n yr Ardd' (which Vivian had also left in Welsh, as noted above) to quotations from Welsh poetry, to concepts with particular cultural connotations in Wales like 'hiraeth' (Owen 2010: 11) or 'bro' (Owen 2010: 14). These are almost always accompanied by explanatory footnotes, of which the translation makes liberal use, far more so than any other translation of a Daniel Owen novel (although the 2011 Brown Cow translation of Owen's *Straeon y Pentan* follows this practice). Where they do not provide translations or explanations of phrases left in Welsh in the main body of the text, these offer information or explanations of concepts, places or historical figures with which Owen's original audience would probably have been far more familiar than a modern audience. The following are examples of some of the explanatory footnotes used in the text:

*'brethyn cartref'* –homespun cloth. Often –though in this case it's literal– used as an analogy for anything homespun, such as entertainment. (Owen 2010: 149)

Mr. Owen has provided us with not one, but two prefaces. In the event that you have neglected to read them, I will point out that this book is a sequel to 'Rhys Lewis' and contains some of the same characters. (Owen 2010: 13)

*'dros ei phen a'i chlustiau'* - literally '*over her head and her ears*'. On this occasion, 'Completely immersed'; in more romantic circumstances, later in the book, it will mean '*head over heels*'. (Owen 2010: 222)

Even when they serve primarily to explain the meaning of a phrase in the text, the footnotes provide a significant outlet for the translator's own commentary, with the translator himself often referred to in the first person:

1 - '*hen bennill*' - literally, an old verse. Traditional folk songs are known as '*hen benillion*' - '*penillion*' being the plural, and the '*p*' mutating to '*b*' because of the adjective '*hen*' before the noun. As I think I've said before, it's an interesting language. (Owen 2010: 263)

Translator Les Barker is a performance poet, whose original poetry (written in both Welsh and English) is typically light-hearted and comedic in tone. Despite their ostensibly informative function, this tone can also be seen in the footnotes, which are often deliberately facetious, as in the following examples:

*'yn specilatio'* –there are times when the lazier Welsh, such as Wil Bryan, simply borrow an English word and stick 'io' at the end of it to form a verb. This is a slovenly practise, and not to be encouraged. (Owen 2010: 13)

*'ffa'* –it still means 'beans' in Welsh. As for Americans not doing much with them, B.C. Unseld and Theodore F. Seward, with Biglow and Main publishers, imported Curwen's tonic 'sol-fa' to the United States, but the method was never widely received, the Americans choosing to develop their own system, and probably their own beans as well. (Owen 2010: 308)

Because of these footnotes' tone and frequency, the translator's voice becomes a major part of the new text. In addition to their specific effects on the sections of the translation that they explain or elaborate, by foregrounding the translator, footnotes such as these emphasise his role as mediator between the text and the reader. The general effect of such a profusion of para-textual information is to emphasise the 'translated' nature of the text; and in this respect, like the snippets of Welsh embedded in the text itself constitute an example of a foreignising strategy in use, as well as representing a

significant contrast with Vivian's *Enoch Hughes* (which is largely, though not entirely, devoid of footnotes).

So far, this thesis has presented *The Trials of Enoc Huws* as a foreignising translation. However, in order to support the Retranslation Hypothesis, a second translation must be shown to be more foreignising than the first. When compared directly with Claud Vivian's *Enoch Hughes*, *The Trials of Enoc Huws* certainly demonstrates several overt foreignising strategies, as demonstrated above, including footnotes and the non-translation of certain phrases and passages. For the most part however the text itself is more fluent and domesticated than that of *Enoch Hughes*. Les Barker is far more likely to paraphrase where Claud Vivian would have offered a more literal translation, as shown in the following examples, where Vivian's translation is shown to be, if not always literal, far closer to the word order and content of the original than Les Barker's. When Enoc thinks of how he would like to tell his housekeeper to leave him alone, Owen's original reads 'ei ddymuniad fuasai ei hannerch— "Ewch i'r — a gadewch lonydd i mi." [his desire would have been to tell her— "Go to the — and leave me alone.]" (Owen 1995: 61). While Vivian's translation keeps fairly close to this form— 'he would have liked to have told her— "go to the — and leave me alone." (Owen 1984—6), Barker's version by contrast is much farther removed from the original: 'he'd rather have urged her, in no uncertain terms, to go away and leave him in peace' (Owen 2010: 47). Similarly, when Owen notes that said housekeeper is illiterate, which he renders as 'ni fedrai hi lythyren ar lyfr' [she didn't have a letter on a book'] (Owen 1995: 65), Vivian keeps closer to the original— 'she didn't know a letter of the alphabet' (Owen 1894—6) —than Barker, who simply notes that 'she couldn't read' (Owen 2010: 51).

