DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Constructing Modern Welsh Womanhood

The Blue Books' Impact on the Portrayal of Women in Anglophone Welsh Literature 1847 – 1907

Williams, Dawn

Award date:
2022

Awarding institution:
Bangor University

PRIFYSGOL
BANGOR
UNIVERSITY

Dawn Williams

500274854

Constructing Modern Welsh Womanhood

The Blue Books' Impact on the Portrayal of Women in Anglophone Welsh Literature 1847 – 1907

Thesis submitted for the award of PhD in English Literature

2022

Yr wyf drwy hyn yn datgan mai canlyniad fy ymchwil fy hun yw'r thesis hwn, ac eithrio lle nodir yn wahanol. Caiff ffynonellau eraill eu cydnabod gan droednodiadau yn rhoi cyfeiriadau eglur. Nid yw sylwedd y gwaith hwn wedi cael ei dderbyn o'r blaen ar gyfer unrhyw radd, ac nid yw'n cael ei gyflwyno ar yr un pryd mewn ymgeisiaeth am unrhyw radd oni bai ei fod, fel y cytunwyd gan y Brifysgol, am gymwysterau deuol cymeradwy.

Rwy'n cadarnhau fy mod yn cyflwyno'r gwaith gyda chytundeb fy Ngoruchwyliwr (Goruchwylwyr).

I hereby declare that this thesis is the results of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. All other sources are acknowledged by bibliographic references. This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree unless, as agreed by the University, for approved dual awards.

I confirm that I am submitting the work with the agreement of my Supervisor(s).

Abstract

The publication of the *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales* (1847) was a defining and profound moment in Welsh history. Its criticism of Welsh education was controversial in itself, but its findings on the supposed immorality of the Welsh people, and women in particular, caused the biggest uproar. This thesis combines literary criticism and historical analysis to argue that Anglophone Welsh literature in the late-nineteenth century challenges both the pejorative vision of working-class Welsh womanhood set out in the Blue Books, and the vision of female Welsh piety established in reaction to that depiction. Alternative visions of modern Welsh womanhood as revealed in this literature include rioters and maids, singers and witches, and the middle- and upper-class women who valiantly but naively seek to help working-class women on their path to an idealised, pious, traditional vision of Welsh womanhood as promoted by the periodicals and pamphlets aimed at women of the time. Indeed, there is a complex middle ground between traditional womanhood and the *Report*'s widely exaggerated immoral womanhood which this thesis uncovers through literary analysis of the works of Amy Dillwyn, Allen Raine, Anne Beale, Sara Maria Saunders, R. Dansey Green-Price, and Bertha Thomas. In doing so, it builds on the important work done by Jane Aaron, Katie Gramich and Kirsti Bohata among others in the field of Women's writing in Wales, extending their work by offering a systematic approach to literary constructions of Welsh womanhood between 1879 and 1907.

The texts analysed in this thesis underline the complex nature of nineteenth-century Welsh women's identity, and her path to modernity. The battle fought in the periodicals and pamphlets to portray Welsh women as morally good, pious mothers is worth recognising, but is aimed at middle- and upper-class women. The *Report*'s support for the anglicisation of Welsh women is also noteworthy, as it seeks to 'improve' such women but erase their cultural identity in the process. Moreover, with the *Report* mainly targeting working-class women, any assessment of its impact should include representations of working-class women. Accepting the traditional ideal of womanhood is, arguably, to accept the *Report*'s findings that working-class Welsh women were inherently immoral and in need of improvement. Instead, the texts analysed in this thesis fill the space in between the Commissioners' and the middle-class view of Welsh womanhood by seeking to amplify the varied representation of Welsh working-class women. This thesis will argue that the path to modernity at the turn of the twentieth century is one that is driven by working-class women rejecting both the pious and immoral image of them, and attempts at anglicisation, for an identity that is decidedly Welsh in nature.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to the following for their contribution in the PhD process:

My supervisors Dr Andrew Webb and Dr Karin Koehler, for your unwavering support.

Dr Tomos Owen (Cardiff University) for your guidance as my supervisor during the first year.

To Prifysgol Bangor, for giving me the opportunity to develop my knowledge and understanding. To the Department of Creative Writing, English Literature, Film, Journalism and Media, thank you for the years spent as an undergraduate, postgraduate and as a PhD Candidate. Diolch to the staff who have offered advice during the PhD.

Thank you to the Association of Welsh Writing in English. The conferences I have attended brought me in the company of brilliant scholars and minds on the wonderful world of Anglophone Welsh literature. In particular I want to thank Dr Rita Singer and Dr Bethan Jenkins for the opportunities you have given me to expand my academic writing.

To Miss Ffion Jones and Mr Eurig Davies at Ysgol Botwnnog – diolch yn fawr iawn am eich holl gefnogaeth dros y blynyddoedd.

To the PhD Forum, an online community of doctoral candidates. To Dr Donna Peach for allowing this space to be created – without the Forum, I would not be submitting this thesis. The encouragement and friendship of people from all over the globe has meant the world. A special thank you goes to Bernadette, Erin, Grace, Jo, Joanne, Katy, Lyazat, May, Rachana, Rachel, Sónia, Suzi and Teresa – what an incredible group of women you are. To be a part of your triumphs has been extraordinary, to consider you all my friends is an honour. To all PhD Forumers, my debt to you all for your support for the past two years is immeasurable. Your mark is certainly felt on this thesis.

Most important of all, diolch to my wonderful family and friends. To my parents Ellen and Eric, siblings Emma and Marc, their partners Gwyn and Catherine, niece and nephew Ani and William, and Bela, my loyal canine companion. Diolch for being there every step of the way. Apologies for the many lost days that I should have spent with you all! The time afforded to me now is all yours. Diolch to my wonderful friends Susan and Eirian, rydych chi werth y byd.

I wish to dedicate this thesis to my Mum. Your courage, bravery, strength, and your love has meant the most to me throughout this whole process. Without you, this thesis would not be what it is today. Mae hwn i chi x

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract **i**

Acknowledgments **ii**

TABLE OF CONTENTS **iii**

Introduction **1**

Aims of thesis 3

Literature review of historical criticism 4

Literature review of literary criticism 7

Research questions 12

Chapter synopses 13

Historical context **18**

Wales before the Blue Books 18

Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales 20

Education 23

Welsh Language 25

Drunkenness and sexual promiscuity 27

Cleanliness 29

Wales after the Blue Books 30

Chapter One. Reports and Riots: The Struggle for Welsh Women's Identity **35**

Historical context 36

Introduction to the novels 37

Rose Mervyn of Whitelake 40

Representation of Rebecca 42

Rose and Rebecca 46

Rose's marriage 49

The influence of Welsh female piety 52

The Rebecca Rioter 55

Battle of the women rulers 57

Rebecca's daughters 64

Rebecca's Other Daughters 66

The ideal of Anglo-Welsh womanhood 70

Rebecca; or a Life's Mistake 74
The waning power of Rebecca 76
A Life's Mistake 79
Men's role in working-class women's 'mistakes' 81
Attempted erasure of Welsh working-class womanhood 82
The success of upper-class Anglo-Welsh womanhood 85
The unashamed working-class Welshwoman 88
The significance of emigration to Welsh womanhood 89
Conclusion 91

Chapter Two. The Precarious Influence of Middle- and Upper-Class Women 93
Introduction to the novels 94
Class Differences 95
Service 96
Poverty 98
Philanthropy 101
The problem with the ideal of Welsh womanhood 108
Conclusion 115

Chapter Three. The Emergence of the Modern Welsh Woman 116
Introduction to the novels 118
Chapter aims 119
Class and race in Allen Raine's A Welsh Singer and A Welsh Witch 121
Race 123
Class 128
Education and its role in the social mobility of working-class women 134
Mifanwy's success as representative of successful Welsh womanhood 141
Conclusion 146

Chapter Four. The Welsh New Woman 148
Who was the New Woman? 149
Welsh Women's Writing prior to the term New Woman 153
The definition of the Welsh New Woman 157
The Welsh New Woman in Fiction 161

Bertha Thomas' Welsh New Woman 177

Conclusion 184

Conclusion **186**

Bibliography: Primary **191**

Bibliography **192**

Introduction

The 1847 *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales* was initially meant as it was titled: a detailed inquiry into the provision of education in Wales, specifically in working-class communities, from the state of the schoolrooms to the qualifications of the instructors. The instructions by Sir James Kay Shuttleworth to the Commissioners related to the investigation into the state of education in working-class Welsh communities, yet included the caveat that the Commissioners must look at 'the influence which an improved education might be expected to produce, on the general condition of society, and its moral and religious progress.'[1] One of the key sentences in Shuttleworth's instructions is that the 'results of [the Commissioners'] inquiries will be important in proportion as they are complete and accurate': indicating the importance of the role of the Commissioners in this particular inquiry.[2] It also meant to establish trust that the Commissioners would be reporting accurately and without bias. The *Report*, by its title alone, does not signify anything that could cause particular upset or furore.[3] Yet the findings on education were highly controversial, stating as they did that education should primarily be through the English medium. Worse still, the *Report* also infamously strayed into commentary and judgment on matters outside the main point of education, and caused such outrage in Wales that became known as 'Brad y Llyfrau Gleision' (Treachery of the Blue Books). This title referred to the colour of the published volumes, the strength of feeling about the findings it contained and it derived from the Welsh name of an 1854 play based on the controversy.[4] The *Report* certainly did not seem 'in proportion' to its originally stated investigations, and it is equally debatable whether the Commissioners' claims were 'complete and accurate'. The sensational claims made in the *Report* attested to the supposedly immoral behaviour of the Welsh people, including sexual promiscuity; excessive alcohol consumption; and the general riotous attitude that had been demonstrated several times over the preceding years, including during the famous Rebecca riots (1839-1843). The Welsh people's behaviour was described as 'deceitful', 'revolting', 'dirty, indolent, bigoted, and contented'.[5] The Welsh language itself was described as a 'nuisance and an obstacle', and as possessing 'evil effects', with the Commissioners linking the language with the above-mentioned immoral behaviour.[6] Gwyneth Tyson Roberts' *The Language of the Blue Books* (1998) offers a detailed analysis of the *Report*'s use of language and its meaning in the context of the *Report*'s attacks on the Welsh people and their language. Roberts's

[1] James Kay Shuttleworth, 'Instructions', in *Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales* [London: William Clowes & Sons, 1848], pp.i-iv (p.iv).
[2] Shuttleworth, p.iii-iv.
[3] This thesis will refer to the Inquiry in the shorthand of *Report*, or as the Blue Books, which it later became known as.
[4] Gwyneth Tyson Roberts, *The Language of the Blue Books: Wales and Colonial Prejudice* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011), p.215.
[5] Ralph Lingen, Jelinger C. Symons & Henry R. Vaughan, *Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales* (London: William Clowes & Sons, 1848), pp.294-297.
[6] *Report*, p.406 & p.309.

study is a key source for this thesis, and I will discuss its importance later in this introduction, especially in relation to the gendered meaning of the *Report*. Gender is a crucial critical line in the response to the *Report*, as its accusations focused on women's behaviour.

Criticism aimed at Welsh women as wives and mothers focused on their perceived failure to impart good morals and hygiene to their husbands and children. This meant, in the Commissioners' views, that these mothers were condemning future Welsh generations to a continuing life of immorality and sin. Although men were more likely to be drunks or criminals, the Commissioners and their assistants take a particularly harsh tone when discussing the role of women in this supposed immorality of Welsh society. There was particular distrust in the *Report* concerning unmarried women and their frequent proximity to single men in the world of work and chapel going. According to the *Report*, women were 'the most ignorant and depraved of the population', 'in general unsteady', and at worst, 'a great stain upon our people.'[7] The poor state of many homes was also blamed on women; the inspection of a 'dirty and squalid working-class home' added to the Commissioners' suspicions about the 'morality of the family that lived there', with the 'women of the family regarded as equally responsible for scrubbing the floors and setting the moral tone.'[8] The Commissioners clearly targeted women as the cause of immorality in Wales.

Yet there are valid points in the *Report* as to the relatively poor provision of education for girls. Welsh girls were 'decidedly worse off than boys', the Commissioners argued, and limited to an education in the practical skills of housekeeping, cooking, and childcare.[9] Although the Commissioners 'commented favourably on schools which taught girls their place in society and the family', the *Report* did pave the way for women to enter the educational system that had been largely reserved for men.[10]

The anger at the *Report* for not only its view on Welsh people in general, but how it represented Welsh women in particular, inspired a furious backlash. Indeed, the Inquiry into education had turned into an inquiry into the lives of the Welsh working class. Some actively countered the *Report*, like Jane Williams, Ysgafell, in her essay *Artegall or Remarks on the Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales* (1848), a methodical and painstaking analysis of the *Report*'s failings and unjust accusations. Others focused on constructing an image of women as morally pious and traditionally dressed, leading campaigns that aimed to directly address some of the accusations of the Commissioners, such as the temperance movement. Journals and periodicals were established post-1847 as a direct response to the *Report*, promoting the image of Welsh women as

[7] *Report*, p.120, p.296, p.301.
[8] Tyson Roberts, p.163.
[9] *Report*, p.227.
[10] Tyson Roberts, p.158.

morally pious by instructing them on how to be the ideal wife and mother. A central figure in these interventions was Augusta Hall, Lady Llanover who wrote essays and directives, such as *An Address to the Welsh Women of Wales* (1850) and *The Advantages Resulting from the Preservation of the Welsh Language and the National Costumes of Wales* (1834), to Welsh women on the best way to dress, how to behave, and how they should promote the Welsh language to preserve a proud ideal of traditional Welsh womanhood. This helped build a narrative that both countered the accusations of the Blue Books, but also acknowledged that the *Report*'s depiction of Welsh women needed to be addressed. Nonconformist chapel culture reacted against the *Report* by promoting an ideal of Welsh female purity, which can be seen in Sydney Vosper's famous painting *Salem* (1908). This shows an elderly Welsh woman dressed in a high black hat, printed shawl, and neckerchief, with a bible in her hands while leaving the chapel, surrounded by similar women, perfectly illustrating the image of religious piety that was a response to the Blue Books during the second half of the nineteenth century:

Salem, Sydney Vosper (1908)

Yet to limit the representation of Welsh womanhood to this one idealised identity is to dismiss the complex and varied depictions of Welsh womanhood that followed the publication of the *Report*. While the leaders of Welsh nonconformism in the post-*Report* era promoted a picture of pious, devout, moral Welsh womanhood, the *Report* also opened the doors to an exploration of Welshness in literature from a decidedly female perspective: a Welshness that was born out of the *Report*'s accusations but was not solely defined by it, and aimed to forge a different identity to that of traditional Welsh womanhood.

Aims of thesis

This thesis investigates the impact of the *Report* on the representation of women in Anglophone Welsh literature from 1879 to 1907. The literary texts analysed in this thesis engage with some of the criticisms of Welsh womanhood made in the *Report*, from unruly behaviour to the supposed bad morals of unmarried women. Some of the texts engage with traditional views of Welsh women, defined by the conservative dress and the women's place in the domestic sphere, as promoted by figures such as Lady Llanover. Texts which reflect these views tend to agree with the Blue Books'

criticism of Welsh women, while also seeking to counter the *Report*'s allegations by pushing for a morally pious and traditional vision of Welsh womanhood. However, as we shall see, there are also texts which explore possibilities for a more positive representation of Welsh women, one that focused on independence and autonomy in the face of mostly patriarchal attempts to restrict Welsh women to their role as ideal wives and mothers. Specifically, this thesis examines the prospect for a modern Welsh womanhood, and explores its relation to anglicisation and Welshness. Modernity in this thesis is defined as women as contributing members of society, especially in the world of work, campaigning on women's rights and leading relatively independent lives outside of marriage and family. My exploration of modern Welsh womanhood also touches upon the possibility of the Welsh New Woman distinct from the English New Woman, a figure who emerges as the nineteenth century comes to an end. The texts presented in this thesis are predominantly written by Welsh women authors: Anne Beale, Amy Dillwyn, Allen Raine, Bertha Thomas, and Sara Maria Saunders, with R. Dansey Green-Price as the sole male literary author. In focusing on the representation of Welsh women post-*Report*, it is important to examine what Welsh women themselves had to say, as it was they who would have felt the main impact of the *Report* in the following decades, either in the form of what the *Report* said about them, or in the public response to its findings.

Literature review of historical criticism

This thesis is necessarily interdisciplinary, using historical and literary material to support the arguments presented. The publication of the Blue Books has gained a reputation over time as one of the defining moments in Welsh history. The *Report* itself is crucial as source material for the analysis of how women were portrayed; an understanding of the report allows for a better exploration of the responses to it. For historical context, this thesis often turns to John Davies' seminal *A History of Wales* (1990). Traversing Welsh history from AD to the 1980s, this is a vital text in explaining Wales prior to 1847, and the Wales that developed following the publication of the Blue Books. Simon Brooks' *Pam Na Fu Cymru: Methiant Cenedlaetholdeb Cymraeg* (2015) discusses the impact the *Report* had on the Welsh language, arguing that one of the *Report*'s aims was to 'gwareiddio'r Cymry drwy ddysgu Saesneg iddynt' ('civilize the Welsh through teaching them English') in order to have one united anglicised nation.[11] Hywel Teifi Edwards remarks in *Codi'r Hen Wlad yn ei Hôl 1850-1914* (1989) that the Blue Books' publication affected the writing of Welsh literature post-1850, limiting poets and writers to themes that promoted the image of pious, moral Welshness.

However, the text to which this thesis most often turns in its discussion of the Blue Books is Gwyneth Tyson Roberts' *The Language of the Blue Books: Wales and Colonial Prejudice* (2011). In this

[11] Simon Brooks, *Pam Na Fu Cymru: Methiant Cenedlaetholdeb Cymraeg* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2015), p.76.

brilliant book, Roberts argues that the publication of the *Report* helped shape the 'images and attitudes towards what it meant and what it means to be Welsh, and as such has played a significant role in the process of construction of a modern Welsh identity.'[12] This is a key sentence for the overall discussion in this thesis, in that it stresses the importance of the *Report* in the establishment of Welsh identity in the following decades. Roberts does not elaborate what this 'modern Welsh identity' is, stating instead that the way Wales saw itself and its place in the world effectively changed due to the content of the Blue Books. In this thesis, I seek to discover this new modern Welsh identity, as presented in nineteenth-century Anglophone Welsh literature, and specifically to reveal the emergence of a new modern Welsh woman's identity in the years following the *Report*. This thesis will not analyse the language of the *Report* to the same extent as Roberts. Instead, I primarily focus on how some of the language used in the *Report* helped to initially present Welsh women's identity in a negative light, and how this later played a crucial part in establishing a new identity. Roberts questions whether 'there [was] such a thing as a distinctive Welsh identity, and, if so, what constituted this distinctiveness?'[13] While Roberts notes that the English Commissioners provided one identity, and the response to the Blue Books from artists like Vosper provided another entirely different identity, there is no reference in Roberts' work to the grey area in between these. This is the subject of my investigation.

The stereotype of the Welsh people as wild and unruly stemmed from the several acts of unrest and rioting in the early nineteenth century, most notably the Rebecca riots. Indeed, the Commissioners' particular view of the Welsh as unruly, riotous people was informed in response to these events, especially following the publication of such reports as The Commission of Inquiry into the Rebecca Riots (1844). One of the defining characteristics of the Rebecca riots was the costume adopted by those who attacked tollgates and weirs to protest against taxation. Given that the largely male rioters dressed in women's clothes, and embraced the roles of both Rebecca and the daughters, it is important to discuss the riots' impact, especially in correlation with the Blue Books on the perception of Welsh feminine identity. The Rebecca riots have been researched extensively over the years, and they are discussed frequently within both historical and literary texts as an important point in Welsh history. David Williams' *The Rebecca Riots* (1955) provides an analysis of the economic and social factors that led to the riots.[14] Pat Molloy's *And They Blessed Rebecca* (1983) is another compelling text that gives a thorough historical account of the riots, including personal testimonies of those present during and after the riots.[15] Personal stories related to the rioting are particularly relevant when considering

[12] Tyson Roberts, p.3.
[13] Ibid, p.209.
[14] David Williams, *The Rebecca Riots: A Study in Agrarian Discontent* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998).
[15] Pat Molloy, *And They Blessed Rebecca: an account of the Welsh Toll-Gate Riots 1939-1844* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 2001).

the depiction of the riots in the novels examined in this thesis, which tend to be sensationalised and exaggerated. This sensationalism is supported by some of the newspaper articles referenced in the first chapter, which presented Rebecca in a highly embellished manner, to make the Welsh working class seem uncontrollably wild.

An essential study into the gender implications of the riots is Rhian E. Jones' *Petticoat Heroes: Gender, Culture and Popular Protest in the Rebecca Riots* (2015). Jones' *Petticoat Heroes* is especially relevant to this thesis, as she explores the riots and their significance from a gendered perspective. Jones notes that there is a blurring of gender boundaries in the presentation of Rebecca and the daughters, specifically a 'mixture of masculine and feminine signifiers'.[16] I am particularly interested in this gendered approach, as despite most of the rioters being male, special emphasis has been placed on the female signifiers of the riots in later decades and centuries. Women were present during the riots, both physically and symbolically, with the feminine signifiers attracting the most attention. While cross-dressing was not unusual in rural Welsh culture, especially when considering theatrical productions and such customs as the 'ceffyl pren', in the case of the riots it became a defining characteristic, amplified by the protesters adopting other feminine performances, such as a change of voice.[17] Since the protesters were not dressed in just female attire, usually wearing their own clothes underneath, they were able to shed this femininity, allowing for two different images to be formed: that of the male rioter, and its female figurehead. This is emphasised by some of the press reports at the time of the riots, whereby the rioters were referenced by female pronouns. The mixing of gendered signifiers, I argue, corresponds with the focus on women in the *Report* as being more culpable for immoral behaviour. Feminine performativity becomes the easy target for those who wish to criticise Welsh behaviour, allowing for accusations that affected women most severely. One of the defining features of *Petticoat Heroes* is the categorisation of the different identities assigned to Rebecca to demonstrate the variability of the character, and how she was perceived in multiple social contexts. The identities include: 'Lady'; 'Performer'; 'Heroine'; 'Unruly Woman'; and the 'Girl Led Astray'.[18] These identities will be explained further in the first chapter, but they already paint a picture as to how Rebecca was seen by some. I will borrow some of these identities that Jones categorises to support my exploration of Welsh womanhood post-Blue Books. I link these different identities to the female characters of the literature analysed in Chapter One, demonstrating how they help to portray the complexity and fluidity of the Welsh female identity, as not merely a traditional wife and mother, or a disruptive, immoral figure.

---

[16] Rhian E. Jones, *Petticoat Heroes: Gender, Culture and Popular Protest in the Rebecca Riots* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2015), p.59.
[17] Further explanation of the 'ceffyl pren' is found on page 64.
[18] Jones, pp.98-9.

Literature review of literary criticism

Anglophone Welsh writing is a field of literature that has been much discussed and disputed since the twentieth century. The terms Anglophone Welsh writing and Anglophone Welsh will be used predominantly to refer to this field of literature and the development of a Welsh identity in the English language respectively. The term Anglo-Welsh, initially an influential term but now disfavoured, will be used when referencing literary criticism that uses it, or when I discuss the anglicisation of Welsh identity within the texts examined in this thesis. This should help separate the two identities, especially as the thesis progresses.

Caradoc Evans' *My People* (1915), a shrewd yet scathing insight into rural Welsh life, is according to Kirsti Bohata 'generally regarded as the first example of a distinctive Anglo-Welsh literature'.[19] Raymond Garlick defined 'Anglo-Welsh literature' in *An Introduction to Anglo-Welsh Literature* (1970) as a 'convenient shorthand for "writing in the English language by Welshmen": a linguistic distinction, implying no reflection upon the Welshness of the writers in question.'[20] This definition suggests that Anglophone Welsh literature was predominantly the work of men. The argument on what was the first 'Anglo-Welsh' novel is addressed by Garlick, making the case for Thomas Jeffery Llewelyn Prichard's *The Adventures and Vagaries of Twm Shon Catti* (1828).[21] *Twm Shon Catti* is a prose narrative written by a Welsh writer in English. *My People*, however, arguably left a bigger impact on the field of Anglophone Welsh writing, with M. Wynn Thomas noting that 'one of the most unfortunate aspects of the legacy Caradoc Evans left to later writers was the animosity his work had helped foster between the two cultures of Wales and their respective literatures.'[22] The 'two cultures' referenced here at Welsh-language literature and 'Anglo-Welsh' literature. This animosity is best exemplified in Saunders Lewis' 1938 lecture titled 'Is there an Anglo-Welsh Literature?' Lewis argues that 'Anglo-Welsh' novelists cannot be considered to be writing for a Welsh audience or be connected to Welsh culture, as despite 'Anglo-Welsh' writers having 'wider fame, more worldly honours, more social success, and more money, the writers in Welsh have the prestige of a national literature, and still some sense of assurance that comes from belonging to a great tradition.'[23] He mourns the decline of rural life in Wales, because 'as it grows anaemic, it grows Anglicised', suggesting a loss of Welsh identity due to industrial growth.[24] This lecture is a clear defence of Welsh-language literature, threatened by the popularity of 'Anglo-Welsh' writers, but it seemingly dismisses all Welsh literature written in English as anglicised texts no longer worthy of being called Welsh

[19] Kirsti Bohata, *Postcolonialism Revisited* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004), p.106.
[20] Raymond Garlick, *An Introduction to Anglo-Welsh Literature* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1972), p.9.
[21] Ibid, p.73.
[22] M. Wynn Thomas, *Internal Difference: Literature in 20th-Century Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992), p.1.
[23] Saunders Lewis, *Is there an Anglo-Welsh Literature?* (Caerdydd: Urdd Graddedgion Prifysgol Cymru, 1939), p.13.
[24] Ibid, p.10.

literature. This thesis, however, analyses literature that is distinctively Welsh but happens to have been written in English.

The development of 'Anglo-Welsh literature' was connected to the rise of industrial novels, especially post-First World War, in which the increasing use of the English language was seen as an important marker in the construction of a definitive Anglophone Welsh literary identity.[25] Industrial novels set in the south Wales valleys were mostly the work of Welsh male writers, such as Lewis Jones and Glyn Thomas, with 'a rare exception in Menna Gallie'.[26] These constituted the 'First Wave' of modern Anglophone Welsh writing that Roland Mathias offered spanned 1915-1945, which included explorations of South Wales Valleys' industry and its resulting economic hardships, the loss of community, and an exploitation of 'the differences and peculiarities of what many had come to think of as a backward and confined way of life in Wales, a life dominated by chapel pieties and disciplines'.[27] There were writers who still engaged with 'rural Romanticism' during this period, however, including Hilda Vaughan and Richard Vaughan, with their works attracting a large readership over the border in England.[28] Literature after 1945 took a post-industrialised direction, defined by writers such as Christopher Meredith.

The field of literary critical work on Welsh Writing in English began in earnest in the 1960s. Raymond Garlick, Tony Conran, and Glyn Jones were particularly influential in the exploration of early twentieth-century Welsh Writing in English. Much of the analysis on Welsh Writing was male-dominated, however, with authors including Caradoc Evans, Lewis Jones, and Dylan Thomas being central to the field. Glyn Jones' *The Dragon Has Two Tongues* (1968) is a key text, a personal study of Anglo-Welsh writing by a novelist, poet, and friend of literary figures including Dylan Thomas and Gwyn Jones.[29] Including analysis on short stories, poetry and prose by writers such as Thomas, Gwyn Thomas and Idris Davies, Jones discusses what it means to be an 'Anglo-Welsh' writer. Although he stresses that a knowledge of Welsh literary tradition would enrich future works in the twentieth century and beyond, he places no qualifying limit to an 'Anglo-Welsh' writer's engagement with their Welsh cultural roots. However, Jones argues that this knowledge is crucial in fostering 'unity' between Welsh and Anglo-Welsh writers, and calls for 'Anglo-Welsh' writers to identify with their Welsh national identity first and foremost, though they happen to write in English.[30] The Triskel series edited by Sam Adams and published in the 1970s gave a platform to critical discussions of Anglophone Welsh writing, including Gwyn Jones' seminal lecture 'The First Forty Years: Some

[25] Roland Mathias, *Anglo-Welsh Literature: An Illustrated History* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press, 1986), pp.72-73.
[26] Stephen Knight, *A Hundred Years of Fiction* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004), p.172.
[27] Mathias, p.82.
[28] Ibid, p.90.
[29] Gwyn Jones, *The Dragon Has Two Tongues* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001).
[30] Ibid, p.196.

Notes on Anglo-Welsh Literature' (1957). Meic Stephens' *The New Companion to the Literature of Wales* (1986) provides a useful guide and encyclopaedia of Welsh authors and culture dating from the sixth century to the twentieth century.[31] Roland Mathias' *Anglo-Welsh Literature: An Illustrated History* (1986) is an essential analysis of the history of Anglo-Welsh literature from the early centuries to the 1980s. He explicitly identifies women as an important factor in the growth of this literature, citing Rhoda Broughton (1840-1920) as 'the only novelist worthy of the name' in the mid-nineteenth century.[32] However, he also places Allen Raine as one of the most important figures in nineteenth-century Anglophone Welsh writing, without claiming her and other writers of the time as 'the harbingers of the Anglo-Welsh writing', stressing that this 'was to begin with the First World War.'[33] This thesis includes Allen Raine and her contemporaries, arguing that their texts can be considered as serious Anglophone Welsh literature rather than just 'popular and Romantic' sketches of Welsh life.[34]

The 1990s, under the central influence of M. Wynn Thomas, gave rise to a wider discussion about the role of Anglophone Welsh literature within Welsh culture, resuming a debate launched, as mentioned above, by Saunders Lewis. Thomas' *Internal Difference: Literature in 20th-Century Wales* (1992) and *Corresponding Cultures: the two literatures of Wales* (1999) explore the relationship between English- and Welsh-language cultures in Wales within a literary context, in particular 'what the Welsh make of themselves and of each other, and thereby what between them they privately make of Wales.'[35] Important work in the field of Welsh Writing in English has also been produced in journals. Established by Tony Brown, the journal *Welsh Writing in English: A Yearbook of Critical Essays* – now known as *International Journal of Welsh Writing in English* – is an influential source, giving a platform for emerging and established critics in the field to publish work on literary criticism.

Much of the analysis on Welsh Writing was male-dominated, however, with authors including Caradoc Evans, Lewis Jones, and Dylan Thomas being central to the field. Raymond Garlick's *An Introduction to Anglo-Welsh Literature* concisely maps the history of Anglophone Welsh literature, arguing that while 'the short story and the novel are twentieth century Anglo-Welsh phenomena', Anglo-Welsh poetry and hymns existed for centuries before.[36] He mostly references male writers, but dedicates a short section to four Anglophone Welsh women poets: Jane Brereton (1685-1740), Anna Williams (1706-1783), Anne Penny (1729-1780), and Julia Ann Hatton (better known as Ann of Swansea, 1764-1838). While referencing Williams and Penny as Welsh writers who moved to

[31] Meic Stephens, *The New Companion to the Literature of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998).
[32] Mathias, p.65.
[33] Ibid, pp.68-9.
[34] Ibid, p.67.
[35] M. Wynn Thomas, *Corresponding Cultures: the literatures of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999); Thomas, *Internal Difference*, p.xii.
[36] Garlick, p.7.

London, Hatton stands out as the one who mostly remains in Wales. Garlick is hugely critical of these women poets' works, however, going so far as to compare their works unfavourably to 'better' works by male writers, and to emerging Welsh women writers in the twentieth century. This suggests that Garlick considered the four poets to have published poorly written work within the field of 'Anglo-Welsh' literature. This thesis focuses on writers, in the second half of the nineteenth century, who promote a distinctly Anglophone Welsh culture driven by women, rather than being considered as weaker version of Anglophone Welsh literature written by men. The exclusion of Welsh women writers is demonstrated in anthologies such as Alun Richards' *The New Penguin Book of Short Stories* (1976), which features some Anglophone Welsh women writers but with some translated works by Kate Roberts and Jane Edwards into English. Even more recent collections, like Dai Smith's *The Library of Wales Short Story Anthology* Volumes 1 and 2, still contain predominantly male writers.

In this century, Stephen Knight's *A Hundred Years of Fiction* (2004) traces how the field of Anglophone Welsh writing has developed over the decades, with a particular 'recognition of a female and often feminist voice in fiction [as] one major feature of Welsh writing in English in recent decades.'[37] The publishing company Honno has been instrumental in bringing Welsh women's literature, in both the Welsh and English language, to a new audience. Essential work has been done over the last few decades in bringing Welsh women writers to greater prominence. In particular, Jane Aaron's groundbreaking works *Pur Fel y Dur: Y Gymraes yn Llên Menywod y Bedwaredd Ganrif ar Bymtheg* (1998) and *Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in Wales: Nation, Gender and Identity* (2007) have brought Welsh women writers and their works the attention that they merit.[38] Furthermore, Aaron's edited collection of short stories, *A View Across the Valley* (1999) is an important source on Welsh women's short fiction from 1850-1950.[39] Aaron's work is influential in the analysis of Welsh women's writing, allowing for the republication of their works and bringing them to a new and wider audience. In conjunction with the historian Ursula Masson, Aaron also edited *The Very Salt of Life: Welsh Women's Political Writings from Chartism to Suffrage* (2007), which offers a vital record of writing by Welsh women in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, demonstrating a Wales, and especially a Welsh identity, that was adapting to political, educational and religious upheaval.[40] It is a record of female voices reacting to and leading developments in nineteenth-century Wales, a country that had to portray itself differently in the light of the *Report*'s accusations. *The Very Salt of Life* emphasises the movements that were predominantly women-led,

[37] Knight, p.175.
[38] Jane Aaron, *Pur Fel y Dur: Y Gymraes yn Llên Menywod y Bedwaredd Ganrif ar Bymtheg* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1998); Jane Aaron, *Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in Wales: Nation, Gender and Identity* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007).
[39] Jane Aaron (ed.), *A View Across the Valley: Short Stories by Women from Wales c.1850-1950* (Dinas Powys: Honno Press, 2002).
[40] Jane Aaron & Ursula Masson (ed.), *The Very Salt of Life: Welsh Women's Political Writings from Chartism to Suffrage*, ed. (Dinas Powys: Honno Press, 2007).

such as temperance and suffrage, illustrating how much of the response to the Blue Books came from women. It is crucial such writing is made accessible for future generations, to show that it was not merely the voices of middle-class Welshmen that was heard in the nineteenth century. The works in this collection are presented in the original Welsh language, where applicable, alongside a translation into English, opening these important sources to a wider audience.

Jane Aaron's *Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in Wales: Nation, Gender and Identity* is a major influence on this thesis. It recovers the work of nineteenth-century Welsh women, whose work can be difficult to access or out of circulation, for twenty-first-century audiences. It has been especially useful in introducing non-literary writers previously unfamiliar to me, especially Ellen Hughes. Aaron explores the early-nineteenth-century romanticisation of Wales, the *Report*'s accusations against women and its impact on how women represented themselves following its publication, and women's consequent political and social involvement. I will use her analysis as a launchpad for my own examination of Welsh women's identity in Anglophone Welsh literature, expanding on some of Aaron's points concerning the portrayal of women following the *Report*. I hope to complement Aaron's study with my own findings, and to introduce some further ideas about Welsh women's identity, focusing in depth on ideas that are addressed only briefly as Aaron provides a particularly broad overview of nineteenth-century women's writing. This thesis will concentrate on a small selection of primary texts, some cited by Aaron, to home in on the literary representation of Welsh women during the century. This thesis, then, seeks to expand on Aaron's study of gender and identity, by providing extensive analysis primarily of the literary response to the *Report*, with some reference to non-literary material.

Aaron's peers in the study of Welsh women's writing include Katie Gramich and Kirsti Bohata. Gramich's *Twentieth-Century Women's Writing in Wales* (2007) develops on Aaron's work, by focusing on the twentieth century. Kirsti Bohata's *Postcolonialism Revisited* (2004) is another key study, providing in some chapters a gendered exploration that has helped to promote wider knowledge of women's writing in Wales, as well as innovative new research into the colonial and postcolonial aspects of Welsh Writing in English. Her article 'Bertha Thomas: the New Woman and Anglo-Welsh Hybridity' (2004) explores the concept of the New Woman within the work of Bertha Thomas, a topic on which I will expand further in this thesis, from a distinctively Welsh perspective.

I have also been guided by work on Victorian constructions of gender more broadly, especially the exploration of the New Woman genre. These texts are not specifically focused on Wales but provide support in my own exploration of the construction of Welsh women in literature. I use Sally Ledger's formative *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin de Siècle* (1997) to help define the New Woman, before presenting an adapted version of the Welsh New Woman. This thesis looks to build

upon the work already done on Welsh women writers by Aaron, Bohata and Gramich, but will take the approach of looking systematically at literary constructions of Welsh womanhood between 1879-1907 in order to explore the range of responses to the *Report* from a gendered perspective. I use both fiction and non-fiction work written by Welsh women to aid my exploration of Welsh women's identity post-1847, linking late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century texts to the *Report*'s impact on Welsh women in society from a literary perspective. By focusing on literature and its construction of Welsh women's identity, I aim to bring Welsh women's writing to the forefront of the response to the Blue Books, supported by the crucial critical work already published in this field.

Research questions

After 1847, Welsh women faced difficult decisions in terms of the way they presented themselves, because of the suggestion made by the *Report* that their behaviour was immoral and, moreover, represented the nation as a whole. The pressure on Welsh women is epitomised by the choices they had, as noted by Aaron. The Welsh woman must either

> [abandon] her Welsh allegiances and [adopt] the English middle-class model of refined femininity, however inappropriate it may have been to her cultural roots and her social position; she defensively asserted her Welshness in the face of insult and, to prove its virtues, clad herself in an armour of strict propriety which necessarily entailed self-suppression on a larger scale than mere sexual self-control; or she accepted the English definition of herself as the libidinous hoyden of primitive Wild Wales.[41]

This thesis provides glimpses of these three identities within the literary texts analysed, particularly the anglicisation of Welsh women. However, this thesis is interested in exploring whether writers construct identities that break out of this suggested pattern, allowing for different versions of Welsh identity. Importantly, I explore whether Welsh women in literary texts were also pushing the boundaries of the traditional wife and mother identity, alongside fighting against the *Report*'s characterisation of Welsh women. Through this, this thesis explores whether the identities formed post-Blue Books offer a path towards Welsh modernity. It also directly references the potential existence of the Welsh New Woman as a means of distancing Welsh women's identity to the Blue Books' characterisation of Welsh women.

This thesis asks how the publication of the Blue Books shaped the representation of women in literary texts about recent Welsh history, especially the Rebecca Riots. Post-1847 representations of Welsh womanhood from the recent past were, I want to suggest, a way for writers to engage with ideas of Welsh womanhood without engaging directly with the findings of the Blue Books. I explore how

[41] Aaron, *Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in Wales*, p.6.

women were seen in relation to the riots, focusing on what the rioters' use of female disguise meant for the reputation of Welsh women during the 1840s. By examining texts published after the 1847 *Report*, I also seek to determine what impact the *Report* had on how the riots were looked upon, and whether their legacy, and the legacy of the Blue Books, enabled writers to present a different identity for Welsh women, beyond the traditional image of ideal wives and mothers.

This thesis also explores the role of class, gender, and nationality in shaping the Welsh response in post-1847 literature. The *Report* aimed accusations of immorality at working-class women. The response to these accusations, however, was largely driven by middle- and upper-class men and women, offended at the way that Welsh women were portrayed. By presenting the 'ideal' Welsh woman to counter the accusations of the Blue Books, they exclude working-class women's experiences, and therefore this thesis directly explores the representation of the Welsh working-class woman within Anglophone Welsh literature following the *Report*'s publication. In particular, I wish to consider how writers differentiate between characters of different classes, and to what extent they reproduce stereotypes and prejudices, and to what extent they defy them. Alongside this, the key question that this thesis examines is what the texts under consideration tell us about the intersections between gender, class, and nationality in nineteenth-century Wales.

Chapter synopses

Chapter One explores the themes of gender, class, and national identity in Anne Beale's *Rose Mervyn: A Tale of the Rebecca Riots* (1879), Amy Dillwyn's *The Rebecca Rioter* (1880) and R. Dansey Green-Price's *Rebecca; or, A Life's Mistake* (1882). It focuses on two significant events in Wales in the 1840s: the Rebecca riots, which provide the background to these narratives, and the *Report*'s publication. Both events helped shape the narrative that Welsh people were wild and in need of improvement, with 'wild' here defined as riotous and disobedient, within a distinctly rural area. A term common in this thesis, 'wild' will be defined in context to the unruly behaviour demonstrated by the rioters, or in connection with the setting of the rural countryside in the texts, as noted in the chapter. Most importantly, both present Welsh women as unruly and immoral: the riots by using female attire to disguise male acts of aggression; the Blue Books by explicitly accusing working-class women of immorality. As a riposte, the three texts present anglicisation as a way for women to achieve a respectable modern womanhood, which distances itself from the Blue Books' vision. This Anglo-Welsh womanhood is defined by good education, respectable dress and manners, and higher morals. While it thus mirrors the respectable vision of Welsh womanhood promoted by Lady Llanover and her contemporaries, it also differs crucially in the insistence that Welsh difference needed to be eradicated as far as possible. However, the texts in this chapter present this Anglo-Welsh womanhood as limited to middle-class women. While working-class women are encouraged to improve themselves – through education and domesticity – the ideal of Anglo-Welsh womanhood

that these texts articulate is beyond them. Attempts at improvement that ultimately see working-class women become upwardly mobile are discouraged and seen as a threat to social hierarchy. These texts reveal the limitations of Anglo-Welsh womanhood as a pathway to modernity, as it is only available to middle-class women. To make it available to working-class women would likely be too much of a threat to Welsh or British class structure, and also to Welsh identity.