Les Barker arrived at his translation strategy in a large part because of a dissatisfaction with Vivian's more literal approach, which Daniel Owen himself had criticised (quoted in Foulkes 1903: 122). Barker made a conscious effort to reduce the length of the translation without removing content, citing his background as a performance poet as a reason for his preference for brevity (Les Barker 2012, personal correspondence). The idea of literal translation is specifically dismissed in Barker's foreword, in which he also claims to have kept the translation's audience of twenty-first English speakers in mind:

I've tried to write a translation, not an adaptation, not my own novel. If Daniel wrote it, it's here. That said, word-for-word translation isn't an option; languages don't work like that. And I've tried to make it readable for today's readership, without losing the flavour of the time or its history. Throughout the process I've been aware that I have a responsibility to the Welsh community, but that I'm writing for the English speaking reader. (Owen 2010: xiv)

One manifestation of this concern for the sensibilities of a twenty-first century readership is that the translation contains some examples of censorship, not unlike other translations of Owen's novels (particularly the translation of *Gwen Tomos* discussed in the previous chapter). Although not examples of domestication *per se*, inasmuch as these examples of censorship sacrifice the content of the original to other sensibilities, they further erode any claims the translation might have had to be a literal one. In

chapter 47 of the original text, Owen remarks that although he could describe aspects of the romance between Enoc and Susi

Am hynny ni soniaf innau amdano, oherwydd pe gwnawn, ni  
roddai fwynhad i neb ond i ychydig hogennod—ac nid i hogennod  
yr wyf yn ysgrifennu'r hanes hwn, ond i ddynion synhwyrol.

(Owen 1995: 350)

I shall not talk about that, because if I were to do so it would  
give enjoyment to no-one but a few girls –and I do not write this  
history for girls, but for sensible men.

In both Vivian and Barker's translations, the claim is changed so that rather than saying the story would interest girls, it is claimed that it would only interest boys (Owen 1894–6, 2010: 323). This eliminates the sexist tone of the original sentence. It is important to note however that one cannot discount the possibility that this was simply a mistake on Vivian's part rather than a deliberate attempt to purge the text of sexism, as the north Welsh dialect words for boy (hogyn; hogiau) and girl (hogen; hogennod) are comparatively similar and could have been confused. Because Barker's translation is a reworking of Vivian's, the mistake could then have been carried over without being noticed. Regardless, Barker's translation exhibits a less ambiguous example of the text's having been deliberately changed to adapt to modern sensitivities. A reference to Enoc 'yn gweithio fel *black* drwy'r dydd' [working like a black all day] (Owen 2002: 61) is changed to 'toiling away all day' (Owen 2010: 47). A second reference to blackness is also clarified and elaborated in Barker's translation:

ymgroesodd wrth feddwl am gyffwrdd â'r fath lwmp o lygredigaeth ag  
Enoc. Yna dychwelodd at ei bibell, oedd *agos* cyn ddued ag Enoc  
(Owen 1995: 17)

he crossed himself when he thought of touching such a lump of  
corruption as Enoc. Then he returned to his pipe, which was *almost* as  
black as Enoc

crossed himself at the thought of touching such a mass of corruption as  
Enoc. He then returned to his pipe, which was nearly as black as  
Enoc's soul. (Owen 2010: 7)

In Barker's translation, the clarification (it is Enoc's *soul* which is black, not Enoc himself) makes it clearer that the passage is not referring to race. Just like the example quoted above with the racist idiom, this works in a similar way, by removing any suspicion of racism from the author's head. As well as providing examples of the subversion of the original text, these changes serve to contribute to the hagiography of Daniel Owen (censorship has been used for a similar purpose in other Daniel Owen translations, as shown in other parts of this thesis), about which more will be explained later in this chapter.