In this chapter, I initially argue that writers use the figure of Rebecca to emphasise the *Report*'s accusations against Welsh women as inherently unruly and wild. The use of female attire and the performance of female characteristics by men supports the idea of wild Welsh womanhood. The portrayal of Rebecca in the three texts seemingly supports the *Report*'s findings on immorality, yet the complexity of the Rebecca figure also becomes a symbol for the complexity of the representation of Welsh women. I use Rhian E. Jones' *Petticoat Heroes* to argue that the portrayal of Welshness in post-1847 texts about the riots is more complex than mere acceptance of the *Report*'s accusations. Just as there was no 'one' Rebecca identity, there cannot be one single Welsh womanhood post-Blue Books. By using Jones' exploration of the different iterations of the Rebecca figure, I show how they can also be used as marks for the representation of nineteenth-century Welsh women, in the grey area between pious and unruly womanhood. As mentioned previously, Rebecca can be seen as the 'Lady', 'Performer', 'Heroine', 'Unruly Woman', and the 'Girl Led Astray'. This chapter explores these identities in relation to the female characters in the novels, and considers how they help shape a different form of Welsh womanhood different from the Anglo-Welsh women. In this sense, this chapter is an exploration of the Blue Books' impact on Welsh literature's depiction of women, which demonstrates that these novels' retrospective look on the Rebecca riots can serve both to justify and contradict the narrative that Welsh women were unruly.

Chapter Two considers the importance of class in responses to the Blue Books. The advocation of traditional Welsh dress, promotion of good housekeeping, and leadership of movements such as temperance were essentially a middle- and upper-class endeavour. Working-class women were involved only to a limited extent. This chapter, however, focuses specifically on literary representations of working-class women and of their relationships with middle- and upper-class women. It pays particular attention to the ways in which working-class women's labour upheld the social status and standards of their superiors. In Welsh literature of the nineteenth century, working-class women appear as maids, nannies, and servants, playing key roles in allowing their mistresses to appear respectable, in terms of their own appearance and of that of their homes, and to promote similar standards for other women. This ideal of womanhood ignores the real circumstances of working-class women, who had to work long hours maintaining the looks and homes of other women, or worry about managing the household on limited money. This chapter also explores how nineteenth-century

novels illustrate the privilege of middle- and upper-class Welsh women who can pay others to help them maintain the standards of idealised femininity and Welshness.

Furthermore, the second chapter examines the representations of upper-class philanthropy, situating these within the context of the response to the Blue Books. By using Amy Dillwyn's novels, *A Burglary: or an Unconscious Influence* (1883) and *Jill* (1884), it seeks to demonstrate how the hypocrisy of upper-class women's philanthropy impacts on working-class women's lives. Dillwyn portrays different versions of Welsh nineteenth-century womanhood in her novels, including the philanthropist, the struggling wife and mother, moral influencers, and women defying gender and class norms. Although Dillwyn had a privileged upbringing herself, her novels sympathetically show the hardships Welsh working-class women faced in their day-to-day lives. While upper-class women are shown to mean well, their acts of philanthropy often fail, emphasising the naivety of this class of women in relation to the lives of their working-class contemporaries.

Chapter Three continues the focus on literary representations of working-class women. It analyses Allen Raine's novels *A Welsh Singer* (1896) and *A Welsh Witch* (1902), arguing that they portray a version of working-class Welsh womanhood that rejects the pious, traditional image that emerged after the Blue Books. They explore paths to modern Welsh womanhood, as defined in the aims of the thesis, that do not involve anglicisation. Although dismissed as mere romance novels written by women for women as light, easy reading at the time and over the course of the following century, I suggest that they could be read as examples of the Welsh *bildungsroman*. The *bildungsroman* is a genre which, I shall argue, enables the text to plot female working-class characters' paths to a modernity, that does not depend on their anglicisation. Indeed, these texts suggest that anglicisation is largely unnecessary, with the social mobility of these working-class women relying mainly on their Welshness. Both texts actually provide representations of working-class women that celebrate Welshness as its own separate identity. Raine's characters cross class boundaries without becoming fully anglicised. Instead, in these novels that straddle the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Raine celebrates a Welsh cultural identity that had previously been criticised. Although the texts were published decades after the publication of the *Report*, the impact of the response to the *Report* was felt throughout the Victorian age; in Raine's novels, we see a representation of modern Welsh women's identity that confidently counters the Blue Books and their legacy.

Although this chapter largely focuses on the positive representation of Welshness in Raine's portrayal of female characters, I also explore the racialised stereotyping of wild Welshness that appears in the texts, echoing the stereotypes famously articulated in Matthew Arnold's *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (1867). The female protagonists of the two texts are noted for being wild, embodying the wildness of the Welsh location and environment they live in and defying gendered Victorian

behaviour. The chapter discusses themes of race and gender in relation to their characterisation, and considers how these themes help shape the narrative of a positive portrayal of Welsh women. I emphasise that Raine draws on the *bildungsroman* form, to subvert the notion that there is only one way to achieve success and modernity in Wales: accepting Anglicisation. Instead, the chapter discovers how Welshness is a significant part of Welsh women's development into modernity.

Chapter Four continues to analyse literature published at the turn of the twentieth century, and examines the continuing impact the Blue Books' legacy had on the representation of Welsh women. It uses short stories by Bertha Thomas and Sara Maria Saunders to determine whether the New Woman figure existed within Anglophone Welsh literature, and what form it took when compared to the English New Woman. The New Woman was associated with the endeavours by women in the nineteenth century to seek equality within a patriarchal society through better education and women's rights. She was often depicted in the media wearing masculine dress, riding bicycles, and smoking, to show women's exploration of further autonomy. However, this characterisation was also used to disparage so-called New Women, who were often seen as a threat to the status quo. The New Woman's manner of dress was often ridiculed by the English press, which largely ignored the important arguments for women's rights and equality that women associated with this concept put forward. This chapter first introduces the English New Woman figure, before setting out in search of the Welsh New Woman. It explores whether or not the New Woman exists in Wales, and how she may be different from her English counterpart. Initially exploring non-literary material, such as newspaper articles and essays published in the 1890s, the chapter explores the extent to which the New Woman in Wales was a copy of her English counterpart, a response to the ongoing influence of the Blue Books, and/or a means of challenging the image of Welsh womanhood as a figure of tradition and religious piety. This chapter also considers Bertha Thomas' essay 'Latest Intelligence from the Planet Venus' (1874) to show that the ideas that lead to the Welsh New Woman existed far earlier than the 1890s definition of the New Woman. This essay informs my argument that the Welsh New Woman differs from the English iteration, supported by Ellen Hughes' 1896 essay 'Y Ddynes Newydd' ('The New Woman'), an important piece of textual evidence in the definition of the Welsh New Woman. These contextual materials support my analysis of Anglophone Welsh literature's characterisation of women in late-nineteenth-century Wales.

In its entirety, this thesis aims to shed light on the representation of Welsh womanhood in a post-Blue Books society, and on how it differs from the non-literary response to the *Report.* Traditional constructions of Welsh womanhood essentially refute the Commissioners' allegations of immorality, while also unconsciously acknowledging that they might contain some truth through the fierce determination to present a completely opposite image. By accepting these polarised representations there is no room to acknowledge the more nuanced range of identities that could exist within a post-

Report society. Anglophone Welsh literature, as analysed in this thesis, provides a deeper exploration of Welsh women's identity, and most importantly, working-class Welsh women's identity. Traditional Welsh womanhood does not necessarily work for Welsh working-class women in these texts, and neither does anglicisation, as it was a means of stifling the Welsh identity to deter immorality within the Welsh population. The push towards anglicisation, especially, was an attempt to alter the Welsh identity to such an extent that the identity as formed by the *Report* would be completely unrecognisable. Anglicisation harmed Welsh women's identity, and, as the century progressed, was not even needed as a new, modern Welsh identity fought to exist without the requirement of anglicisation.

Historical context

This introductory chapter will provide an historical overview of events during the nineteenth century in Wales, focusing on those leading up to the *Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales*, the contents of the *Report*, and the reaction to the *Report* post-publication. I hope to provide the necessary information and context to support later discussions of literary works. Firstly, I will discuss Wales from 1800 to 1847, prior to the publication of the *Report*. Then I will give an overview of the *Report* and its findings. Lastly, I will include some of the reactions to the *Report*, while also discussing the effects of the *Report* on Welsh society and culture up to the turn of the twentieth century.

Wales before the Blue Books

Wales in the first half of the nineteenth century saw significant changes and unrest. With the Industrial Revolution underway in Britain, and wars in Europe, Wales became a centre for the production of coal and the mining of copper, iron, and slate. Immigrants to Wales were 'drawn to the furnaces, the collieries and the quarries of industrial Wales', causing population growth.[42] The population of Wales doubled between 1801 and 1851, following the creation of work opportunities in industrialised sectors.[43] Wales 'had a leading role' in the development of locomotion, John Davies notes, since the 'ironworks of Wales were among the first to adopt the steam-engine; the first experiments with locomotion were made in Wales and many of the world's locomotives were to travel along rails of Welsh manufacture'.[44] Trading and exports meant a steady supply of work, especially in south Wales, beginning in the eighteenth century. Wars in Europe during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries meant exports of materials such as iron.[45] Following the end of the wars, however, the price of iron fell, causing tension and unrest in iron-producing areas. With wages being cut and difficult working conditions, several strikes began. Larger-scale protests at working conditions and pay garnered press attention, such as the 1816 march from Tredegar to Merthyr. This was the escalation of a strike which affected several ironworks along the way and resulted in a confrontation between the protesters and special constables. Eventually soldiers were brought in to settle the unrest and compromises were found between employers and workers.[46] Poor wages and working conditions led to several protests over the following years, including protests in the 1820s against Irish immigrants, who were willing to work for less pay.[47] With work opportunities came an influx of immigrants to Wales which caused problems in several parts of Wales, including 'where the upsurge in population

[42] John Davies, *A History of Wales* (London, Penguin Books, 1994), p.323.
[43] Ibid, p.321.
[44] Ibid, p.324.
[45] Ibid, p.326.
[46] Ibid, pp.366-7.
[47] Ibid, p.385.

exceeded the increase in resources'; this, John Davies argues, became 'the key to deprivation and unrest in many rural districts'.[48] Conditions for both industrial and agricultural workers were tough, and despite high demand for food and metal products on occasion, Welsh people often lived in poverty. This poverty resulted in nearly fifteen years of turmoil in the fight for fairer wages and working conditions.

The first major event was the 1831 Merthyr Rising, the 'most ferocious and bloody event in the history of industrial Britain.'[49] Workers decided to protest against William Crawshay II of Cyfarthfa Ironworks, who imposed low wages. This protest spread through the town, buildings were destroyed, and magistrates came 'under siege' in the Castle Hotel as the 'town was in the hands of the crowd'.[50] With reported crowds of up to 10,000 people, on June 3rd, 20 people were shot dead when confronted by the soldiers of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. It was not until June 8th that the town was under the control of the forces, and several men were arrested for their part in the riot. One of these was Dic Penderyn (Richard Lewis), a coalminer, who is believed to have been wrongfully hanged for wounding a soldier during the unrest.[51] More unrests followed, especially after the Poor Law Amendment Act 1834, which aimed to cut financial aid given to the poor, and made workhouses the only source of poor relief. In the workhouses, families were often separated by gender, placed in uniforms, made to work to a strict schedule, and forced to live in unsanitary conditions. The workhouse was a real fear for Welsh industrial and agricultural labourers in the 1830s, since wages were low and jobs scarce. The uncertainty and worry led to several attacks on workhouses during the 1830s. John Davies notes that 'the years 1834-45 were among the most troubled in the history of Wales.'[52] This period included the Newport Rising in 1839, a march of thousands of people calling for an expansion of voting rights. Soldiers opened fire on the crowd when the marchers demanded the release of Chartist protesters who had been arrested earlier. Dozens were killed and wounded, and the 'rising' was deemed a failure.[53]

One of the most significant expressions of unrest in this period, however, was the Rebecca riots, during which farmers and labourers in West Wales attacked tollgates to protest against the extortionate costs for using turnpike roads, at a time of financial struggle for most farmers.[54] 'Rebecca' was the main figurehead of these protests, with the role being performed by different men in different areas. Rebecca would wear female dress and a blackened face, and her followers – Rebecca's 'daughters' – would be dressed similarly, with the theatricality of the protest emphasised

[48] Davies, p.323.
[49] Ibid, p.366.
[50] Ibid, p.366.
[51] Ibid, p.376.
[52] Ibid, p.369.
[53] Ibid, p.377.
[54] David Williams, *The Rebecca Riots*, p.185.

by Rebecca's dramatic speeches to her daughters at the start of each attack.[55] John Davies argues that the 'will to attack and destroy' the tollgates 'sprang from a deep-rooted sense of deprivation', resulting from fluctuating wages and poor harvests.[56] The tollgates were a physical manifestation of the difficulties Welsh farmers faced, and became an easy target for an attack. The first attack was in Efailwen, Carmarthenshire, in 1839, spurring further attacks until 1842, when there was a lull in activity. Attacks on tollgates continued later in 1842, and expanded to target other political grievances, including workhouses and weirs, high rents, and tithes.

The Rebecca riots garnered plenty of press attention, and English soldiers were sent to West Wales to deal with the rioters. Those arrested were often sent to prison, or transported to Britain's penal colonies. A Commission of Inquiry into the riots was launched in 1843 and published a year later, which included 'legislative changes to road administration' and established Roads Boards to ensure better road conditions.[57] Rhian E. Jones points out that to portray the Rebecca riots as merely a protest against tollgates 'exclud[es] an array of other expressed objections, and the reasons of political expediency'.[58] The riots, along with other unrests during the 1800-1847 period, were manifestations of dire levels of poverty, unpredictable work opportunities, and a squeeze on resources due to a high influx of English and Irish workers to Welsh communities.

Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales

The Commission of Inquiry into the Rebecca Riots foreshadowed the 1847 *Report* as it linked the riots to the state of education in Wales, with encouragement of the use of the English language to help restore the rule of law in the country, and advance work and educational prospects.[59] In 1846, William Williams, the Welsh-born Member of Parliament for Coventry, made a speech that outlined concerns over the relationship between riots and unrest and the state of education in Wales, arguing for 'the advantages which a knowledge of English among the Welsh working classes would have for the maintenance of law and order'.[60] In her analysis of the *Report*, Tyson Roberts notes that the 'message of his speech was very clear; the Inquiry would find glaring faults in current educational provision in Wales, and the measures which the subsequent Report would recommend to improve it would have the maintenance of law and order as their underlying objective.'[61] Specifically, Williams believed that introducing the English language into Welsh education, particularly working-class education, would be 'a cheaper and easier way of creating the obedient population than the use of

[55] Williams, p.191.
[56] Davies, p.378.
[57] Rhian E. Jones, *Petticoat Heroes*, p.26.
[58] Ibid, p.115.
[59] Gwyneth Tyson Roberts, *The Language of the Blue Books*, pp.22-23.
[60] Ibid, p.23.
[61] Ibid, p.24.

force'.[62] Education in Wales prior to 1846 was largely administered by Nonconformist chapels, which operated through the medium of Welsh, so that 'monoglot Welsh could participate in a host of other activities held in the only language they understood.'[63] As Tyson Roberts notes, the prevalence of Nonconformity in Wales was a 'cause for great anxiety to a mindset which regarded anything but Anglicanism as dangerous'.[64] There were several other educational opportunities in Wales in the early nineteenth century, for children and adults, established by Methodists and Congregationalists among others. The quality of education provided in Welsh schools varied greatly, depending on the expertise of school instructors and the standards of the classrooms. Often these schools were run by charitable trusts or academies relying on sponsorship. They usually taught in Welsh, as 'using the language the children already knew was more efficient than teaching them another language in order to educate them in it.'[65] The instruction of Welsh children in their own language disturbed the British Parliament, and in 1833 the government started supporting the establishment of schools in Wales, with decidedly Anglican influence. However, the provision of education, especially for working-class children in Wales remained predominantly in Welsh. This became a matter of concern for government in response to the general unrest in Wales during the 1830s and 40s. Accordingly, 'a major, government-directed effort' was launched to Anglicise Wales.[66] Sir James Kay Shuttleworth, secretary to the Committee of Council on Education, set up the Inquiry and appointed the Commissioners: Ralph Lingen, Jelinger C. Symons, and Henry R. Vaughan Johnson, educated, middle-class men who 'shared the attitudes and beliefs of men of their class and time.'[67] They were instructed by Shuttleworth to

> ascertain, as accurately as circumstances will permit, the existing number of schools of all descriptions, for the education of the children of the labouring classes, or of adults – the amount of attendance – the ages of the scholars – and the character of the instruction given in the schools; in order that Her Majesty's Government and Parliament may be enabled, by having these facts before them in connexion with the wants and circumstances of the population of the Principality, to consider what measures ought to be taken for the improvement of the existing means of education in Wales.[68]

The Commissioners' tasks concerning schools were to inspect the: 'tenure of the school'; 'capacity of the schoolroom'; 'state of the school furniture and apparatus'; 'average attendance' of children;

---

[62] Tyson Roberts, p.24.
[63] Davies, p.359.
[64] Tyson Roberts, p.21.
[65] Ibid, pp.26-7.
[66] Ibid, pp.22-3.
[67] Ibid, p.75.
[68] James Kay Shuttleworth, 'Introduction', *Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales*, pp.i-ii

'organization of the school, and the methods used'; subjects taught and 'the time allotted to each'; and 'whether the children are instructed in the Welsh language, or in the English, or in both'.[69] The Commissioners were also asked to inspect the standard of teaching, including the 'number of teachers – their ages, whether trained at a normal school, or at a model school – for what period and when.'[70] This inspection into teachers also extended to 'previous occupation', salaries, whether they 'follow any trade, or hold any other office' and even 'whether they have a house rent-free, a garden rent-free, fuel, or other emolument.'[71] This in-depth investigation into all aspects of school life came with an understanding that the Commissioners must 'depend on [their] own courtesy and discretion in the prosecution of [their] inquiries', although without the 'absolute authority' to inspect all schools or question people if they were unwilling to cooperate.[72] Shuttleworth stresses that visits to schools would 'be limited to an attempt to form a just general estimate of the means of education available for the poor in Wales', while also allowing the Commissioners to 'form an estimate' of how a good education might influence better social outcomes within Welsh communities.[73]

The three Commissioners were unable to examine all schools in Wales; due to the language barrier and scale of the task, assistants and local informants were asked to help inspect and provide information about the state of working-class education in Wales. The assistants were reportedly bilingual Welshmen; yet, following the publication of the *Report*, there were accusations of deliberate mistranslation, or a lack of proper communication between the Commissioners, their assistants, and the children. Welsh readers were particularly angry with the assistants upon the publication of the *Report*, feeling a sense of betrayal that Welshmen could write of their fellow countrymen in such unfavourable terms; in some cases, the assistants were far harsher in their findings than the Commissioners. Tyson Roberts explains this reaction of anger, stating that

> The critical comments of the Commissioners could be explained, in some measure at least, by their ignorance of the people and culture they were investigating; the assistants had no such excuse, yet they seemed to many Welsh readers of the Report to have aligned themselves as completely as they could with the attitudes and prejudices of the Commissioners [...]. Their pejorative comments on the culture, language and living conditions of their compatriots were regarded as even more blatant evidence of treachery.[74]

Although the findings of the *Report* concentrated on the provision of education and the improvements needed to make the Welsh people 'obedient and enthusiastic subjects of a British Empire dominated

[69] Shuttleworth, pp.ii-iii.
[70] Ibid, p.iii.
[71] Ibid, p.iii.
[72] Ibid, p.ii.
[73] Ibid, p.ii.
[74] Tyson Roberts, pp.103-4.

by England', the *Report* also contained vivid commentary on the social and living conditions of Welsh people, and on the moral standards of the Welsh.[75] Specific comments targeted the Welsh language, poor standards of homes, uncleanliness, drunkenness, and loose sexual morals among young Welsh people. Within these criticisms, there was a particular emphasis on women, who were apparently failing, either as teachers or mothers, to exercise moral influence on children. The Commissioners' findings were often generalised, commenting on the lives of people from the 'perspective of their own social and financial position[s]'.[76] Poverty was not seen in the *Report* as an adequate reason for uncleanliness and immorality; instead, the Commissioners were critical of working-class improvidence, especially spending limited income on alcohol and other immoral habits. Lacking sufficient time to perform a full inspection of schools and people's houses, the commissioners and assistants often oversimplified their findings, or relied on existing biases. The *Report* also lacked detailed analysis of living standards and reasons for the poverty working-class Welsh people experienced.

Education

The commissioners found the general state of education in Wales to be poor, owing to lack of educational support by parents, lack of appropriate opportunities for girls, the substandard quality of teaching, and, most importantly, its execution in the Welsh language. The Commissioners' and their assistants' method of testing Welsh schoolchildren's ability to read and write were controversial; although the Commissioners' assistants could speak Welsh, questions were often asked in English, of pupils taught through the medium of Welsh. If the pupils could not reply in English, or gave an incorrect response, this led to the conclusion that the pupils were ignorant and poorly-taught; despite the likelihood of the children knowing and expressing the answer in Welsh. One observer noted how 'the Vicar and the master declared that the children knew more than they answered; I think that they did myself. But of their utter incapacity of adapting an answer to a question, and their ignorance of English, there could be no doubt.'[77] Furthermore, criticism was levelled at the schools that taught English texts by rote. Tyson Roberts acknowledges this problem, noting how 'Welsh children learned English texts phonetically and recited them with only the haziest notion of what they meant, unless the teachers and monitors took active counter-measures.'[78]

The *Report* included letters by witnesses who claimed that Welsh parents were not interested in their children receiving a proper education, with one stating:

[75] Tyson Roberts, p.106.
[76] Ibid, p.137.
[77] *Report*, p.194.
[78] Tyson Roberts, p.34.

> The parents do not know what education means: they think half a year long enough to learn everything, and take their children away in general after that time. They cannot bear the idea of paying for a book. The terms are exceedingly low in this neighbourhood, and not all that is nominally charged is actually received.[79]

The writer accuses parents of disinterest and ignorance, without acknowledging that the parents likely missed their own opportunities for education and are therefore unable to pass on their experience to their children. Parents may also have had good reasons to believe education was too expensive, especially if there was more than one child in the family; many of these families were from the poorest areas, and could scarcely afford necessities such as food.

The provision of education was poorly reviewed in the *Report*. Girls' education was particularly badly perceived, with one commissioner noting that 'The girls' room is not so completely furnished as that of the boys, and I was told that they did not often go to receive instruction for the master in the other school. They are taught needlework.'[80] Criticism hinted at the need for a wider range of educational subjects for girls, with current provision often being restricted to needlework and other domestic chores. Although the *Report* was widely condemned for its views on Welsh people, its criticism of girls' education in Wales laid the foundations for greater opportunities. Symons explained the disparity between girls' and boys' curricula, stating that the

> reason for this inferiority is, that, money being the sole motive for acquiring the little education that exists, that inducement is much less strong with respect to females than with regard to males, for men are supposed to be more in need of arithmetic and writing for their advancement in life. Another reason is the preponderance of schoolmasters over schoolmistresses. Each favour their own sex and neglect the other as a general rule; […] the girls for the most part are more imperfectly instructed, if possible, than the boys. The effect is observable in the gross ignorance of the female peasantry[.][81]

With instructions to inspect the standard of schoolteachers, Symons goes on to present how, on average, in the schools inspected, '[of] 49 schoolmistresses, 6 had been sempstresses, 7 governesses, 1 dairymaid, 10 milliners, 9 housekeepers, 12 ordinary maid-servants, 2 shopkeepers, and 2 only were originally in schools.'[82] Girls' education in Wales had been so limited that the standard of teaching for schoolgirls by 1847 was low. The occupations mentioned here demonstrate the domestic-centred education many of the women who went on to become teachers had received, preparing them for a life of domestic work. The comment also emphasises that many women had not been educated

[79] *Report,* p.251-2.
[80] Ibid, p.168.
[81] Ibid, p.227.
[82] Ibid, p.248.

sufficiently to be considered competent schoolmistresses. The Commissioners and their correspondents recognise that girls are as worthy of education in arithmetic and reading as boys, by including The Reverend H. Griffiths' reflection on the Sunday schools' 'great difficulty' in 'the want of intelligent females', especially when 'there are nearly twice as many girls as boys; but we are not able to muster 40 teachers of their own sex.'[83] This recognises the need for equal education for both sexes; the demand for it was there, but the lack of adequately trained and educated schoolmistresses was a barrier.

Welsh Language

The provision of education in Wales was mainly through the medium of the Welsh language. The Commissioners published letters from correspondents and witnesses who expressed negative views of the Welsh language, using these letters to support their own views. Symons argues that the 'Welsh language is a vast drawback to Wales, and a manifold barrier to the moral progress and commercial prosperity of the people.'[84] Symons goes further and accuses the language of 'evil effects', as it 'dissevers the people from intercourse which would greatly advance their civilization'; in effect, it denies the people the opportunity to advance themselves, which Symons claims can only be achieved through speaking English.[85] The use of the word 'evil' denotes the strength of feeling on this subject, sowing a sense of fear in an age of strong religious beliefs. The Welsh language, Symons suggests, urgently needs to be eradicated in order to save people from further harm. This argument is woven throughout the *Report*: that speaking Welsh is a detriment to learning, to advancement and to 'moral progress'; this last accusation was, perhaps, the most hurtful to the Welsh people, as it linked their first – and to some, only – language to immorality.

One observation on the language notes its negative impact 'in courts of justice', as 'it distorts the truth, favours fraud, and abets perjury, which is frequently practised in courts, and escapes detection through the loop-holes of interpretation.'[86] Here Symons links the Welsh language to illegal practices in court, suggesting that criminals or those brought in front of a judge and jury are 'distorting' justice through their use of a different language. Another correspondent writes that 'one need only read the Welsh publications to be convinced of the non-utility of the language for any practical purpose whatever, religious, political, or commercial, and the sooner it becomes dead the better for the people.'[87] The language used to describe Welsh is harsh, calling for its 'death' in order to improve the circumstances of the people. English was seen as the language of prosperity and opportunity: the correspondent Reverend James Denning wrote a letter calling for the Commissioners to 'give us

[83] *Report*, p.291.
[84] Ibid, p.309.
[85] Ibid, p.309.
[86] Ibid, p.310.
[87] Ibid, p.411.

English schools, and you may, under God, be made the means of conferring on poor Wales a great and lasting blessing.'[88] The English language is a 'blessing', a word that is chosen carefully, not only in a religious context, but in its contrast with the 'evil' and 'dead' Welsh language. This difference is suggestive of the wider attitude towards the two languages; one was seen as being old-fashioned and the cause of immoral behaviour, while the other was seen as the moral saviour and key to success. Another correspondent wrote:

> English is gaining ground, and until it is universally spoken nothing effective can be done to raise the social character of the people; and for this reason – the arts and sciences, agriculture, &c., are brought to perfection in England. […] Teach English, and bigotry will be banished.[89]

Wales is seen as a bigoted nation compared to England, while the bigotry and imperfections that were also prevalent in England are ignored. The Welsh language is scapegoated here, seen as the root cause of the perceived immorality of Welsh society; as children were taught through the medium of Welsh, they were not being taught the right and proper ways of society. The *Report*, while taking a scathing look at the provision of Welsh-medium education nevertheless concedes that:

> Yet, if interest pleads for English, affection leans to Welsh. The one is regarded as a new friend, to be acquired for profit's sake; the other as an old one, to be cherished for himself, and especially not to be deserted in his decline.[90]

The Commissioners recognise that while English, as a language, should be used for 'profit's sake', for business and general communication concerning work, the Welsh language cannot be 'deserted' because it is the language of emotion and heart. The opinions expressed in the *Report* on the Welsh language are representative of a century where, as Geraint H. Jenkins notes, 'those who were determined to get on in the world viewed Welsh as the language of potato soup, straw beds and peripatetic minstrels. In such circles, "Welsh does not pay" became a popular catchphrase.'[91] It led to the devastating conclusion that the 'most effective way to avoid future collective humiliation was to suppress the use of Welsh in key domains.'[92]

The Commissioners note how Welsh people, especially the poorest of society, did see opportunities in acquiring the English language. One of the Commissioners noted how:

> genuine evidences of the earnest and unprompted desire of the poor to acquire a knowledge of the English language have frequently presented themselves to my notice. I attribute this

[88] *Report*, p.359.
[89] Ibid, p.311.
[90] Ibid, p.10.
[91] Geraint. H. Jenkins, *A Concise History of Wales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p.216.
[92] Ibid, p.215.

> desire of the poor exclusively to pecuniary motives: they find an ignorance of English a constant and almost an insurmountable obstacle to their advancement in life, especially their efforts to place their children out at service.[93]

The Welsh people's self-consciousness over their lack of English speaking and reading abilities is linked here to employment opportunities, further establishing the connection between English and economic success. The need to improve their prospects shows the Welsh people in a positive light, suggesting a desire to overcome hardship and surmount social expectations, through the pursuit of respectable and gainful work. That this must be done through the medium of the English language neatly fits the Commissioners' views of English as the language of education and prosperity.

Drunkenness and sexual promiscuity

The *Report*'s explorations concerning education and the Welsh language played a significant part in the impact of the Blue Books after they were published. However, John Davies emphasises in *A History of Wales* that:

> Less than ten of the pages of the report discuss this [sexual habits of the Welsh] issue, but it was those pages which gave London journals the opportunity to vilify the Welsh and which aroused the anger of Welsh patriots.[94]

Accusations of immoral behaviour, including drinking and promiscuity, were the focus of many articles and newspapers after the *Report*'s publication, opening Wales up to be ridiculed and judged harshly. Women in particular were especially criticised for immoral behaviour, with the *Report* including several references to Welsh women's lack of chastity. One correspondent writes that:

> Probably the chief causes of this disregard to modesty and chastity may be referred 'first,' to the want of room in small farmhouses and cottages. […] 'Secondly,' to the bad habit of holding meetings at dissenting chapels or farmhouses after night, where the youth of both sexes attend from a distance for the purpose of walking home together.[95]

Women are seen as the main cause of a lack of chastity, with the *Report* stating:

> There is another very painful feature in the laxity of morals[.] I refer to the alleged want of chastity in the women. […] it is sufficient to account for all other immoralities, for each generation will derive its moral tone in a great degree from the influences imparted by the

[93] *Report*, p.254.
[94] Davies, p.380.
[95] *Report*, p.301.

> mothers who reared them. Where these influences are corrupted at their very source, it is vain to expect virtue in the offspring.[96]

The onus is on mothers to uphold society's morals. The prevalence of drunken behaviour, especially from men, emphasises that fathers and older men could also be a bad influence on the 'youth'; yet, they are not portrayed in the *Report* as bearing the same responsibility as women for Welsh immorality. The *Report* takes the accusation against Welsh women even further, noting that the 'young women are in general unsteady; nothing is thought of having a bastard, and when in the family-way, they walk as publicly as a married woman'.[97] The apparent lack of shame and remorse for sexual transgression and its consequences clearly disgusts the Commissioners and their correspondents; once more, they ignore the role men play in these supposedly immoral acts. This corresponds with what Keith Thomas defines as the 'Double Standard' on sexual morality, where 'men were permitted liberties of which no woman could ever avail herself and keep her reputation.'[98] Thomas also points out that 'among the lowest classes of society the tradition of promiscuity was too strong to allow the emergence of so sophisticated a concept as that of the double standard.'[99] Despite Thomas' view on the lack of the 'double standard' concept for the working classes, the Commissioners were middle-class men who would still possessed attitudes engrained in society towards immorality and sin, and therefore judged working-class people equally, regardless of any supposed double standard.

One of the Commissioners' biggest concerns was the tradition of 'caru yn y gwely' ('courtship in bed'). This was the practice of young people sitting on a bed and conversing, described by Tyson Roberts as a 'natural and ordinary occurrence, especially in a peasant society where a young couple might have to wait a long time before they could afford to marry and set up house together'.[100] The *Report* looks upon the ritual as a 'revolting habit', arguing that 'natural modesty is utterly suppressed by this vile practice, and the instinctive delicacy alike in men and women is destroyed in its very germ.'[101] It notes that 'England farmers' daughters are respectable; in Wales they are in the constant habit of being courted in bed.'[102] Harri Garrod Roberts argues that the Commissioners, by 'taking this harder line on women […] were simply reflecting conventional thinking of the day, which tended to view women as less capable of rational thought than men and therefore as closer to the world of animals'.[103] By comparing Welsh women to their English counterparts, the *Report* further

---

[96] *Report,* p.294.
[97] Ibid, p.296.
[98] Keith Thomas, 'The Double Standard', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 20 (1959), 195-216 (195).
[99] Ibid, p.206.
[100] Tyson Roberts, p.70.
[101] *Report,* p.294.
[102] Ibid, p.534.
[103] Harri Garrod Roberts, *Embodying Identity: Representation of the Body in Welsh Literature* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), p.38.

embarrasses Welsh people, holding them up against an allegedly more perfect standard of moral womanhood and detailing how they fall short.

The report also singled out women in its broader criticisms of the Welsh working classes in terms of alcohol abuse; one contributor to the *Report* noted that drunkenness 'extends to the women', predominantly '20 to 25 years of age, and unmarried.'[104] This of course helped shape the narrative that Welsh women were immoral, with particular emphasis on the possibility that drunken women were more liable to become unmarried mothers. While men's drunkenness led to other issues such as antisocial behaviour, the possibility of unmarried mothers was a particular source of shame. Partly in response to these accusations, the Temperance movement gained momentum after 1847, predominantly led by women.

Cleanliness

Connections were made by the Commissioners and their assistants between dirt and immorality in Welsh society. Cleanliness would have been one of Welsh women's many responsibilities, and the failure to maintain high domestic standards was, accordingly, women's fault. The Commissioners are critical about the universal dirt and 'grime' the Welsh people carry about themselves, with Symons writing how:

> They who constantly witness scenes of dirt and disorder, and who are exposed to the debasing agencies of a low physical condition, are almost out of the reach of moral influences. Nevertheless these influences, I feel assured, might produce ample fruit.[105]

Symons also complained in his Brecknock, Cardigan, and Radnor report that:

> The cottages in which the people dwell are miserable in the extreme […]. In very few cottages is there more than one room, which serves the purpose of living and sleeping. […] the cottages and beds are frequently filthy. The people are also very dirty.[106]

He echoes this sentiment in his Monmouthshire report, saying how the 'bodies and habits of the people are almost as dirty as the towns and houses of the swarthy region in which they swarm.'[107] The choice of 'swarm' further dehumanises the Welsh working-class, continuing the Commissioners' portrayal of the Welsh people in need of English guidance and intervention, and not merely for educational purposes. Furthermore, the word 'swarthy' is interesting, suggesting a 'region' that is largely dark-complexioned; the connotations of race will be explored in this thesis. The perception of the Welsh as 'dirty' suggests there needs to be a dramatic change in order to 'cleanse' the people of

[104] *Report*, p.296.
[105] Ibid, p.397.
[106] Ibid, pp.292-3.
[107] Ibid, p.394.

their moral and physical dirt, which, Symons suggests, must come from 'moral influences'. Symons' belief that this will prevail in instilling cleanliness and good hygiene on the Welsh people also suggests an attitude that there are two tiers of poverty: the 'deserving' poor, who have very little but still manage to maintain high domestic standards and keep themselves morally and physically respectable; and the 'undeserving' poor, who succumb to degradation. This suggests that all can be classed as 'deserving' poor if they are ready to accept other moral influences. The attitude of the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor was commonly found in the culture and literature of the time.

Wales after the Blue Books

The publication of the *Report* incited huge anger among Welsh people, who were portrayed as dirty, immoral, drunk, and uneducated. Many believed they were betrayed by the *Report*, having co-operated with the Inquiry in the hope the government would implement some positive changes in the provision of education in Wales. Welsh people were unprepared for the *Report*'s conclusions; they had expected to be seen as 'poorly educated' but 'they had not expected to be told that they were drunken, dirty, superstitious and sexually promiscuous liars and cheats.'[108] The *Report* and its findings had long-lasting consequences for Wales and its representation outside of the country; and it prompted the Welsh to respond in strong terms.

The response to the *Report* was fierce and almost instant. Bitterness towards the assistants was particularly intense, due to their being Welshmen themselves. It was reported that in 1851 a person spat on the coffin of Lewis Edwards, one of the assistants, calling him a 'traitor to his country.'[109] Contributors to the *Report*, such as the clergymen who wrote letters to the Commissioners, also faced backlash, for portraying their parishes in an unfavourable light. The backlash was expressed most clearly in R. J Derfel's 1854 play *Brad y Llyfrau Gleision* (Treachery of the Blue Books), which castigated clergymen for contributing to the negative portrayal of Wales in the *Report*, linking them to demons and hell as opposed to godly Wales. The play's title gave the *Report* its popular name: the Blue Books. Due to the anger over the *Report*'s findings, legitimate concerns over the state of education were often ignored. Instead, as Tyson Roberts suggests, the negative portrayal of Wales ensured that the Welsh rallied together, taking up 'positions according to existing class and national loyalties rather than to consider coolly the shortcomings in educational provision which is discussed, and which most observers agreed needed urgent improvement.'[110] With the *Report*'s observations on Welsh morals receiving most of the attention post-publication, it is no surprise that the response to the *Report* was primarily focused on either refuting the allegations of immorality, or accepting them and working to forge a new image of Welsh piety.

[108] Tyson Roberts, p.209.
[109] Ibid, p.103.
[110] Ibid, p.104.

Following the *Report*, several newspapers and periodicals published articles that denigrated the Commissioners, the assistants, and the contributors. The Welsh writer Jane Williams, Ysgafell, wrote a response to the Blue Books in 1848 that eviscerated the contributors, saying

> The majority of the witnesses had a direct personal interest in furthering the plan of the Commissioners. The landowners hoped to save their money, and the clergy and ministers their care and toil, by commending the schools to the proffered charge of the Executive Government, and therefore they endeavoured to give the worst possible account of the moral necessities of the people and to enforce the strength of their belief in the reformatory powers of secular education.[111]

Williams' response was a careful and measured critique of the *Report*'s general findings and the dubious tactics the Commissioners used to come to their conclusions. She criticised the Commissioners' emphasis on the negative aspects of what they witnessed in Wales, the difficult questions they posed to the children, and their attitude towards the Welsh language. Although Williams' response sought to counter the *Report*'s accusations, she also 'brought Wales into clearer focus and sought to disseminate amongst an English-language audience greater knowledge and appreciation of the country.'[112]

The Blue Books also inspired other women writers to publish political articles and essays, often refuting what the *Report* had to say about women, or promoting the ideal of the traditional wife and mother in the face of its accusations. New periodicals actively addressed the allegations of women's immorality in the *Report*. *Y Gymraes* (1850), for instance, 'set out to create a perfect Welshwoman whose high Christian morality and, in particular, virtues of sobriety and thrift would ensure that in future the Welsh nation would be above all criticism.'[113] *Y Gymraes*'s editor, Ieuan Gwynedd helped guide Symons in Tredegar and claimed Symons did not wish to see clean and kept houses, while embellishing on what he did see in poorly-kept homes.[114] Gwynedd's defence of Welsh morals and, in particular, Welsh women appeared in the pages of *Y Gymraes*, which helped shape the narrative of an ideal Welsh woman, who was religious and morally superior to the image presented in the *Report*. In 1850, Augusta Hall, otherwise known as Lady Llanover, published her influential essay 'Anerchiad i Gymraësau Cymru' (An Address to the Welsh Women of Wales) in *Y Gymraes*, under the pseudonym Gwenllïan Gwent. In this essay she exalts the virtues of the 'true daughters' of Wales,

---

[111] Jane Williams, 'Artegall; or Remarks on the Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales' (1848), *The Very Salt of Life: Welsh Women's Political Writings from Chartism to Suffrage,* ed. by Jane Aaron & Ursula Masson (Dinas Powys: Honno Press, 2007), pp.18-50 (p.25).
[112] Aaron, p.79.
[113] Sian Rhiannon Williams, 'The True Cymraes: Images of Women in Women's Nineteenth-Century Welsh Periodicals', *Our Mother's Land: Chapters in Welsh Women's History 1830-1939* ed. by Angela John (Cardiff: University of Wales press, 2011*),* pp.73-94 (p.74).
[114] Tyson Roberts, p.213.

who, 'whether poor or wealthy' are of 'moral excellence'.[115] Only if they live up to this standard, according to Hall, can women be considered 'Welsh Women of Wales'; otherwise they are simply 'the woman who lives in Wales'.[116] For Hall, morality becomes the all-important defining feature of Welsh womanhood. Hall's message for Welsh women includes calls to extend their influence on men, as 'daughters, sisters, wives and mothers'; to be patriotic through speaking Welsh, especially to children; and to wear the 'NATIONAL FLANNELS which have been since time immemorial the garb of our nation.'[117] Hall puts the onus on women to counter 'against evil', declaring it an act worthy of God to promote and sustain the Welsh language and Welsh purity in the face of the corrupted English.[118] The image she produced, of a Welsh woman in a high black hat, white headkerchief, red shawl and practical woollen dress, helped to cement a notion of Welsh women as especially morally pious; after 1847, it influenced a wider acceptance of the costume, which emerged as one way to demonstrate defiance against the Blue Books' accusation.