When viewed as a whole *The Trials of Enoc Huws* cannot, then, be considered sufficiently foreignising a text to provide supporting evidence for the Retranslation Hypothesis, at least, not if it is interpreted rigidly. However, between the untranslated Welsh embedded in the text and the frequent and verbose footnotes, the reader is



constantly reminded that she/he is reading a translation and the translator himself certainly could never be said to be ‘invisible’ in a Venutian sense (1995). In Edoardo Crisafulli’s article *The Translator as Textual Critic and the Potential of Transparent Discourse* (1999), the author criticises a Venutian interpretation of foreignisation, using as his case study H. F. Cary’s translation of Dante’s *Divina Commedia*. Although Cary’s translation is very different to *The Trials of Enoc Huws* in that Les Barker presumably did not intend his work to be a textual criticism of the source material, there are similarities between the texts in that they demonstrate the limitations of a dualistic approach to foreignisation and domestication in translation.

The evidence considered in this article indicates that it is not necessary for the translator to disrupt the ‘target-language cultural codes’ (Venuti 1995: 42) in order to present a complex image of the translation process and cast doubt on the possibility of rewriting the source text faithfully, which presumably is one of Venuti’s aims. In fact, Cary foregrounds his role as an interpreter and often flaunts his partiality (consider his Ghibellinism). Even a transparent rewriting may challenge the received views of textual meaning and consequently bring to the fore the foreignness of the source text –or the ‘differential/fragmented’ nature of meaning– without the translator necessarily having to play the signifier against the signified. (Crisafulli 1999: 99)

In the case of *The Trials of Enoc Huws*, in his Foreword and subsequently in his footnotes, Les Barker certainly foregrounds his role as interpreter, emphasising the foreignness of the source even as the text itself is made to fit many of the norms and expectations of the target language's literary system. In doing so he presents a possible third way for translators dissatisfied with an either/or approach to a domesticating/foreignising interpretation of Welsh-English translation.

Inasmuch as the extensive footnotes in Barker's translation constitute a foreignising element, they do not seem to have adversely affected the translation's reception. Indeed, the footnotes appear to have delighted at least one reviewer, Meg Elis, whose glowing review of Barker's translation in *Taliesin* praises the footnotes' conciseness and claims that they enliven many of the story's duller chapters (2011). Elis also praises the translation for not omitting those very chapters, as well as successfully maintaining the changes in register which are so prevalent in the original. Elis concludes a very positive review by describing the translation as a 'gwaith gorchestol' [masterly work] (2011: 158).

That the two translations of *Enoc Huws* should be so different is unsurprising considering the considerable chronological gap between them. A key difference between the contexts of each translation is that, as noted in the discussion above, Claud Vivian's *Enoch Hughes* was produced when the tradition of Welsh writing in English was nascent. By contrast, by 2010 the tradition was well established. A significant result (whether intentional or otherwise) of the domesticating aspects of Les Barker's translation is that, at the same time as distancing the translation from its source literary tradition (Welsh-language literature), it is also distanced from the native Welsh writing

in English. By no means do all Welsh writers writing in English use unconventional linguistic styles (intended either to reflect English as it is spoken in Wales, or informed by Welsh-language speech patterns and intended to represent characters speaking or thinking in Welsh), however it is not unusual and can be seen in the prose of Caradoc Evans (Knight 2004: 33) and Emyr Humphreys (Knight 2004: 141), to name just two examples. This distancing is particularly significant if, as hinted at by M. Wynn Thomas, Welsh writers writing in English may see translations from Welsh as a potential threat to the cultural legitimacy of their own writing (1999: 114). Translations which tread less clearly on the same ground as Welsh writing in English might be considered to be less threatening by that tradition.

As well as a change in the condition of Welsh writing in English, Welsh-language literature had developed considerably in the period between the two translations. Most relevant to this thesis was the development in Daniel Owen criticism and scholarship detailed in Chapter 2, from the almost-uncritical hagiography of the early twentieth century to the more complex assessment and understanding of critics in the second half of the century. *The Trials of Enoc Huws* certainly engages with the author's canonicity, and it is clear from even a superficial reading that the translation intends to further enshrine the author's canonical status. Various aspects of the book's production for example demonstrate the publishers' conception of the work as a central part of the Welsh canon. The translation is promoted as part of a series of 'Welsh Classics for English Speaking Readers'; a phrase repeated on the front and back of the cover and on the title page, where the book is also described as being part of a 'Daniel Owen Signature Series' (Owen 2010: iii). Above the bar code the book is described as 'Fiction/Welsh Classic'. The biography of Owen on the first page of the book describes

the author as ‘the foremost Welsh-language novelist of the 19th-century’ and ‘one of the greatest Welsh-language novelists’. The book’s status as a retranslation of a previously-translated text gives it a certain critical authority even if Les Barker’s footnotes can hardly be considered textual criticism. Further installations in Brown Cow’s planned series will similarly constitute retranslations of *Rhys Lewis* and *Gwen Tomos*; If Brown Cow’s ambition of a complete set of translations of all Daniel Owen’s novels is achieved, it would represent a significant statement in terms of the codification of the Welsh-language literary canon.

## 5.5 Conclusions

This chapter has attempted to demonstrate the considerable contrasts between two texts which are supposedly separate editions of the same translation. Owen’s *Enoc Huws* has been particularly attractive to translators, as evidenced by the presence of two different translated versions. This thesis postulates that this can be explained by the fact that *Enoc Huws*, as well as being perceived as Owen’s greatest novel by the Welsh-language critical community, is also the novel most like those of Owen’s English contemporaries and therefore the most acceptable to English-language audiences. This is the most obvious explanation for the presence of two translations; however it has also posed a dilemma as to how translators approach the text: whether to emphasise those non-Welsh elements of the text or to emphasise its ‘Welshness’.

Claud Vivian’s translation approached this dilemma by adopting a distinct linguistic style which reflects the Welsh-language source text by the literal translation of some idiomatic phrases and the reflection of Welsh-language syntax in dialogue. His

translation is a foreignising one which deliberately deviates from the expectations of the target-language literary tradition. The magazine in which Vivian's translation was published, *Wales*, was expressly intended to inspire an English-language prose tradition in Wales, modelled on the Scottish novels of Walter Scott and the American novels of Nathaniel Hawthorne. At the time, the English-language literary tradition of Wales was only just coming into being. Vivian's translation suggested one mode for the form it might take in prose.

As a retranslation of Vivian's *Enoch Hughes*, Les Barker's translation represents a commentary and criticism of Vivian's translation as well as presenting an alternative translation mode for translations from Welsh into English. In contrast to Vivian's translation, by the time *The Trials of Enoc Huws* was published in 2010 Welsh writing in English could hardly be considered to be nascent. The combination of foreignising and domesticating translation strategies—the former including leaving parts of the original untranslated and the extensive use of footnotes, and the latter being the generally fluent prose of the text itself—simultaneously distances the translation from both contemporary English literature and from Welsh writing in English. As a text that is less obviously foreignised than Vivian's *Enoch Hughes*, *The Trials of Enoc Huws* offers further support for the argument that the Retranslation Hypothesis does not adequately explain retranslation (Paloposki & Koskinen 2010). The translation does however engage with Daniel Owen's canonicity in the Welsh-language literary system by emphasising his novels' status as 'classics' and their author's status as the most important novelist in the language, serving as evidence that the author continues to be seen as central to Welsh-language literature even after the critical re-evaluations of the twentieth century.

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## Notes

- 1 It is estimated that approximately 20% of the roughly one million Welsh-speakers recorded by the census of 1911 were monoglot (Atchison & Carter 2000).
- 2 The most comprehensive body of research on this topic appears to be that by Sarah Yoder (2008).
- 3 O. M. Edwards' journal should not be confused with a later, perhaps better known magazine which also bore the title *Wales*, published in the mid twentieth-century under the editorship of Keidrych Rhys.
- 4 Dafydd ap Gwilym's poetry for example is available in translation by Joseph Clancy, Anthony Conran, Rachel Bromwich and Richard Loomis, among probably many other less-well known names.

## Chapter 6: Conclusions

The introduction to this thesis suggested that the translations of Daniel Owen's novels make an excellent case study for the hitherto-understudied field of Welsh-English literary translation in Wales. I have attempted to show that a study of the English translations of Owen's novels reveals a series of critical questions about the field of Welsh-English literary translation. The introduction outlined three main areas of analysis that might be helpful when considering this area of research. The first of these was how Welsh-English literary translation has functioned within an ongoing discourse of colonialism in Wales by serving as a form of anti-colonial nationalist rhetoric. Secondly, this thesis suggested that translation has been used as a way to engage with the question of Owen's status as a canonical author, by emphasising his canonical status but also by addressing some of the criticisms that had been levelled at the author. The third main area of analysis was the relationship between translated Welsh literature and the English-language literature of Wales: this thesis has argued that translations of Daniel Owen's novels have variously attempted to influence the styles and norms of Welsh writing in English, or by presenting themselves in a manner which distances translated Welsh literature from the original English-language literature of Wales.