Many of those who aimed to counter the accusations of the Blue Books, including Lady Llanover, focused on presenting Welsh women as morally pious, suggesting they accepted the *Report* in some ways. The middle-class people who felt most embarrassed by the *Report* saw the need to present a completely different image of Welsh women, which predominantly focused on the role of the mother, who, as Sian Rhiannon Williams notes, 'was the most important agent in the process of reform'.[119] Periodicals such as *Y Gymraes*, and later *Y Frythones* (1879) and the second iteration of *Y Gymraes* (1896), emphasised the mother's influence over her children and the future generation of morally good Welsh people.[120] The attitude of the editors and writers of the periodicals leant towards the belief that women 'educated for the role of wife and mother would necessarily improve the condition of society at large, since her influence over husband and children would have a far-reaching effect.'[121]

Nonconformist culture in Wales played a significant part in the construction of the traditional Welsh woman figure, working alongside Lady Llanover and an 'Anglican group of patriotic antiquarians' to present a vision of Welsh womanhood that fitted a standard acceptable to the English establishment.[122] Jane Aaron characterised this informal alliance as seeking to 'reconstruct the Welsh as a homogeneous and virtuous people who deserved to survive as a nation, even on English terms.'[123] The influence of Nonconformism cannot be understated, as, in Kenneth O. Morgan's words,

---

[115] Augusta Hall, 'An Address to the Welsh Women of Wales', in *The Very Salt of Life: Welsh Women's Political Writings from Chartism to Suffrage*, ed. by Ursula Masson & Jane Aaron (Dinas Powys: Honno Press, 2007), pp.57-63 (p.57).
[116] Ibid, p.57.
[117] Ibid, p.61.
[118] Ibid, p.63.
[119] Williams, p.78.
[120] Ibid, p.79.
[121] Ibid, p.74.
[122] Aaron, p.76.
[123] Ibid, p.76.

'nonconformity was responsible for almost every significant and worthwhile aspect of social and cultural activity in late nineteenth-century Wales.'[124] The need to respond to the *Report* was particularly strong from a nonconformist perspective, as Aaron explains, 'Nonconformist Wales had hitherto pledged its allegiance and loyalty to the government that now turned on it and vilified it.'[125]. Nonconformism actively fought against the negative portrayal of the Welsh people. The Nonconformist response to the *Report* involved a 'heavily punitive and intrusive line on women's sexuality', with threats of excommunication from chapel for those deemed to fail this mission.[126] Choosing the route that appeased a British social standard effectively played to the strengths of Lady Llanover, 'whose allegiance', as Aaron points out, 'was to Wales as a contributing nation to a greater Britain, rather than as a potentially sovereign nation justified in seeking its independence.'[127] This emphasis on an unionist approach diluted Welsh national identity somewhat; however, it also played to the common attitude of 'tributary patriotism', as Tyson Roberts explains, whereby 'differences between the component parts of Britain could be used to further the advance of Britishness.'[128] In this respect, the Welsh were allowed to be proud of their national identity, 'as long as they felt even prouder to be British.'[129]

With the Welsh language seen as a prominent cause of unrest in the country, the *Report* had a detrimental effect on its use; 66% of the Welsh population were estimated by Sir Thomas Phillips to be Welsh speakers in 1841, compared to only 54% as recorded in the 1891 census.[130] The decline can be attributed partly to an increase in migration into Wales, and partly to the decreasing number of monoglot Welsh schools. The English language was more and more enthusiastically promoted as the language of success and prosperity; as part of this drive, the Welsh Not was more widely used in school classrooms to deter the use of Welsh.[131] Although the Not had been used for decades before the *Report*, it was more frequently in use by the second half of the nineteenth century. The suppression of the Welsh language succeeded to some extent, forcing some to emigrate and start their own Welsh communities abroad, to preserve the language and resist efforts at anglicisation. Although the Welsh language continued to be celebrated within a cultural context in Wales, as in eisteddfodau where people could present poetry and stories in their native tongue, the *Report* encouraged many Welsh people to accept that the English language was becoming more important in everyday life.

---

[124] Kenneth O. Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation: A History of Modern Wales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.18.
[125] Aaron, p.75.
[126] Ibid, p.86.
[127] Ibid, p.72.
[128] Tyson Roberts, pp.11-12.
[129] Ibid, p.12.
[130] Ibid, p.220.
[131] The Welsh Not was a wooden plaque placed around a child's neck if caught speaking Welsh. The child was made to stand at the front of the classroom until the next child was similarly caught: the last child wearing it at the end of the school day would be caned as punishment, setting a deterrent against further Welsh speaking.

Although the *Report* negatively impacted Welsh language education, the criticisms of the Commissioners did bring to the forefront a need to improve education provision more generally, particularly for women. The Commissioners acknowledged the Welsh people's appetite for education, and regretted the fact that, in general, school buildings were inadequate, and schoolteachers not trained to the highest standards. The 1870 Elementary Education Act ensured state-funded schools in Britain and Ireland, establishing compulsory education for children between the ages of five and ten. In recognition of the need for institutions to facilitate higher education, University College Wales (now Aberystwyth University) was founded in 1872, followed by the University College of North Wales (Bangor University) in 1884. The Commissioners' comments that the provision of girls' education was relatively poor led to greater educational opportunities in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Welsh Intermediate Education Act (1889) led the way in providing better education for girls, giving them equal opportunities to boys.[132] This led to higher attendance for girls in schools, better educational outcomes in writing and reading, and the acceptance of women into higher education.[133]

By the end of the nineteenth century, opportunities had arisen for Welsh women to broaden their experiences within society. Opportunities to write in periodicals and the abundance of literary writing by Welsh women, as characterised by Allen Raine, Amy Dillwyn, and Sara Maria Saunders to name a few, allowed a greater female voice in the construction of a Welsh identity post-Blue Books. Writers such as Ellen Hughes published essays including 'Angylion yr Aelwyd' ('Angels in the House') (1899) that dismissed the idea that women were considered failures if they did not fit the particular 'angel' stereotype. The idea that women are considered failures if they do not present as 'angels' within and outside the home ignores, Hughes argues, the fact that women adapt and survive through other, 'worthier direction[s]'.[134] Although this thesis will focus on the development of women's Welsh identity through analysis of literature, it will also include some reference to essays and publications by Welsh women that help to determine how women responded to the legacy of the *Report*. The issues raised in the history of Wales post-Blue Books have been extensively researched throughout the decades, with Lady Llanover and the image of the traditional Welsh woman having also been explored in previous works by critics including Aaron. Issues such as cleanliness, sexual impropriety and lack of good morals as noted by the *Report*, and the social response to them as noted in this historical overview, will inform the literary analysis in this thesis. This will then allow for a greater exploration of the response to the Blue Books from a literary perspective.

---

[132] Aaron, p.163.
[133] Ibid, p. 163.
[134] Ellen Hughes 'Angels in the House', in *The Very Salt of Life: Welsh Women's Political Writings from Chartism to Suffrage*, ed. by Ursula Masson & Jane Aaron (Dinas Powys: Honno Press, 2007), pp.152-154 (p.154).

Chapter One. Reports and Riots: The Struggle for Welsh Women's Identity

This chapter explores literature about the Rebecca riots, which took place between 1839-1843, published after the appearance of the *Report*. The texts chosen in this chapter were published in the 1870s and 1880s and thus allow for analysis of literary representations of Welsh womanhood in the aftermath of these two seismic events in Welsh history. These are: Anne Beale's *Rose Mervyn: A Tale of the Rebecca Riots* (1879), Amy Dillwyn's *The Rebecca Rioter* (1880) and R. Dansey Green-Price's *Rebecca; or, A Life's Mistake* (1882). The focus of this chapter will be on the representation of Welsh women during the Rebecca riots, focusing on the intersections between gender, class, and national identity, especially the formation of Anglophone Welsh identity. The novels retrospectively explore the Rebecca riots, demonstrating a post-Blue Books response to the *Report*'s accusations.

The Rebecca riots were a series of protests primarily aimed at dismantling tollgates in south Wales, as an expression of anger towards rising taxation in agricultural communities. Men would dress in women's clothing, with one designated as the leader (Rebecca), and the fellow rioters the daughters. The performative nature of dressing in women's clothes to attack tollgates ensured lasting attention by the newspapers and inspired official inquiries into the causes of the unrest. The *Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry for South Wales* (1844) investigated the inability of many Welsh people to speak and read English, with the Report also acknowledging the lack of education in Wales; this matter was investigated several times during the 1840s.[135] The later *Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales* followed an inquiry into Welsh education, which expanded into an investigation of Welsh morals and behaviour, with the Riots criticised as an expression of immorality. The *Report*'s criticisms established Welsh women as the cause of immoral behaviours, arguing that as mothers and educators they had the most influence on Welsh society: 'it is sufficient to account for all other immoralities, for each generation will derive its moral tone in a great degree from the influences imparted by the mothers who reared them.'[136] The reputation of the riots, combined with the Blue Books' harsh judgments of the working classes, provide an image of Welshness in need of reform. Accordingly, the authors of the novels under consideration in this chapter respond both to the riot and the *Report*, by focusing on Welsh womanhood, often in the context of anglicisation. The women celebrated in the novels are upper- or middle-class, with some connection to Englishness that endows them with a respectability and moral standard that serves as a positive influence on the Welsh working classes. Working-class women in the novels, however, are associated with wildness due to their links to Rebecca. Working-class women are seen to be too closely linked to the daughters' wildness to be entirely innocent themselves. This allows for the

[135] Gwyneth Tyson Roberts, *The Language of the Blue Books: Wales and Colonial Prejudice*, p.22.
[136] Ralph Lingen, Jelinger C. Symons & Henry R. Vaughan, *Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales*, p.294.

advocation of Anglo-Welsh womanhood – as defined in the introduction as the anglicisation of Welsh identity – as a response to Welsh wildness; wild, here, defined as uncivilised women ripe for civilising influence due to unruly behaviour. Anglo-Welsh womanhood in the texts denotes good education, manners and respectability, ideals to be emulated by all women yet dependent on class boundaries; working-class women are expected to improve according to English standards, but only in ways that do not infringe on other class structures and expectations of their sex. In these texts, working-class women simply need to be good wives and mothers, and take care of the home.

Historical context

The Rebecca riots were a series of riots between 1839 and 1843, mainly targeting tollgates in rural south Wales. With the poor harvests of the late 1830s and the fall in prices for cattle and corn during the early 1840s, the economic situation of farmers in mid-to-south Wales was dire.[137] Anger and frustration were rife especially with the increases in toll rates, which had been taken over by English and Welsh gentry toll-renters. Attacks on the Welsh tollgates were reported across Britain, with newspapers at that time being largely unsympathetic; *The Times* was an exception, noting the 'general poverty of the farmers.'[138] The descriptions of 'infested [and] formidable gangs of armed men, who patrolled the county at night with blackened faces and other disguises' illustrated the physical danger Rebecca posed, but often ignored motivations behind the use of violence.[139] Pat Malloy explains that

> It was a time and place where the iniquities of turnpike road tolls and church taxes, the harshness of the new Poor Law which seemed to make poverty a crime, the real and imagined wickedness of the absentee (and even the resident) landlord, the exorbitant cost of taking disputes to court, and the apparent failure of the magistrates to dispense justice with an even hand, turned the most God-fearing and law-abiding to the violence of despair.[140]

Unsurprisingly given the lack of political representation, the people turned to the mythical figure of Rebecca. This figure became a symbol of rebellion and hope to a society that was perpetually downtrodden. Molloy's reference to the 'violence of despair' emphasises how harshly the reality of poverty was felt by the Welsh working-class. The fact they resorted to violence and destruction of property, despite being 'God-fearing' people, demonstrates their feelings of being politically neglected and abandoned.

---

[137] David Williams, *The Rebecca Riots*, p.115.
[138] Unknown, 'The riots at Carmarthen and the state of South Wales', *The Times*, 26 June 1843, as referenced by Pat Molloy in *And they Blessed Rebecca* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 2001), p.102.
[139] Unknown, 'Rebecca Riots" in Wales', *The Cardiff Times*, 19 January 1878, p.3 https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3388790/3388795/76/rebecca%20riots%20in%20wales [accessed January 2018].
[140] Pat Molloy, *And They Blessed Rebecca: an account of the Welsh Toll-Gate Riots 1939-1844*, pp.16-17.

The Blue Books, as Tyson Roberts notes, present the riots not 'as the reaction to grievances but as the result of a lack of education which would have taught the participants where their duty and best interests lay'.[141] This perception dismisses the effects of heavy taxation on the working classes, instead focusing on a lack of education and ingratitude toward the gentry, who allegedly have the working-class people's 'best interests' at heart. The *Report* also states that the riots had a lasting, detrimental effect on the behaviour of the Welsh working classes. It says

> that the people are much disimproved since the Rebecca riots, which have tended to engender a spirit of disaffection; the women are also immoral; that they are less disposed to respect the old families of the county than they used to be, and are less honest than they formerly were.[142]

The particular mention of women, when it was predominantly men who took part in the riots, reinforces the targeted nature of the *Report*'s criticism. Furthermore, it categorises women as being separate from the 'people' the *Report* initially criticised. The Blue Books do contextualize Rebeccaism somewhat, including testimony that the people 'only wanted a leader.'[143] This emphasises the absence of a political outlet in the 1830s and 40s that allowed Rebecca to thrive. In addition, the 1847 testimony states that 'Rebeccaism is only dormant, and that it is highly dangerous to leave the people in their present state of ignorance. They are liable to be grossly misled and are easily excited by any demagogue.'[144] Rebecca is a continuing threat to society, this suggests, only waiting to incite further violence by the working classes. The threat described in the *Report* highlights the need for educational reform to prevent a revival of Rebeccaism, or an exacerbation of the already immoral behaviour in the Welsh working classes.

Introduction to the novels

The texts examined in this chapter were written approximately four decades after the riots and the publication of the *Report*. Anne Beale's *Rose Mervyn: A Tale of the Rebecca Riots* (1879) was swiftly followed by Amy Dillwyn's *The Rebecca Rioter* (1880) and R. Dansey Green-Price's *Rebecca; or, A Life's Mistake* (1882). Although not entirely sympathetic to the Rebeccaite cause, these texts use the riots as a means of showing the extremes to which the rural working classes were driven by poverty and perceived neglect by local landowners as well as political leaders. Some characters use the riots for personal gain, suggesting that anyone can adopt the Rebecca guise even if they do not care or know about the root cause (high road tolls and other taxation) of the riots. Their appropriations of the guise of Rebecca alter the power this figure holds as the symbol of widespread social and economic injustice, allowing her to become a significant figure of more personal grievances, too.

---

[141] Tyson Roberts, p.149.
[142] *Report*, p.326.
[143] Ibid, p.334.
[144] Ibid, p.334.

These novels provide an insight into the way the riots were viewed by upper-class writers, in a nation forced to confront its problems by a report that was extreme in its judgement of Welsh immorality. When the texts were published, an endeavour by Welsh people to correct the many faults highlighted by the Commissioners had long been taking shape, for instance, in the publication of domestic guides for women and Lady Llanover's advocacy for a universal dress code. The revival of Rebeccaism in the 1870s, in attacks against salmon weirs, seemed to support the *Report*'s view that Rebecca was 'dormant', something which *Rebecca; or a Life's Mistake* highlights. The 'Dedication' to that novel carefully states that the novel is a 'warning' against further revivals of Rebeccaism, continuing the *Report*'s work against Welsh wildness. The literary revival of Rebecca, however, also provided an opportunity for the belated exploration of Rebeccaism as an exciting, riotous period in Welsh history.

Both *Rose Mervyn* and *Rebecca; or a Life's Mistake* offer a romanticised view of Wales, by including references to Welsh myths and legends, and glorifying the Welsh countryside. Yet, women in the texts become more English in their manners and lifestyle, either through marriage or education, creating an Anglo-Welsh respectability that is to be admired by the predominantly English readers of these texts. While *Rose Mervyn* has a middle-class heroine, *Life's Mistake* elevates a working-class woman to a similar position but with a warning against attempts to transcend one's original social sphere. In all three texts there is a middle- or upper-class woman who is held in high regard but who cannot be emulated or matched by those born into the lower classes. Working-class women in the texts must improve themselves within their class boundary, where a different kind of respectability, which is altogether humbler, can be achieved. What the texts share in common is an idealisation of Anglo-Welsh culture and identity: the texts promote an identity that retains certain parts of Welshness but in a tamed, reformed version, while also emulating specifically English upper- and middle-class morals. Engagement with 'Anglo-Welshness' serves as a response to the Blue Books that is respectable, yet in the process, loses a portion of the Welshness along the way.

This chapter argues that the representation of Welsh women offers a far more complex impression than the one created in the Blue Books, which had presented women as embodiments of immoral behaviour in Wales. Although the texts highlight the image of Rebecca as an uncontrollable, devil-like character, there is underlying sympathy towards female characters depicted in the text. The particular sympathy towards working-class women suggests the writers' awareness that the Rebecca riots, and subsequently the Blue Books, unfairly portrayed women as the cause of immoral behaviour. The men in the texts, the writers suggest, should be blamed for their own behaviour. Rebecca, and the crossdressing performativity of the daughters uses Welsh womanhood as a disguise for men's actions. Nevertheless, Welsh working-class women come under scrutiny and criticism.

Beale's *Rose Mervyn*, Dillwyn's *The Rebecca Rioter*, and Dansey Green-Price's *A Life's Mistake* all explore the working- or middle-class woman in need of encouragement or improvement, using the figure of Rebecca to illustrate Welsh wildness and its consequences. Beale's *Rose Mervyn* uses Rebecca as a figure who is manipulated by men, a terrifying character used to scare and emotionally blackmail a woman. *The Rebecca Rioter* is slightly different in exploring the image of Rebecca as leader, pitting her against Queen Victoria, whom the working classes see as an absent leader with little interest in her Welsh subjects. Rebecca does not win, however, and the crimes for which she is responsible are punished by the Queen's laws. *A Life's Mistake* firmly states that Rebecca and working-class women are linked, and although working-class women can be 'tamed' through education, these women cannot match middle- and upper-class women. Throughout these three texts there exists the idea of upper- and middle-class womanhood as a response, and potential solution, to both the wildness of Rebecca and the accusations of the *Report*. The superior morality, dress, education, and manners of upper- and middle-class women are to be emulated by their working-class inferiors, but crucially not in a way that challenges their perceived superiority. The texts' response complements the response of upper- and middle-class women of the time, such as Lady Llanover, who advocated for traditional Welsh dress for women. Later nineteenth-century texts reflected the need at the time to present Welshness and womanhood as respectable and morally good.

From a gender perspective, the figure of Rebecca is a complex one. Rhian E. Jones' recent study of the Rebecca Riots, *Petticoat Heroes*, explores the gender symbolism of Rebecca. Jones places Rebecca in five categories: the 'Lady' who is renowned for her similarities to the Queen; the theatrical 'Performer'; the Romantic 'Heroine'; the 'Girl Led Astray', who evokes biblical morality; and the 'Unruly Woman', whose violence is a threat to authority.[145] Jones recognises the different aspects of the personalities Rebecca possessed, noting that Rebecca's identity was 'fluid, transcending age and socio-economic status as well as ideas of gender-appropriate behaviour, and "she" could appear sexualised or desexualised, imperious or commanding, or wanton and frenzied.'[146] I draw on Jones's model throughout this chapter, especially in exploring the role of Rebecca as the 'Lady', who is juxtaposed with Queen Victoria.

The Rebecca figure in *Rose Mervyn*, *The Rebecca Rioter* and *A Life's Mistake* is a symbol of Welshness, and includes differing interpretations of what this means. Historically, the Welsh working classes looked upon her as a symbol of defiance against rules and regulations imposed upon them by the Welsh gentry, or by English laws. English upper-class society saw Rebecca as a threat to the gentry's role as regulators of working-class behaviour. In the novels, 'she' is both protagonist and antagonist, a leader and a villain. Rebecca is not a lone figure, however, with the representation of

[145] Rhian E. Jones, *Petticoat* Heroes, pp.98-9.
[146] Ibid, p.98.

Rebecca's cross-dressing daughters providing an image of womanhood that reflects wildness in both men and women. Being Rebecca's daughter is temporary however, with men being able to shed feminine signifiers when necessary; nevertheless, due to the feminine signifiers associated with Rebecca, working-class women in the texts enduringly, and unfairly, bear the reputation of wildness predominantly expressed by men. While the *Report* notes examples of working-class men's drunkenness and immoral behaviour, women are more harshly criticised for the same behaviours, and the legacies of the report's discourse are apparent in the three texts under consideration in this chapter. The texts analysed in this chapter take issue with this stance by reflecting on the struggles of working-class women to overcome perceptions of them as wild in nature.[147] There is encouragement for working-class women in the texts to become better educated and more moral, but within a strict social hierarchy. The Blue Books advocated for better education and cleaner morals for working-class women; the texts in this chapter demonstrate there is a limit to cross-class social mobility.

Rose Mervyn of Whitelake

Anne Beale (1816-1900) was an English governess living in Wales who later became a full-time writer, publishing several novels during her long career including *The Vale of the Towey, or Sketches in South Wales* (1844), later retitled *Traits and Stories of the Welsh Peasantry* (1849) and *Gladys the Reaper* (1881). Her novels delved into Welsh life, with the Welsh countryside providing a background to her stories of romance and domesticity, which engaged a predominantly English audience. Due to this appeal to an English audience, in *Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in Wales* Aaron argues that a 'persistent strain of sensationalism runs throughout her Welsh romances, suggesting that she gained her popularity with English audiences in part through exploiting their appetite for reading material depicting ways of life less inhibited than their own.'[148] Furthermore, Aaron accuses Beale of including material that 'reproduced racial stereotypes in a manner which can hardly have been of much real assistance to the Welsh in their endeavour to redeem the nation's "good name"'.[149] This image of a wild Wales, in which English audiences could find entertainment, also fostered a sense that Welsh people needed an English influence to civilize them. Although her attitude to Wales changed over the decades, leading Beale to republish earlier works and erase the most offensive segments, some promotion of Anglocentrism persists, as can be seen in her 1879 novel: *Rose Mervyn of Whitelake.*

Set during the Rebecca Riots, *Rose Mervyn* recounts the romance between a beautiful young Welsh woman and the English major who is in the county to eradicate the threat of Rebecca. The Rebecca Riots are a looming threat in the novel, with the Rebeccaites appearing sporadically at first,

[147] The term 'wild' here is defined as unruly and riotous, following the noted behaviour of Rebecca and her daughters.
[148] Jane Aaron, *Nineteenth Century Women's Writing in English*, p.123.
[149] Ibid, p.124.

emphasising the mystery and superstitious belief associated with the Rebecca figure in the county. Alfred Johnnes, a brash, confident, and handsome middle-class man, is the Rebecca of the novel, using this role to manipulate Rose into marrying him. By representing the consequences of Rebecca's actions in the novel, Beale emphasises the possibility of personal redemption, while also encouraging unity between the classes, and, most importantly, unity between the English and Welsh. *Rose Mervyn* is a romance novel that explores the supposed Romantic and spiritual identity of the Welsh middle-class, through the idealisation of Welsh legends and its nature. Its titular protagonist is distinctively Welsh, yet also fully connects with an English identity, which is further entrenched by her marriage to the masculine representation of Anglicisation, Major Faithfull. Thus, she is held up as the beacon of hope and peacefulness in the novel, a counterfigure to the outlandish character of Rebecca, who is portrayed as demonic.

This section will explore the relationship between wild, uncivilised Welshness, as represented by the Rebeccas, and the Victorian ideal of Welsh womanhood, as represented by Rose. The triumph of Anglo-Welsh femininity over Rebecca represents a victory over perceived Welsh unruliness, coming in the decade when English commissioners reported on Welsh immorality and ignorance. I examine how the role of Rebecca as 'Heroine' is usurped by the titular protagonist, who comes to better embody the 'romanticised reminder of the ancient British past.'[150] Rebecca's 'somewhat incongruous glamour and romance' makes her an 'exotic heroine', who cannot endure before she loses her appeal.[151] The Rebecca figure in *Rose Mervyn* is admired, yet does not last in a community that eventually values morality over petty grievances. As an alternative, Rose as the real heroine becomes a symbol of unity, who encourages moral improvement. The heroine becomes romantically tied to the ideal of anglicised morality, representing an Anglo-Welsh solution to the problem of the 'unruly' and immoral Welsh working classes.

I begin by studying how the Rebecca figure is represented in the novel, considering the symbolism of the figure and how she is physically manifested. Second, I examine how *Rose Mervyn* juxtaposes Welsh and English responses to the idea of Welsh wildness. As part of this second point, I first explore the differences in the representation of Rose and Alfred respectively, before discussing how Rose's marriage to Major Faithfull represents an Anglo-Welsh union. Last, I will explain how Egain's role comes to further emphasise the novel's message that being morally good and god-fearing is an antidote to the view of an immoral Wales.

[150] Jones, p.105.
[151] Ibid, p.105.

Representation of Rebecca

Rose Mervyn offers two contrasting images of Rebecca: one, as the heroic representative of the downtrodden poor, ridding the county of oppressive tollgates and salmon weirs; the other, a Satanic figure who manipulates the 'deluded peasantry' to perform acts of violence and vigilantism.[152] The novel begins by introducing a small act of rebellion against the turnpikes, as if in preparation for the appearance of Rebecca. Nanno, 'a woman with a scarlet cloak and very high hat' ignores the toll for the turnpike as she 'boldly walked through the side gate'.[153] This act of resistance, significantly performed by a woman, sets the stage for Rebecca, with the locals bemoaning that 'it was high time that Rebecca or some one should put down the pikes'.[154] This early sign of rebellion emphasises the acceptance of Rebecca's actions throughout the first half of the novel, where sympathies lie with Rebecca because the people 'believed the turnpikes a grievance, and even felt it as such personally.'[155] Being themselves affected by the rising cost of entering through turnpikes, the local people can justify actions taken by the Rebeccaites to rid the county of taxation which impoverishes them. Jack Mervyn, Rose's father, argues for the damage to the weir, claiming that obedience to laws 'is very well when one has enough to eat' and stressing that the upper classes who own such weirs 'grudges the peasant his sewen.'[156] In her representation of Mervyn, a middle-class gentleman farmer who supports the riots, Beale bears witness to the fact that, historically, the Rebecca movement forged connections between the middle classes, who primarily protested high taxation, and labourers, who protested deprivation and hunger. Rebecca inspires a loyalty that is attributed by Beale's narrator to an innately Welsh consciousness, as 'the Welsh were as staunch to one another then as when they fought for liberty in their strongholds against Saxon or Roman.'[157] Although Rebecca's actions over the course of the novel become more sinister, she is nevertheless given support and protection by those who risk serious punishment for collusion. When Rebecca is attacked by Major Faithfull, 'his followers closed round him […] he had disappeared, they knew not where.'[158] This emphasises the tight protection surrounding Rebecca, where followers risk their own safety to help conceal the identity of Rebecca. This sense of loyalty stresses how Rebecca's cause has taken root in the community, due to the people's joint belief in the justice of the riots.

The image of Rebecca in the novel nonetheless also evokes superstition and religion, through suggestions of devilry and Satanic imagery. When Major Faithfull is called out from a dinner party to deal with a riot, he quips that Rebecca is 'more powerful even than a bishop', suggesting the quasi-

---

[152] Anne Beale, *Rose Mervyn*: *A Tale of the Rebecca Riots* (London: Griffith Farran Browne&Co. Limited, 1909), p.244.
[153] Ibid, p.2.
[154] Ibid, p.3.
[155] Ibid, p.20.
[156] Ibid, p.44.
[157] Ibid, p.265.
[158] Ibid, p.243.

religious authority of this figure over the local community.[159] This power is stressed early in the novel, when Alfred 'alluded to the superstition of the ignorant, fostered by the leaders of the riots, who tried to make the world believe they were aided by unseen powers.'[160] Preying on the vulnerably superstitious allows the idea of Rebecca to grow in several directions: to some, she seems more powerful than God's earthly representatives; to others she evokes the idea of the Devil. She is the 'Evil One himself' whose 'satanic majesty must be complimented', and an 'abominable caricature'.[161] Rebecca's 'grotesque forms' terrorise not only the gentry, but also working-class people whose religious beliefs insist that there can only be 'good' or 'evil.'[162] A similar tension is illustrated in some of the views of the real riots, as seen in contemporary newspapers. One letter to a newspaper, from 1843, warns of the 'temptations of the Devil' that have led the people to 'forsake[n] the path' set out for them by God, and instead follow the 'ways of riot, drunkenness, profaneness and crime'.[163] The reference to crime here is important in relation to actions seen in the novel; in *Rose Mervyn* the fire at the Mervyn farm – an act of apparent revenge for Rose's refusal of Alfred and her brother Llewellen's joining the regiment – is an extreme and unnecessary act of violence against an initial supporter of the Rebeccaite cause. Beale thus suggests that the Rebeccaites engage in violence and vandalism beyond the original intentions of the Rebecca cause, and seems to support the contemporary criticism that the rioters have 'forsaken' the moral path God created. We are left with the image of the 'blackened faces and grotesque figures, which the flames rendered almost demoniacal.'[164] With the cause being diverted to more personal grievances, acts of violence become a confirmation of the presence of evil, and the Rebeccaites are classed as 'Rascals! Cowards! Murderers!'[165] The narrator issues a caution, which emphasises the conflicting image of Rebecca: 'Do restless spirits ever count the cost of misrule before they embark on its treacherous, turgid waters?'[166] This suggests that while 'misrule' can have good intentions, when it is taken too far its perpetrators come to be perceived as 'Evil', and the real cause of their rioting is eventually forgotten. The question about 'restless spirits' also serves as a commentary on the actions of Alfred Johnnes, who, by adopting the guise of Rebecca, exercises his personal 'restlessness'. Being a gentleman with no financial reason to support the violent removal of the turnpikes, he purports to sympathise with those who are less fortunate than himself by taking part in the riots. When he is assaulted by the military on their pursuit of Rebecca, Alfred's mother questions his motive for taking part, asking

[159] Beale, p.43.
[160] Ibid, p.9.
[161] Ibid, p.9, p.118.
[162] Ibid, p.129.
[163] Lycurgus 'Welsh Riots' in *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 8th July 1843 http://newspapers.library.wales/view/3393973/3393977/52/rebecca%20riots [accessed February 2018].
[164] Beale, p.243.
[165] Ibid, p.229.
[166] Ibid, p.223.

'And for what? For an imaginary grievance which would have righted itself but for him and other rebellious spirits, to whom excitement and notoriety were dearer than respectability and peace'.[167] It seems that Alfred's natural 'rebellious spirits' must find an outlet, and the Rebecca riots provide an opportunity for him to act out his 'excitement' while also allowing him to exercise his social authority over the working-class rioters by becoming their leader. His stated belief in the socio-economic issues underpinning the Rebecca movement serves as an excuse to join the riots, yet this apparent sympathy with the poor inspires complete loyalty from his fellow rioters, which is to his personal benefit.

Whether Alfred-as-Rebecca can be seen as a 'hero' is questionable. His motive for joining the cause of the Rebecca movement, and his subsequent introduction as Rebecca herself, are dubious. Using the guise of Rebecca, he tries to manipulate Rose into marrying him, threatening violence against her family home if she refuses. Her clear rejection of him merely encourages his careless and wild nature, leading him to further take advantage of a genuine grievance for personal gain. Alfred's absurd theatricality as Rebecca is entirely superficial and becomes removed from the folk performances and communal rituals that Rhian E. Jones describes in *Petticoat Heroes*. Consequently, the real cause of the riots in *Rose Mervyn* becomes secondary to personal motivations and the grievances of Welsh peasants move to the background of the plot. Furthermore, Alfred as Rebecca physically represents the consequences of impulsive, ill-considered actions, serving as a warning to the Welsh people. At the start of the novel, he is a man with a 'bold resolute face and manner', and the 'peasants around him held him in some awe, while they admired his daring and laughed at his frolics.'[168] During the riots, he is one of many figures in 'a very white shirt, peculiar bonnet, and black face', yet it is obvious that he embodies 'the fabulous Rebecca; for, by gesture rather than word, she commanded and was obeyed.'[169] The use of the word 'fabulous' here complements the mythical and glamorous image of Rebecca. Compare this 'fabulous' image with the description of Alfred following his injuries at the hand of Major Faithfull and his regiment: 'No one could have recognized in the ghostly-looking invalid the handsome man who had done such havoc with female hearts and illiterate peasants.'[170] The image of the 'ghost' recalls representations of Rebecca as a 'spirit' or mythical being. More importantly, though, this description shows the effects of engaging with the riots, where a young man has transformed into a 'ghostly' version of himself, becoming unrecognisable: 'the once stalwart, handsome, resolute Alfred Johnnes, he was so much altered.'[171] His self-inflicted punishment ensures he cannot adopt the guise of Rebecca again. The role of Rebecca requires an element of physical

[167] Beale, p.252.
[168] Ibid, p.3.
[169] Ibid, p.45.
[170] Ibid, p.283.
[171] Ibid, p.385.

majesty, a 'fabulous' vision demanding attention; here, Alfred stands as a complete contrast to the image of Rebecca.

Alfred's punishment, voluntary exile in Australia and New Zealand, and a life of 'working, and half-starving', are his way of repenting for his past misdemeanours and escaping official and legal punishment for his deeds.[172] That he has 'escaped' formal justice is noteworthy and reveals the ways in which socio-economic differences determine individuals' encounters with the legal system. However, his repentance indicates a desire to change and turn his back against notions of a distinctive Welsh wildness and rebellion in the form of Rebecca. Alfred's time as Rebecca, and its effects on him, suggest the text's rejection of rebellious Wales; a rejection which is also presented through the romance plot in the novel. The love triangle between Rose, Alfred and Major Faithfull represents a battle between different identities and notions of nationhood. Rose is the embodiment of unity in the novel, the 'Heroine' in almost every sense; she is the romantic heroine, the mythical heroine and the symbol of peace between Wales and England. Within this possibility of peace there is an implication that Wales will become even more subservient to England. Marriage would require Rose to concede any rights she might have, alongside her personal finances, to the English Major, as the Married Women's Property Act, which allowed women greater control over some of their own property and money, did not appear until 1870.[173] While the same would happen if she were to marry Alfred, it is difficult to overlook the political resonances of the personal, romantic union between an emblem of Romantic Wales and a representative of the British military.

Beale's construction of Rose's Welsh identity is important in shaping the plot of the novel. Rose, a young woman who 'had been cradled and trained amid scenes of beauty, poetry, and legendary lore', is representative of a 'shy, wild patriotism and romance of youth.'[174] She is caught in the fables of Wales to such an extent that she does not know how to 'disconnect the legendary from the real', a sign that she sees the world through the romanticised view of the past, and cannot connect with the troubles around her.[175] Matthew Arnold's *On the Study of Celtic Literature* notes the 'Celt, undisciplinable, anarchical, and turbulent by nature […] is just the opposite of the Anglo-Saxon temperament, disciplinable and steadily obedient within certain limits, but retaining an inalienable part of freedom and self-dependence.'[176]

---

[172] Beale, p.385.
[173] Mary Beth Combs, '"A Measure of Legal Independence": The 1870 Married Women's Property Act and the Portfolio Allocations of British Wives', *The Journal of Economic History*, 65 (2005), 1028-1057 (1031) https://www.jstor.org/stable/3874913.
[174] Beale, p. 25.
[175] Ibid, p.19.
[176] Matthew Arnold, *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1867), p.91.

Beale works with these ethnic stereotypes in her representation of the Welsh in *Rose Mervyn*; when they turn on their fellow countrymen, they are shown to be 'turbulent' and 'undisciplinable'. The romance plot in *Rose Mervyn* allows the difference between the 'undisciplinable' (Wales) and 'disciplinable' (England) to be bridged, with Rose at the centre, evoking the mythic Romance of Wales yet rejecting its current 'turbulent' nature in order to forge an Anglo-Welsh relationship and identity. Her inability to connect with Rebecca, both morally and romantically, attracts her to English heroism. In Major Faithfull she finds a saviour from the violence of the riots, the causes for which she cannot truly understand, being removed from the acts themselves by her own moral purity.

Rose and Rebecca

This section explores the contrasting figures of Rose and Rebecca, focusing on Beale's depiction of their physical appearance and behaviour. Rose's triumph over Rebecca, I argue, advocates for a Wales that is shaped by domesticated Anglo-Welsh femininity.

As previously argued, Rose represents the Romantic past of Wales, and is idealised because of her beauty and her gentle manners. Rose, like the real Rebecca, has inspired poetry in her honour: 'a *penyll* or stanza had already been composed' for her.[177] One similarity between Rose and Rebecca lies in the mythical quality within both of these figures. Above, I discussed how the Rebecca figure and her daughters in *Rose Mervyn* inspired comparisons to myth and spirits. Beale also writes of Rose that she is 'as wild and romantic as the country in which she was born, and would have loved to dream away her life […] but she was already beginning to learn that "life is real," and to puzzle over its strange problems.'[178] Her wildness, however, differs radically from Rebecca's. While Rebecca's wild behaviour is demonstrated by the attacks on the tollgates, Rose's 'wildness' is firmly linked to her physical surroundings. She lives among 'the ruins of an abbey to the lake, and an old British encampment on one of the hills, so that Llynhafod as well as its White Rose was cradled in romance.'[179] While Rebecca is viewed as the rebel figure, fighting for the oppressed local poor, Rose is the figure representative of the past, where legends and Welsh patriotism were rife. Moreover, the narrator states that

> Her exceeding whiteness and fairness caused the peasants to look upon her with fear, as she grew up, because they said she was almost a spirit already, and would certainly not live long, for there could scarcely be a drop of blood in her veins.[180]

This reference to a 'spirit' suggests, once again, a similarity to Rebecca. However, while Rose is 'feared' for her appearance, Rebecca is a spirit that is closer to the Devil in terms of behaviour.

[177] Beale, p.10.
[178] Ibid, p.11.
[179] Ibid, p.12.
[180] Ibid, p.26.

Furthermore, Rose's paleness – one of the reasons behind her 'White Rose' nickname – contrasts with the painted black face of the Rebeccaites. Rose's first meeting with them, where Rebecca's 'black face or mask [is] contrasting with her white one', juxtaposes imagery of peace and innocence against the black, which represents the rioting and violence of Rebecca.[181] Rose's reaction after meeting Rebecca – 'Rebecca! Rebecca! A demon! a fiend!' – further emphasises the difference between them.[182] Rebecca is the 'demon' or the devil, feared for her 'evil' behaviour, while Rose is the heroine in need of rescue from the demonic creature. Rose's reaction is not entirely unwarranted, given the nature of her conversation with Rebecca; Rebecca seizes the moment to blackmail Rose into marrying 'who next proposes' to her, with the threat of hurting her father in some fashion.[183] Rebecca's violence, based on personal interest rather than political idealism, stands in contrast to Rose's immaculate behaviour throughout the novel; not once is she shown to be engaging in any actions that would compromise her heroine status.

Rose is not only afraid of Rebecca but also of Alfred, separate from his actions as Rebecca. Several times in the novel Rose makes a conscious effort to avoid Alfred, as she 'felt uncomfortable beneath his bold and persistent glance.'[184] Additionally, her relief after rejecting Alfred that she is 'permitted to walk […] unmolested' confirms her discomfort with the attentions of a man to whom she is not attracted, and who does not accept her rejections.[185] Alfred's persistent behaviour corresponds with his behaviour as Rebecca; in both guises, the character is adamant in the pursuit of his goals. While Beale presents Rose and Alfred as an attractive pairing – 'It was the last day of the joyous month that had the white blossom for name-child, and not during its course of thirty-one days had it looked on a comelier pair – he dark, ruddy, manly; she fair, sweet, and graceful' – their compatibility is purely superficial, as their morals and manners are very different.[186] Rose's 'many dreams' are focused on being 'acquainted with the great and good', a vision from which Alfred is excluded until he seeks redemption.[187]

By rejecting Alfred, Rose also rejects Rebecca. Alfred, as Rebecca, embodies rebellion and a Welshness that is wild beyond reasoning. Rose cares for him when injured, as she is encouraged by Jim (employed by her father and a supporter of the Rebecca cause) to do 'good for evil'.[188] The 'goodness' of Rose must come to the need of the 'evil' Rebecca, setting Alfred on the path of redemption, which begins with rejecting the wild behaviour that brought negative attention to the

[181] Beale, p.47.
[182] Ibid, p.49.
[183] Ibid, p.49.
[184] Ibid, p.88.
[185] Ibid, p.178.
[186] Ibid, p.61.
[187] Ibid, p.41.
[188] Ibid, p.245.

community. Rose's goodness suggests her innate moral superiority. She helps Alfred when he is injured, despite her ordeal at his hands. She also refuses to reveal Alfred's involvement with Rebecca, as she was 'brave when roused, […] and would have been a martyr had she lived in persecuting times'.[189] While this can be seen as Rose conspiring to help conceal Rebecca, this is also a sign that she sees Alfred as being redeemable; Rose is willing to perjure herself and her family to protect Alfred. This allows Beale to highlight the moral superiority of Rose: Rose gives Alfred a chance at redemption, and consequently allows the figure of Rebecca to die away. Indeed, she is compared to 'still waters' which are 'sometimes very refreshing in the midst of life's boisterous sea'; she is the ideal opposite to the 'boisterous' Rebecca, and heralds a new time of unity rather than division.[190]

Rose embodies ideal anglicised Welsh femininity. As a governess to the local gentry family, she is lauded for having 'the most perfect manners! self-possessed, yet unobtrusive. What can one desire more in woman?'[191] Similarly, she is complimented by Mr. Wynne, a gentleman, for her 'influence over the children, you read so well, you are so accomplished and lady-like'.[192] Rose is a romance heroine in the text, but she also embodies a Victorian ideal. This praise reveals a young woman with maternal instinct as well as good manners and morals; she is the very ideal of femininity in the novel. As M. Jeanne Peterson points out, the profession of the governess could be reconciled with such an ideal, as 'it was within the home' and therefore 'avoided the immodest and unladylike position of public occupation.'[193] In the novel, Rose is thus suitably placed within the domestic sphere, allowing her to show her accomplishments and talent ideally suited as a future middle-class wife and mother.

Throughout, Beale explores Rose's relationship to ideas of Englishness and Welshness. Rose's education was the responsibility of her mother, an English upper-class woman, who marries out of love rather than social aspirations. Her origins enable her to bestow her upper-class upbringing onto her middle-class children. This background emphasises Rose's difference to not only Rebecca, but to other young women in her Welsh community. She is celebrated for having an education that is out of reach of many women of her position. In addition, she can draw on a blend of English and Welsh heritage and education to foster goodness and morality in her fellow countrymen and women. Her English heritage allows for others to imagine her association with upper-class English society, where she 'might sparkle with diamonds, have lovers of high degree, be the belle of a London season, be presented to our gracious Queen, be idolized'.[194] Although she rejects this in solidarity with her mother – who was rejected by her father for marrying a middle-class Welsh gentleman – she is

[189] Beale, p.276.
[190] Ibid, p.155.
[191] Ibid, p.198.
[192] Ibid, p.198.
[193] M. Jeanne Peterson, 'The Victorian Governess: Status Incongruence in Family and Society', *Victorian Studies,* 14 (1970), 7-26 (10), https://www.jstor.org/stable/3826404.
[194] Beale, p.338.

nevertheless 'dazzled for a moment' by the opportunity, as any young woman would.[195] However, her interest in the opportunity stems from her desire to alleviate her family's poverty, showing a dedication to her Welsh family, as well as her superior morality.

Despite Rose's connections with England and Englishness, Beale's description of her as 'deeply religious as well as romantic' further reinforces a lasting association with Welsh Romantic ideals.[196] Her religious devotion, and good manners and morals, places her as the ideal counterpart to the unruly Rebecca. Her connection to the romanticism of rural Wales suggests that she represents Wales in a better, more subdued manner than Rebecca. Arnold argued that Celtic culture had 'ineffectualness and self-will for its defect.'[197] Arguably, Alfred's 'ineffectualness' in getting Rose to marry him also corresponds to an ineffectualness in establishing Rebecca as the dominant heroine. Alfred eventually recognises that the 'White Rose is too white- too pure- too passionless', speaking for himself and for Rebecca; the 'White Rose', with her English education and inherited Welsh romanticism, is the eventual harbinger of defeat for Rebecca.[198]

Rose's marriage

> And how did it come to pass that there, in the dark, wild ruin, true knighthood and pure girlhood met in the fond embrace of plighted love?[199]

With the Welsh rioters and the English military on opposing sides, the romance between Rose and Major Faithfull ensures that, by the end of the novel unity between the Welsh and English prevails while Rebecca has all but disappeared from the community. Their marriage becomes a political statement: Welsh people must reject the wild, lawless behaviour associated with the Rebecca rioters and instead embrace an ideal of morality and manners that is strongly influenced by England. Rose's rejection of Alfred, as stated earlier, is a rejection of his embodiment of Rebecca and the actions of Rebecca and her daughters in the local community. Accordingly, Rose's attraction and subsequent marriage to Major Faithfull (he is later made a Colonel) is a symbol of unity between the romantic Wales that glorifies its past, and modern England, which also eradicates the perceived wildness of Wales. Their marriage shows that the 'Welsh and English are united now, and live in happy confidence.'[200]

Already this chapter has explored Alfred's portrayal in the novel, arguing that his wild nature and rebellious spirit make him an unsuitable romantic hero for the perfect heroine. He is also a 'general admirer of good-looking women', a thread throughout the novel that inspires petty jealousies and

---

[195] Beale, p.338.
[196] Ibid, p.41.
[197] Arnold, p.97.
[198] Beale, p.286.
[199] Ibid, pp.372-3.
[200] Ibid, p.374.

rivalries between the local women.[201] This prolific womaniser stands in complete contrast to Major Faithfull, who 'had his mistress already, and her name was Glory.'[202] Beale stresses that the Major is completely dedicated to the cause of the British Empire, focused on winning battles rather than winning hearts. He has the look of a 'genuine soldier', with his 'bronzed features' and a figure to be admired, and his 'deep, thoughtful, intelligent eyes' suggest a romantic hero ideally matched to a woman of Rose's beauty and accomplishments.[203] In the novel, Major Faithfull inspires admiration through his heroism, as illustrated by his coming to Rose's rescue at the lake, after she is accosted by Rebecca (Alfred). While 'Rebecca' frightens her with his threats of marriage, the Major becomes 'in her imagination […] a knight-errant, ready to redress all wrongs, and as much removed from the ordinary race of beings as was the white lady herself.'[204] That Rose compares the Major to the imaginary spirit of the 'white lady' suggests she sees him as a 'good' spirit, whose presence inspires feelings of comfort and trust, unlike the 'evil' spirit of Rebecca. Indeed, when referencing some of her spiritual 'visions' at the lake, Rose states that 'of all of [these] this stalwart major was the most real.'[205] His authority is tangible, breaking through the 'visions' and essentially opening the door to the breaking down of Rose's spirituality towards an accepted middle-class anglicised womanhood.

Major Faithfull is described as a 'gentleman [and] courteous without being complimentary, grand, but not vain.'[206] The comparison here between the English 'gentleman' and Alfred is stark; compared to the idealised Major, Alfred – due to his reckless and rebellious actions – is deemed a 'revengeful, deceitful scoundrel'.[207] Rose's view of the Major only solidifies the higher esteem in which he is held: she 'connected him in her mind with King Arthur and his knights, and thought he would make a suitable hero for one of the romances she sometimes wove.'[208] This statement serves to unify Rose's mythic romanticism with the image of the Major as the 'hero', forming an early indication to the reader that Rose and the Major will eventually marry. It suggests this coupling is an inevitable conclusion to the story of a turbulent Welsh community, which must reject its 'wildness'. Indeed, the reference to King Arthur emphasises the contrast between 'romantic' and 'wild Wales'; as a romantic hero defending his land and its customs, Arthur becomes connected to Major Faithfull's mission, which brings about the downfall of wild Wales in the novel. Beale's narrative ensures that readers cannot miss this point, 'rubbing salt in the wounds' of the Welsh, especially Alfred; Beale deliberately has the Major and Rose walking 'side by side beneath the flowery hedgerows that had witnessed the

[201] Beale, p.30.
[202] Ibid, p.81.
[203] Ibid, p.71, p.43.
[204] Ibid, p.103.
[205] Ibid, p.104.
[206] Ibid, p.154.
[207] Ibid, p.250.
[208] Ibid, p.154.

proposal and rejection of Alfred Johnnes.'[209] After the downfall of Rebecca, tensions between the Welsh and the English take the shape of spiteful gossip about Rose's romantic life. These accusations encourage a Welsh-English divide in the novel, where one gossip suggests a physical fight between the two opposing men at the Llynhafod fire: 'Virginie heard that [Major Faithfull] and the Mr. Johnnes, to whom you are engaged, had quite a romantic fiery duel for you, and the Major carried you off.'[210] That the Major is victorious here – albeit in an untruthful version of events – suggests a belief in the superiority of the Englishman over the Welshman among the novel's characters. From the defeat of Rebecca to the romantic pursuit of Rose, Alfred finds himself on the 'losing' side, and as a result is forced into changing his behaviour and character. The Major, on the other hand, is given the ultimate reward by marrying Rose.

The marriage between England and Wales is not without trials. The Major declares his love for Rose, while also acknowledging that he cannot propose marriage to her due to his commitments – familial and financial: 'He has been supporting a widowed sister and three orphan nephews for years'.[211] Although he confidently declares that Rose should be a 'soldier's bride', having recognised her bravery at the fire in Llynhafod, financial considerations establish an obstacle between them.[212] Here, Rose's middle-class background is to her detriment, as the Major seeks a more financially viable marriage. This, of course, is no longer an obstacle once Rose's family on her mother's side is revealed to be very wealthy and in possession of landed titles. Beale thus removes the final barrier to the union between Rose and Major Faithfull, linking it to the popular narrative convention of lost and returned fortunes, reminiscent of novels such as Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847). Beale also ensures that, before she provides a happy ending, the Major appears in an even more sympathetic and heroic light. After he is wounded in battle in India, he is reported to have 'behaved so gallantly' that he is 'sure of promotion'; this gives the reader an image of the brave Englishman, fighting battles abroad and at home, and, in turn, protecting the British Empire.[213] That he goes from establishing order in Wales to attempting to establish order in India emphasises the colonial narrative of the novel, situating Wales as one of England's colonies. Rose, thus, marries a man entirely befitting her Anglo-Welsh identity: an Englishman who protected her from the excesses of Welsh wildness, and goes on to be lauded for his bravery in fighting for and encouraging British interests. Beale rewards Rose and Major Faithfull with financial prosperity and upward social mobility into a decidedly Anglocentric society. They go and live with Rose's grandfather, Lord Howard, who grants them access to London's high society. Rose, therefore, is given her expected happy ending, which also reflects on the happy ending for the

[209] Beale, p.192.
[210] Ibid, p.248.
[211] Ibid, p.351.
[212] Ibid, p.226.
[213] Ibid, p.351.

community: Rebecca 'had passed away with the obnoxious turnpikes', allowing the people to continue in a peaceful, orderly society.[214] This Anglo-Welsh identity has also become a British identity, certifying the novel's trajectory for Rose as the Anglo-Welsh heroine.

The influence of Welsh female piety

The novel's focus on morality and the defeat of Rebecca is not the sole responsibility of Rose: Egain, Alfred's former sweetheart, portrays a different model of morality, rooted in her staunch belief in God and his message of redemption. I conclude my discussion of Beale's novel with a brief analysis of Egain's impact on Alfred, which, I argue, reflects the religious turn following the Blue Books.

It is important to establish first the effect of Alfred's behaviour on Egain before the events of the novel. A secret three-year engagement between them leaves Egain suffering emotionally and physically due to his persistent womanising. Having once been a 'bright, handsome girl', their separation leaves her sickly and weak, and dependent on others.[215] Despite Egain's love for Alfred, she does recognise that he is not a particularly good man, shown by her frequent imploration for Rose to reject Alfred's proposals: 'you are too pure, too good, too innocent, and young for such as he.'[216] This is a warning to Rose that her 'innocence' and 'purity' will be tarnished by Alfred, with Egain speaking from personal experience. Indeed, the background to Alfred and Egain's relationship is another way for Beale to depict Alfred as a negative embodiment of Welshness: a rumour mentioned in the novel has Alfred throwing Egain into a lake during a heated argument. Although this exact rumour turns out to be false, Egain confirms he grabbed her arm in the argument, but tries to excuse his behaviour: 'had [she] been less excited he would have been less violent.'[217] This willingness to excuse his physically violent behaviour demonstrates Egain's strong devotion to Alfred. Through his stalking and manipulation of Rose and his general womanising, Alfred emerges as a man who abuses his social and physical power over women, leaving them scared of his behaviour or accepting it because of misguided loyalty and love for him.

While Alfred is the antithesis of the traditional romance hero, he does show moments of tenderness. When the Rebeccaites attack the turnpike run by Egain's father, Alfred as Rebecca physically removes Egain from the scene, ensuring her safety, especially as the Rebeccaites turn increasingly violent: Egain's parents are thrown into a nearby river. Accordingly, Egain defends Alfred's actions as Rebecca, claiming that 'perhaps Rebecca may wish to do the country a service, and be unable to control her followers'.[218] Although Rebecca's daughters have shown over the course of the novel tendencies to be violent outside of Rebecca's direct instructions, this does not excuse Alfred's overall

[214] Beale, p.382.
[215] Ibid, p.37.
[216] Ibid, pp.108-9.
[217] Ibid, p.170.
[218] Ibid, p.156.

encouragement of the Rebeccaites and their cause, or absolve him of being violent. Although she excuses him, Egain does remark to Rose that 'he is not a good man.'[219]

Egain's portrayal as a physically weak woman, a victim of a love affair gone wrong, is a means for Beale to advocate for a religious lifestyle to counter the ill-effects of Welsh unruliness. As noted earlier, Lady Llanover's 'An Address to the Welsh Women of Wales', a direct response to the *Report*, stressed women's 'chief responsibilities' related to religion and morality.[220] Egain's religiosity corresponds with the response to the Blue Books advocated by such campaigners as Lady Llanover. From a young woman who had been 'celebrated in her girlhood' and garnered the attentions of Alfred 'and many other youths', Egain's turn towards God transforms her into an 'angel-guest, [who] always administers the most refreshing draughts when one is sad or weary.'[221] She becomes a source of comfort and reliability for others, an 'angelic' figure at odds with the turbulent, emotional figure once engaged to Alfred. Her purpose in life is to help and comfort others, guiding them towards a more fulfilling, law-abiding life. During the Llynhafod fire, she actively takes part in the recovery process, her physical weakness being replaced by the need to be useful: 'excitement had, literally, roused [Egain] into action.'[222] Her role in the rescue is particularly important in the novel. When Alfred appears to help, Egain hides in the shadows, with only her voice being heard as she implores Alfred to 'help to repair the mischief you have done'.[223] Her voice 'haunted him', Beale writes; with Egain being unseen, this gives the impression that Egain's voice is connected to Alfred's consciousness.[224] Here she exerts influence, encouraging him to right a wrong, although he is not physically responsible for having set the fire. Due to his influence as Rebecca, and the 'mischief' he has done over the course of the novel, he bears responsibility for others' actions. It is significant that the actions of Rebecca and her daughters are the catalyst for Egain's physical revival since this connection underscores the importance of Egain's piousness as a means of restoring Alfred's reputation. Alfred's transformation is also a symbol of a communal transformation following the riots, with religion as the main means of redemption. Indeed, the fire 'was blessed, for it gave […] the impulse needed to complete her restoration from nervous depression to nervous exultation.'[225]

This revival in Egain is best demonstrated by her eager willingness to help Alfred after he is physically struck by Major Faithfull. She sees an opportunity to 'bring the sinner to repentance [and] if it is granted to [Egain] to help him either in body or soul, it is in answer to many prayers.'[226] It is

[219] Beale, p.168.
[220] Augusta Hall, 'An Address to the Welsh Women of Wales', p.60.
[221] Beale, p.220, p.164.
[222] Ibid, p.231.
[223] Ibid, p.225.
[224] Ibid, p.227.
[225] Ibid, p.231.
[226] Ibid, p.251.

through the strength of her belief in God that Egain can forget her poor treatment at Alfred's hands and offer herself as a means to his redemption. Her devotion to God surpasses and purifies her love for Alfred, as her

> Self was banished, and a Christ-like compassion replaced it. All her prayerful longing was that [Alfred] might be spared to repent and be forgiven. She believed that she could see him die if only she could once hear from his lips, "God be merciful to me a sinner".[227]

The potential for romantic happiness becomes secondary to Egain's wish for Alfred's salvation, showing a selflessness and devotion to God that is presented by Beale as admirable and encourages a different idea of Welshness: one that is focused on religion and personal sacrifices. Egain believes Alfred to be 'wild and thoughtless, but not intentionally wicked'.[228] To encourage a change in his behaviour, Egain adopts an almost motherly role, whereby Alfred 'obeyed her like a child'.[229] This suggests a near rebirth in Alfred's circumstances: having been physically punished for his actions, he must become a 'child' again and allowed to begin a new and more religious life, while rejecting his previous wild self. This change in Alfred allows him to recognise that he must be punished: 'transportation – voluntarily, but deserved.'[230] He is completely transformed from the arrogant, selfish character portrayed at the novel's start, showing that redemption is possible in specific circumstances. The last chapter in the novel allows for Alfred to become 'a changed man, both in appearance and heart', successfully demonstrating that physical and mental sacrifice renders possible a 'new life under better, if sadder circumstances.'[231] By ending the novel with Egain and Alfred getting married, the author encourages the rejection of wildness and the embracing of a more pious existence; those who reject wildness will be rewarded, as Alfred is rewarded by his reciprocated love for Egain. Alfred had 'known privation and suffering, he had earnestly repented of his sins, and he had come home to atone, as far as in him lay, for the past.'[232] Having overcome demons – in the shape of Rebecca – Egain is also rewarded: she has earned respect and admiration for her persistence and dedication to Alfred, while also ensuring that Rebecca is left in the past. Arguably, Egain has an even more significant influence on Welsh moral revival than Rose, due to her direct influence over Alfred. Egain is content with a 'life of holiness', with a love 'more all-sufficing than the trammelling, passionate life and love of the world and self.'[233] This shows how both Egain and Alfred have withdrawn from the social, economic, and political world, content with a life of 'holiness' rather than 'passion', as represented by the riots. Rose, by contrast, forms an Anglo-Welsh union, which weakens

[227] Beale, p.258.
[228] Ibid, p.262.
[229] Ibid, p.281.
[230] Ibid, p.294.
[231] Ibid, pp.385-87.
[232] Ibid, p.385.
[233] Ibid, p.289.

her Welshness but gives her access to British high society. Beale thus responds to the Rebecca movement by suggesting two possible trajectories for Wales: Anglicisation or a distinctive national identity that revolves around religion rather than Rebecca.

This novel offers a romanticised view of Welshness, where superior morals and piety triumph over the 'evil' of Rebeccaism. It is clearly directed toward English audiences, criticising the unruly Welsh working classes, while offering an Anglo-British solution to the immoral behaviours displayed in Wales. Rebecca is a supernatural being, deliberately portrayed as demonic to emphasise the evils of Rebeccaism. In contrast, Rose and Egain offer images of Welsh womanhood that reflect two sides of the response to the Blue Books: both are devoted, morally superior women, influencing others into improved morality. The romantic ending for Rose emphasises the need to accept Anglicisation, in whatever form, either through marriage or class connections, while Egain's trajectory embodies religious revival. *Rose Mervyn* does not explore the economic struggles that motivated the riots, instead offering those involved in Rebeccaite activities an opportunity for regret and redemption. Amy Dillwyn's *The Rebecca Rioter* is more concerned with the representation of working-class lives, although with some echoes of *Rose Mervyn's* positive representation of Anglo-Welshness.

The Rebecca Rioter

Elizabeth Amy Dillwyn (1845-1935) was a novelist and businesswoman from Swansea, whose literary career flourished in the 1880s, when she published novels such as *The Rebecca Rioter* (1880), *A Burglary; or an Unconscious Influence* (1883) and *Jill* (1884). The daughter of Lewis Llewelyn Dillwyn, an industrialist and Liberal MP for Swansea, Amy Dillwyn grew up in privileged circumstances. Indeed, she was a debutante at a Royal reception, where 'she was being launched by her family on the first stage of a journey intended to lead to marriage, motherhood and the strictly conventional life of a very wealthy Victorian lady.'[234] This journey ended in heartbreak, after Dillwyn lost her fiancé Llewellyn Thomas shortly after their engagement. Although she enjoyed the 'joys of high society' and the busy scenes of London, Dillwyn also exercised her philanthropic duties as an upper-class woman in the area of Killay:

> She was not a passive observer of the harrowing scenes of poverty and distress in the poorer districts, haughtily dispensing largesse as the lady of the manor; she worked tirelessly to nurse and comfort when she could without thought for her social position or her health.[235]

During a period of illness in the 1870s, she began to write, using her experiences in London and Swansea to write novels satirising 'the London life of the rich and leisured' while also 'focusing

[234] David Painting, *Amy Dillwyn* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2013), p.2.
[235] Ibid, pp.48-56.

particularly on the social conventions restricting the possibilities of fulfilment for women.'[236] Apart from her writing, her contribution to life in Swansea increased at the death of her father, when she inherited the Llansamlet Spelter Works. Dillwyn worked to pay off the factory's large debt – of around £100,000 – and ensured that the Works continued, while refusing to take any large profits for herself. Alongside her business endeavours, Dillwyn continued to engage in social causes, supporting local wage strikes and joining the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.

In her personal life and novels, Dillwyn often plays with and subverts gendered expectations. The manner of her dress drew comments of being 'excessively masculine'.[237] She appeared as a

> bespectacled woman wearing the plainest of short serge skirts with a pocket on each side in which she buried her hands when talking, a short rather mannish jacket, a very plain hat, sporting a simple bunch of violets at her throat and carrying a walking stick or umbrella, and striding out in a thoroughly businesslike manner.[238]

Combined with her trait of smoking cigars, these fashion choices allowed Dillwyn to blur gender expectations of the Victorian age. In her later life Dillwyn inhabited both the feminine and masculine in appearance and manner, and this straddling of gender roles can also be seen in her literary works.

Amy Dillwyn's *The Rebecca Rioter* subverts gender boundaries, telling the story of a young man, whose voice has been adopted and adapted by a middle-class male narrator, who is in turn written by a female author. Despite this framing, the novel gives a voice to Evan, whose lower social standing provides him with little agency and an incomplete understanding of the political stakes of the riots, but who is nevertheless completely committed to the cause. The narrative is thus extensively gender and class fluid: the female writer is disguised as a middle-class male physician, writing the tale of a man who dressed up as a woman during the Rebecca riots. The narrator notes in the 'Preface' that he has 'been obliged somewhat to alter the Welshy, and sometimes uncouth, language used by [Evan], as otherwise it might not have been intelligible to the general reader.'[239] The preface and the epilogue are at pains to claim authenticity of narrative, yet the text itself accommodates the requirements of its middle-class English readership. The plight of the Welsh has to be presented through 'English terms', or at least in a 'respectable' voice to be fully understood. Dillwyn, however, provides a voice for the rioters in the novel, rather than the gentry. This is particularly interesting, as her own father – a

[236] Katie Gramich 'Introduction' in *The Rebecca Rioter: A Story of Killay Life by Amy Dillwyn* (Dinas Powys: Honno Press, 2008), pp.v-xxi (viii).
[237] Ibid, p.x.
[238] Painting, p.87.
[239] Amy Dillwyn, *The Rebecca Rioter: A Story of Killay Life* (Dinas Powys*:* Honno Press, 2008), 'Preface'.

member of the gentry and an MP – witnessed and recorded a real Rebecca attack.[240] Rather than adopting the voice of upper-class experience, Dillwyn presents a working-class perspective.

In my discussion of Dillwyn, I continue to analyse how the image of Wales, discussed in the previous section in relation to *Rose Mervyn*, functioned in nineteenth-century literature. I examine how the novel presents Rebecca as an emblem of this wildness, who is juxtaposed to other models of womanhood, in the form of Gwenllian and Queen Victoria. Queen Victoria is perceived by the working classes in *The Rebecca Rioter* as an idle spendthrift, robbing the working people of their hard-earned money. The contrast between that image of the Queen and of Rebecca juxtaposes two female leaders, enacting a battle as to who can be seen as the 'real' ruler of Wales. Alongside this, the quiet influence of Gwenllian suggests that the two extreme representations of womanhood – Queen and Rebecca – are not as effective as the Anglo-Welsh moral influence of an upper-class woman.

I begin by considering how the conflict between Wales and England is represented through the figures of Rebecca and the Queen. I suggest that these figures symbolise contrasting images of Welshness: Rebecca as a figure of rebellion, and Victoria as the emblem of bourgeois order. Second, I study the image of womanhood as presented by Rebecca's daughters, in particular the depiction of cross-dressing during the riots and the corresponding feminisation of protesting. Third, I examine the representation of working-class women in the novel, and how the fight for respectability is hampered by the men in the novel. Last, I analyse Gwenllian's role in the narrative, and how her subtle influence ensures a more positive legacy by comparison to Queen Victoria.

Battle of the women rulers

It is important to establish Dillwyn's representation of 'wildness' in the novel, as seen by her description of Upper Killay and its people. Evan, whose narrative is relayed by Morganwg, introduces his background, in particular the nature and the people that surrounded him. He identifies 'Upper Killay folk [as] rather being a rough set', characterised by the wild nature that surrounds them: 'Upper Killay is so placed that it seems as if its inhabitants must naturally have more or less of a twist towards wildness.'[241] This suggests that the people of Upper Killay cannot help their character, which is shaped by the 'whole force of every wind that blows, and where there always is some air stirring even though there may be none anywhere else'.[242] This description of place provides one explanation of why the riots find such a passionate response in Upper Killay, where the people are already accustomed to wildness, as defined by their surroundings. The narrator, through Evan's recollections,

[240] Gramich, p.v.
[241] *The Rebecca Rioter,* pp.1-2.
[242] Ibid, p.1.

is keen to point out that the people of Upper Killay are inherently wild and immoral, with this behaviour being passed through the generations:

> If the parents were black, the children would never be white, and if the parents were uncivilised, so would the children be also to the end of their days, and it was no use trying to make them anything else.[243]

The absence of positive influences keeps the wildness and immorality that appears to be part of the people's nature unchecked. The novel's depiction of a Welsh village evokes the later depiction of Welsh rural communities in the Blue Books. Indeed, the narrator in *The Rebecca Rioter* acknowledges that 'people did not take so much trouble to improve one another in those days as they do now.'[244] 'Those' days refer to the time of the Rebecca riots, a near decade prior to the publication of the Blue Books. The narrative addresses the lack of education of the working classes of Upper Killay: 'None of the children of the place knew what going to school meant, and, as a rule, we ran wild, and amused ourselves by getting into as much mischief as possible from morning to night.'[245] Evan acknowledges the lack of suitable educational opportunities for the rural working classes, and the general lack of interest in education, when children found better amusement in being outdoors and making 'mischief'. In 1847, the *Report* stated that 'parents do not know what education means: they think half a year long enough to learn everything, and take their children away in general after that time.'[246] In establishing the character of Upper Killay, Dillwyn presents an appropriate environment for Rebecca and her cause to thrive; if the Welsh working classes are already wild in nature and their children brought up to partake in 'mischief', the novel suggests they are more liable to be influenced or inspired to perform acts of rebellion and rioting.

This depiction of a rural Welsh-working class area in Dillwyn's novel suggests that its people need a 'leader', a figure who either guides their wildness to more useful outcomes, or one who suppresses its wildness and enforces an acceptable, anglicised morality. To present the two alternatives, *The Rebecca Rioter* contrasts the images of Rebecca and Queen Victoria. Rhian Jones recognises the comparison between royalty and Rebecca in *The Rebecca Rioter*, noting how the author 'juxtaposes Rebecca with the existing Queen and constructs "Rebecca" as an emblem of roused nationhood, gendered as female and implicitly held up as an alternative ruler of the Welsh.'[247] By comparison, as Aaron notes, Queen Victoria was presented by the 'spin doctors of the age' as the 'Great White Mother', a figure who was 'diligent, hard working, responsible and self-disciplined' as well as 'warm

[243] *The Rebecca Rioter*, p.2.
[244] Ibid, p.2.
[245] Ibid, p.3.
[246] *Report*, pp.251-2.
[247] Jones, p.103.

hearted, [and] able to sympathize with the lowliest of her subjects.'[248] This suggests an ideal to which Welsh women should aspire, who is caring and sympathetic as well as a 'hard-working' ruler. That Jones' analysis gives Rebecca the honour of being the alternate ruler is significant, as it gives her a prestige similar to that of the dynastic ruler of the United Kingdom of Britain and Ireland. This prestige, however, is decidedly informal, as Rebecca cannot legally be recognised as a 'ruler' of Wales as 'she' is not one real person, suggesting an imaginary quality to this parallel, the product of wishful thinking rather than reality.

The image of Queen Victoria in the novel, as a lazy, uncaring ruler, reflects the general ignorance shown in the Blue Books as to the Queen's official role. During the Commissioners' visits to schools for the *Report*, many of the children did not know who Queen Victoria was, or if they did, thought she ruled over England and not Wales, or did not know her function.[249] This lack of knowledge serves in the novel as a means for Thomas Beynon to seduce the young men of the area into joining Rebecca's cause, which is here represented as a cause against the Queen. Many of these men – including Evan – have not heard of her. The Queen is used as a symbol of tyranny and economic hardship, the 'wicked' woman whose 'power over [them] is so great' and who knows nothing of her subjects and does not 'come among [them] and find out if her servants are treating [them] well'.[250] The idea that the Queen did not know her subjects, and everything they suffer, is key to understanding why her Welsh subjects in the novel resort to rioting and violence to draw attention to their plight. Within the logic of the text, it makes sense that Beynon uses criticism of the queen to incite rebellion; if 'her' people have not heard of her, or do not understand what her function is, it is unsurprising that they should question her existence and power over the nation. It must be noted, however, that this suspicion of the Queen is the result of Beynon's rhetoric, which influences the local people's feelings; only when they are alerted to the presence of this ruler does the desire for an alternative ruler emerge. The people in the novel – working-class peasantry – cannot naturally identify with Queen Victoria, in the way they seem to with Rebecca who speaks directly to their situation.

The accusations against the Queen focus on her supposedly spending the working-classes' hard-earned money. Beynon argues

> What right have the Queen and her government to put a tax on things that poor people must have? On the things without which they cannot live? And what do they do with the money they take from us? Who has it? Why the Queen has it! She and the people she chooses for her ministers![251]

[248] Aaron, p.180.
[249] Roberts, p.111.
[250] Dillwyn, p.63.
[251] *The Rebecca Rioter*, p.62.

Beynon frames this as a conflict between the rich and poor, playing on the emotions of the working classes who feel the pain of taxation most strongly. Although Beynon includes the all-male government in his criticism, the Queen as the one who 'chooses' these men is held responsible for taking from the poor to feed luxurious upper-class lifestyles. Indeed, because the Queen allows 'her' men to make the laws, she is open to criticism of inactivity: 'If it is wicked to be greedy, idle, and to live upon the earnings of other people, and give them nothing in return, then, I say, the Queen is wicked, for that is just what she does.'[252] This is a rhetorical device that suits Beynon's goals, as the role of the Queen was (and remains) a constitutional one; although she could appoint and remove ministers, she did not create laws. Her name is used by her 'men' to exert power. Beynon states

> It is she who governs the country through the soldiers and police, who obey her commands. The magistrates act under her orders. If anyone is fined, or put in prison, it is to please her, and her name is on every warrant that is issued.[253]

The suggestion that people are put in prison to 'please' her indicates that the law and the police, the only public institutions of which Upper Killay has a strong sense, can be traced directly to the Queen's authority, as Beynon suggests. Similarly, Evan recalls 'having heard the Queen's name read out in a police-court […] so no doubt that everything Beynon said about her was perfectly true.'[254] With the community already distrustful of the law, it is not difficult for them to believe Beynon, and see the Queen as the figurehead and symbol of their oppression. The Queen becomes the scapegoat of their anger towards taxation and, specifically, turnpikes, while the people of Upper Killay remain largely ignorant as to the real causes behind their hardships.

One particular accusation against Queen Victoria is her general lack of interest and care for her people: 'Since her power over us is so great, surely her care for us should be equally great; the hand to help should reach as far as the hand to punish; but is that so?'[255] The expectation that the Queen should 'care' for them suggests a gendered assumption that it is a woman's role to be nurturing, to be the mother and to guide her 'children' to a better life. This concept, Aaron explains, was 'part and parcel of the rationale for British imperial rule as a civilizing, caring system: the empire was one great family, who shared in the feelings of their "Mother" as she shared in theirs.'[256] Queen Victoria was in the early years of her reign during the Rebecca riots, so her depiction as the 'Great White Mother' – as quoted from Aaron above – was yet to be created, although Dillwyn would be aware of it at the time of writing. Beynon chooses not to present this younger woman, just starting her life of motherhood, as possessing natural feminine care for her people, since to do so would not suit his

---

[252] *The Rebecca Rioter*, p.63.
[253] Ibid, p.63.
[254] Ibid, p.64.
[255] Ibid, p.63.
[256] Aaron, p.181.

purpose. Indeed, in the closing remarks of his speech, Beynon describes being ruled by the Queen as being 'no better than dogs that cringe and fawn on the master who strikes them'; his words emphasise the need to 'shake off her chains.'[257]

Beynon's representation of the Queen contradicts the dominant cultural image of Victoria put forward by the state. As John Plunkett suggests, during the first few years of her reign, the 'young, female, attractive, politically innocent' Queen, 'with decidedly Whiggish sympathies […] seemed far removed from the excesses of her aged Hanoverian uncles.'[258] This analysis seemingly contradicts Beynon's view of the Queen frivolously spending the money of the poorest people in society. Plunkett goes on to argue that 'at Victoria's accession her well-known Whiggish sympathies meant that numerous street ballads depicted her as a radical or reforming Queen', leaving her 'positioned firmly on the side of the People.'[259] This argument contradicts Beynon's position that she taxes the poor to further enrich the upper classes. However, Plunkett later notes that

> The radical nature of Victoria's imagined political plans manifest the degree to which she became the overdetermined vessel of contemporary anxieties and wishes. The utopian excesses of her image are an index of how thoroughly Victoria's initial media making reached into the hopes and desires of those who were consuming her representation. However, this was a momentum that could not be maintained as it quickly became clear that Victoria would do nothing to change the political status quo.[260]

This quotation clarifies the contemporary context for Beynon's speech; the early media representation of the Queen's bourgeois appeal does not come to full fruition. Nevertheless, Plunkett also notes that 'Victoria was constituted as exceptional, even fetishised, by the very degree of media attention she received.'[261] This attention is even represented in *The Rebecca Rioter*, when someone reads aloud the newspaper at a pub: 'On Thursday Her Majesty the Queen went for a ride in the park – I've been told by one that had it from them as knew that she rides a deal.'[262] This trivial piece of news not only indicates the popularity of the young Queen, but also implies that she is mentioned in the newspapers on a frequent basis; therefore she would be known by those who have access to newspapers, which seem to be a rare commodity in Upper Killay. Only the literate would be aware of such articles, while the largely illiterate working classes in Upper Killay were not exposed to popular images of the

---

[257] *The Rebecca Rioter,* p.65.
[258] John Plunkett, 'Of Hype and Type: The Media Making of Queen Victoria 1837-1845', *Critical Survey,* 13 (2001), 7-25 (7), https://www.jstor.org/stable/41557102.
[259] Ibid, p.13.
[260] Ibid, pp.17-18
[261] Ibid, pp.21-2
[262] *The Rebecca Rioter,* p.148.

Queen. Beynon takes advantage of this gap in knowledge, using the Queen as symbol of English tyranny, and offering an alternative to this English ruler.

Rebecca as the alternative female ruler resonates with the people of Upper Killay. One of the images Rhian Jones presents of Rebecca is as 'The Lady', a figure of 'renown and sophistication' who 'illustrates the contemporary importance of social class and the amenability of this trope to overt and implicit use in political rhetoric.'[263] It is debatable whether Rebecca held any true 'renown and sophistication' in a wider context, but the veneration by the working classes is most important in this respect; she must be the true leader of the people, in their eyes. Even though Rebecca was ultimately suppressed by the English and Welsh gentry, it is certain that the figure inspired loyalty and devotion in the working classes; Rhian Jones notes that she was variously described as the '"Rebecca Regina", "Regina Rustica, Rent Reducer", "that rustic queen" and "her most graceless Majesty"'.[264] As the speaker for the Rebecca cause, Beynon establishes Rebecca as the alternate leader the working classes need, one who pays better attention to their grievances than the Queen. His speech meets with enthusiastic agreement, and even incites anger in local men. They do not question him, and by the end of the speech they are 'all wildly excited, and were ready to rush to the nearest turnpike and pull it down there and then.'[265] This fervour is strengthened by the evocation of Beynon's references to 'native princes' who 'long flung back every attempt of the English tyrant to grind [Wales] under his heel', suggesting that the Welsh people have somehow lost their way and, most importantly, their identities along with their princes, and need to be woken up once more to fight another form of 'tyranny'.[266] Beynon needs to remind his audience that they 'belong to Wales, to that wild Wales' that is separate from the 'cold-blooded English', to inspire the passion and spirit of a part of Wales that has seemingly forgotten its identity after centuries of English rule.[267] His rhetoric presents Rebecca as the nationalist symbol, firmly representing the Welsh people in their fight against English tyranny. By establishing Rebecca as the heroic figure, almost in the vein of Boudica, Beynon seems to suggest that it is right to look upon her as an alternate ruler. However, the narrative also explores the flaws in the cult of Rebecca.

The questionable morals shown by the men in the novel, from thieving to assault and murder, undermine the narrative of Rebecca as respectable leader. Rebecca thus becomes aligned with the 'bad' side of Wales, where attitudes towards crime are neutral, at best. When Evan debates with himself about informing the police of Rees Hughes and Tom Davies' assault of an innocent man, which leads to the latter's death, he concludes that 'it would be quite against the Killay ideas of

[263] Jones, p.102.
[264] Ibid, p.103.
[265] *The Rebecca Rioter,* p.65.
[266] Ibid, p.65.
[267] Ibid, p.65.

morality to bring two neighbours into trouble'.[268] The reference to Killay's 'ideas of morality' is significant, suggesting that its people inhabit a space that is wildly different from the accepted middle-class moral code, which further removes them from the bourgeois values the Queen represents. Rebecca provides them with a system of beliefs and activism that better suits their ideas of morality. Being sceptical of the law, and having already become accustomed to violence in society, the men of Upper Killay are more accepting of the violence needed to be a part of the Rebeccaites. When someone questions the violence, as Evan does when he expresses the injustice of burning the tollkeeper's house, he is firmly put in his place: 'And who are you […] who speak when you should hold your tongue? and who stop and argue when you should be hurrying on to work?'[269] This image of Rebecca contradicts the image Beynon conveyed of a figure that would fight for the Welsh people. Instead, Rebecca appears as cold-blooded, ironically echoing Beynon's accusation towards the Queen. Moreover, the fact that Rebecca ignores Evan's request to spare the tollkeeper's house and becomes affronted by being questioned emphasises that the behaviour of this Rebecca is problematic. Here, Rebecca is portrayed as tyrant, mirroring Beynon's image of Victoria. Although Evan initially questions the need for violence, Rebecca's behaviour during the riots does not discourage him; indeed, he is overtaken with a 'savage joy' when he shoots a man, with the 'satisfaction of remembering that [he] had rid the world of at all events one of those who defended injustice.'[270] Even by the end of the novel, fifteen years into his incarceration, he is not bitter that Rebecca led him to his fate. On the contrary, he finds fault with the upper classes, who should 'try to civilise the poor' by 'going amongst them with a real and unaffected sympathy that forgets differences of rank, and sees in each poor person a fellow-creature with the same faults, virtues, needs, and feelings as a gentleman has'.[271] This returns us to the accusations laid at the door of Queen Victoria, who did not come amongst her people to see their daily struggles; this time, the accusation is aimed at the upper classes more widely – with Victoria as their symbol. Had the upper classes shown sufficient care towards the poorest in society, Evan argues the 'poor men would not be imbued with that feeling of natural enmity and distrust towards their superiors which had a very great deal to do with the Rebecca riots.'[272] By the end of the novel, the blame is not the Queen's alone. Instead, it is the 'system that is to blame – the system of narrowness and of pride, and of exclusiveness, and of no one doing anything for another, unless there is something to be gained in return.'[273] This awareness demonstrates the growth of Evan's character, as he recognises that no individual person is to blame for the weaknesses of the 'system'. While the Queen is an obvious symbol of this system, the system cannot be defeated

[268] *The Rebecca Rioter,* p.43.
[269] Ibid, p.83.
[270] Ibid, p.111.
[271] Ibid, p.174.
[272] Ibid, p.174.
[273] Ibid, p.174.

by another female ruler who does not exist as a real person with real power; Rebecca alone cannot change the status quo by pulling down turnpikes. Rebecca's image as leader, therefore, is weakened, although her image, and that of her daughters, ensures a lasting legacy.