Chapter 2 of this thesis functioned primarily as a literature review of Daniel Owen scholarship, showing how the critical consensus has changed over the last century from almost-unqualified praise and hagiography toward a more complex stance. It also hinted at some of the ways in which the editors of Welsh-language editions of Owen's novels have been willing to edit his texts in response to the criticisms that had been levelled at the novelist.

Chapter 3 took as its subject James Harris' English version of Owen's novel *Rhys Lewis*. The translation was very poorly received on its publication in 1888, and critics since have tended to dismiss it as an aesthetic failure. This thesis by contrast made the argument that the translation was envisioned as a piece of nationalist activism. Harris was editor of a magazine that was aimed at Welsh people unable to speak Welsh, designed to foster in them a sense of Welsh national identity that transcended linguistic and political affiliations. His translation of Owen's novel had a similar purpose, as well as being intended to impress English audiences with the quality of the Welsh imagination represented by Daniel Owen. Owen's novel was uniquely appealing to a translator with these intentions: not only had it been extremely popular in its original language, it had been noted for its uniquely Welsh character. Its religious themes also represented the interests and priorities of contemporary Welsh-speaking Wales, while its autobiographical form would have been familiar to English audiences. The text also featured, in characters like the Parson and Mr. Strangle, caricatures of the English values that Harris wished to challenge. In terms of the translation itself, Harris deliberately adopted a rarefied, pseudo-intellectual linguistic style which would have represented a challenge to the idea that the Welsh were uneducated (an idea which had been popularised by the Blue Books of 1847). Harris also censored occasional passages where the original might have reflected negatively on the Welsh. Critics such as M. Wynn Thomas have noted that Welsh-English translation in the twentieth century was often used as a means to challenge English cultural values (1999); this thesis suggests that this was taking place a few decades earlier in Harris' translation.



Chapter 4 focused on a translation produced in a very different historical period and political climate to Harris' translation, but this thesis argues that it was calculated to serve a similar political agenda. T. Ceiriog Williams and E. R. Harries' translation of Owen's novel *Gwen Tomos* is also very different in character to Harris' *Rhys Lewis*. Rather than the foreignising approach Harris adopted, the 1963 translators produced a domesticating text. Basing their translation on an edition of the original which had already cut a great deal of material, the translators also cut even further in their own edition to produce a finished text that was far shorter than Owen's original novel. Amongst their cuts was strong evidence of censorship: for example, much of the more religiously-themed material was removed, making it harder to get the impression that Owen was a religious conservative. Williams had himself argued that Owen was a religious moderate. Sexist and racist material was also removed, as well as sexual material. It is possible that this was done in order to present a purer, cleaner version of Wales than Owen's novel might have done unmodified. One of the translators at least viewed Owen as a national hero, comparing him with the medieval Welsh warrior-prince Llywelyn.

Furthermore, the translators of the English edition of *Gwen Tomos* were also producing a commentary on Owen's own status as a canonical Welsh-language author. The abridged edition on which they had based their translation was produced in response to criticisms of the novel's structure, and by using it as the basis for their translation they were further normalising the production of Owen's novel in abridged form. As well as serving a nationalist agenda, the censorship described above allowed the translators to present a view of Owen that fit their own image of a great writer.

Chapter 5 focused on two translations of the same Daniel Owen novel, *Enoc Huws*: the 1894–6 serialisation by Claud Vivian and the 2010 (re)translation by Les Barker. It also briefly described the translations of extracts of Owen’s novels that appeared in the 1953 anthology *A Book of Wales*. This chapter argued that, as a retranslation, Barker’s translation represented a further stage in the canonisation of Owen’s novel. It also functioned as a criticism of Vivian’s translation, implying by its very existence that Vivian’s was inadequate. Of the three chapters which focused on translations, this was the one which most explicitly dealt with the third area of analysis highlighted in the introduction to this thesis, namely the relationship between Welsh writing in English and Welsh-English literary translation. This chapter argued that Vivian’s translation was published so as to provide a model for original Welsh writing in English, using a style that evoked Welsh-language syntax and inflections to produce an English that, while artificial, distanced it from contemporary English literature. Barker’s translation, by contrast, used a linguistic style much more reminiscent of English literary conventions which distanced it from the Welsh-inflected style used by some Welsh Writers in English. Barker simultaneously however employed a variety of foreignising translation strategies which emphasised the ‘otherness’ of the text, such as the non-translation of occasional Welsh words and phrases and the use of verbose footnotes which emphasised the role of translator as interpreter. The latter constantly remind the reader that the text they are reading is a translation, preventing the original from becoming ‘lost’ and being rendered unnecessary or invisible by the translation process.