Rebecca's daughters

Rhian Jones' concept of Rebecca as the 'Performer' can be seen in the act of rioting, most specifically in the use of women's clothing during the riots. The 'Performer' was defined as 'an extension or reflection of the comic exaggerations of femininity used by participants, or a co-option of Rebecca's identity into familiar tropes of dramatic or comic artifice'.[274] The act of cross-dressing for the riots is meant mainly as disguise, yet it also holds a deeper meaning which is linked to the representation of Wales in gendered terms. As Marjorie Garber explains, cross-dressing 'is about the anxiety of economic or cultural dislocation, the anticipation or recognition of "otherness" as loss.'[275] In *The Rebecca Rioter*, 'economic dislocation' allows for the emergence of Rebecca, pitted against the English queen symbolically held responsible for the Welsh working class's economic hardships. Rebecca's disguise is a performance and a construction of a different identity to express working-class, rural anger, as Tomos Owen notes in his essay about rioting and rebellion in the novel.[276]

The men of Upper Killay readily embrace the female disguise that became associated with the Rebecca riots. The first introduction to crossdressing comes when Evan and 'one or two others went so far as to get ourselves women's clothes so as to have our disguise ready so soon as the chance to use it; but this we kept perfectly secret from anyone else.'[277] Their early preparation highlights the acceptance of women's clothing in the act of rioting. Of course, the wearing of women's clothing was nothing new in rural Wales where folk rituals like the Ceffyl Pren still took place in the mid-nineteenth century. The Ceffyl Pren was the public parading 'upon a hobby horse, wooden pole or "stang"' of wrongdoers in a 'symbolic declaration of their offence.'[278] As Pat Molloy argues, it was 'but a short step to extend the Ceffyl Pren and all its attendant carnival-like paraphernalia to the destruction of toll gates, especially since the use of women's clothes and blackened faces for disguise was such a well-established part of the Ceffyl Pren tradition.'[279] The use of women's clothing in such rituals, and their later adoption by the Rebeccaites, highlights the theatricality of the riots.

---

[274] Jones, p.104.
[275] Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), p.390.
[276] Tomos Owen '"Never Again Stop the Way of a Welshman" Rioting and Rebellion in Amy Dillwyn's *The Rebecca Rioter'* in *Riots in Literature,* ed. by David Bell and Gerald Porter (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 51-73 (63).
[277] *The Rebecca Rioter,* p.75.
[278] Jones, p.52.
[279] Molloy, p.29.

Dillwyn's novel, however, illustrates a disconnect between the theatre of rioting, in which women's garments are a prop, and the daily reality of the women wearing the same uncomfortable garments. On first wearing women's clothes, Evan remarks that:

> We did not much like the dresses, and felt extremely thankful that we were not obliged always to wear such uncomfortable costumes. I remember I thought the Welsh flannel bedgown I had on was the most disagreeable garment I had ever worn in my life.[280]

Evan's words show sympathy from a male perspective for the lack of comfort in women's clothing, while also expressing relief that, as a man, he does not have to wear uncomfortable dresses outside this act of rebellion. The quotation highlights men's privilege in being able to discard clothing without worrying about gender rules; they can adopt women's clothing for rioting, but they do not have to wear them to work and live in. As Jones argues in *Petticoat Heroes,* the 'signifiers used in Rebecca – false beards, wigs, "feminine" voices, swords and parasols – are significant in that they are detachable and that they represent masculinity and femininity through secondary sexual characteristics.'[281] Evan can physically 'detach' himself from the women's garments which form part of his secondary identity as one of Rebecca's daughters. The wearing of women's clothing is a symbol to him of his anger towards the system that oppresses the working classes. For the women of Upper Killay, it is a manifestation of daily oppression. The impracticality of women's clothing is emphasised when Evan describes their departure after the attack of a tollgate: 'So we just changed our dresses as we might run for our lives, and the petticoats would bother us terrible in that case.'[282] The dresses are useful as disguise, but hinder escape. Dillwyn's own sartorial choices showed that she favoured comfort and practicality over feminine appearance, with her the masculine jackets, and plain skirts and headwear. In *The Rebecca Rioter*, working-class women are not given the privilege of expressing themselves through their attire; only the men are given the freedom to express political resistance by donning symbols of femininity. Rebecca's daughters in the novel are playing with gender, discarding symbols of femininity when it becomes impractical to their cause.

Evan's description of Rebecca's daughters presents an androgynous image, showing how both feminine and masculine signifiers are used in the fight: 'We certainly were a queer-looking lot of women with black faces, and beards and whiskers peeping out under the white caps.'[283] The picture provided to the reader presents their crossdressing as strange, considering the 'beards and whiskers' showing underneath feminine white caps. It shows, however, the rioters' need to hold on to symbols of masculinity while they are wearing women's clothing, to show that they are still men underneath

[280] *The Rebecca Rioter,* p.81.
[281] Jones, p.73.
[282] *The Rebecca Rioter,* p.92.
[283] Ibid, p.81.

those feminine garments. As Jones notes: 'the use of opposing masculine and feminine signifiers in a single figure was part of the attempt to present a dual or amalgamated identity involving conflicting or synthesised opposites – a more sophisticated operation than men straightforwardly "dressing as women".'[284] This 'dual' identity allows – as noted earlier – for the shedding of one identity for the purpose of another; the rioters can rid themselves of feminine attire while using the performance of femininity as a form of protest. Indeed, the dedication to the cause allows for certain comfort in the disguise it provides: 'for when a man's face be black, and he dressed in a bedgown and wittle and bonnet, [he] do not think as his own wife shall know him on a dark night in a crowd, if he do hold his tongue.'[285]

In Dillwyn's novel, the blurring of gender has supernatural connotations. The previous section examined the imagery of the devil in *Rose Mervyn*; this also appears in *The Rebecca Rioter*. Evan describes the 'strange figures with negro faces and women's clothes, the fierce eyes glistening in the firelight […], the savage delight […]. I think we must have looked more like fiends than men.'[286] There is no clear sense of femininity or masculinity in the tearing down of the tollgate; identity becomes blurred and, in its place, stands a 'savage' presence, untethered to concepts of gender. The wearing of female guise and working-class anger combine to create a 'wildness' that is almost terrifying in the imagery presented. It is the presence of both genders – in female dress and masculine violence – that demonstrate uncontrollable Welsh wildness.

The representation of Rebecca's daughters in *The Rebecca Rioter* suggests a distortion of the feminine/masculine binary, as they adapt their characteristics to changing circumstances: the rioters must wear feminine attire when rioting – and performing acts of violence – at tollgates, but resort to their masculine selves to ensure they are not caught. The rioters in the novel cannot rely on one gendered characteristic to successfully perform as Rebecca and her daughters. This brings an otherness to the figure of Rebecca, which brings attention to the cause while also portraying a supernatural, mythical quality that ensures the lasting imagery of Rebecca and her daughters. As consequence, the women of the novel must fight against the violence and immorality demonstrated by Rebecca and her daughters, and attempt to forge an identity that is separate from the image of Welsh wildness.

Rebecca's Other Daughters

Standing in contrast to Rebecca's daughters are the real working-class women of the area, presented in supportive roles to their men while having to live with the consequences of the men's actions. This

[284] Jones, p.72.
[285] *The Rebecca Rioter*, p.92.
[286] Ibid, p.85.

subsection explores the role of Martha, Evan's sister, as an embodiment of the Upper Killay working-class community's female population. This character, I argue, aims to maintain respectability in the face of her environment's wildness.

Dillwyn presents Martha as a hardworking young woman, whose ambition in life is to 'marry some thoroughly respectable steady young man, who would always keep a good roof over her head.'[287] This fairly modest ambition shows her desire for stability, honesty, and respectability, goals which, in the novel's context, appear unattainable. The representation of Martha contradicts the Commissioners' claims in the *Report* that the 'young women are in general unsteady', immoral and sexually lax.[288] Their accusations portray Welsh women as lacking self-respect as well as dismissive of society's expectation that they be respectable. *The Rebecca Rioter,* meanwhile, shows a young woman whose ambition is to be respectably married, who belies the Commissioners' view of Welsh women as libidinous and immoral. Almost all men presented in the novel, however, are morally suspect, engaging in behaviour ranging from theft to assault, and, of course, rioting. Martha's wish to marry a 'respectable' man suggests hope for a better life; without any prospect of education, marriage is her only path to social mobility. As discussed earlier in the chapter, the men of Upper Killay are presented as naturally wild, and mostly happy to settle for the way they have been brought up to be; Martha is more ambitious and longs for escape from this community.

Dillwyn represents domestic abuse of women as a common feature of rural life in Wales. Martha's love interest, Tom Davies, is described by Evan as the 'sort of man who was likely to be kind to his wife, and not to beat her – as was common custom with the husbands about Killay and Three Crosses.'[289] This fairly casual reference to the 'customs' of the area suggests that domestic abuse is rife in Upper Killay, and accepted as the norm in marriage. A similar casualness can be detected when Evan mentions the local pub landlord who is known for severely beating his wife and disabled daughter, and who even sets his wife on fire. Evan uses this example as a means of informing the reader of 'what we ourselves were like' as a community, suggesting that 'wildness' can take many different forms, from political action to personal violence.[290] Heather Nelson notes that

> Essentially all types of abuse – physical, emotional, and sexual (or 'the marital rape exemption') – were legal throughout the century because of prior wifely 'approval', so

[287] *The Rebecca Rioter,* p.81.
[288] *Report,* p.296.
[289] *The Rebecca Rioter,* p.34.
[290] Ibid, p.32.

> regardless of the severity or length of trauma, wives could not easily revoke their 'consent' to it.[291]

That Tom is 'kind' and unlikely to 'beat' Martha indicates how limited her prospects are; Upper Killay women must gratefully settle for a non-abusive spouse, Dillwyn's narrative suggests, despite other flaws in the man's character. Evan acknowledges that Tom is known for 'idleness', which does not fit with Martha's hopes for financial stability.[292] Although Martha herself recognises how 'idle and thriftless' Tom is, his gifts for her make her believe he has enough money and that he is 'really putting by something against housekeeping.'[293] She believes Tom will be 'able to keep a wife in comfort', but unbeknown to her his money comes from his thieving; 'comfort', therefore, is not something Martha can properly look forward to.[294] Here, Dillwyn's narrative evokes pity for Martha, for while her personal safety is likely – Tom is not said to be violent toward women – she settles for a man who cannot promise her the steadiness and respectability she craves. The novel thus challenges the Blue Books' claim that women were mainly responsible for Welsh immorality; in *The Rebecca Rioter*, immorality is firmly associated with men.

In *The Rebecca Rioter*, Welsh working-class women are the victims of manipulation by morally dubious men. Martha's initial wariness of Tom is overturned by his attentions to her. Indeed, Martha herself states that:

> She had never let herself fall in love with Tom till she believed him to be just such a man as she wanted; and now that she had found out her mistake it was too late to change, for she was so fond of him that she would rather have to beg her bread than to live without him.[295]

Tom's manipulation, despite his genuine love for her, leaves Martha in a state of unease, having to live in fear for his and her safety; this is a far cry from the 'steadiness' she craves. When Tom becomes aware that the police are suspicious of him, he asks Martha to 'stick to him and love him all the same, whatever people might say about him.'[296] His words show that he expects a woman's unconditional loyalty, Tom can rely on Martha to help conceal his whereabouts, even after he joins the riots and causes her further troubles. This does not stop him from joining in the Rebecca riots, further heaping trouble upon Martha. Martha thus appears as easily influenced, weak-willed in the face of a man's plea for a woman's love. Nonetheless, her portrayal is more multifaceted than this plot might suggest.

---

[291] Heather Nelson, 'Nothing She Could Allege Against Him in Judicious or Judicial Ears': "Consensual" Marital Abuse in Victorian Literature' in *George Eliot - George Henry Lewes Studies*, 69 (2017), 89–119 (90).
[292] *The Rebecca Rioter*, p.34.
[293] Ibid, p.34, p.56.
[294] Ibid, p.56.
[295] Ibid, p.81.
[296] Ibid, p.69.

Despite her weakness for Tom, Martha is seen to resist unwanted male attention when it encroaches on her domestic space. Martha deliberately evades Pugh Morgan's advances, using domestic chores as a means of resistance. On different occasions she goes to: 'fetch in coals'; drops a 'heavy coal-scuttle on his toes – of course *quite* accidentally'; starts loudly 'dusting the furniture and scouring the floor', so she cannot hear him; and lastly 'manage[s] cleverly to upset over him a basin of sour pigs'-wash'.[297] Here, Martha uses her most readily available weapon – domesticity – to counter unwanted harassment, displaying a spirit reminiscent of Rebecca's daughters. Martha reacts similarly when Tom tries to excuse his absent behaviour: she 'was not in the humour for that just then, so she managed to upset a dish of hot potatoes over the floor, and kept him picking them up for her for the next five minutes.'[298] Martha uses domesticity here to deflect from engaging emotionally with Tom, and then forcefully involves him with her domestic tasks as a form of punishment for his absence. Martha engages in her own – albeit limited – form of protest.

Working-class women are more than romantic objects in the novel; they show a fierce protectiveness when faced with threats towards others that demonstrate an independence of spirit. When Pugh insults Tom, Martha urges him to go 'away this moment, [the] little insulting wretch, unless [he] do want for me to throw this saucepan at [him]!'[299] This threat of violence evokes the spirit of the Rebecca riots, although it is, once again, an instrument of domesticity that serves as a weapon. After Pugh Morgan leaves 'Martha's spirits went too', suggesting that her 'spirit' only arises when she feels herself personally threatened or when she needs to protect her loved ones.[300] Her loyalty and her resistance to Pugh Morgan, an eventual traitor of Rebecca, serves to illustrate Martha's integrity.

Martha is not naïve, showing an awareness that for every wrong action there must be consequences. This self-awareness has Martha 'quite ready to make friends' with Morgan later on as 'for one thing, she never bore malice long, and for another, she had an idea that if he was friendly with her perhaps he would be the same with Tom.'[301] This demonstrates a clever, subtle approach towards what she perceives as a threat to the safety of Tom and herself. This clever instinct of Martha is shown again later in the novel, when she understands that Morgan has informed the police about an imminent riot. She is a shrewd observer of her environment, knowing that men such as Morgan, hurt and bitter over rejection by a woman, would seek some form of revenge over his rival; while Tom, on the other hand, cannot believe a man would be capable of this behaviour. Tom's disbelief is indicative of a code of honour among the people of Upper Killay, which is broken by Morgan's snitching. As Evan reflects after witnessing the robbery earlier in the text: 'it [was] quite the against the Killay ideas of morality

[297] *The Rebecca Rioter*, p.88.
[298] Ibid, p.59.
[299] Ibid, p.89.
[300] Ibid, p.90.
[301] Ibid, p.95.

to bring […] neighbours into trouble'.[302] While Tom might be surprised at Morgan's behaviour, the narrator reflects there is 'no denying that a woman's wonderfully sharp about anything that concerns her young man.'[303] Martha's realisation that Morgan betrayed the Rebeccaites enable the rioters to take revenge, as Morgan is left to die in a dark pit for betraying the Rebecca cause. Had Martha not spoken of her suspicions, Morgan would likely have managed to escape Upper Killay. Although not explicitly referenced in the text, this is also a way for Martha to avenge herself for the harassment she experienced from Morgan, further emphasising Martha's shrewdness while exposing men's lack of awareness over the impact of their actions.

With Morgan dead, and her brother Evan in exile in Australia, Martha's fate lies in America, demonstrating how the effects of the riots impact on women's lives. Tom 'got safely to Liverpool at last, and embarked from there for America […] and from America he sent back to Martha to come and marry him.'[304] Her journey with her family is financed by Gwenllian and her brother, which allows Martha the possibility of a more prosperous, stable life away from the dangers facing Tom and the Rebeccaites in Wales. Evan believes 'they are all thriving there capitally now – at least to judge by their letters, which are always contented, and speaking of prosperity.'[305] That they had to emigrate for this 'contented' life illustrates how the chaos surrounding Rebecca's daughters in the novel – the ambush, stealing, murder and so forth – affects the women in the community. It also suggests that socio-economic inequalities persist, despite Rebecca's partial success in the region, meaning that there are relatively few prospects within Wales. Martha can only achieve her original aims of a stable, prosperous life in another country, where Tom can shed his violent history and start afresh. *The Rebecca Rioter* demonstrates how the lives of Rebecca's daughters and the daughters of the Upper Killay working-class community are connected: while the Rebeccaites channel their inherent wildness into acts of violence, women like Martha bear the brunt of their actions as they continue to hope for a life of peace and stability. The *Report* argues that women are 'in general unsteady', as noted earlier, but the portrayal of working-class women in *The Rebecca Rioter* subverts this image. Men are 'unsteady' and deserve to be chastised; women are the ones to seek respectability.

The ideal of Anglo-Welsh womanhood

While Martha's working-class femininity provides one alternative to the image of Welsh women presented in the *Report*, the novel's representation of upper-class femininity is also an important part of Dillwyn's response to the wild Wales trope. This section explores Gwenllian's image as a caring, sympathetic upper-class woman, who serves in the novel as Evan's moral conscience. Her Anglo-

[302] *The Rebecca Rioter,* p.43.
[303] Ibid, p.120.
[304] Ibid, p.175.
[305] Ibid, p.175.

Welshness underpins her influence in lives of the working classes, and her visibility in the community marks a pointed contrast to the absent and largely invisible Queen.

First, it is important to establish Gwenllian's Anglo-Welsh connections. The surname of Tudor has royal connotations, superficially linking her to Queen Victoria. Henry VII had Welsh and English heritage, and some of the middle and upper classes in Wales relished this connection: 'it was not a matter of the Tudors identifying themselves with the Welsh but rather of the Welsh identifying themselves with the Tudors.'[306] The Tudor name, therefore, endows Gwenllian with a natural authority, especially over those historically conscious of the Tudor name. With her Welsh gentleman father and English mother – similar to Rose Mervyn – she perfectly straddles the Anglo-Welsh divide. Unlike Rose, though, Gwenllian is born and raised in an upper-class Anglo-Welsh gentry family, which places her in a greater position of influence and authority; Rose must marry to achieve a similar status.

In contrast to the portrayal of the Queen by Beynon, the narrator establishes Gwenllian as a naturally caring and sympathetic woman. As an occupant of a runaway carriage that Evan manages to stop – at the expense of his own safety – her entrance in the novel is dramatic and initially suggests a 'damsel in distress' the novel's male protagonist must rescue. However, it soon becomes evident that Gwenllian is the one taking on the role of 'saviour'; she remarks to her snobbish aunt on going to Evan that she 'couldn't help seeing to the boy who saved [them]'.[307] Her insistence that she must take him home to be seen by a doctor shows a genuine warmth and gratefulness to the young man who saved her life, at odds with her aunt's attitude: the latter warns Gwenllian not to go 'recklessly into any chance poor person's cottage, where, for all you know, there may be scarlet fever, or small pox, or measles, or mumps, or any other of those diseases that that people are sure to bring home in their clothes from those sorts of places.'[308] Gwenllian dismisses this worry, either because she is unafraid of these 'dangers' or because she questions her aunt's assumptions about the poor. This initial interest in Evan establishes a relationship in which Gwenllian is the kind, caring influence – both educational and moral – and Evan the willing pupil, besotted by her beauty, her kindness, and her natural authority. She brings him 'wonderful jellies, and soups, and puddings, and creams' as he recuperates after the accident; she reads him stories 'of people who travelled about, and had adventures'; and, on 'finding that [he] could not read or write, she began teaching me a bit.'[309] She continues to ignore her father and aunt's further warnings on the 'bad, rough lot' of Upper Killay, 'never being afraid of anything for herself'.[310] This demonstrates Gwenllian's determination in the face of generational and

[306] John Davies, *A History of Wales,* p.219.
[307] *The Rebecca Rioter,* p.8.
[308] Ibid, p.10.
[309] Ibid, pp.17-18.
[310] Ibid, p.29.

class snobbery towards the working class, defying others' worries to continue educating Evan. She succeeds in marking 'a pretty scholar' of Evan, who 'like most Welsh people [is] quick to learn when [he has] a mind to it.'[311] Evan's educational progress shows how upper-class engagement with the willing working classes can foster a mutually positive experience, where the upper classes can engage in a form of philanthropy and the working classes receive some education. Evan remarks on Gwenllian's impact:

> A man can love in earnest, even though he may have been roughly born and bred; and if he loves in earnest there is a chance that he may become in some degree like whoever he loves; so possibly my love for Miss Gwenllian, joined to her two years' teaching of me, might have raised me to some extent above the level of other Killay men.[312]

Here Evan conflates his love for Gwenllian and the education he receives from her as the means of improving him as a man, so much so that he considers himself better than 'other Killay men'.

Gwenllian's influence focuses on moral goodness, and allows Evan to question some of Rebecca's techniques. When Evan joins the rioting, having listened to Beynon's unflattering portrayal of the Queen, he uses Gwenllian as a point of moral reference. He states that had he 'spoken to her about the rioting, and she had condemned it – why, [he] should even have kept away from Rebecca to please her.'[313] This suggests that Gwenllian had the power to stop him from joining the Rebecca cause. Unbeknown to Gwenllian, Evan's idea of her moral greatness places a great burden on her, as the events that follow Evan joining the Rebeccaites begin a chain of personal misfortunes. Evan insinuates that Gwenllian would have had the power to stop him fully engaging with Rebecca, had she been physically present to voice her unease. He asks: 'if she were with me at that moment, what would she have me do?'[314] It is this position of power in which he places Gwenllian that allows Evan to believe that 'at some time or other [Gwenllian] might quite suddenly be able to see [him] or know what [he] was doing when [he] least expected it.'[315] This contrasts with the image of the Queen in the novel: although she is everywhere – in their courtrooms and on their money, for example – she does not come among the working classes and enquire about their needs or wellbeing. Gwenllian, on the other hand, has personally involved herself with Evan's intellectual and moral education. She exercises an internalised and imagined power as opposed to the Queen's actual, tangible power. Despite her constitutional power, the Queen is an abstract being to Evan who – in his mind – has no direct positive influence on his life, and who prompts no genuine loyalty and devotion. Gwenllian, as an upper-class woman exercising her duty to help the poor and uneducated in the community, is a

[311] *The Rebecca Rioter*, p.29.
[312] Ibid, p.79.
[313] Ibid, p.81.
[314] Ibid, p.38.
[315] Ibid, p.45.

visible representation of philanthropic and nurturing femininity. Her generosity is channelled towards one specific person in Upper Killay, representing a more personalised and less abstract influence, and less focused on systemic change.

Gwenllian's obliviousness to the strength of her influence demonstrates that Evan has created the portrayal of her as an all-knowing influence in his narrative. From the beginning of their connection, Evan notes how Gwenllian has 'bewitched me, and whatever she wished was my law.'[316] The reference to 'my law' is important: the Queen is a stranger to him and therefore her laws do not have the same significance to him as Gwenllian's 'laws'. Even by simply ordering Evan to see a doctor for his broken arm, Gwenllian demonstrates a direct authority to which Evan cannot help but defer. The word 'bewitched' suggests the strength of her control, an impression which is reinforced when Evan explains:

> Though I felt how entirely she took possession of me and seemed to leave me no will of my own against hers, still that did not frighten me or make me want to stay away from her to keep myself free. On the contrary, the more I saw her the more I longed to see her.[317]

Gwenllian's influence is a welcome kind of power, but one which is also largely constructed in Evan's imagination. When Evan does demonstrate a will separate from hers, by choosing to join the Rebeccaites, he assumes he knows Gwenllian's thoughts: 'For I thought it was very likely that people amongst whom she lived might not tell her of what was really being done – of how the magistrates were trying to support what was wrong and unfair, and to crush down those who only wanted justice.'[318] Evan believes that, if Gwenllian were told of the reason behind it, she would be sympathetic to a predominantly middle- and working-class cause. Again, Gwenllian's power over Evan comes partly from what he imagines her to believe. It is possible that Gwenllian would sympathise with the Rebeccaites, as the novel has demonstrated her resistance to anti-working-class tropes, as spouted by her aunt. However, it does not suggest a support for the movement's techniques, which lead in the end to her father's death. Yet Gwenllian's misfortune further serves to demonstrate her fairness. When Evan confesses to shooting her father, she does not initially recognise him but tells him: 'as you have come here of your own accord, I would rather not give you up to the police.'[319] Despite her grief, she does not seek revenge, and refuses to become responsible for Evan's capture and possible execution. This fairness extends to finding legal representation for Evan – once she recognises who he is – and taking care of his family after he is transported, by paying their expenses for emigration to America. In her grace and generosity, Gwenllian appears in the novel as an ideal of

[316] *The Rebecca Rioter,* p.15.
[317] Ibid, p.18.
[318] Ibid, p.121.
[319] Ibid, p.158.

Anglo-Welsh womanhood. She uses her class authority for the good of the working classes, rather than aiming to control and punish them, as Rebecca's daughters accuse Queen Victoria of doing in the courts.

Gwenllian as the idealised Anglo-Welsh womanhood is romanticised in the novel. Yet, Gwenllian is never shown to give Evan specific political or moral guidance and her physical absence during crucial moments of his life suggests that any influence she has comes from his idealised view of her. Nonetheless, her education, her caring nature, and her easy engagement with the working classes ensure a lasting impression on people like Evan. By contrast, any other external female influence is seen as a threat to the Upper Killay way of life: Queen Victoria's particular presence is only felt, negatively, in court or other interactions with the law. While Gwenllian and Victoria are presented as complete opposites in the novel, both are constructions rather than actual women in the text. The Queen is constructed as a 'villain' by those who have a particular political and social agenda. Gwenllian, by contrast, is an idealised construct that bears some semblance to her real nature because she is physically present in the text, yet is largely constructed by a man who has romantic feelings for her.

The romanticisation of middle- and upper-class women in *The Rebecca Rioter* resembles the portrayal of ideal Anglo-Welsh womanhood seen in *Rose Mervyn.* Dillwyn, however, does present a more balanced approach to Rebecca than *Rose Mervyn*. This allows for the promotion of Gwenllian to be more subtle than the elevation of Rose as idealised Anglo-Welsh womanhood. A large segment of Gwenllian's character has been romanticised by Evan, showing bias from a working-class man idolising his love interest. Her kindness and forgiveness are genuine, but cannot stop the consequences of Rebeccaism. Evan's fate, alongside the diminished role of Rebecca by the end of the novel, reflects the change to come in Wales: where Welsh unruliness must be curbed by English laws, and through Anglocentric education. Dillwyn has, however, provided a different view of Rebecca – as leader and rival to Queen Victoria. *Rebecca; or a Life's Mistake*, by comparison, continues the adoration of Anglo-Welsh womanhood, while dismissing Rebecca entirely.

Rebecca; or a Life's Mistake

Sir Richard Dansey Green-Price's *Rebecca; or A Life's Mistake* (1882) is different to the two texts we have seen so far, in that it explores the riots in relation to the salmon law rather than the tollgates. This situates the novel some years after the 1839-1843 tollgate riots, possibly around the 1860s and 70s when working-class people objected to the privatisation of salmon reserves. Dansey Green-Price (1838-1909) was Second Baronet of Norton Manor in the county of Radnor. Little is known of his life or his works, but it has been noted that he published three 'novelettes', including *Rebecca; or a*

Life's Mistake, Foils and Counterfoils and *The Rope Ladder* (dates unknown for both texts).[320] The novel's dedication to Reverend Richard Lister Venables (1809-1894) of Llysdinam provides some insight into the background of the novel. As 'Chairman of the Court of Quarter Session in the County of Radnor, and as a Conservator of the Wye', Venables was in a position to 'check the evils of Rebeccaism', and provide Green-Price with information about the second Rebecca campaign.[321] Green-Price stresses that the purpose of the novel is to deter the 'revival of Rebeccaism, intending rather to check any tendency to its renewal by the relation of the sad consequences likely to ensue were such unhappily to take place.'[322] These introductory remarks show that the tone of the novel is decidedly unsympathetic to the Rebecca cause, unlike the previous novels in this chapter, which are somewhat more nuanced. *Life's Mistake* is an unsympathetic comment on Rebeccaism written by an upper-class man; as magistrate and novelist, Green-Price evidently supported the laws against salmon poaching.

The focus of the novel, however, is not entirely on Rebeccaism. Much like *Rose Mervyn*, *A Life's Mistake* uses the dramatic background of the riots to create tension in the budding relationship between John and Myra. The story follows John Mountjoy, a young upper-class Englishman who falls in love with the working-class Myra, rescuing her from her dire situation in which her brother William – the Rebecca of the novel – has left her. The novel focuses on the transformation of an 'untutored', 'unsophisticated and pretty' Welsh girl whom Mountjoy wants to mould into an upper-class woman.[323] Upper-class respectability, however, is not an achievable goal, as Myra's background and her connections to Rebecca undermine John's aim of modernising the gentry's social attitudes. The upper-class society that Mountjoy wants to impress chooses to ignore Myra's existence, thus disregarding Mountjoy's position. Rather than on the riots, then, the novel focuses on Myra's failed social transformation. The gentry's negative perception of Myra's transformation suggests that there is a limit to personal improvement; in a way that is consistent with its negative portrayal of the riots, the novel suggests there is no desire to improve working-class lives enough to shift class hierarchies. As a consequence of social rejection, John and Myra must emigrate to New Zealand where they are warmly welcomed and able to achieve their respectable status. The rejection of the Mountjoys' marriage is contrasted with the welcoming reception offered to Gladys, a Welsh upper-class woman initially expected to marry John, who manages a successful, socially accepted marriage with an English gentleman. This contrast suggests that the only tolerable variety of Welsh womanhood is the upper-class, anglicised one.

---

[320] Unknown, 'Sir Richard Dansey-Green Price, Bart.', in *Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*, November 1892, 58, 289-291 (p.290).
[321] R. Dansey Green-Price, *Rebecca; or A Life's Mistake* (London: Roworth & Company Limited, 1882), p.v
[322] Ibid, p.vi.
[323] Ibid, p.11.

This section argues that *Life's Mistake* serves as a warning, not only against the resurrection of the Rebecca riots, but also against crossing of social boundaries. Although the Blue Books criticised the lack of education and loose morals of the Welsh people, *Life's Mistake* suggests that, in the eyes of the upper classes, any improvement must be limited according to one's social origins and economic circumstances, rather than serving as a path toward social mobility. First, I examine the purpose of the Rebecca figure in the novel, whose representation also informs the reception of the main romantic relationship. Following this I explore the perceptions of class and womanhood the novel conveys in its depiction of the Mountjoy marriage. Third, I compare the characterisation of Myra and Gladys, considering the contrasting images of Welsh womanhood, and examining how the novel presents one as more palatable to English upper-class society than the other. Additionally, I examine the role of Hannah, Myra's cousin, arguing that, through this representation of a confident working-class woman, Green-Price suggests that working-class womanhood can be respectable within its own class boundaries.

The waning power of Rebecca

The Rebecca in *Life's Mistake* is not *The Rebecca Rioter'*s champion of the working classes or *Rose Mervyn's* bold leader. Instead, the figure of Rebecca is associated with a violent drunk, whose only attempt at a riot in the novel nearly leads to capture and subsequent imprisonment. William, as Rebecca, is not presented sympathetically, in line with the author's statement in his dedication that he does not seek to incite a 'revival of Rebeccaism'. By demonising Rebecca and promoting the goodness of the upper classes, the novel expresses its opposition to the Rebecca cause.

First, the novel establishes the unsteadiness of the man who embodies Rebecca, suggesting that the cause she represents should not be admired. William is an unstable drunk, foolishly declaring himself to be Rebecca to random strangers. This suggests that William is not only irresponsible, but also does not foster any sense of trust or hope for the Rebecca cause to succeed under his 'leadership'. One of the rules of Rebeccaism was secrecy and mystery; William breaks this code by declaring 'I'm Rebeccah. That's who I am. No man conquers Rebeccah. Not him.'[324] His threats to 'fight three such men' as John – whom he meets on his way home – are useless, as he is too drunk to hit John.[325] This is not the same commanding figure of Rebecca we have witnessed in previous texts, but one lacking self-regulation and control. This coincides with the suggestion that Rebecca's influence is waning, with the upper-class Peter Lewes noting how:

[324] Green-Price, p.35.
[325] Ibid, p.35.

> I have spoken to many people in Gwydyr, who used to encourage Rebecca, and am sure they will do so no more. It is only a few incorrigibles that will persist in it, and must be stopped. […] if we can only catch one or two of the ringleaders 'the snake will be scotched'.[326]

Rebecca here is seen as a largely isolated figure in the community, only retaining the support of a 'few incorrigibles', while the majority of the working classes have dutifully understood the 'great concessions which have been passed by [Peter's] board' to appease them.[327] The comparison of the figurehead of Rebecca to a snake, suggests a character deliberately misleading innocent people, who only need men like Peter to show them the 'correct' way. That is not to say that Rebecca is not held in some regard, with her having 'somehow or other obtained such a notoriety for invincibility that the population, if not imbued with a kindred spirit, at least held the band in considerable awe.'[328] It is Rebecca's supposed 'invincibility' that fosters admiration, although this invincibility proves short-lived when Peter manages to briefly apprehend and identify William as Rebecca. Despite the Rebeccaites managing to escape, the close brush with Lewes and his men is the end of rioting in the novel: 'Like other seven days' wonders, the affray and the subjects of it soon began to die out of the memory of those in the neighbourhood. As spring came round, the talk of it almost ceased in Gwydyr and its surrounding villages.'[329] This emphasises Rebecca's lack of power during this later resurrection of her image, where talk of her vanishes as soon as Rebecca herself has gone. Furthermore, the narrator stresses that a year later, 'Rebecca had not revisited her old haunts, there was peace among the salmon, and they had certainly increased in the river and its tributaries.'[330] The novel thus presents legislation against poaching as successful, further illustrating the narrator's perspective that the upper classes in the novel have the 'right' approach and that the working classes should heed wiser decisions rather than follow the 'unreasonable' steps taken by Rebecca.

The character of William is used by the author to highlight the 'evils' of Rebecca. During William's trial for Rebeccaite activities, the prosecutor stresses that:

> [William] has, I believe, borne an unblemished character in his district – a good shepherd, an honest servant – marred only by this sad canker, this social blot on the existence of too many in that country, this spirit of rebellion against irksome laws which were passed for the public good.[331]

This quotation suggests that William was a good citizen before Rebecca came along, and encouraged men like him to social unrest. The image of Rebecca as a 'canker' or a 'blot' on society is carried

[326] Green-Price, pp.72-3.
[327] Ibid, p.72.
[328] Ibid, p.74.
[329] Ibid, p.89.
[330] Ibid, p.90.
[331] Ibid, p.150.

through the novel, with repercussions on the lives of those closely linked to Rebecca's activities. William has 'the ban of the landed proprietors […] upon him' and 'the farmers did not like to employ him for fear of offending their landlords.'[332] He has become tainted by association with Rebecca, no longer seen as the 'good' and 'honest' worker, but a blemish on the county which forces him to move away. That he also fails to fit in with the Mountjoys suggests he is no longer welcome on British shores, forever tarnished by his association with Rebecca wherever he goes. As a result, he is encouraged to emigrate to Australia. Other texts in this chapter have also emphasised the negative consequences of Rebeccaite activism, signalling that while there is a worthy cause behind the rioting and the violence, any actions shown to be excessive or illegal must be punished. *Life's Mistake* presents Rebecca as the downfall of men like William, whose only redemption lies on foreign lands, removing the threat of the 'canker' infecting the Welsh working classes. After he is acquitted, William states: 'we'll have no more Rebeccas. It's a poor game, and does not pay.'[333] Rebecca no longer holds the same power in Wales, with even her daughters rejecting her. No longer the alternate leader as seen in *The Rebecca Rioter*, the Rebecca in *Life's Mistake* quietly disappears, having caused significant damage to people's lives.

Rebecca's impact on others in the novel demonstrates the toxicity of the once celebrated figure. John and Myra are rejected from society in large part due to Myra's working-class roots, including her connections with the Rebeccaites. In English society it is brought up several times that her brother is Rebecca, as a means of insulting Myra and John: John has 'made such an ass of himself; gone and married a girl he found on the Welsh hills; says he has educated her; she turns out to be the sister of the fellow who nearly killed Peter Lewes in the Rebecca row'.[334] The Rebeccaite assault on Peter has been turned into an attempt at murder, making Myra's link with Rebecca more sinister. Even John himself is wary of this connection: after William's arrest, the 'more [John] thought of it the less he liked it. It all seemed to reflect on him. Perhaps he would be drawn into it personally. […] Perhaps he would be put down as a Rebecca himself – he had certainly married the sister of one.'[335] John's initial plan to educate Myra is a way of eliminating her working-class roots and the shame of Rebecca. The failure to conceal her background allows for English antagonism against Rebecca to be directed towards Myra. William predicts this outcome, telling Myra that she is 'hardly fit for such a job as this. You are only fit to mend a fellow's stockings in Gwydyr.'[336] His bluntness demonstrates Myra's initial prospects, hinting at employment as a maid or marriage to a local working-class man. The union of John and Myra does not eliminate the divide between the English and the Welsh, nor allow

[332] Green-Price, p.228.
[333] Ibid, p.169.
[334] Ibid, pp.197-8.
[335] Ibid, p.143.
[336] Ibid, p.45.

for Rebecca to disappear altogether. While the English want to physically remove Rebecca and her influence from Wales, they are prepared to resurrect her image to discredit Welsh womanhood in the process.

A Life's Mistake

This section explores the meaning of the 'life's mistake' in the novel. It argues that the Welsh working classes – especially working-class women – are denied the opportunity to be a part of English upper-class society due to associations that the English upper-class saw as controversial, including links to past violence and potential for future violence. This also links with the inherent belief in people knowing their place in society. Myra is too tainted by her links to Rebecca and her lack of education to ever be accepted into English high society. Despite the Blue Books advocating for better education, the novel suggests there is a limit to the outcomes of such improvement, and that it is a 'mistake' to encourage working-class women to reach above their 'station' in life.

The novel's narrator often projects his own feelings on the 'mistake' John is making by marrying Myra, suggesting that the author himself is critical of the relationship. He is sometimes sympathetic towards Myra's situation, stating numerous times that the English upper-class society will not easily accept change. In reference to John's evasion of questions concerning his relationship, the narrator notes:

> Poor fellow! he was blind to the fact, the patent fact, that the world will persist in constituting itself a judge in such matters, and that it makes its decisions felt, however disagreeable and unpalatable they may appear at the time.[337]

The narrator knows how society works, even if he does not fully agree with every judgment passed by the upper classes. The upper classes' judgmental attitude towards Myra's working-class background undermines John's plan to elevate her to a superior standing, ensuring from the beginning that Myra will be rejected. Some attempts are made in the novel, however, to welcome Myra: one Lady argues that John's wife has a 'right to be treated as a lady so long as she behaves as such.'[338] However, she is stopped from talking to Myra by threats from other influential women to cut her out of their society, illustrating the harsh, close-minded nature of English high society. The 'cutting' of John Mountjoy takes many forms, where:

> Days, weeks, and months passed, and hardly a carriage drove up to his door. […] there seemed a studied avoidance of his domestic affairs by every person whom he chanced to meet. All this galled him bitterly, but the climax to his agony came when he was systematically 'cut' at

[337] Green-Price, pp.135-6.
[338] Ibid, p.199.

> the Dhustone Club Meeting, and when, later in the summer, an invitation to the Annual County Bow Meeting […] came for "John Mountjoy, Esq.," without any mention whatever of his wife.[339]

John, as an upper-class gentleman himself, feels this 'cut' more deeply, because he understands the gesture as a rejection of his actions. By contrast, Myra is unaware of being snubbed, ignorant of upper-class customs and blissfully content with her fortunate change in circumstances. Indeed, as a working-class woman, she is unused to being among the upper classes as one of their own, and does not feel the slights against her as particularly cruel.

On the other hand, the novel suggests that Myra is not physically suited to upper-class London society, where taken 'from her own high bracing climate, she seemed to fade away and grow a shadow of herself – her old self'; it is not until she 'was once more in Nature's wilderness […] then she seemed more like old self.'[340] Removed from Wales' wilderness, Myra is only comfortable in the English countryside of her husband's county. Even there, she and John are not fully accepted, being ignored by even the tenants and lower classes of the county. By contrast, Gladys and her husband Dick are given a warm welcome when they take possession of John's house after the Mountjoys' emigration:

> Carriages full of callers come pouring up the drive every day, till it is positively worn into ruts with its unusual traffic. The wealth and fashion of Rufushire vies to do them honour. The invitations to dinner parties, balls, and afternoon gatherings lie three deep on their writing-room table. […] the hard, uncompromising world of polite society will have no denial. The Harwoods are for the time their idol, and must be worshipped.[341]

This reception is exaggerated as if to erase the Mountjoys' existence, similar to the erasure of Rebecca in Wales. Despite John's best intentions concerning Myra, the novel remarks that it would have been best for John to remain a bachelor rather than 'marry beneath you. It is not so much your wife, as her belongings.'[342] It is John's mistake to marry Myra and become associated with her belongings – meaning her brother's reputation. He thus forces the English gentry to reject both him and his wife rather than risk becoming tainted themselves with the remains of Rebecca. Welsh working-class womanhood becomes the downfall of John Mountjoy as he had the 'impudence to bring her into Rufushire or Wrekinshire'.[343]

---

[339] Green-Price, pp.231-2.
[340] Ibid, p.184.
[341] Ibid, pp.236-7.
[342] Ibid, p.213.
[343] Ibid, pp.129-30.