This thesis has focused entirely on the work of a single author, but its research conclusions will doubtless be relevant to many other instances of Welsh-English literary

translation. Although, as noted in the introduction, few other Welsh-language novelists have been translated as extensively as Daniel Owen, there are a large number of translations and texts that could be approached from a similar research perspective. The work of translator Richard Ruck was mentioned in the introduction to his thesis: Ruck translated all five novels by Welsh-language novelist T. Rowland Hughes between 1950 and 1969, a body of work which may be the only instance in which a single translator has taken on the complete novels of a Welsh writer.<sup>1</sup> As noted by M. Wynn Thomas, in the introduction to the first of these, *From Hand to Hand*, Emlyn Williams presented Hughes' work as an antidote to those examples of Welsh writing in English which he found wanting in *Welshness* (1950). This introduction alone touches on several of the research areas explored in this thesis, and the ways in which Ruck's translations themselves may have engaged with these same subjects is surely worthy of some attention. Similarly, translations of other canonical Welsh-language novelists such as Islwyn Ffowc Elis, Caradoc Prichard or Kate Roberts may reveal some of the same tendencies with regards the use of Welsh-English translation as a canonising force.

This thesis has focused on Welsh-English translation as a phenomenon which takes place in particular historical and cultural contexts. For the most part, it has done so without comparing the translations directly with contemporary developments in original Welsh-language writing or with the English language literature of Wales. As suggested in Chapter 4, it is possible to place the 1963 translation of *Gwen Tomos* inside a wider context of literary activity in the period that was motivated by, and sought to further, nationalism. Future research might delve deeper into this by comparing how translation and original writing were both used in the 1960s to further Welsh nationalist interests. The fourth chapter of this thesis also suggested that Welsh-English translation has often

served as a commentary on the English-language literature of Wales: a wider study of the mutual influence of these two traditions of writing would be a fascinating examination of a largely neglected field. A systematic comparison of the styles of texts within both traditions might reveal how similar techniques have been used and developed; an analysis of translations and original writing by those many writers who have explored both may illustrate whether translation has indeed been used as a proving ground for styles later used in original Welsh writing.

Many of the critical texts on Welsh-English translation mentioned in the introduction to this these have noted that translation between these two languages remains a highly politically charged practice. That translation in this context has been used as a means to render original Welsh texts unnecessary –a process of cultural assimilation, or, to use Ned Thomas’ term, grave-robbing (1997)– has been well-established. That Welsh-English translation has also been used to attempt further Welsh nationalist causes and agendas –as this thesis has argued– might be considered a more controversial statement. For those who remain sceptical, it should be noted that the intention for a text to serve as nationalist activism does not necessarily mean that it inevitably does so successfully. As M. Wynn Thomas notes at the end of his chapter on Welsh-English literary translation,

[Welsh-English] translation may come to function, however unintentionally, not as a form of creative encounter with the Other... but, rather, as a means of eliminating the otherness which is inscribed in/as a different language...

...Under such circumstances, translators properly intent upon being culture-brokers are sadly all too liable to find themselves suborned into acting as culture-breakers. (1999: 154, emphasis original)

The reluctance of some Welsh-language writers like Twm Morys to have their work translated— a reluctance based at least to a certain extent on nationalist rationale — suggests that this fear is very real, and has a direct effect on patterns of translation. Thomas expresses a desire to

ensure that [Welsh-English] translation take place within the proper context of a vigorous programme to nurture the development of a genuinely diglossic, bicultural Wales. This will have to involve the abandonment by the Welsh people of the remnants of a colonial mentality, otherwise Welsh-English translation is likely to serve, as it did in late-nineteenth-century Ireland, only to increase the marginalisation and to hasten the disappearance of Welsh. (1999: 154, emphasis original)

Thomas' model for the proper context for Welsh-English translation may provide some way forward. While it does not advocate specific translation strategies, it is hoped that this thesis has successfully highlighted some of the political and cultural implications inherent in Welsh-English translation. It is further hoped that in doing so it might contribute toward a wider dialogue about what place this kind of translation may have —if it should continue to have any place at all— in the modern Wales.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> T. Rowland Hughes was the first Welsh-language novelist whose popularity matched Owen's. Although a poet earlier in his career, he is best remembered for his novels, originally written between 1943 and 1947.

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