Men's role in working-class women's 'mistakes'

The Mountjoys marriage results in condemnation of Myra's working-class background, yet it is important to stress that Myra does not place herself in an English upper-class society. This section argues that John Mountjoy's discomfort in upper-class society, especially among upper-class women, unfairly places pressure on a Welsh working-class woman to perform as an upper-class woman. This, in turn, causes tension with the actual upper class in the novel.

John is uncomfortable in his own society, especially around women. He is described early in the novel as a 'good fellow, but a duffer in ladies' society'.[344] He is deemed to be 'too much devoted to his favourite sports' rather than women, although a fishing trip to Wales is ironically the occasion that brings Myra to his attention.[345] His naivety concerning women is illustrated when Myra and her cousin Hannah accompany John on his next fishing trip, and provide him with lunch: the 'poor simple John Mountjoy thought he had never seen such clever and devoted kindness in womanhood before, and where it was least expected too.'[346] Although Myra and Hannah are kind, their actions express a servile attitude toward the upper classes, which John mistakes for personal kindness. The girls' actions can easily be accepted by John as a non-threatening gesture, which makes him comfortable in his natural authority and class superiority. By contrast, he is nervous around upper-class women such as Gladys, 'look[ing] upon her as a superior being, of whom he was unworthy.'[347] John states that he does not 'like ready-made things as a rule', having judged Gladys a 'ready-made lady' in terms of accomplishments and education.[348] His warm response to Myra suggests one of the reasons for his taking her on as his protégée is his sense of inferiority in the company of upper-class women; by moulding Myra into an upper-class woman, he remains the superior.

John's view of Myra is naïve, while also reflecting his view that Welsh womanhood needs rescuing, with the English gentleman in the role of rescuer. His initial thoughts on Myra are not of love. Instead, they focus on what she could achieve with his careful attention: 'If only I could have her educated as I liked, and bring her out when she was an accomplished woman, as my wife, how the world would admire her! – how proud I should be of her! – how I should adore her! – that would be something worth living for.'[349] The predominant focus in this passage is on the 'I', of what John gets from educating Myra; there is no realistic reflection on the impact for her. Indeed, he believes that 'she would soon eclipse all the girls I ever met in the world's society', demonstrating again his need to exercise his authority to 'eclipse' the superiority of the upper-class women he fears.[350] His plan to

[344] Green-Price, pp.13-14.
[345] Ibid, p.13.
[346] Ibid, p.25.
[347] Ibid, pp.17-18.
[348] Ibid, p.67.
[349] Ibid, p.33.
[350] Ibid, p.33.

educate Myra according to his own design reveals his belief in his own superiority, which is undermined throughout the novel. During one social occasion John has 'stiff manners', and when simply questioned about his involvement with the Reeces, he 'assume[s] a sullen air' and replies in a petulant manner.[351] He is convinced that his own behaviour is correct, and is unwilling to take criticism for his actions from others of his social standing. Having been financially independent since the age of twenty-one, he does not feel accountable to anyone, which shapes his attempt to improve Myra. The narrator remarks that: 'Good tempered and easy as Mountjoy was in ordinary matters, sensible and deliberate in many things, yet in this one great object of his life he was as unbending and uncompromising, as deaf to all reason, as the veriest unteachable ruffian.'[352] Despite his peers' attempts to give advice, then, John is entirely focused on his goal, which is to 'rescue' Myra from her working-class life. John uses Myra as a diversion to his feelings of inadequacy in the company of upper-class women. The impact on Myra herself is profound, although not for the reasons John wanted.

Attempted erasure of Welsh working-class womanhood

The vilification of Myra by the upper classes in the novel demonstrates the 'mistake' of promoting a working-class woman to the ranks of high society. Working-class women, Green-Price suggests, were not meant to step out of their class into a higher one. This section argues that Myra's Welshness is erased by Mountjoy, in his attempt to improve her circumstances. This, in turn, leads to the creation of a version of womanhood that does not belong to either Wales or England, leaving Myra in a difficult situation.

The depiction of Myra at the start of the novel is fairly complex: she is portrayed as the quintessential beautiful heroine, yet the author is careful to stress her working-class background, which places Myra in a confusing position. The trope of a working-class woman who is pursued because of her beauty by upper-class men is common in Victorian novels, including Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848), George Eliot' *Adam Bede* (1857), and Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891). The difference in *A Life's Mistake* is that John wants to marry, rather than simply seduce, a working-class woman. Myra's beauty is emphasised early in the novel, where she is described as being:

> Fair, beautifully fair, with thick, light hair, with a tinge of auburn about it, drawn back and tied in a simple plaited knot; bright grey, expressive eyes, with well-marked eyebrows and long lashes; her nose and mouth fitting prettily into a plump little dimpled face; with a complexion that would have been lovely, were it not for a few sun-freckles; and the whole lighting up wonderfully when spoken to, and showing the neatest set of white teeth (a rare

[351] Green-Price, p.41, p.173.
[352] Ibid, p.135.

> treasure in Wales, where the hill water is supposed to destroy the women's teeth in many cases before they are out of their teens).[353]

The description blends markers of Myra's working-class status – her freckles and her surprise at being 'spoken to' – with a romanticisation of rural beauty, which contradicts the negative portrayal of working-class rural life in the Blue Books, where the Commissioners noted that the 'bodies and habits of the people are almost as dirty as the towns and houses of the swarthy region in which they swarm.'[354] The reference to 'rare treasure' of having white teeth is a dubious compliment, but serves the important function of setting Myra apart from other working-class Welsh women, suggesting that she is in some ways superior. Furthermore, Myra does not seem to associate with other working-class people either, but keeps to herself. Her cousin Hannah states that it is 'very seldom poor Myra here sees any one' and stresses that it is a 'wonder [Myra] does not become a regular wild girl, among these hills from morning to night, with nobody to speak so except her brother William, and he often away from home.'[355] This suggests that Myra needs someone to 'rescue' her, from the danger of becoming wild. Indeed, when John acquires a governess for her in London, it is through having 'painted such a pathetic picture of the lonely girl in her mountain home, almost starved, deserted, and miserable, looking to him for protection, which he had promised her – perhaps rashly – a few months before'.[356] This contrasts with the initial introduction of Myra as the beauty who attracts an upper-class young man; here, she is merely a 'pathetic' girl, looking 'miserable' and 'starved'. This positions Myra in the form of a charitable case rather than the supposed heroine of the novel, demonstrating how John manipulates the perception of Myra to suit his circumstances. There is no sense of Myra's personality among her earliest descriptions, which allows John to project his own personality onto hers, in the guise of 'saving' her from the threat of wildness.

The novel presents Myra as an uneducated young Welsh woman, who simply does not have the resources to improve her own circumstances, like seeking better education. Her 'simple, child-like, untutored way' endears her to some, but most hold the view that she is 'not a person destined to make a fitting wife for John Mountjoy.'[357] This is emphasised when Miss Wilcox, the woman chosen to educate Myra muses that John's 'idea of a wife' was that of a

> piece of choice china or drapery, which could be carefully packed away in cotton wool, and only brought out occasionally, for his especial benefit – a pretty little plaything, to be toyed

[353] Green-Price, pp.7-8.
[354] *Report,* p.394.
[355] Green-Price, p.11.
[356] Ibid, p.111.
[357] Ibid, p.111.

> with, and not used in the rough reality of life – something to delight his eye, and to be kept unsoiled and untrammelled from the cares of an ordinary mortal.[358]

John wants Myra to look the part of the upper-class woman, yet it takes more than this to be considered a gentlewoman: she must be able to engage in social life and never betray her working-class roots. When she is physically altered she is no different to other young women of the time, although a 'trifle thinner' than usual for her, showing the effect of her move from rural Wales to urban London.[359] Despite the alterations to her mind and body, John and Miss Wilcox cannot fix one aspect of her character that prevents her social success: 'she cannot get over her shyness.'[360] Hence, Myra cannot express her personality, nor can she show her new talents to other people. Even in her new home, the novel states, 'Mrs Mountjoy's nerves were unstrung; she was unequal to this new task, this taking possession of, and becoming the acting mistress of, such a place as Topley Park.'[361] It is unclear whether this is Myra's self-reflection or the narrator's voice; either way, the words emphasise the disconnect between Myra and her new anglicised life. Her shyness, alongside her self-consciousness as mistress of Topley Park does not endear her to the English, while her new way of life is removed from her Welshness. Her alienation is demonstrated by the lack of recognition on what 'home' means to her:

> How odd the word "home" seemed to her. "Home!" Did he mean that this room was to be her home, or was she to call all the great building she was conscious of being in "her home?" Yes, all of it; gardens, stables, servants, all were hers, and she was to enjoy them, use them, live amongst them – she tried to realize it all, but failed utterly.[362]

By failing to 'realize' her new home, and subsequently her place in it, Myra cannot fit comfortably in upper-class society, with the prospect of servants and opulent living an unimaginable concept to a girl having been brought up poor. Myra's inability to 'realise' home confirms the prejudices and presumptions of those in English high society that Welsh working-class women cannot become members of the English upper class. Because of her lack of education and fear of her new position, there is no opportunity for Myra to develop an Anglo-Welsh identity. Likewise, by the end of the novel she cannot claim to belong to either Welsh or English womanhood.

John attempts to improve Myra's circumstances, without real consideration for her own wishes and needs. Myra is motivated by her love for John; he, by contrast, is determined to change her identity. Throughout the novel, her own personality is never presented, and when she does show some

---

[358] Green-Price, p.111.
[359] Ibid, p.108.
[360] Ibid, p.113.
[361] Ibid, p.183.
[362] Ibid, p.183.

leadership – at the trial of her brother – the effort leaves her a 'poor little, prostrate, fainting creature, unable to enter into the joy of victory'.[363] Myra's weakness of character allows for John to imprint his own projections onto her, to the final detriment of both. With Myra's lack of a strong Anglo-Welsh identity, the void must be filled by Gladys.

The success of upper-class Anglo-Welsh womanhood

The novel's treatment of Gladys suggests that the inherited status of an upper-class Welsh woman is more palatable than Myra's elevation to upper-class society. This section explores the role Gladys plays in the novel, in contrast to, and in competition with, Myra. Additionally, it argues that Gladys' Welsh womanhood must also adapt slightly to English society, albeit with a more successful outcome than Myra's attempt. Gladys has to merely adjust to another social environment in order to fit in; Myra, the narrative suggests, simply cannot make a 'home' in English high society because the class barriers, the text suggests, are insurmountable.

The first description of Gladys is designed to establish her superiority over her love rival. It is overexaggerated in its praise, noting that Gladys has

> a faultlessly-shaped head, the fairest of fair hair, almost silvery in its silk-like gloss, with a complexion exactly matching it; her eyes, of a hazel tint; her nose, a trifle long, but prettily shaped, with a mouth that had just sufficient curl in it to show there was determination and woman's will in its owner, and yet it helped, materially helped, to make up the tout ensemble of a really handsome woman.[364]

The narrative stresses how 'faultless' and 'handsome' she is, with no flaws to be used as a weapon against her character. Importantly, she has 'determination and woman's will', suggesting a personality of her own, which is found lacking in Myra. This, of course, comes from Gladys' secure knowledge of her place in society, with the expertise and education befitting her position. The description of her body also suggests a superior woman, as her 'figure, too, was faultless' and her 'waist a marvel of smallness, although nobody was heard to accuse her of tight lacing.'[365] That people would not even accuse her of 'tight lacing' suggests her immunity to even minor criticism and judgment. Additionally, it suggests her physical attributes are all natural, rather than artificially produced, being distinctly upper class in her appearance. Gladys' manners also reflect her upper-class upbringing. When the illiterate Myra asks Gladys to write a letter to John for her, Gladys willingly helps despite the personal cost to her, having held ambitions to marry John herself. This shows Gladys' selflessness, yet she is not entirely benevolent. Her musings on Myra are also reflective of

[363] Green-Price, p.167.
[364] Ibid, p.16.
[365] Ibid, pp.16-17.

the general upper-class attitude towards the young woman, as Gladys – in disbelief – thinks how 'a man of John Mountjoy's fine position, name, temperament, everything good, could be in love with a little Welsh girl off the hills, who could not even write her own name.'[366] Gladys is not purposefully mean about Myra, but recognises that the 'poor little creature' is 'without any talent to hold the position of John's wife.'[367] The novel sympathises with Gladys, depicting Myra as having effectively stolen John from her, with Gladys reflecting how the 'plain little country girl with the veil on […] had supplanted her – had won from her the treasure she had hoped for, longed for, dreamed of – aye, and proudly worn as the image nearest her heart.'[368] The narrator focuses on the hurt caused to Gladys, when he writes that she 'lay as helpless as one dead' on hearing the news of the Mountjoy marriage.[369] The victimisation of Gladys allows for animosity between the upper- and working-class women to develop, although Gladys' upper-class manners ensures that she is never portrayed as the vindictive, wronged woman. The author's sympathy for Gladys, however, is understandable considering Green-Price is an upper-class man himself; he can best reflect the upper-class attitude and manners of the time, while he cannot put himself in Myra's situation of a working-class person working towards upward social mobility.

The representation of upper-class Welsh womanhood is designed to promote anglicisation within strict class limits in the novel, with Gladys able to seamlessly move from one upper-class set to another. She is much admired at Ascot where 'even in the great competitive ring of London beauties; her charming fairness and figure shone out among the host of sun-flowers at Hurlingham and in the Park, and her admirers were already a goodly clan.'[370] Her admirers are the same people who mock and shun Myra, demonstrating that there is only one type of Welsh womanhood that is acceptable in English high society. Being a member of the gentry herself, Gladys naturally fits into upper-class circles, in contrast to Myra's shy awkwardness. Gladys' Welsh womanhood naturally make her more comfortable in the Welsh countryside than the bustling social scenes of London, where 'the late hours did not suit [her].'[371] Yet the novel can simply transport her from the Welsh countryside to the English countryside of Topley Park, where she becomes mistress of the estate with an ease and grace found lacking in Myra. Indeed, Gladys herself recognises after her first visit how 'dull and quiet her own mountain country would seem after the more refined and civilized country at Topley Park', showing her preference for the English manor.[372] She is bestowed with an advantageous marriage to an Englishman, and a manor estate, suggesting that ideal Anglo-Welsh womanhood is rewarded;

[366] Green-Price, pp.83-4.
[367] Ibid, p.84.
[368] Ibid, p.178.
[369] Ibid, p.180.
[370] Ibid, p.120.
[371] Ibid, p.214.
[372] Ibid, p.71.

specifically, upper-class Anglo-Welsh womanhood is rewarded by the author, suggesting this is the only accepted Welsh women's identity in England. Gladys's acceptance of the English countryside as superior to the Welsh countryside, alongside her ease in settling into married life with an Englishman, associate her with the Anglo-Welsh ideal. In contrast to John and Myra, Gladys and Dick Harwood's welcome to Topley Park – as examined earlier – illustrates the acceptance of this second Anglo-Welsh marriage. Gladys takes her natural place as mistress, albeit not in the manner she initially thought she would.

The contrasting images and reception of Myra and Gladys show the inherent snobbery of the upper classes: they cannot accept Myra despite the attempts made for her elevation, while Gladys is naturally a part of their class and therefore triumphs over her rival. Dick questions

> how could a man like Mountjoy have chosen the wild flower of Fairwen to transplant, when there was a lovely exotic in the same valley, aye, perchance, within his reach, that had to be passed by and left to grow to even greater perfection in this wild, romantic climate of its own.[373]

The view of Myra and Gladys as 'flowers' that can be easily plucked from their native Wales suggests that their Welshness is fleeting, removed by men to their land. There is also a degree of portability here, with Welshness as a decorative ornament that can be uprooted from Welsh soil to other locations. As a 'wild' flower, Myra cannot be sufficiently tamed or improved when taken to English circles as she is literally rooted in Wales. By contrast, Gladys' 'exotic' womanhood allows for easier portability: her exoticness is out of place in Wales and must be moved elsewhere. The author uses flowers as an analogy of the differing Welsh identity to further emphasise, as argued above, that there can only be one accepted identity in England.

The contrasting characterisations of Gladys and Myra serves to amplify England-Wales tensions, with only one perceived as an acceptable match for an English gentleman, largely due to class dynamics. Gladys' strength of character and her upper-class nature can be transferred from the Welsh countryside to England, where she can be more greatly appreciated. She is the ideal woman John wants Myra to be. However, with Gladys living at his home by the end of the novel, the author reinforces the mistakes John has made. Gladys is the rightful mistress of Topley Park, and the novel celebrates her triumphant Anglo-Welsh womanhood over other versions of womanhood. As a consequence, this identity is near impossible to achieve for other Welsh women, especially from the working classes, and, therefore, Anglo-Welsh womanhood becomes an exclusive identity of upper-class women.

---

[373] Green-Price, p.221.

The unashamed working-class Welshwoman

There is one other depiction of Welsh womanhood in the novel: Myra's cousin, Hannah. Although a minor character, her presence highlights the unruliness of working-class women as constructed by the author. This section briefly examines the role Hannah plays in the plot, while arguing that her inclusion serves to highlight a version of working-class Welsh womanhood that is secure in its class boundaries, and even thrives within it. Hannah's character represents, within the logic of the novel, what Myra's life should have been.

Being the physical opposite to her cousin Myra, Hannah is presented by Green-Price as the more authentic version of Welsh wildness. Hannah is introduced at the same time as Myra, allowing the reader to compare their appearances. She is 'rather taller and darker, with a nice bright complexion, a broader nose, a less shapely mouth, and bad teeth; but for this, she too would have passed for a pretty woman in any company.'[374] While Myra's white teeth set her apart from stereotyped perceptions of the working classes, as expressed in the Blue Books, Hannah's 'bad teeth' interfere with her beauty and highlight her working-class identity. This disqualifies her from the role of romantic heroine, allowing the narrator to exult Myra's beauty by comparison. Hannah is neither the heroine of the novel nor possesses any features which would allow the reader to romanticise her character. This anti-heroinism allows her to perform acts that are morally questionable, yet the reader cannot fully condemn her due the narrative's praise of her character: she is bold, courageous, and loyal to her family. At William's Rebecca trial, the indecision of the jury that sets William free is orchestrated by Hannah, who uses her sexuality to her advantage. By persuading her potential lover and husband not to prosecute William, causing division in the jury's official decision, she cleverly uses her feminine prowess to alter the course of the plot; William's subsequent presence in the Mountjoy home exacerbates the ill-feeling of the upper classes towards John and Myra, and accelerates their decision to emigrate. The reader is only allowed a brief glimpse into Hannah's life post-trial. We learn that she

> long ago rewarded her faithful cousin Jem for his behaviour on the jury on that notable day and night, when he sat them all out, in defiance of threats and reasoning. She is now an active, buxom farmer's wife, with two or three hopeful brats at her side.[375]

The sexual connotation of Hannah having 'rewarded' Jem is contrasted with the image of their happy, respectable marriage. The reference to 'hopeful brats' suggests the possibility of a future in which the antics of William and the Rebeccaites can finally be erased, as the next generation are raised to be good citizens. The image of wild Welsh womanhood, therefore, is replaced by a respectable working-

[374] Green-Price, p.8.
[375] Ibid, p.238.

class womanhood, which was available to Myra, who, arguably, could have fared better by staying in this sphere.

Hannah's brief role in the novel is nevertheless significant, and provides the reader with another depiction of Welsh womanhood: one who is proud of her Welshness because she is not exposed to English upper-class snobbery. She is comfortable and content with her place in society because there are no expectations beyond motherhood and managing a household. Furthermore, she holds no ambitions to move into upper-class society. Her future as a farmer's wife is secure; arguably, she and Gladys are the women most satisfied by their lots in life by the end of the novel. Both versions of womanhood – upper class and working class – have been depicted sympathetically and straightforwardly, and both are rewarded for successfully performing the ideal of femininity associated with their own class; Myra's hybrid womanhood is too complex to thrive in Britain.

The significance of emigration to Welsh womanhood

The differing depictions of Welsh womanhood in *Rebecca; or a Life's Mistake* suggest that ideals of womanhood differ according to class. Where Gladys' gentry background allows her to effortlessly transition from Wales to England, Myra's womanhood must be physically removed from Britain and allowed to thrive elsewhere; Hannah can thrive in Wales, within the bounds of her original class. John and Myra's emigration signifies a rejection of the change John sought to inspire in upper-class society. This section argues that Myra's Welsh working-class identity has no place in upper-class English society; the liminal nature of her identity cannot fit in Wales or England, and must, therefore, find acceptance somewhere else.

The quiet departure of the Mountjoys works to their advantage. They can leave to establish their identities elsewhere without being followed by the judgments they experienced in England. The simple announcement that 'among the outgoing passengers by the mail steamer for New Zealand, [were] "Mr. and Mrs. Mountjoy and child (a baby), with servants, for Auckland"' is representative of their ambition to start again as a young family, with no mention made of their past connections.[376] John recognises that they have been 'hunted down by society, whose opinion he had hoped to conquer' so he emigrates to 'where the social barrier was a thing unknown, and where he could breathe in the free air of equality with all around him.'[377] The suggestion here is that England and Wales are not modern enough to cope with a cross-class, Anglo-Welsh marriage; one must be distinctively English or Welsh, and not try to marry cross-class. The lack of social modernity in Britain is further demonstrated by John's belief in new 'radical notions' of a modernised society as seen in New Zealand, which will make the English and Welsh 'learn the lesson when too late, and

[376] Green-Price, p.234.
[377] Ibid, p.234.

they will soon find themselves not only passed by, but left far behind by new countries like this.'[378] John and Myra are warmly welcomed in New Zealand, where little or nothing is made of Myra's working-class background, which makes upper-class English society's treatment of her seem regressive and resistant to change. That Myra has 'long ago forgiven' that society for their treatment shows a patience and understanding that is far more reflective of good manners than the behaviour demonstrated by the English upper classes.[379] This newfound peace is a physical relief to Myra: no longer the sickly, shy woman found at Topley Park, she is allowed to perform her role as wife and mother without being judged. While Myra failed to fit in with the English upper class, the Mountjoys' happy new life in New Zealand is the exact opposite of failure. It is British society that has failed to adapt to social and class modernity, and the Mountjoys' emigration signifies their rejection of a restrictive society.

The significance of emigration in the novel is to highlight two contrasting arguments: first, that the Mountjoys have been expelled for breaking a class boundary by marrying cross-class; and second, that the Mountjoys themselves are condemning England and Wales for its old-fashioned views of marriage and class. The novel's oscillation on class is demonstrated in the final pages: Gladys can look upon their marriage positively because '[John] has been true to his love, and has triumphed over the world's ill-nature', while Dick claims that leaving 'only makes [John's] mistakes all the more glaring.'[380] The Welsh Gladys can admire John and Myra's stand against society, while the English Dick only sees their marriage as a 'mistake' that can never be fixed or forgotten. The ambivalence of the novel's overall view on the Mountjoy marriage remains: the text seems to endorse the perception that Myra, as a working-class Welsh woman, is unsuited to marry into English upper-class circles. Yet her life abroad is a small triumph against those that rejected her attempt to cross these barriers, and she is allowed to forge this identity in a place that will appreciate and celebrate it for its modernity.

Rebecca; or a Life's Mistake is a novel that explores class boundaries, and the space Welsh womanhood inhabits in this hierarchy. The novel is a warning about advocating for change in the social hierarchy of England's upper classes, yet it is also a warning for the English about the refusal to accept modernity; which here takes the shape of a cross-class relationship. The victim of this rejection is a Welsh working-class woman who has contravened class boundaries. Myra did not ask to be moved from her native Wales, and quietly accepted her identity being changed because the alternative was poverty and hardship. Arguably, Hannah's marriage suggests Myra would have eventually married a farmer or similar, and been somewhat comfortable in her circumstances. Instead, she has been swayed to follow John, flattered by attention she has never experienced before. The

[378] Green-Price, p.241.
[379] Ibid, p.242.
[380] Ibid, p.243.

treatment of her by the English upper classes is cruel, yet her acceptance of it demonstrates the subservient attitude of a young working-class woman engaging with her class superiors for the first time. John's attempts to elevate her status shows naivety of social norms that leaves Myra judged and ridiculed, leaving his work effectively meaningless. He has gone above and beyond the Blue Books' advocation for the appropriate education of the Welsh working classes: he has deliberately overstepped class boundaries without contemplating the reaction of his fellow gentry, and the effect this would have on Myra. Myra's identity is no longer her own, and despite her happiness in New Zealand, her new identity has been established by John and can never revert to what it was.

The ending for Myra and John would indicate the author has some sympathetic tendencies towards their ill-treatment by the upper classes, but nevertheless endorses the view that working-class women should not cross class and nation boundaries. Similarly, the 'triumph' of Gladys at the end of the novel illustrates that the upper-class hierarchy is being reinforced. Her Anglo-Welsh womanhood is accepted due to being born upper-class, and although she is physically removed from Wales, her identity has not been considerably altered. Class in nineteenth-century England is the superior force in the hopes of social mobility, and Welsh womanhood must be up to standard from the beginning: there is no place for pretenders.

*

Welsh womanhood in *Life's Mistake* is seen in two ways: first, as the upper-class woman celebrated for her Anglo-Welshness, and rewarded for her connections to English society; second, as the working-class woman who is in her place: comfortable and thriving in her own class boundary, and without interest in traversing class boundaries. In between these depictions of Welsh womanhood lies Myra, not given the opportunity to thrive within her own class, while thrust into another class on the whims of another person. Although John is punished by his community, Myra is the outsider and must be resoundingly rejected. Anglo-Welsh womanhood in Myra's case is an unsuccessful experiment because she has no prior connection to upper-class society. She has been set up to fail in the novel, although her success in New Zealand reveals an opportunity elsewhere to embrace modernity. Rebecca in *Life's Mistake* is a secondary character, relegated to the background of John and Myra's story. However, Rebecca is an underlying threat, not only to laws but to the future of those connected to her. The message of the novel is to sever all possible ties with Rebecca; after that, perhaps, working-class women could be given the opportunity to improve and be educated, without the threat to their reputation that Rebecca would bring.

Conclusion

The revival of Rebeccaism was short-lived, yet interest in her image and what she stood for was reignited in the late 1870s and into the 1880s. Through their exploration of Rebecca, the novels

analysed in this chapter can be seen as a reflection on history, while also exploring the concept of Welsh womanhood in the 1800s, following two formative events that forced a change in how Welsh women were seen. Although this chapter examined the role of Rebecca as representative of Welsh womanhood that is uncontrollable and wild, the texts' depiction of their female characters is more revealing. The texts suggest that a woman must have anglicised middle- or upper-class connections to perform the ideal of Welsh womanhood.

The novels do not dismiss Welsh working-class womanhood. Instead, working-class female characters are represented as victims of Rebecca and her daughters. The taint of Rebecca's daughters lingers upon them, often leading to emigration as the only way to achieve respectability and stability. Moreover, the novels suggest that working-class women need to be educated and improved, by presenting them as ignorant and limited, suggesting that Rebecca is not the sole cause of the bad image Welsh women had by the time of the Blue Books. Improvement, however, must take place within established class boundaries; only then can working-class women be seen as a reflection of moral Welsh womanhood.

Chapter Two. The Precarious Influence of Middle- and Upper-Class Women

> There might have been angels in pious, middle-class households, but most women were tied to the milk churn, the spinning wheel and the washing place.[381]

In response to the Blue Books, the view that women must 'atone' for their reported misbehaviour emphasised the expectation placed on those women to be, as Jenkins puts it, the '"angel of the hearth", a symbol of Nonconformist purity and the embodiment of godliness, sobriety and thrift.'[382] This 'angel' figure is a middle-class ideal, as shown in the previous chapter; middle-class women claim ownership of a good, clean home while working-classes women physically performed domestic labour. Service, the work that underpins middle-class domesticity – which, in turn, signifies good morality – is performed by the classes who were criticised for their immorality in the *Report*. Nevertheless, while working-class servants and labourers helped to create middle-class wealth, as well as the appearance of middle-class respectability, middle- and upper-class women took on a role as moral influencers, aiming to improve the poor as well as to guide the boys and men in their own social class.

The need to change society, following criticisms made in the Blue Books, led to the establishment of movements, including temperance, and publications, including the periodical *Y Gymraes*, that were mostly led by middle- and upper-class women who wanted to exert their moral influence on the men and women of the working-class.[383] As temperance reformers, they aimed to curb the levels of excess drinking that were perceived as a leading cause of loose morals in the country. By dressing in the Welsh garb, and encouraging all Welsh women to do so, they advocated for the physical representation of the traditional mother, the virtuous and hardworking woman whose 'patriotic spirit' would never allow her children to be brought up surrounded and influenced by immoral behaviour.[384] Through establishing periodicals such as *Y Gymraes*, middle-class writers gained a platform to address the sins of sexual immorality as noted in the *Report*, using the periodical's pages to accuse the 'unmarried Welsh woman' of being a 'shameless wanton, who must be chastised into changing her ways.'[385] These movements allowed middle- and upper-class notions of gender to dominate the response to the Blue Books. However, these attempts did not always consider the real lives and livelihoods of working-class Welsh women; the role that working-class women played in ensuring the continuation of middle- and upper-class lifestyles and ideologies; and the change that was required

---

[381] Geraint H. Jenkins, *A Concise History of Wales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p.219.
[382] Ibid, p.219.
[383] Further analysis of nineteenth-century Welsh periodicals can be seen in Chapter Four.
[384] Augusta Hall, 'Address to the Welsh Women of Wales', p.58.
[385] Jane Aaron *Nineteenth Century Women's Writing in Wales*, p.84.

in middle- and upper-class morality, social attitudes, and institutions to effect genuine national improvement.

This chapter argues that the response of the middle and upper classes in Wales to the accusations of the Blue Books relied on assumptions of gender and class difference and, indeed, upper-class superiority. As argued in Chapter One, middle- and upper-class Anglo-Welsh womanhood was seen as the pinnacle of womanhood, whereas working-class Welsh women were not given the same attention, allowing Anglo-Welsh womanhood to be seen as morally superior. These responses were ultimately ineffective since they were based on an improper, flawed understanding of the poorer classes, and especially of working-class women. The lack of understanding between the middle and upper classes and the poor, and the ineffectiveness of middle- to upper-class women's social activism, is a frequent theme of Amy Dillwyn's fiction. This chapter will look at three main aspects in Amy Dillwyn's novel *A Burglary: or an Unconscious Influence* (1883), while also referring to her novel *Jill* (1884). First, this chapter will analyse Dillwyn's portrayal of class. I will examine, first, how Dillwyn's texts acknowledge the ways in which working-class women's labour, especially as domestic servants, helped to maintain and support the ideals and appearance of middle- and upper-class femininity; second, I will contrast working-class women's perceived flaws – specifically their failure to maintain the domestic sphere and their own appearance – with the representation of upper-class women in Dillwyn's texts. Then, I will examine how Dillwyn satirises the philanthropy of upper-class women. By emphasising their unsuitability to perform charity, due to their complete lack of understanding of household chores, Dillwyn presents their attempts to 'help' the poor as a futile exercise. It is, however, an exercise that helps maintain the role of the upper-class woman as the moral influencer. Finally, I will consider how Dillwyn's texts respond to the gendered ideology of separate spheres of influence, famously expressed in John Ruskin's 'Of Queen's Gardens'. Drawing on Ruskin's analysis in my reading of *A Burglary*, I will suggest that Dillwyn examines the limited agency that the role of 'moral influencer' provided for middle- and upper-class women. The central protagonist of *A Burglary*, I argue, experiences little personal growth and development, since her energies are channelled into a performance that cannot effect real change, in a Victorian society that did not want their women to be more than a supporting act for the men.

Introduction to the novels

A Burglary or an Unconscious Influence is a novel of crime and romance. The novel focuses on Imogen, a sixteen-year-old girl who rebels against the superficiality and strict rules of high society through her unconventional dress and passionate temper, but who cannot hide her interest in the glamour of 'coming out' into the society she gently defies. She is conflicted by her determination to retain independence from upper-class ideals (in dress and manner) while also being attracted to an upper-class lifestyle and the performance of femininity that it entails. When Imogen is at the threshold

of adolescence and womanhood, her cousin's jewels are stolen. This 'burglary' starts a conflict between the local working class and middle class; a working-class man, Richard Richards, is accused and vilified, while the real thief, middle-class William Sylvester, is given the opportunity to redeem himself in the course of the novel, seeking repentance through his love for Imogen. The novel contains satirical commentary on the upper classes, portraying them as shallow and obsessed with maintaining appearances and hierarchies, over-dramatic about trivial issues, and oblivious to the real concerns of the poor. Imogen pushes against the conventions associated with her class and gender and demonstrates occasional awareness of the artificiality of both sexual and social distinctions. However, the novel's ending, which returns to the clichés of romance novels whereby the female protagonist ends up with the hero, is ultimately conservative, leaving the promise of Imogen's early independence and individuality unfulfilled. Therefore, while Dillwyn calls contemporary social and sexual conventions and hierarchies into question, her fiction ultimately reaffirms some of them – at least on the surface.

By contrast, the eponymous protagonist of Dillwyn's novel *Jill* revels in pushing the boundaries, both of femininity and class, throughout. Adopting the guise of a maid, the eponymous heroine rejects a part of her upper-class upbringing because it does not suit her needs: being kept in the schoolroom and educated as a 'lady', she prefers adventures and travel, achievable only through rejecting her family and using disguise to seek what she really wants. Jill herself is not a wholly sympathetic heroine; she admits to lying and cheating to get what she wants and constantly puts her own needs and desires above those of others. However, the novel appears to endorse her transgressions, as these help her escape an unhappy home and forge her own path and independent personality. She achieves the independence that Imogen initially pursues but eventually abandons. Crucially, however, only middle- and upper-class women are allowed to defy conventions in Dillwyn's work. While Dillwyn deconstructs expectations of women, her critique of gender conventions remains limited to the upper classes. The working classes are not given the opportunity to defy social and sexual expectations. Dillwyn's working classes must be taught to conform to societal expectations, while upper-class women are given the freedom to explore and challenge the boundaries of femininity.

Class Differences

Upper- and working-class women in Dillwyn's texts are presented in contrasting images: the upper-class women as charitable, well-meaning helpers of the poor; the working classes as labourers who support upper-class appearances and lifestyles. Despite showing some resistance to being stereotyped as objects of charity, working-class women in these texts are nevertheless exploited by the upper classes. Working-class women occupy a role that supports upper class women's construction of themselves as 'angels in the house'; through their physical labour they enable richer women's lifestyles. In this section I will explore how Dillwyn presents working-class women's labour and the

ways in which it maintains class distinctions. Furthermore, I will explore how Dillwyn contrasts working-class women to the supposed feminine ideals embodied by the upper classes.

Service

As maids and servants, working-class women held part of the responsibility for ensuring that upper-class ideals of femininity were upheld. Those ideals included appropriate dress and physical presentation, and the cleanliness of the domestic sphere. Although gentry women lectured the poor on matters of cleanliness, as will be examined in the second section, the work in their own home was usually carried out by servants. By adopting the role of 'teacher' in matters of domestic management, upper-class women erased the labour of working-class people, especially working-class women, in ensuring that their own homes appear respectable and clean. Ignorance of the service that the working class provide is evident in the early chapters of *A Burglary*. Having to get dressed to go visit her cousin's room after the burglary, we first get a glimpse of Imogen's opinion on the issue of a 'toilette':

> An elaborate toilette was a thing which she looked down upon as frivolous and ridiculous, for she had not yet attained to that love of dress which most women have from their earliest childhood. Consequently the style of dressing which she preferred was more rapid than elegant; and when left to her own devices in the matter, she was apt to appear with her hair parted all awry, the edge of her petticoat protruding below her gown, the front and side of her skirt twisted so that each had usurped the place of the other, and a general look of having had her clothes "put on with a pitchfork".[386]

This demonstrates a young woman who does not value appearance for appearance's sake, and her carelessness is an affront to her maid, Millet. It is Millet's role to 'assist in the "respectabilising" process' of getting Imogen appropriately dressed for the company of others.[387] The use of the word 'respectabilising' emphasises how 'respectability' is not something upper-class people innately possess, but something that needs to be carefully produced and maintained. The role of ensuring that Imogen appears in appropriate attire falls to her maid, who herself was 'wont to put on a highly aggrieved air at beholding the torn and sodden condition of the petticoats, stockings, boots, and other garments whereof she was the appointed guardian.'[388] The reference to being an 'appointed guardian' is especially important here, as it suggests the maid's vital role in upper-class women's performance of feminine ideals, especially in terms of appearances. While her mistress can do whatever she likes to her clothing, it is the maid's role to ensure that the garments are presentable afterwards. Without Millet's work, Imogen would be judged for her dishevelled appearance, but, in Millet's view, the ultimate blame would fall to her maid. Imogen's carelessness over her appearance emphasises the

[386] Amy Dillwyn, *A Burglary: or Unconscious Influence* (Dinas Powys: Honno Press, 2007), p.69.
[387] Ibid, p.67.
[388] Ibid, p.67.

lack of care for the labour of her servant, highlighting that mending, cleaning, and dressing are not concerns for her. The presentation of Imogen's character is conflicting: while her dismissal of feminine appearance suggests a resistance to gender conventions, this stance is undermined by her ignorance of the physical labour that ensures her continued respectability in society. Millet has a rather different – perhaps even an inflated – perception of her importance: saying 'When I see 'er sometimes hafter she've been dressing 'erself, I feel that hashamed hof 'er that reely it's as much as I can do to bring myself to hac-knowledge 'er as belonging to me hat hall!'[389] The implication of the mistress 'belonging' to the maid suggests that working-class women could be judged for the appearances and manners of their employers; in Millet's view, any flaw in her mistress's appearance would be deemed the fault of the maid, which in turn would give said maid a poor reputation. The appearance of the gentry, essentially, is the product of servants' work, which also showcases the servants' ability.

In *Jill*, Dillwyn also presents the protagonist's dismissive attitude towards service; Jill, as a gentry woman, has privileges, including time and money, that allow her to resist gender conventions, while others take care of her appearance and respectability. When Jill's mother objects to her playing in the mud, due to the inevitable dirt it leaves on her clothing, she 'took off [her] shoes, stockings, gloves, and drawers, turned [her] sleeves back to the shoulder, [and] wound [her] petticoats round [her] waist'; she defies conventions and rules of dress deemed appropriate for a girl of good social standing.[390] Clothing here is a barrier to childhood freedoms, with Jill announcing with childish innocence that the risk of dirt 'exposed nothing but my own flesh'; suggesting that her mother and her class could only ever object to dirty clothing rather than nudity, as dirt on skin can be easily cleaned, while any dirt on clothing would require far more effort to eradicate.[391] What is glossed over is the work that a maid or servant would have to do to rid Jill's clothing of mud and dirt. To Jill it is an inconvenience that does not merit her mother's disapproval, because clothes can be easily taken out of the picture; Jill's dirtiness is a momentary release from class and gendered norms. As a child of genteel birth, Jill would be expected to appear clean and respectable, so to dirty those clothes is to reject the conventionalities of her class. Her resistance against convention, however, also rests on indifference toward her maid's labour.

Dillwyn shows that supposedly inherent class boundaries remain even when the gap between being served and being the servant disappears, when she has Jill adopt the guise of a maid. Jill's role as maid is a temporary one; she can give it up at any time and return to the more familiar gentry lifestyle. The readers are reminded throughout the novel that her real class upbringing is vastly different to the

[389] *A Burglary*, p.70.
[390] Amy Dillwyn, *Jill* (Dinas Powys: Honno Press, 2013), p.6.
[391] Ibid, p.7.

one she pretends to have. By adopting the role of a servant, Jill does not necessarily gain the ability to empathise with the servants' lives. In one instance, when the eponymous protagonist contemplates her role as lady's maid, she expresses disgust at sewing garments for her mistress: 'it would inevitably be unreasonable to expect a servant to have cultivated both brains and fingers alike'.[392] It is ironic that Jill questions the 'brains' of servants who have acquired and cultivated skills that she herself cannot perform. Her opinion of dressmaking as a skill that requires no education or 'brain', dismissed as an 'inferior art', showcases her contemptuous attitude toward service and its relative unimportance in her day-to-day life.[393] Jill's refusal to engage in dressmaking, common work for a maid, is a rejection to adopt fully the guise of a working woman, suggesting that it is not important to Jill whether she succeeds in the long-term. Jill is a temporary inhabitant of a working-class existence; she is able to accept certain liberties associated with a working-class lifestyle while being largely ignorant of the hardships that come with actually belonging to the working class. Dillwyn's novel *Jill* thus illustrates how poorly some middle-class women understood the nature of their servants' labour and the associated skills. Jill's disregard for the labour of the working classes, especially of working-class women, is one striking manifestation of the class divide in Dillwyn's texts.

Poverty

The working class are not afforded the same privileges as Imogen and Jill in Dillwyn's texts, echoing similar characterisation seen in the texts of Chapter One. *In A Burglary or an Unconscious Influence*, the representation of the different classes is important in commenting on the naivety of the upper class; the belief of upper-class women that they know what is best for the working classes is proven misguided. As I argue in the second section, philanthropy by the upper classes relegates the working classes to a position as mere objects of charity. This suggests that upper-class women have no consideration of the real work and social change that is needed to alleviate the poverty that the working classes experience. Dillwyn's portrayal of upper-class women's misdirected generosity is made evident by the inclusion of the Richards family in *A Burglary*.

The difference in class in terms of femininity is made stark with the presentation of the appearance of Ann. As discussed previously, Imogen's appearance is the responsibility of her maid, who cares more for her mistress' femininity than Imogen herself. Imogen would willingly wear her flannels all day and run around the Welsh countryside, likely indifferent to the expectations placed on her by her upbringing to uphold certain feminine ideals. This choice of how to dress is a privilege that someone of Ann's social standing is not given; she is thoroughly judged for being

[392] *Jill,* p.60.
[393] Ibid, p.60.

> evidently a thorough slattern - unwashed, unkempt, and with dishevelled hair that looked as if it might have been done about a week ago, and not since taken down or brushed. The appearance of the children, furniture, and whole place corresponded to that of the mistress […].[394]

As previously stated, Ann is not given the privilege of time to be able to take care of her own appearance. Therefore, the criticism of her appearance is particularly harsh; it is entirely likely that she has not brushed her hair, owing to more important matters taking most of her attention. The matter of caring for the children, while their father is mostly absent, is a priority for Ann, with worries over feeding the children superseding cares about appearances. Appearance only matters to her when the gentry group come to visit: 'the nose of the second boy was not exactly in a condition that was suitable for the reception of company, so she pounced upon him unexpectedly, and hastily pinched and wiped it with a corner of her apron.'[395] Ann is also perhaps not aware that certain feminine ideals exist or why she herself must conform to them, because her life has not given her the leisure to think of it. While gentry women in the novel focus on their own passions and pursuits, life for Ann is dominated by survival rather than worries over the state of the children or the household. This is demonstrated when Imogen's attempts to teach her how to clean the home fails to make any meaningful impact with Ann; Ann cannot change what is unmanageable on the whim of an upper-class young woman like Imogen. Cleanliness requires resources and time that are largely unavailable to Ann; the resources given to her by Imogen fail to adequately address the reasons why Ann and her family live in such uncleanliness and after time 'the cottage was no whit less of a pig-sty than it had been when first she had gone there.'[396] What Ann needs is escape from abject poverty, the right support to feed her children and keep the household clean. While she can accept the money Imogen leaves for her, she 'was free from the begging taint, and – unless under very extreme pressure of want – would have gone without pecuniary assistance sooner than humiliate herself to ask for it.'[397] Ann is under pressure to keep the household and its inhabitants clean and to have them well-fed, but under her terms and recognising her pride in not begging for assistance. Financial support should be automatic from 'one of the gentry, and therefore [those] necessarily rolling in riches'; practical help like Ann is forced to accept is relatively useless.[398]

The responsibility for a neglected home, and the unruliness of its inhabitants, is firmly placed on Ann, who is often left alone while her husband works or spends his evenings poaching. As seen in the *Report,* women were often blamed for fostering 'immorality' in Welsh society by their poor

[394] *A Burglary,* p.93.
[395] Ibid, p.95.
[396] Ibid, p.207.
[397] Ibid, p.180.
[398] Ibid, p.180.

upbringing of children and poor domestic management. One commissioner stated that it is 'sufficient to account for all other immoralities, for each generation will derive its moral tone in a great degree from the influences imparted by the mothers who reared them. Where these influences are corrupted at their very source, it is vain to expect virtue in the offspring.'[399] By placing the blame for the state of the home and children entirely on Ann, Dillwyn's text evokes the accusations of the Blue Books that mothers helped to breed a new generation of 'immoral' behaviour. Accordingly, when Richards is accused of being a thief, this can be read as a further indictment of Ann's failure to provide a moral environment and influence in her home. It equates dirt and slovenliness with immoral actions.

On suspecting that Richard Richards has stolen Ethel's jewellery, a group consisting of Imogen, Ethel, Imogen's father Mr Rhys, Sir Charles Dover, and barrister Trevor Owen head to the cottage to make inquiries; their heightened belief that he is the culprit stems from him missing a finger, a key clue that identifies the thief. The fact the cottage is an 'untidy, uncared-for looking place […] with a mud-floored, roughly-furnished kitchen' places the supposed culprit in a setting that appears suited to the role of a thief, suggesting ample reason for Richard Richards to steal expensive jewellery to improve his family's dire circumstances.[400] The description of the home is similar to the descriptions noted in the Blue Books, where one Commissioner observed that:

> Evil in every shape is rampant in this district; demoralization is everywhere dominant and all good influences are comparatively powerless. They drink to the most brutal excess […]. They have little regard to modesty or to truth, and even the young children in the streets, who can scarcely articulate, give utterance to imprecations. The bodies and habits of the people are almost as dirty as the towns and houses of the swarthy region in which they swarm.[401]

The commissioner's report views and condemns drinking, immodesty, and uncleanliness as manifestations of evil, but does not fully consider the socio-economic causes behind this evil. Rather, it suggests an inherent moral corruption in the 'bodies and habits' of some people, indicative of what Tyson Roberts notes was the Commissioners and assistants' belief 'in the existence of original sin'; they 'regarded the Welsh as having retained most of the share they had been born with.'[402] This assumption is echoed in the reaction of the gentry to the Richards household in *A Burglary*; uncleanliness and mess are perceived as signs of inherent moral inferiority. What is really the result of poverty – dirt and neglect – is here interpreted as a sign of immorality and criminality. In *A Burglary*, the gentry not only fail to examine their prejudice that poverty leads to petty crime (which is not entirely ungrounded, given that Richard does engage in poaching), they also equate the results

---

[399] Ralph Lingen, Jelinger C. Symons & Henry R. Vaughan, *Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales*, p.294.
[400] *A Burglary*, p.93.
[401] *Report*, p.394.
[402] Gwyneth Tyson Roberts, *The Language of the Blue Books*, p.148.

of poverty, such as dirt, with supposed immorality; it is simpler for them to equate poverty with crime than to make further inquiries into the theft that might lead them to uncomfortable truths.

By reflecting on the state of the household and Ann's own 'unkempt' appearance, the accusations of the *Report* seem especially relevant. However, Imogen's failure to help the Richards suggests that there is no easy solution against dirt and hunger. Therefore, while the *Report* was quick to accuse women, providing targeted and effective help that would produce real change was far more difficult. To influence others and improve their social circumstances, the upper classes would need to be attuned to and understand the reasons why people such as the Richards live in squalor. Since it is grounded in ignorance of poverty and its effect on people, acts of upper-class philanthropy such as can be seen in *A Burglary,* appear redundant.

Philanthropy

Middle- and upper-class acts of philanthropy, aimed at the poorest in society, were not exclusive to Wales following the revelations of the Blue Books. In the nineteenth century philanthropy was a 'respectable activity for women who might otherwise have been idle', suggesting that middle- and upper-class women needed something to occupy their time outside of the household, which they nominally managed while others took care of the physical labour.[403] Additionally, it was 'one of the few activities that gave women access to the public sphere without threatening male domination.'[404] Men were involved in the professional and political world while women could involve themselves with the struggles of society without being seen to interfere with its actual running; they had no direct role in the making of laws, although middle- and upper-class women did form pressure groups. The sort of charity work they engaged in included help for poor children and women, work that 'reflected women's acceptance of their role as nurturers, caregivers, and healers.'[405] Thus, middle- and upper-class women leant towards a specific type of charity work: work that played to their supposed strengths firmly restricted to the domestic sphere. Women's philanthropy was consistent with the broader middle- and upper-class performance of gender; as charity workers, middle- and upper-class women could instruct other women on domestic matters and women's proper role in society. Moreover, they could use their supposed knowledge of household management to help those less fortunate than themselves. For example, in some of the institutions that were established as a result of women's philanthropic efforts, 'pauper girls were trained to sew, wash, and clean'.[406] However, as Margaret Preston notes, the skills middle- and upper-class women possessed 'would not provide

[403] Margaret Preston, 'Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century Dublin', *The Historian*, vol. 58 (1996), 763-776 (765).
[404] Ibid, p.765.
[405] Ibid, p.765.
[406] Ibid, p.765.

adults with high wage jobs but would firmly maintain the poor as members of the working classes.'[407] By limiting training for working-class women to such skills as cleaning and sewing, the middle and upper classes could ensure that, while working-class women would gain access to paid employment and thus become socially useful, they would nonetheless remain in their own sphere. As maids and servants, working-class women could contribute to the economy, while also benefiting the middle and upper classes rather than only themselves. Upper-class women were teaching the working classes to perform roles that would cater to middle- and upper-class needs.

The trope of philanthropy in English-language Victorian literature allowed two ways of presenting the typical middle- or upper-class woman: as Pamela Corpron Parker suggests, she was to be 'either depicted sentimentally as a rescuing angel of mercy, or more often, she was satirized as an interfering self-important '"Lady Bountiful" figure, extending her range of domestic tyranny.'[408] Dillwyn's depiction of the middle- and upper- class women in *A Burglary* and *Jill* suggests the latter approach, although her female protagonists maintain some genuine feeling behind their performance of philanthropy. Dillwyn satirises the form that their charity takes, and the naivety that underpins upper-class women's treatment of the working classes.

Dillwyn parodies the upper classes and their charitable treatment of the working classes in *A Burglary*, presenting their philanthropic acts as frivolous and superficial performances of morality, which reveal that middle- and upper-class women are poorly qualified to provide meaningful help to the poor. In *A Burglary*, upper-class attempts to bestow charity upon the poor are guided by mistaken assumption about working-class wants and needs, resulting from a failure to communicate with, and listen to, working-class perspectives. While philanthropy in the nineteenth century was seen as a way for upper-class women to engage in the public sphere, as noted earlier, in Dillwyn's fiction it is presented as a means for these women to interfere with the working classes for their own gain without necessarily improving the circumstances of the poorest people. It is the hope of the novel's protagonist, Imogen, to be 'of some real use in the world', question the upper-class obsession with balls and appearances, and reject being 'bound to spend the day dowagering in a carriage with fine lades, talking pretty to visitors, picking one's way through the mud in one's best clothes because the guests must be taken for a gentle constitutional, or some other abomination of that kind.'[409] This need to be of 'real use' is admirable, but her journey towards that meaningful social activism is doomed to failure, due to Imogen's own naivety and unwillingness to learn about the lives of the poor. Imogen uses working-class people for her own gain, although she perceives herself as understanding their

[407] Preston, p.766.
[408] Pamela Corpron Parker, 'Fictional Philanthropy in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* and *North and South*', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 25 (1997), 321-331 (325).
[409] *A Burglary*, pp.31-35.

negative attitudes towards the gentry and their interfering ways. Reflecting on what she will do once she has 'come out' in society, she considers the idea of teaching poor women how to cook 'to save money and make their homes very comfortable.'[410] Despite good intentions, Imogen reveals her naivety and ignorance about the lives of poorer women when she continues that 'I don't know any poor people, it's true'.[411] Further on, it transpires that she regards the poor as 'belonging to a weaker class than her own, and was on that account chivalrously disposed to sympathise with and stand up for them.'[412] She sees herself as a potential improver of the lives of poorer men and women but also as completely separate from them, despite poor families living and working on her family's land. Although she is geographically close to poverty, she does not connect the conditions of the poor with the life she and her family lead, being physically and emotionally removed from the hardships and turmoil.

Imogen's ignorance is fostered by the lack of care and interest shown by her own family towards the poorer family nearby, suggesting a generational divide in the performance of philanthropy; where Imogen feels a social expectation to be charitable, her parents have sought comfort in the separation between the rich and poor. Indeed, her father reflects that

> Neither [he] nor any of his family had ever yet set foot in the cottage; but for all that he knew perfectly well where it was, for the same reason that the more a thorn pains one, the more certain one is to be able to lay one's finger precisely on the spot where it lies. For the proximity of so evil-disposed and ill-regulated a person as a poacher was a sore trial to him; and he was resolved that if ever that cottage should be in the market he would purchase it, whatever it might cost, in order to have the satisfaction of ridding himself of his objectionable neighbour.[413]

Mr Rhys's attitude towards a poorer family places greater emphasis on his own reputation and appearance than on their suffering and possible ways to alleviate it. His comparison of the poor family's cottage to a 'thorn' suggests that they are temporarily painful, but easily removable. To remove them, by buying their property, is more satisfying than to improve their living conditions. In a sense, Mr Rhys's way of thinking is more honest than that of the typical Victorian philanthropist; if he charitably improved their situation, the 'thorn' would still be there, albeit presented in a more respectable package. Mr Rhys' honesty stands in contrast to Imogen's self-deception; she knows she should not be in the position of instructing others on subjects she herself is not an expert in, yet the societal expectations on young gentry women to perform philanthropic acts outweighs her initial

[410] *A Burglary,* p.31.
[411] Ibid, pp.31-2.
[412] Ibid, p.101.
[413] Ibid, p.92.

scepticism. Mr Rhys' attitude is nearer to that of Gwenllian's aunt in *The Rebecca Rioter*, further emphasising the generational divide in philanthropic intentions.

Having admitted to not knowing 'any poor people', Imogen's contemplation of performing acts of charity shows an approach that differs from that of her father, who only wants to remove the poor from his proximity. Although, like her father she considers the poor inferior, her belief that she must support them on account of her privileged position suggests not only a generational change but also a gendered difference. Men, Dillwyn suggests, are focused on practical matters such as land management and housing arrangements, while women engage with poorer people in a personal capacity; thus, the culture of middle-class philanthropy reflects the expectation that women are more nurturing, and therefore better suited to help those most in need of care. Her father's solution is to physically remove the poor while her own is to perform charity, although she does admit that 'it was quite another thing to think of going about amongst them in their own homes, and trying to convert them to the same ideas of comfort, cleanliness, and morality as were entertained by herself and her equals.'[414] This reflection is prompted by her cousin Ethel's encouragement to visit the poor with food and medicine, in order to 'civilise them a little.'[415] Ethel, as the richest person in the novel, finds nothing wrong with this notion, although Imogen expresses a more critical attitude, stating that she does not 'see what right [she] should have to interfering with a poor woman, and telling her she isn't clean enough. […] she must be wondering internally why [Imogen] didn't mind [her] own business'.[416] This is an important conversation between two well-off women about their views of the poor: one believes she must be seen helping and teaching them how to live in decent society; the other notes that it is none of her business how the poor live. Both believe that they have a duty to help the poor, though their approaches differ. It also highlights their perception of working-class women as inherently inferior in the art of homemaking and therefore dependent on upper-class charity. It is clear from Ethel and Imogen's dialogue that, although they are not 'authorities' on domestic management themselves, they consider their natural class superiority to compensate for any lack of skill and expect working-class women to defer to their expertise.

In the aftermath of the burglary, Imogen rejects her earlier reservations about interfering in the lives of the poor: pitying the Richards for the false accusation that has left them destitute and Richard severely ill, she takes it upon herself to teach them about cleanliness. The narrator likens the idea to

> a transformation scene in a pantomime. There were the evil giants of dirt and untidiness to be overcome, and there was she to enact the good fairy and overcome them by her wand of soap

[414] *A Burglary*, pp.101-2.
[415] Ibid, p.102.
[416] Ibid, p.102.

> and water – always remembering, however, that the potent weapon was to be applied vicariously and not with her own hands![417]

That Imogen likens herself to a 'good fairy' indicates how she wants to be seen; as the outsider coming in to act as benign influence and 'transform' the lives of people who never asked for help. The comparison to a pantomime reveals that she perceives her philanthropic work as light-hearted and fun, anticipating a 'transformation' that will serve as entertainment. What is telling is the admission that her 'weapon' is to provide the poor with 'soap and water' while she observes and does not take part 'with her own hands'. The idea that she might take part in the act of cleaning seems absurd to Imogen, as her role is to provide advice rather than take any physical action. She admits before this endeavour that 'she did not feel any special inclination or qualification for the employment – but what did that matter if it was right?'[418] Her own admission that she neither wishes nor is qualified to help the working-class family improve their domestic circumstances further emphasises the performative nature of her philanthropy: her charitable work really is a 'pantomime'. She waves the wand and, while others bring about the transformation, she responds to the obligations of her class position by appearing in the guise of a benign moral influence. Despite possible good intentions that upper-class women may have, it is in general an act that must be seen and admired.

Her attempt at charity with the Richards contradicts her own intuition that the poor do not need people to meddle in their business, showing that social expectations eventually triumph over the actual needs of the poor. Dillwyn's satire of upper-class philanthropy is reminiscent of the middle- and upper-class response to the Blue Books in Wales. Imogen's philanthropy, like attempts by Lady Llanover and other gentry women to improve the reputation of Wales and its people, are honest and well-intentioned. Yet Dillwyn's depiction of Imogen also exposes the problems inherent in a campaign for national change, especially change in the habits and manners of the lower classes, that is led predominantly by upper- and middle-class women. Dillwyn suggests that gentry women cannot and will not understand the true experiences of the poor, which compromises their efforts to change them. Dillwyn signals that when gentry women like Imogen place themselves in roles of authority, the disparities between rich and poor women become all the more apparent. Middle- and upper-class activism that largely focuses on appearances, such as the cleanliness of working-class homes, is revealed as ineffective: there is no simple 'wand' that vanishes the 'evil' of poverty. Even charitable gifts of money, while more useful to the poor, are limited in their effectiveness since the upper classes will continue to possess most of it. Money plays an important part in the performance of charity, as it enables gentry women to provide food, medicine, and domestic equipment to the poor. However,

---

[417] *A Burglary*, p.172.
[418] Ibid, p.164.

as Dillwyn shows, these gifts do not lead to meaningful change; granting money to the poor in isolated acts of charity only puts a plaster over a large gaping wound.

In Dillwyn's novel, gentry women's acts of charity show well-intentioned but ultimately misguided attempts at helping the poor. While they hope to inspire some change in the lives of the working class, in terms of appearances and cleanliness, that hope is based on the eventual benefits that the upper-class women themselves will receive from performing charity. By teaching the poor how to perform domestic tasks, upper-class women can demonstrate their influence and philanthropic effectiveness. Indeed, as Mary Wollstonecraft suggests in her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), the perceptions of others may have been an important dimension of philanthropy: the upper-class woman reflects on the 'impression she may make on her fellow-travellers'; whatever her intentions or actions, she must always wonder what others might think of her philanthropic ventures.[419] Arguably, though, the way in which the poor themselves perceive and respond to upper-class philanthropy is also important. By instructing the working classes according to the domestic ideals and expectations of the middle and upper classes, philanthropists claim their own social superiority but also give the poor an opportunity to emulate the manners of the more affluent, respectable members of society. By commanding admiration for their own, upper-class domestic manners, they reinforce a hierarchy to which the working classes are expected to defer. Philanthropy is, in this respect, both a vanity project and a strategy for maintaining inequality.

Dillwyn's representation of philanthropic acts not only serves as a comment on upper-class vanity, but it also suggests that upper-class women's education leaves them ill-equipped for both practical work and effective social activism. In her *Vindication*, Wollstonecraft notes that upper-class women sneer at labour because:

> A fine lady […] has been taught to look down with contempt on the vulgar employments of life; though she has only been incited to acquire accomplishments that rise a degree above sense; for even corporeal accomplishments cannot be acquired with any degree of precision unless the understanding has been strengthened by exercise.[420]

Since ladies' education a century after Wollstonecraft wrote the *Vindication* still largely focused on refinement in music, dancing, sketching and needlework, upper-class women lack understanding of physical domestic labour. Since they undertake only light domestic duties, relying on servants to perform more onerous tasks, they cannot fully understand the physical demands of cleaning, cooking, and providing clothing for a whole family.

---

[419] Mary Wollstonecraft, 'A Vindication of the Rights of Woman', in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt, 8th Edition (London: W. W. Norton & Co, 2006), pp.170-195 (p.189).
[420] Ibid, pp.194-5.

Imogen's reflection on her failure to change the Richards' lives recognises her unsuitability for her philanthropic role, while also more generally questioning the value of the approach. She notes how

> she endeavoured to inculcate cleanliness and tidiness whenever she saw what she thought a good opportunity of doing so, either directly or indirectly. But perhaps she did not go the right way to work, or perhaps the family may have been unteachable, for certain it is that she was no more successful in this line than she had been in trying to educate the children's taste in the matter of sweets.[421]

Ultimately, her own lack of experience, combined with the Richards' lack of resources, concludes in both their and her lives continuing unchanged; Imogen follows convention and takes her place in London's high society, while the Richards are content to keep their lower standing, as long as they can do so in Wales, having contemplated fleeing their tarnished reputation by emigrating to America. We have seen already in Chapter One the significance of respectability within Welsh culture, and the severe costs imposed on those whose reputations fall short of society's expectations; for example, in the forced emigration of Martha to America, and Myra to New Zealand. Imogen's lack of impact, followed by her removal from rural Wales into upper-class London society, suggests, following Wollstonecraft, that aristocratic women are 'warm in many pursuits; yet this warmth, never concentrated into perseverance, soon exhausts itself; exhaled by its own heat, or meeting with some other fleeting passion'.[422] Imogen's trajectory shows that upper-class women's interest in philanthropy can be temporary and fleeting, because they will always have other 'pursuits' and 'passions' that will take their fancy, and any interests prior to that are forgotten about. Indeed, the lives of those she aimed to change are also eventually forgotten about, and allowed to follow their own path without the interference of an upper-class Anglo-Welsh woman performing her class duties.

Imogen's performance of charity results from the consensus in the novel that upper-class women must fulfil social expectations of philanthropy towards the poor. Due to upper-class women's show of philanthropy, working-class women become their objects of charity, who have to abide by the rules imposed by their class superiors, even if those superiors have no expertise over what they seek to regulate. Although Imogen has good intentions, she also resorts to this mode of thinking, expecting the Richards to take on her 'wisdom' without hesitation, and she is left confused when they do not easily conform to her expectations. Dillwyn shows that upper-class perceptions of the poor are distorted, and the working classes occupy a more complex role than that of mere 'objects of charity'. However, this distorted view is a consequence of how middle- and upper-class women were pigeon-holed into a position of moral influence, valued by Victorian society primarily for 'tenderness of

[421] *A Burglary*, p.207.
[422] Wollstonecraft, p.190.

understanding, unworldliness and innocence, domestic affection, and, in various degrees, submissiveness.'[423] Without means for changing the circumstances of the poor, as dictated by the roles they are meant to adopt, women are left ineffectual.

The problem with the ideal of Welsh womanhood

> All I want is just what I say, to be of some use in the world.[424]

Early in *A Burglary*, Imogen confidently states her purpose in life: to use her class privilege to help others less fortunate than herself. Already we have seen her attempts to help the Richards, with disappointing lack of success. They are well-meaning and demonstrates a side to Imogen that is charitable yet naïve. It also allows Dillwyn to highlight the difference in Imogen's attempts at moral influence: with the Richards' Imogen is actively trying to be charitable and helpful, which is unsuccessful; with Sylvester she appears to perform an instinctive, natural tendency by upper-class women to exert moral influence over those, especially men, who need moral guidance. This last section will reference John Ruskin's lecture 'Of Queens' Gardens' from *Sesame and Lilies* (1865), in order to examine how Dillwyn comments on a dominant Victorian ideal of middle- and upper-class women's moral development and influence in *A Burglary*. Drawing on Ruskin's view of middle- and upper-class women and the important part they play in 'moralising' men, I will observe how Dillwyn's novel explores and challenges its impact, ultimately giving an unfulfilling ending to a heroine initially portrayed as defying class and gendered expectations. Imogen eventually succumbs to the role of the 'enduringly, incorruptibly good' wife.[425] Even before marriage, Imogen, as the 'good woman', finds herself in the role of the influencer, who is responsible for correcting morally suspect behaviour, especially in middle-class males. Thus, Dillwyn also explores the consequences of romance. Her texts suggest that the personal growth and development of her female protagonist is a very firmly conventional one, which requires her to give up any future intellectual or physical independence. Dillwyn allows Sylvester to redeem himself somewhat from his past actions (stealing, fraud), while Imogen shows little personal growth beyond her fleeting dalliance in charitable deeds. By having Imogen agree to marriage at the end of the novel, Dillwyn seems to resign her character to the image of the woman as domestic angel. However, Dillwyn also suggests that Imogen's influence throughout the novel is largely ineffective; this suggests that even though upper-class

---

[423] Unnamed author, 'The "Woman Question": The Victorian Debate about Gender', in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt, 8th Edition (London: W. W. Norton & Co, 2006), pp.1581-1583 (p.1581).
[424] *A Burglary*, p.31.
[425] John Ruskin, 'Of Queens' Gardens', in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt, 8th Edition (London: W. W. Norton & Co, 2006), pp.1587-1588 (p.1588).

philanthropy is the conventional route for women, it does not need to have a large, or any, impact as long as upper-class women are seen to be engaging in philanthropic acts.

John Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies,* published in 1865, was a seminal lecture that heralded Victorian women as the submissive domestic angel, whose duty was to provide men with a moral atmosphere and guidance in the private home, protecting them against the temptations and corrupting influences of the outside world. His vision of middle- and upper-class womanhood is, in Kate Millett's view, to consign them to 'an ancillary circle of housewifely and philanthropic activity.'[426] Ruskin observes that women must be

> infallibly wise – wise, not for self-development, but for self-renunciation; wise, not that she may set herself above her husband, but that she may never fail from his side: wise, not with the narrowness of insolent and loveless pride but with the passionate gentleness of an infinitely variable, because infinitely applicable, modesty of service – the true changefulness of woman.[427]

This suggests that women must only be 'wise' if their wisdom does not interfere with, or replace, the natural superiority of their husbands. As man is 'eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender', women's role is confined to the home, where her 'power is for rule […] and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement, and decision.'[428] This leaves women in the home, where her influence is confined to two spheres: that of the domestic, and philanthropy. Millett, in her essay 'Ruskin versus Mill', notes how Ruskin's 'lecture is significant as one of the most complete insights obtainable into that compulsive masculine fantasy one might call the official Victorian attitude.'[429] To have the woman at home, while the men engage in public life, is to not only minimise women's contribution, but to also prevent women from doing anything beyond the home. To portray upper- and middle- class women as mere support for the husband through 'order' and 'arrangement' of the household, is to relegate them to a status of subservience. Their role is to compliment and help others, especially men, who are far freer to make errors, a luxury which is not offered to wives and mothers, who 'must be incapable of error[.] So far as she rules, all must be right, or nothing is.'[430] This pressure to be perfect does not allow room for young women such as Imogen to explore their class and gendered boundaries to the extent that men do; while '[the] man, in his rough work in open world, must encounter all peril and trial.'[431]

---

[426] Kate Millett, 'The Debate over Women: Ruskin versus Mill', *Victorian Studies,* 14 (1970), 63-82 (76) https://www.jstor.org/stable/3826407
[427] Ruskin, p.1588.
[428] Ibid, p.1587.
[429] Millett, p.64.
[430] Ruskin, p.1588.
[431] Ibid, pp.1587-8.

Millett emphasises that Ruskin's view of education for women encompasses 'the graceful studies of music, art and literature, [and] Nature herself constitutes the fourth branch of female education', which will result in women '[growing] in piety'.[432] In response, David Sonstroem argues that 'Ruskin's educational scheme for women is designed to broaden thought, feeling, and outlook, and to encourage more assertive, outgoing behaviour.'[433] Ruskin believes that education of middle- and upper-class women should ultimately benefit the moral wellbeing of others. By stating that Ruskin's view encourages 'outgoing behaviour' in women, Sonstroem ignores the point that this vision of education is limited to managing households and other charitable endeavour, and not to encourage acts of engagement within the running of the country. Dillwyn does present a different experience of women's education. Jill's own education is varied, if not always orderly. She speaks several languages and is highly competent in navigating foreign customs, showing scorn towards the usual education of upper-class women. Her indifference and sometimes cruel attitude towards her governesses emphasise her lack of interest in obtaining a 'smattering of accomplishments' she does not consider useful to herself. Gentry women's education, as Jill understands, is designed to help them secure a good marriage, which will also place them in a sphere of moral influence, but not in a position to change economic and political circumstances – something to which their husbands were entitled. Jill's rejection of domestic education is a rejection of a future as wife and mother, while education in languages and money allows her to break traditional norms and acquire some of the freedom men have. Her 'influence', therefore, is not bound to men, but an opportunity to wield influence further afield.

Imogen's 'unconscious influence' is directed at a man, drastically transforming William Sylvester's character and behaviour. However, the fact that the influence is wholly unconscious deprives Imogen of meaningful agency – and it also leaves Imogen largely unchanged. Dillwyn parodies conventional narratives that celebrate love as a means of influence, in which women are positioned as the saviours of morally flawed men. Instead, Dillwyn highlights that the romanticisation of women as a source of moral influence leaves little room for women's own development and agency. The influence over Sylvester is ultimately futile, as his death prematurely ends his own development. This suggests that Dillwyn is passing moral judgment on a person's prior behaviour and not allowing morally suspect characters to benefit from any happy consequences, despite a subsequent change in their character. Alternatively, more conventional narratives would reward the man for his reformed character with marriage; by killing him, Dillwyn rejects the conventional narrative that a woman's love has the power to transform a man, taking a complete opposite direction from the portrayal of Egain and Alfred

[432] Millett, p.71.
[433] David Sonstroem, 'Millett versus Ruskin: A Defense of Ruskin's "Of Queens' Gardens"', *Victorian Studies*, 20 (1977), 283-297 (294).

in *Rose Mervyn*. With a wife by his side, Sylvester might have avoided any immoral temptations that he is ultimately punished for, and subsequently given Imogen more agency as an influential woman. In her popular conduct manual, *The Woman of England: Their Social Duties and Domestic Habits* (1839), Sarah Stickney wrote about women's influence over men:

> when the snares of the world were around him, and temptations from within and without have bribed over the witness in his bosom, he has thought of the humble monitress who sat alone, guarding the fireside comforts of his distant home; and the remembrance of her character, clothed in moral beauty has scattered the clouds before his mental vision, and sent him back to that beloved home, a wiser and better man.[434]

A Burglary makes much of the fact that Sylvester had no proper female influence in his life. Having lost his mother at an early age, 'it was not altogether his own doing that he was what he was, and that he would probably have been far different and better had he had some one to love him and be good to him when a child'.[435] Without a maternal influence in his life – the woman who would have provided him a moral compass when growing up – he has no reference to 'fireside comforts' or the 'moral beauty' of woman, until he meets Imogen.

Sylvester is a 'gentleman burglar' to whom Imogen is drawn, without knowing the reason why.[436] After their first meeting, Imogen reflects that 'she had certainly never before met anyone who was at all like this Mr. Sylvester, and that she would have been very much puzzled to have to pronounce an opinion on him.'[437] This complexity in character provides Imogen with a challenge, although only the reader is aware that this challenge consists of possibly reforming a thief and embezzler. If she were aware of her influence over him, it would provide her with the very level of usefulness in society that she so craves, as examined earlier. The narrator remarks that

> [Imogen's] unconsciously-exercised influence over herself ought to have taught her that she, in her turn, might also be influencing some other person without knowing it. […] she had not begun to realise what an amount of work – both good and bad – is performed in this world of ours by unconscious influence.[438]

Her work with the Richards' is one of conscious influence and is deemed a failure. Her unconscious influence is slightly more effective, but since she is unaware of its existence, it provides her with no sense of moral agency. Unaware of the influence she has even over herself, her influence over

---

[434] Sarah Stickney Ellis, 'The Women of England: Their Social Duties and Domestic Habits', in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature,* ed. by Stephen Greenblatt, 8th Edition (London: W. W. Norton & Co, 2006), pp.1584-1585 (p.1584).
[435] *A Burglary,* p.255.
[436] Ibid, p.141.
[437] Ibid, p.139.
[438] Ibid, p.256.

Sylvester is half-hearted, and never fully realised. When Imogen does come to know of her influence, she questions if 'some of [Sylvester's] subsequent lack of goodness or actual wickedness might not lie at her door?'[439] This acknowledgment of a woman's influence places unwarranted pressure on women in the novel, that their influence can be a good or bad thing, depending on the character of the man involved. Indeed, this was seen in the supposed influence of Gwenllian over Evan in *The Rebecca Rioter*, with a heavy burden unconsciously put on Gwenllian to direct Evan and his life choices. Similarly, Dillwyn also suggests that rather than being morally 'good', women can also inspire feelings or actions of 'wickedness'. This suggests that due to their unconscious influence over others, women must always try to be perfect themselves. If the outcome of their influence is bad, they can excuse themselves for not being consciously aware of having ever exercised such influence in the first place. Once upper-class women become aware of their influence, they can express shame of influencing such bad behaviour in others, and therefore separate themselves from 'wickedness'.

The thought that women such as Imogen can influence bad behaviour also reveals upper-class women's agenda in performing charity. When Imogen continues to lament her unconscious influence over Sylvester, she states that

> When in her best and highest moods she had often been troubled by an impatience of the uselessness of her life, and had felt eager cravings to be able to benefit the world somehow – to do something that should make a real difference in it for good. And now that it appeared that the very chance she had longed for had come to her without her perceiving it, she felt by no means satisfied of having made the most of it, and profited by it, as she might have done.[440]

The reference to profiting highlights how Imogen wanted an opportunity of influence to help improve herself, and she regrets not being able to make the most of it. Similarly, having missed the opportunity to fully reform Sylvester, Imogen feels that she has failed to develop as a person. While others of her ilk can show their charitable abilities, Imogen fails twice and remains the naïve woman she was initially at the beginning of the novel, and she must settle to exerting future influence through her marriage to Sir Charles. It is an unsatisfying ending for a young woman who wanted to defy gendered expectations (of coming out in society, marriage, and femininity) and yet is left with everything that she originally despised. Imogen has become socialised to the view that marriage produces real change, instead of forging a more independent path.

According to Victorian conventions, upper- and middle-class women depended on marriage as their only hope of establishing any meaningful impact on society. This is a view that is addressed early in the novel. Imogen's brother, Ralph states that a woman 'can't have any profession except to marry,

---

[439] *A Burglary,* p.332.
[440] Ibid, p.332.

and it's absurd of her to go taking up some particular line when she doesn't know what her husband'll be like, or what sort of position she'll have to fill.'[441] Although viewed by Imogen as misogynistic, Ralph here seems to articulate a socially dominant view about women's activism, which his sister calls into question but cannot fully resist. Here, Dillwyn suggests that married women are expected to take on causes that directly interest the husband, implying that women have little to no autonomy to adopt causes about which they are personally passionate. Indeed, Pamela Corpron Parker's study of Elizabeth Gaskell notes that 'participation in philanthropic activities became an important sign of family status', suggesting that women's choice of philanthropy is primarily defined by family and marriage, further demoting the individuality of women's philanthropic work.[442] In the case of Imogen's first foray into charity, her target is a household living near her own family's land; she follows an expectation to represent her family's status by helping the local poor.

Imogen's response to her brother's assessment of women and marriage is to challenge the inevitability of marriage, stating that the

> popular idea that it was the natural destiny of all women to get married if possible, seemed to her to be an insult to her sex, and she was always ready to oppose it fiercely […]; falling in love she regarded in the light of a piece of folly – a thing not exactly wrong, but a sort of contemptible weakness of which, she was convinced, she would herself never be guilty.[443]

Early on, this places Imogen into the position of the 'rebel', who might be domesticated by a romantic link to the right upper-class man. Her previous views on marriage can be dismissed as naïve folly when she marries Sir Charles, apparently proving that her brother's initial views on married women were correct. When he first proposes, Charles aims to persuade Imogen to marry him by stressing that he

> know[s] of an object to [Imogen's] energies who would afford them ample scope, and whose life you have the power to make perfectly happy. You say you want work that shall do good in the world, and make a real difference in it. Well then![444]

This 'object' is Sir Charles himself, who will provide Imogen with an outlet to 'make a difference', either through charity or other means that she finds will give her life meaning. His social standing will allow her to expand her philanthropic endeavours by introducing her to new connections and causes. His statement that 'no woman need ever fear not being of use when she's married' highlights the general belief that women must marry to gain increased agency in society.[445] Briefly, Imogen

---

[441] *A Burglary*, p.29.
[442] Parker, p.323.
[443] *A Burglary*, pp.29-30.
[444] Ibid, p.199.
[445] Ibid, p.200.

appears to reject this stereotype through her initial refusal to marry Sir Charles, an affirmation that 'she can be just as much use when she's single'.[446] However her initial intention of philanthropic ventures as a single woman never comes to fruition, and her early independence, evident in her refusal of marriage is ultimately compromised when at the end of the novel she agrees to marry Sir Charles. Furthermore, she even comes to accept the idea that marriage is a better outlet for her usefulness. She laments her initial rejection of Sir Charles, which has deprived her of an 'opportunity of a paragon husband.'[447] This is a man she knows to be morally good, and who could, therefore, have allowed her to perform charitable duties without much interference. He would have trusted her to act out his own societal beliefs and to represent his good standing.

Sir Charles is morally good from the outset, although he tells Imogen that he considers himself as 'unutterably inferior to her good great merits.'[448] Furthermore, in reflecting on Imogen deciding to visit the Richards instead of going skating, Charles notes that 'it would be far better to try and learn self-sacrifice from her example.'[449] Millett writes in response to Ruskin's views on the goodness of women that

> in general the task of woman is to serve man and the family through "womanly guidance," to exercise some vague and remote good influence on everyone, and to dispense a bit of charity from time to time.[450]

Imogen's lack of selfishness in foregoing a pleasurable day skating to instead visit and help the poor cements in Sir Charles' mind that she is the perfect wife, seeing for himself that she can show 'womanly guidance' by her selfless actions and engaging in charitable activities. Choosing to help the Richards, rather than seeking fun for herself, is the final piece that Sir Charles needs to confirm his decision to ask her to marry him.

Imogen's marriage to Sir Charles, although based on romantic love, is a disappointing outcome for a young woman who shows an independent outlook on life at the beginning of the novel. A young woman who did not care for conventions of dress and behaviour, or even the pressure to marry, subsequently marries and shows relatively little growth in her development beyond dismissing her initial refusal of what marriage meant for women. Her destiny is to become the wife of an upper-class gentleman, and to develop her position as a moral influencer, work that began in the novel through her influence over Sylvester.

---

[446] *A Burglary,* p.201.
[447] Ibid, p.336.
[448] Ibid, p.191.
[449] Ibid, p.193.
[450] Millett, p.70.

Conclusion

In defence of Ruskin's lecture, Sonstroem explains that women are 'to be trained to forego egocentric self-development for the sake of others' welfare.'[451] By contrast, Millett notes that women are 'dispossessed persons themselves, both legally and economically, [and] quite unable to give any really material help to other dispossessed groups'.[452] These observations highlight how young women such as Imogen are pressured into a role that means losing a sense of their own personality while trying to serve others; excluded from playing an active role in shaping laws, economic conditions, and social policies, they are restricted to performing charity. The novels suggests that change must come from women engaging in society at large, separate from focusing on fixing others' moral behaviours. Only then will the lives of working-class women – indeed all Welsh women in a post-Blue Books narrative – improve. Acts of philanthropy, while well-intentioned, are nevertheless designed to promote the moral goodness of the middle- and upper-class women of the texts in this chapter. At the heart of their acts, and without these 'generous' women being conscious of or attempting to recognise it, is the desperate plight of some of these Welsh working-class people, and working-class women in particular. No real conscious awareness of the role of the working-class woman in upholding idealised feminine ideals is shown by the middle- and upper-class women of these texts. In Jill's case, she almost sneeringly dismisses their hard work when she herself adopts the guise of a working woman. Following Chapter One's analysis of the ideal Anglo-Welsh womanhood, dominated by middle- and upper-class women, this chapter has sought to emphasise the hypocrisy of this ideal, and allow a glimpse into the evolving narrative of nineteenth-century literature in Wales, which, as the century drew to a close, began to focus beyond the romanticised, idealised view of a certain class of Welsh woman.

[451] Sonstroem, p.293.
[452] Millett, p.78.

Chapter Three. The Emergence of the Modern Welsh Woman

Following the previous chapter's exploration of upper- and middle-class Welsh womanhood and its influence on working-class women, this chapter returns to the examination of working-class Welsh womanhood. Allen Raine's *A Welsh Singer* (1896) and *A Welsh Witch* (1902) form the basis of this chapter, two texts commonly viewed as popular romance novels. However, this chapter argues that they are an important step in the representation of Welsh working-class womanhood. It will be demonstrated that Raine avoids the Victorian novel's 'fallen woman' trope, where 'popular fiction' could 'barely conceal a genuine dread of female sexual, social, and economic autonomy.'[453] Instead, the analysis in this chapter shows how Raine explores and celebrates the autonomy of her working-class female characters through having one of her lead female protagonists subvert the 'fallen woman' trope, by taking her fate into her own hands instead of waiting to be 'rescued'. Furthermore, these characters embrace their Welshness rather than rejecting it as an obstacle to modernity, as termed as independent, socially aware women. Moreover, unlike their middle- and upper-class counterparts, they do not undergo anglicisation.

Rather than being strictly romance novels, these texts are also examples of the *bildungsroman* which 'charts the protagonist's actual or metaphorical journey from youth to maturity.'[454] The novels seek to retain both characters' Welshness, both ethnically and culturally, as Mifanwy and Catrin develop into modern middle-class citizens. Thus, Raine offers Welsh women a different way of existing in the modern world which does not involve anglicisation, a strategy that initially emerged as a way to counter the Blue Books' accusations, as shown earlier in this thesis. The female protagonists of the novels in this chapter reclaim their Welsh cultural identity. Indeed, their successful social mobility is rooted in their Welshness. The analysis below, however, will also demonstrate that Raine does at times draw on unfortunate stereotypes of a racialised Wales. Nevertheless, Welshness is celebrated as an identity that can withstand the pressures to conform to an anglicised ideal; it does not need to merge with any other cultural identity to be respected and successful.

Anne Beynon Puddicombe (1836-1908), better known by her pseudonym Allen Raine, wrote several late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century novels, such as the National Eisteddfod winner *Ynysoer* (1894), *By Berwen Banks* (1899), *Garthowen* (1900) and *Queen of the Rushes* (1906). Born in Castellnewydd Emlyn in Ceredigion, Raine spent several years living in England. Having married the Welsh banker Beynon Puddicombe in 1872, she resided in London, returning to Wales on account of her husband's mental health issues. Raine's novels then supported them financially. They were

[453] Beth Kalikoff, 'The Falling Woman in Three Victorian Novels', *Studies in the Novel,* 19 (1987), 357–367 (357) www.jstor.org/stable/29532514.
[454] Petra Rau, 'Bildungsroman' (2002), *The Literary Encyclopedia,* https://www.litencyc.com/php/stopics.php?rec=true&UID=119 [accessed 10 August 2021].

categorised as 'romance' novels, 'impossibly idyllic and clichéd'.[455] However, as Katie Gramich suggests, Raine 'includes and comments upon a wide range of distinctly un-idyllic aspects of rural life', including 'such taboo subjects as madness, witchcraft, domestic abuse and religious frenzy.'[456] Gramich's claim dismisses the notion of Raine as a mere romance novelist, presenting her instead as an author who explores rural, domestic issues under the guise of romance fiction. That is not to say that romance does not play a significant part in her novels; Sally Roberts Jones argues in the *Writers of Wales* series that Allen Raine's books have

> almost a dual nature. On the one hand there is the sober, precise, even witty description of the rural society of which she was herself a part, and on the other hand there are passages of what can only be described as romantic gush, and a variety of awkward, creaking devices intended to bring about the appropriate happy ending[.][457]

The romance genre is driven by the distinctive Welsh theme of her novels: they are mostly set in Wales, with vivid descriptions of the vast Ceredigion landscape creating a sense of sweeping romanticism. Her novels also include numerous references to Welsh culture and the natural use of the Welsh language to present the way her characters speak. These combine to embody an idealised image of Wales, a celebration of wild Celtic Welshness that can also be seen as racialised or stereotyped. Her novels *A Welsh Singer* and *A Welsh Witch*, in particular, include a romanticised stereotype of Welshness, with the main female protagonists' connection to the wild countryside reflected by their behaviour and appearance. It must be noted, however, that Raine's stereotyped interpretation of Wales is often in sympathy with ethnic and cultural Welsh womanhood, as opposed to the glorification of the anglicised Welsh womanhood discussed in earlier chapters. Moreover, as Roberts Jones stresses, Raine 'rarely, if ever, writes of her peasant characters as either a Hardyesque 'chorus' or a gallery of quaint rustics; they are distinct and recognisable people, and people with whom she and her heroes and heroines identify.'[458] The easy to relate to characters, however stereotyped, ensured an audience for her novels: *A Welsh Singer* (1896) sold 316,000 copies by the early twentieth century.[459] In her popular fiction, Raine validates Welsh working-class womanhood, and although she veers into stereotyping her characters, she nevertheless celebrates their otherness while presenting these characters' development.

A Welsh Singer and *A Welsh Witch* provide similar representations of Welsh women; specifically, they feature poor, young women who are uneducated but who manage to raise themselves into the

---

[455] Katie Gramich, *Twentieth-Century Women's Writing in Wales: Land, Gender, Belonging* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), p.35.
[456] Ibid, p.35.
[457] Sally Jones, *Writers of Wales: Allen Raine* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1979), p.31.
[458] Ibid, pp.59-60.
[459] Ibid, p.22.

middle classes. Mifanwy from *A Welsh Singer* and Catrin in *A Welsh Witch* are considered 'unruly' and 'untamed' young women, characteristics which are evident from descriptions of their darker, tanned skin tone to their defiance of social and class conventions. However, Mifanwy and Catrin's behaviour never strays into immoral territory, allowing the perceptions of their 'wildness' to be confined largely to their appearance or socially unconventional behaviours. They are presented as success stories of working-class Welsh womanhood thriving despite the judgments and challenges they face. While Raine's depiction touches on middle-class anglicisation, by contrasting the two protagonists of the novels with alternative images of femininity in Elizabeth and Yshbel, Mifanwy and Catrin are always distinctively and proudly Welsh. They are improving themselves while never losing their Welsh identity. Raine offers a validation of Welsh working-class women defying societal and class expectations. All models of Welsh womanhood I have explored so far have involved some anglicisation. Raine's novels, however, demonstrate a past that is entirely Welsh, and largely removed from the process of anglicisation.

Introduction to the novels

A Welsh Singer is the story of Mifanwy, who is raised by a kindly couple alongside Ieuan, both working as shepherds for the upper-class, tyrannical John Powys. Powys' niece, Laissabeth (later known through the anglicised version, Elizabeth) is the love rival of Mifanwy for Ieuan's affections, and this relationship between the two young women establishes a sense of competition between Welsh womanhood and aspiring anglicisation. Ieuan's departure for better prospects as a sculptor in London becomes the catalyst for Mifanwy's own personal development, as she is unwilling to passively wait for his return to claim her. Although initially intending to work in service, Mifanwy joins the circus as the maid to the owner's wife. She is taken on as a singer with the circus after she is heard when joining in with the communal singing. Mifanwy forges a brief career within the circus, before seizing an opportunity to go to London and develop her career as a singer. This in itself represents a departure from the traditional romance plot. Mifanwy's education as a singer, first developed through participation in *eisteddfodau*, later becomes a successful national career. Her singing is celebrated for its passion and emotions, her talent eclipsing all other women, in particular Elizabeth. Through her success, Mifanwy adopts the new guise of La Belle Russe (The Beautiful Russian), due to the audience's misidentification of her accent. This new identity, supported by her physical and behavioural transformation, leads to Ieuan failing to recognise her, allowing him to fall in love with a more polished version of the country girl he grew up with. When Ieuan returns to Wales seeking release from his promise to Mifanwy, he is surprised to learn Mifanwy is La Belle Russe. Mifanwy's development from poor country girl to lauded professional singer, victoriously claiming her man, represents the triumph of a Welsh over an Anglo-Welsh female character. While a romantic and melodramatic cliché, the success of a distinctly Welsh character and the downfall of the Anglo-

Welsh Elizabeth suggests that the novel champions Welsh working-class womanhood over Anglo-Welsh bourgeois womanhood. In this way, the novel explores the possibilities of a modern Welsh identity that is not the result of anglicisation.

A Welsh Witch explores rural working-class womanhood through the eyes of a protagonist who has an awkward relationship with her community. Catrin is presented as a societal outsider, whose dark skin, love of nature and the outdoors, and defiance of social conventions lead to accusations of being the titular 'Welsh Witch'. Neglected by her alcoholic father, after her mother's death Catrin forges her own path in Treswnd, finding happiness in the freedom the outdoors provides, as opposed to the traditional confines of the home. Catrin only returns home permanently when her father becomes seriously ill, taking her place as the domesticated, dutiful daughter as she nurses him. Her longing for the outdoors never leaves, and when he dies she resumes her previous lifestyle by following the gypsies, the family on her mother's side. The novel features three other characters: Yshbel, Goronwy and Walto, with whom Catrin struggles to interact, despite her occasional desire to be socially accepted. Through these four characters, Raine depicts romantic trials, including Yshbel and Walto's secret love, which defies the class expectation that initially forced them apart. The more-socially appropriate engagement between Yshbel and Goronwy is a failure, with the characters expressing their love for Walto and Catrin respectively. The ideal romantic ending for all the characters – Catrin and Goronwy, and Yshbel and Walto together – is typical of the romance genre, with the obstacles placed in front of all the characters eventually overcome. However, Raine's use of the romance genre encompasses a number of distinctive elements. As Jones argues, it contains 'first, the romantic plot; second, a celebration of the land and people of Wales; and third, a careful and lovingly observed study of Welsh society in nineteenth-century Cardiganshire.'[460] Jones does not, however, explore the novel's affinity with the *bildungsroman* which underpins its representation of successful young Welsh women, who hold on to their Welshness as they enter middle-class society.

Chapter aims

This chapter explores the positive representation of Welshness and working-class women in *A Welsh Singer* and *A Welsh Witch*. First, I look at the significance of race and class in the novels, emphasising the growth and social mobility of Mifanwy and Catrin, which challenges the contemporary argument that working-class women should stay within their inherited social and class hierarchy. Both novels emphasise the colour of Mifanwy and Catrin's skin, which signifies their otherness within their own communities. References to race – for example to Mifanwy's 'swarthy skin' and Catrin's 'naturally dark' skin – represent their deep connection with the earthiness of Wales.[461] The racialisation of

[460] Sally Jones, p.80.
[461] Allen Raine, *A Welsh Singer* (1897) (London: Hutchinson & Co, n.d), p.84; Allen Raine, *A Welsh Witch* (1902) (Dinas Powys: Honno Press, 2013), p.18.

Welshness in the nineteenth century was not a new concept, and is demonstrated clearly by Matthew Arnold's series of lectures, *On the Study of Celtic Literature*. For Arnold, the impression of Wales as stuck in its past and traditions suggested the need for the country to embrace the 'fusion of all the inhabitants of these islands into one homogeneous, English-speaking whole' to achieve 'modern civilisation'.[462] Raine seemingly endorses the erasure of Welsh difference in some aspects of the novel, as when she describes Mifanwy's skin being lightened to fit an anglicised feminine ideal. However, she also challenges anglicisation, by celebrating Welshness and its cultural roots within the wild nature of Wales' countryside. Mifanwy's successful singing career is borne out of her connection with Welsh cultural roots. Rather than completely accepting anglicisation, Raine allows her protagonist to engage with Englishness while retaining Welshness as the most prominent and important aspect of her character.

The chapter then examines Raine's juxtaposition of the development of women who are explicitly racialised as Welsh, and women who embrace the English bourgeois ideal of femininity, by analysing the role that education has within Mifanwy and Catrin's social mobility. I particularly focus on the representation of Mifanwy and Elizabeth in *A Welsh Singer,* but will also refer to *A Welsh Witch*, especially Catrin's development. Mifanwy and Catrin are representatives of a wild, Romantic Wales as defined by their connection to Wales' nature, and their experiences in romance and social mobility, compared with the trajectory of the female 'villain', generates greater sympathy for the more 'authentically' Welsh women. The *bildungsroman* nature of the novels supports this sympathetic view of Welsh womanhood, whereby young working-class women develop into modern, successful middle-class women without undergoing a process of anglicisation. Arnold argued that the Celtic tendency to be sentimental was a barrier to the Celtic peoples becoming modern. He noted that the 'Celtic genius' had 'sentiment as its main basis, with love of beauty, charm and spirituality for its excellence' and 'ineffectualness and self-will for its defect.'[463] This chapter argues that Raine's novels contradict Arnold's assertions, depicting Welsh working-class women who possess strong self-will. Raine's novels actually portray characters who combine 'sentiment' and 'spirituality' with 'self-will', creating an image of Welshness that subverts racialised stereotypes. The last section of this chapter will emphasise how Welshness is celebrated within the context of Mifanwy's success, and how this constructs an image of modern Welsh nationhood driven by Welsh women. This chapter shows that, while racialised stereotyping was a common feature of nineteenth-century Welsh writing in English, it does not have to be accepted as the prevalent view of Welshness. As *A Welsh Singer* and *A Welsh Witch* reveal, there can be a fusion between cultural, traditional Welshness, the ability to engage with modernity and self-development.

[462] Matthew Arnold, *On the Study of Celtic Literature,* p.12.
[463] Ibid, p.115.

Class and race in Allen Raine's *A Welsh Singer* and *A Welsh Witch*

This section analyses Allen Raine's representation of race and class in *A Welsh Singer* and *A Welsh Witch.* The novels initially establish that Mifanwy and Catrin are different from their working-class community in their distinct appearance and manner. This allows for a sense of 'otherness' to develop within the respective novels, whereby the two young women never truly sit comfortably within their class identity. The sense of 'otherness' is also driven by the racial undertones of the novels. A significant feature of both Mifanwy and Catrin's characters is their dark skin, a signifier of working-class identity representative of time spent labouring outdoors. Gramich suggests that Raine's characters are 'formed by their environment', with

> Raine's heroines distinguished by their deep suntans, acquired through their work and, indeed, life out of doors. Raine makes much of the prejudice shown towards these brown-skinned girls, whose tan presumably is seen as a badge of low social status, but may also be seen as Raine's veiled commentary on racial prejudice.[464]

This is an excellent point, which addresses how Raine reflects the anti-Welsh attitude of her time in her novels. Gramich suggests that their dark skin goes further than marking these young women as members of the rural working class, though, becoming an indicator of colonialist rhetoric, and the Anglocentric British attitude to Welshness; as was seen in the *Report*'s mentioning of 'swarthy' skin in rural Wales. This section examines how the novels endorse stereotypes and prejudice of the poor uncivilised Welsh, as presented in the Blue Books, through the early racist depiction of both Mifanwy and Catrin. However, I go on to show how Raine challenges Anglocentric prejudices through the *bildungsroman* structure of the novels: her plots demonstrate that development and modernity do not a require loss of cultural identity. Raine's complex texts reflect the prejudices of the time, while also offering an alternative path to Welsh modernity for women.

The racial 'otherness' that Mifanwy and Catrin embody invites questions as to how far this representation of Welshness must be anglicised, or colonised within the framework of Raine's novels. Kirsti Bohata, in her essay 'En-gendering a New Wales: Female Allegories, Home Rule and Imperialism 1890-1910' explains how

> The figure of woman-as-nation is inevitably inflected in Wales by the nineteenth-century construction of the Welsh people as a feminine race, who would naturally benefit from the masculine guidance of the (racially distinct) English. The feminization of what was inscribed

[464] Gramich, p.36.

> as racial otherness was, of course, a common feature of British colonial discourse, but was employed and inflected in various ways in different countries.[465]

The relationship between tanned skin and racial ambiguity suggests a belief that Wales needs to be colonised, just as Catrin and Mifanwy need to be tamed or managed in order to be considered acceptable to society.

However, although the narrative seems to engage with racist stereotypes, Raine does try to counter these by allowing these 'brown-skinned girls' to triumph over nineteenth-century prejudices. The tan as a 'badge of low social status' emphasises the girls' representation of the Welsh 'otherness', whereby, as Gramich notes, 'Raine is subtly suggesting the way in which Wales has been colonized and designated as racially inferior by its powerful neighbour.'[466] In this way, Raine's novels are reminiscent of Arnold's stereotyping of the Celtic nations as 'sentimental' and in need of a discipline and logic which comes from England. He writes, 'do not let us wish that the Celt had less sensibility, but that he had been more master of it.'[467] In commenting on the Celts' failure to 'master' themselves, Arnold advocates for them to achieve an 'Anglo-Saxon temperament, disciplinable and steadily obedient within certain limits, but retaining an inalienable part of freedom and self-dependence.'[468] *A Welsh Singer* and *A Welsh Witch* participate in the racialisation and stereotyping of Welsh characters, but they do not present Welshness as a weakness or an obstacle to progress. Mifanwy and Catrin embrace their Welshness; their 'otherness' is an inherent identity and any attempt to be different – or have change imposed upon them – strengthens their connection to their Welshness. The conclusion to the novel sees Mifanwy returning to her native Cardiganshire, her 'rightful place in the Welsh landscape'.[469] Both Catrin and Mifanwy's identities are rooted in the nature of Wales, and attempts to permanently remove them from it eventually fail. In that sense, while Raine has engaged with racial stereotypes, and, as will be argued further in this chapter, allows for alterations in appearance to suggest an 'accepted' white Welsh working-class identity, having both Mifanwy and Catrin celebrate their 'otherness' allows for a different approach to colonialist attitudes. This chapter will provide deeper analysis into the importance of race in these texts, and how the female characters respond to attempts to change their 'otherness'.

---

[465] Kirsti Bohata, 'En-gendering a New Wales: Female Allegories, Home Rule and Imperialism 1890-1910', in *Beyond the Difference: Welsh Literature in Comparative Contexts*, ed. by Alyce von Rothkirch and Daniel Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004), pp.57-70 (p.58).
[466] Gramich, p.37.
[467] Arnold, p.108.
[468] Ibid, p.109.
[469] Gramich, p.37.

Race

The racialisation of Mifanwy and Catrin in *A Welsh Singer* and *A Welsh Witch* respectively is the means of separating them from their own communities, and of establishing their distinct 'otherness'. Neither character truly fits within her community, with their tanned skins representing an earthy, natural connection to Welsh roots, not seen in the other characters of the texts. This section examines how the physical description of both Mifanwy and Catrin helps to establish the 'otherness' of their Welshness, and how it responds to attempts to anglicise this identity. Mifanwy, especially, retains her Welshness in the face of physical transformation through her cultural identity: although her skin lightens, she is still recognisably and proudly Welsh. The lightened skin, however, endorses racist prejudice of dark skin equating with lower-class status; removing Mifanwy's dark skin means removing the colonialist image of Wales and seemingly embracing a more anglicised and imperialist version of Welsh femininity.

In *A Welsh Singer*, the first description of Mifanwy's appearance highlights the significant physical difference between Mifanwy and her community. The narrator remarks on how 'her bare feet were small and well formed, but abnormally dark in hue; the skin of her face and hands, too, had been so scorched and browned by the sun and wind, that one might easily imagine her to belong to some southern race.'[470] This positions Mifanwy's Welshness as a foreign identity, ripe for colonisation. Stephen Knight argues that Mifanwy's appearance provides an 'image of an American or Australian native girl', stressing that 'these figures often symbolize the fertility of the colonized country, their beauty and sexual availability providing an exciting image of the profitability of the new land.'[471] This colonialist representation of Mifanwy stresses her 'otherness' from the community, while also providing the nineteenth-century reader with a more 'exotic' heroine. While not eliminating her Welshness, it nevertheless taps into colonialist rhetoric.

A Welsh Singer, however, does not necessarily sexualise Mifanwy. Indeed, her beauty is repeatedly questioned due to the darkness of her skin. Ieuan declares that Mifanwy is 'the most beautiful girl that I have seen; in form, I mean, not in colour.'[472] His denial of Mifanwy's beauty 'in colour' signals a racist view of femininity, suggesting that this working-class Welshman has internalised a colonialist view of beauty. This is contrasted with the description of Laissabeth, whom Ieuan identifies as 'the most beautiful in colour', and who was lauded earlier by the narrator for the 'dazzling whiteness of her skin.'[473] The contrast of the two young women further emphasises the 'otherness' of Mifanwy's character, pitted against the more accepted, paler and anglicised feminine form of Laissabeth. Indeed,

---

[470] *A Welsh Singer*, p.2.
[471] Stephen Thomas Knight, *A Hundred Years of Fiction: Writing Wales in English*, p.19.
[472] *A Welsh Singer*, p.44.
[473] Ibid, p.44, p.4.

Ieuan privately tells Mifanwy that he 'never remember thou art so dark except when Laissabeth is with us', illustrating clearly how Mifanwy is seen as inferior to another, more anglicised girl.[474] That the comment is made by a man highlights the patriarchal structure, where beauty is defined and accepted by men. While Mifanwy receives some praise for her beauty, it is always caveated with remarks on the darkness of her skin, a flaw that apparently cannot be overcome. For example, a description of her 'smile of welcome' which 'disclosed a row of pearly teeth between the full red lips' is followed by Ieuan's reflection that she is beautiful 'in spite of her swarthy skin and shabby clothes.'[475] This reminds us of the description of Myra's teeth in *Rebecca; or a Life's Mistake*, where the narrator notes that white teeth were a 'rare treasure in Wales, where the hill water is supposed to destroy the women's teeth in many cases before they are out of their teens'.[476] Unlike Myra, however, Mifanwy is not viewed as a truly beautiful young woman as her tanned skin renders impossible the kind of beauty that transforms Myra's life.

Yet Mifanwy was not always dark-skinned, suggesting a physical transformation that can be altered or reversed. Much is made by Mifanwy's adoptive mother of the 'cream and roses' of Mifanwy's skin in childhood.[477] Mifanwy's dark skin in adolescence is the result of her time outdoors as shepherdess where 'sun and wind wass make [her] blacker than anybody else'.[478] As Rita Singer suggests, it is an 'externalised proof of her life in unison with Welsh nature.'[479] Since she was initially 'as white as the sea foam', removing her from outdoor work provides the narrative with an opportunity to 'correct' the anomaly of Mifanwy's skin.[480] Mifanwy's self-consciousness about her appearance suggests that she herself feels the 'otherness' of her identity: she looked 'sorrowfully at her brown hands, and thinking of the "cream and roses"' of her childhood complexion.[481] This self-consciousness, combined with the acknowledgment of her former appearance, suggests that her particular representation of Welshness – rooted in the Cardiganshire hills – is a fleeting blemish, that could possibly be 'fixed' someday. Raine seemingly endorses racist views here, where dark skin is seen as a defect and white skin is admired; the mourning of Mifanwy's white skin suggests that beauty can only come in a white, anglicised package. By showing Mifanwy's previous whiteness, Raine signals the possibility of a return to whiteness that would best conform to standards of anglicised femininity, and perhaps Welsh ideals of femininity.

---

[474] *A Welsh Singer*. p.72.
[475] Ibid, p.84.
[476] *Rebecca; or a Life's Mistake*, pp.7-8.
[477] *A Welsh Singer*, p.99.
[478] Ibid, p.134. 'Wass' is spelled as in the text.
[479] Rita Singer, 'Re-inventing the Gwerin: Anglo-Welsh Identities in Fiction and Non-Fiction, 1847-1914' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leipzig, 2013), p.346.
[480] *A Welsh Singer*, p.99.
[481] Ibid, p.100.

Mifanwy's entrance into English upper-class society exposes her to a different standard of acceptable femininity, but the process by which she is anglicised and rendered 'white' begins earlier in the narrative, when she leaves Cardiganshire and joins the circus. Having rejected an offer of going into general service, Mifanwy happens upon a work opportunity as a maid to the circus owner's wife, tempted by the possibility of reaching London. Her talent as a singer is discovered when she sings 'Men of Harlech', allowing her to become the official singer of the show. Expressions of surprise that 'that little brown sparrar were a nightingale' demonstrates an underestimation of Mifanwy, who has been judged by her brown skin.[482] Although she sings in Welsh, Tom – the son of the circus owner – dresses Mifanwy as an Arabian princess, giving her the stage name of 'Princess of Randelar'.[483] Allowing Mifanwy to sing in Welsh adds to the exoticisation of her stage character, an attractive prospect for an English audience. The community of the circus is less concerned, in some respect, with how Mifanwy's skin colour affects her beauty, using her appearance to their advantage when appointing her as the circus singer. Her brief career at the circus, however, exposes Mifanwy to other possibilities beyond, as her recognition of her singing abilities, combined with her education under Tom's tutelage, leaves her wanting more. This recognition also allows Mifanwy to start seriously questioning her appearance, which begins upon her entry into London.

Mifanwy's physical transformation in London is seen as an improvement, but it does not erase all of the racist attitudes towards her. Mifanwy's time in London is marked by endeavours to anglicise her appearance, with the whitening of the tanned skin masking her physical Welshness and working-class status. Patrick Brantlinger notes that in Victorian novels 'racially marked outsiders' were 'far more likely to be either comic stereotypes or figures of monstrosity meant to repel rather than to evoke sympathy.'[484] When Lady Meredith refers to Mifanwy having been 'a little brown-faced monkey' in Wales, it is not only an 'othering' of her as a Celtic woman, but also a reflection on Victorian attitudes to race.[485] It serves to further identify Mifanwy as a 'racially marked outsider', despite Mifanwy's now 'accepted' white skin having returned. Her skin 'regain[s] its pure and transparent fairness'; Mifanwy has been improved, the narrator suggests, and is now deemed worthy of recognition.[486] It is recognition from a particular audience, however: from an English upper-class society that has shown itself to espouse colonialist and racist views of dark skin. That Mifanwy recognises her own beauty only now that her skin has been returned to its white pallor, shows how internalised the ideas of beauty that stems from upper-class English society have become. Mifanwy's recognition of the change initially suggests an acceptance of anglicisation: she looks at herself in the mirror and sees

[482] *A Welsh Singer*, p.134.
[483] Ibid, p.137.
[484] Patrick Brantlinger, 'Race and the Victorian Novel', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel* ed. by Deirdre David (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 129-147 (140).
[485] *A Welsh Singer*, p.317.
[486] Ibid, p.144.

the 'dusty brown skin now changed to a soft, creamy fairness'.[487] The opposing adjectives used here – 'dusty' and 'soft' – to describe two different types of beauty seems to endorse the view that dark skin is bad, while whiter skin is to be celebrated. This view is taken further, when Mifanwy reflects on the 'feeling that the outward Mifanwy was dead.'[488] The use of the word 'dead' here is an explicit reaction to the drastic change from dark-skinned shepherdess to pale-skinned famous singer. She has lost the physical traits of her rural, working-class Welshness, to conform to Victorian society's expectations of middle- and upper-class women.

However, Mifanwy does not allow this alteration to affect her Welsh identity. As she declares later: 'fine clothes, this fair skin, are all outward things which cannot touch me, myself; I am Mifanwy, and my home is on the rocks with the sea-birds.'[489] This emphasises how it is her inner nature that defines her Welshness, not her appearance. The loss of her tanned skin is the result of a lack of time spent outdoors, an unintended consequence of her decision to go to London and become a professional singer. Mifanwy does not intentionally seek to alter her identity; raising herself to English middle-class society and living with its expectations has forced this change upon her, reflecting the *bildungsroman* narrative of adapting to 'varying social circumstances'. In reality, however, her heart and her identity lie within the 'rocks' of her home, suggesting that attempts at anglicisation can affect certain aspects yet not change someone's inherent identity completely. The novel both admires Mifanwy's enduring Welshness, while also taking the racist view that her Welshness is improved when it becomes paler.

Catrin's character in *A Welsh Witch* is similar to Mifanwy, in that both embody a deep connection with Welsh nature, yet Catrin is othered by her own community as opposed to Mifanwy who is racialised by English outsiders. The narrator explains that: 'altogether she gave one the impression of a *brown* girl; her long unkept hair was brown, her eyes the same colour, her skin, naturally dark, was burnt and tanned by summer suns and winter winds'.[490] Catrin's skin colour is not unusual for a young woman who spends the majority of her time outdoors in the sun. Although the community labour outside and expose their skin to the sun, Catrin's skin is seen as even darker because she exclusively – or excessively in the view of the community – spends her time outdoors; while their lives can be split between the outdoors and their homes, Catrin's home is the cliffs and countryside. The emphasis on 'brown' suggests that the above quotation is not only a remark about a suntan resulting from outdoor labour, but a reflection of internalised colonialist attitudes towards Welshness, specifically an exoticised and racialised Welshness. Catrin's appearance is defined by its brownness, from her

[487] *A Welsh Singer,* p.188.
[488] Ibid, p.188.
[489] Ibid, p.189.
[490] *A Welsh Witch,* p.18.

skin colour to her hair and eyes; this appearance, combined with her actions, make her a social pariah. Descriptions of her as behaving like a 'rat or a wild cat' or a 'hunted animal' further dehumanises her in her society.[491] She is hunted by her community, for representing an 'other' version of Welshness. Unlike in Mifanwy's case, the ill treatment of Catrin – based on her dark skin and unconventional living arrangements – comes from her own working-class neighbours, demonstrating a deep-set fear of the darker skinned 'other', which has become ingrained in rural Cardiganshire. *A Welsh Witch* does not seek to anglicise Catrin, but to alter her identity to better fit into her community. Racism is deeply rooted in the community, and with the Welsh people themselves turning against another, it can be seen how easily colonialism is internalised within the Welsh psyche.

Catrin's connection with nature, and consequently her Welshness, is exclusive to her *cynefin*. The narrator notes how, after travelling north to seek work, she 'had grown very thin, and there were shadows under the eyes, no longer sparkling with smiles; the dimples, too, had fled, and there were lines of sadness about the mouth.'[492] Although this physical deterioration is seen as the effect of heartbreak over Goronwy, it also suggests that Catrin's Welshness flourishes best within her own habitat. Removed from her deep connection with her roots, her Welshness is weakened, altered to such an extent she is close to death. Even her time indoors, taking on domestic duties for her father, does not fully eliminate her 'natural' Welshness. It does alter her appearance, with her now 'creamy complexion' and 'white and smooth' arms.[493] As in Mifanwy's case, however, it does not change her overall identity. Her identity is forever rooted in the specific location to which she feels a strong attachment, and her future as the mistress of her own farm guarantees a life connected with this location.

As in *A Welsh Singer*, Raine contrasts one depiction of feminine beauty with another in *A Welsh Witch*, in this case Catrin and Yshbel Lloyd. Importantly, the novel contrasts opposing vision of beauty, with an initial emphasis on the whiteness of Yshbel's skin suggesting a more 'ideal' version of Welshness. Yshbel is described in glowing terms, with her 'willowy grace of form, the crown of yellow hair, the dark-blue eyes, the slender, creamy neck which rose from the rough blue serge frock, fitting so close to her slight girlish form, the red parted lips, and the rosy hue' of her face.[494] Yshbel is also a working-class woman, but has gentry connections; therefore, her version of femininity is seen as ideally suited to the potential of middle-class identity. Catrin embraces the outdoors, and shuns feminine norms, which leads to her being continuously described as a 'brown girl', blending in with the hills and fields around her.[495] Although Catrin and Yshbel are represented as the opposite

[491] *A Welsh Witch*, pp.33-34.
[492] Ibid, p.379.
[493] Ibid, p.207.
[494] Ibid, p.26.
[495] Ibid, p.16.

ends of feminine beauty, it is interesting that the highest praise for Catrin comes from Yshbel, who takes note of

> The perfect oval of the face, on which the dimples played like sunbeams on a lake; the dark, clear skin, like polished marble; the fine glow of health in cheek and lips; and, above all, the brown, velvety eyes, which so easily sparkled in mirth, or grew humid with feeling; the symmetrical moulding of the bare arms; the graceful contour of the bust and figure revealed by the thin brown frock – all made a picture of such uncommon beauty that Yshbel was struck with astonishment.[496]

Yshbel's description of Catrin is almost romantic, and it is notable that another young woman reflects on Catrin's true beauty, compared to the mostly male gaze within their Welsh community. Here, the darkness of Catrin's skin is 'like polished marble', something to be admired. The feminine praise for Catrin's dark skin challenges patriarchal standards of beauty, and reinforces the argument that Raine seeks to challenge colonialist attitudes to Wales. Another young Welsh woman, on her own path to modernity, can admire Catrin instead of perceiving her dark skin as a barrier to modern Welsh womanhood. Unlike the middle- and upper-class women of *A Welsh Singer*, Yshbel sees no need to disparage a working-class woman's beauty. Catrin and Yshbel co-exist relatively peacefully, both representing different versions of femininity and Welshness. Looked upon in the context of Ieuan's above cited remarks on Mifanwy in *A Welsh Witch*, the praise from Yshbel towards Catrin is a further emphasis by Raine in her texts on the dominant patriarchal attitudes towards women in society as well as an indication of the potential for solidarity between women.

Raine includes numerous racist and colonial views of Welsh people in both texts, demonstrating how anti-Welsh prejudices were internalised by Welsh people. Yet Raine also challenges these stereotypes to present a version of Welsh womanhood that does not need to fully conform to colonialist England; rather, Raine's characters engage with English society and cultural norms to some extent, but with the overwhelming endorsement of Welsh nationhood prevailing over total anglicisation.

Class

Having considered the two novels in relation to race and Welshness, this section now explores the texts in relation to anglicisation as a marker of class identity and social mobility. Raine shows how both Mifanwy and Catrin challenge the expectation that to be socially mobile involves anglicisation, an expectation that comes from English communities, but also importantly, from within Welsh communities. She represents the Welsh community of *A Welsh Witch* in particular as being backwards and prejudicial in its view of women's Welshness, reflecting a Welsh people badly hurt by the

[496] *A Welsh Witch*, p.156-7.

accusations of the Blue Books. The response to the Blue Books, with its emphasis on piousness, abstinence, and middle-class performativity, Raine suggests, makes Welsh communities especially critical of women who seek a different path to modernity. This section explores how Raine, once more, both endorses and challenges prejudices of the time, and how Mifanwy's and Catrin's retention of their national identity by the end of their respective novels sets out a pathway towards a modern, distinctively Welsh womanhood.

One of the defining aspects of the *bildungsroman* narrative is the

> desire for self-improvement, the need to adapt to varying social circumstances in a world of change, and the ever-present aspiration to belong to the middle-classes, all [leading] to increasingly complex characterisations that can be subsumed under the notion of "development."[497]

Raine presents such a narrative in the two texts analysed in this chapter, presenting two young women constantly adapting in a 'world of change'. Arguably, Raine's characters are always striving for self-improvement but on their own terms, as opposed to the socially accepted norms for working-class young women: to receive some education, work in the domestic sphere, and eventually become wives and mothers. As Petra Rau suggests, this *bildungsroman* narrative allows for 'complex characterisations'. Catrin and Mifanwy are both certainly complex; they do not necessarily aspire to 'belong to the middle-classes', yet manage to find themselves there through their own determination and defiance of prejudices. Above all, they retain elements of their Welshness, which sets them apart from many of the characters that we have discussed so far.

Catrin is portrayed as a challenge to the working-class Welsh community from the outset of the novel, yet it is the behaviour of the community that is shown to be most offensive, displaying an attitude that has been formed by decades of authority figures telling the Welsh that they must conform to Anglo-British standards or fall behind the rest of the nation's civilisation. Catrin is physically apart from the rest of the community of Treswnd, preferring to live closer to nature, an existence that is often disrupted by provocation and 'the antagonism of her fellow-creatures.'[498] Her way of life is frequently interrupted by those eager to make fun of her unique living situation, affronted by the decision of a young woman willing to reject domesticity for independent living. The first introduction to Catrin in the novel comes from one of the local boys calling her 'the witch of Pengraig', urging his friends to 'run after her and drive her over the cliffs.'[499] The boy suggests that ''twon't hurt her; she won't drown.'[500] This references the act of 'ducking' women accused of being witches, with the

[497] Rau, p.2.
[498] *A Welsh Witch*, p.53.
[499] Ibid, p.10.
[500] Ibid, p.10.

expectation that if they survived, they were confirmed witches. The novel later references the archaic nature of the witch accusations, with the local doctor remarking how 'such tomfoolery has died out of the world', except 'in this out-of-the-way corner of the world.'[501] Condemning the treatment of Catrin, the middle-class doctor comes to criticise the outdated beliefs of the working-class community. While not necessarily agreeing with Catrin's defiance of domestic ideals, he nevertheless condemns the community's outdated views of women. Raine here portrays the Welsh community as backward and unable to tolerate people acting outside its own social norms. However, the community's response to Catrin is contradictory in nature. It is torn between wanting to ignore her abnormal social behaviour and wanting to punish her for it. Catrin's reputation is seen by the community as a 'slur upon the respectability of the neighbourhood', a hypocritical accusation from those who choose to ignore the rampant alcoholism, domestic abuse and immorality in Treswnd.[502] The community's definition of 'respectability' here is shaped by the legacy of the Blue Books, where piousness found its way into rules of dress, and mandated abstinence as a means of controlling 'immoral' behaviour. Raine here strongly suggests the hypocrisy of a community that clamps down on some kinds of unconventional behaviour while ignoring instances of immorality as a way of protecting itself from further criticism. It is far easier for the community to condemn Catrin, a woman who does not conform to social norms, than to interrogate broader issues. Treswnd is thus portrayed as a community that values the selective performance of respectability, which takes the form of engaging with the community through attending church and working collectively during harvests. Raine's novel is a less extreme characterisation of the hypocrisy of Welsh nonconformism than that found in Caradoc Evans' *My People*, a text which eviscerated the supposedly religious, respectable Welsh communities; nonetheless, it anticipates Evans's claims about the hypocrisy of the patriarchal Welsh chapel culture in the post-Blue Books era.

Catrin feels some pressure to conform to social expectations of accepted behaviour, showing how deep the response to the *Report* has ingrained itself within Welsh communities. Several times throughout *A Welsh Witch* she questions what her life would be like if she were an ordinary girl. She is aware of other young women and how they perform in society, and exhibits feelings of jealousy or disappointment based on her inherent 'otherness':

> She had but a vague idea of the glories of a fair, for she had never been to one, but she knew that the girls enjoyed it, and returned laden with apples and sweets and gilded gingerbread. At fifteen these delights awaken strange yearnings in country girls, and as she turned away from that cottage window, it would be hard to describe the bitterness of spirit which overwhelmed

[501] *A Welsh Witch*, p.45.
[502] Ibid, p.16.

> her. Hitherto, she had lived happily in the solitude of the hillside, but tonight she realised that something was wanting in her life.[503]

This suggests a 'want' to conform to class expectations, which results from loneliness and the need for female companionship, in particular. Catrin goes on to question why 'God made her at all if she was to be thus separated from the rest of the world', further illustrating her yearning need for friendship.[504] By questioning God about her loneliness, she presents her identity as beyond her control, shaped by God's will. Apart from Goronwy, she holds no friendship with any other character in the novel, beyond her own gypsy community, and with them only because she feels a kinship with their way of life. That does not stop her from expressing a 'dawning and timid desire for sympathy and friendship.'[505] Catrin is comfortable with the life she leads, to the extent it provides her with the freedom from expectations of her role within the home and community, to be, as her housemaid puts it, a 'tidy maiden in the house, making the beds and preparing the meals for her father […]; and going to church on Sunday with her prayer-book […], and going to the singing class with all the other boys and girls.'[506] This freedom comes with a price, however. Standing out in the community means Catrin is unable to connect to anyone apart from those who willingly accept her identity as she is.

The reluctance of the Welsh working classes to accept members of the community who do not conform to their strict social norms is also evident in the way that the communities in both texts respond to the appearance of the main female characters. In *A Welsh Singer*, when Mifanwy wears a new dress and pair of shoes for the *eisteddfod* it 'could not efface from the minds of the audience her ordinary tattered blue petticoat and bare feet and crook.'[507] The working-class audience cannot marry the image of the clean, presentable singer in front of them with the barefoot shepherdess she is on ordinary days. To them Mifanwy is the shepherdess, usually singing among nature; the woman on stage cannot be the same person as she does not conform with the appearance they have become accustomed to. A similar scene occurs in *A Welsh Witch*, when Catrin attends church. Having worn her 'best gown and kerchief' with her 'hat of rushes with a wreath of barley', she is oblivious to the 'risibility of the congregation' at her appearance.[508] The usual dress for attending church in Treswnd are 'attempts to follow the English fashions', where hats are 'expensively trimmed as a lady of fashion's.'[509] It could be argued that Catrin's hat made of nature's offerings seems more suited for a rural church than the trimmed hats of the other young women, yet it is her attire that is judged to be against feminine norms. The irony here, of course, is that the people of Treswnd reject Catrin for her

---

[503] *A Welsh Witch*, p.70.
[504] Ibid, p.72.
[505] Ibid, p.156.
[506] Ibid, p.20.
[507] *A Welsh Singer*, p.51.
[508] *A Welsh Witch*, p.185.
[509] Ibid, pp.184-5.

unconventionality in Welsh society, while accepting other young women who follow 'English fashions'. The episode demonstrates how the Welsh response to the Blue Books serves to encourage anglicisation within Welsh communities. Catrin's obliviousness to these judgments upon her attire and her refusal to endorse English fashion suggests she is rejecting anglicisation as the only path to modernity. Indeed, through Catrin, Raine explores a Welsh path to modernity, where Catrin manages to keep to her identity in both spirit and aesthetic, which contrasts with the slight ambiguity of Raine's intentions with Mifanwy. Attempting to dress themselves in 'proper' attire does not change the way either woman is seen in society, however. They must change their entire identity to rid themselves of society's perceptions of 'otherness', a requirement which neither character truly accepts.

Mifanwy and Catrin take separate routes in engaging with their class identity. Although taking an upward trajectory in social mobility, they maintain aspects of their working-class identities. When she wins the *eisteddfod* over Laissabeth, Mifanwy gives the other girl the money she won as a show of humility; Laissabeth deems this fair, and shamelessly takes the money. Mifanwy is, in some respects, disregarding class difference, as she seeks connection based on her and Laissabeth's shared participation in a traditional Welsh cultural event. Mifanwy's triumph – both competitively and morally – and later in the novel, on the London scene emphasises her transformation from downtrodden working-class woman into a celebrated middle-class heroine. Although Mifanwy does not defer to the superior Laissabeth in Wales, she becomes conscious in London of a class-divide.

Only when she arrives in London does she become conscious of her social standing, noting to Rhys Morgan how she 'came here in ignorance.'[510] This embarrassment of her situation in the circus is brief, only becoming conscious of the performers' standing in society when she fully understands the social hierarchy in England. Performing in the circus provides Mifanwy with happiness and some recognition, yet she acknowledges that her costume of 'satins, and velvets, and tinsels' does not compare to the 'fine clothes' Ieuan and Elizabeth wear in London, having come across the two in their upper-class finery.[511] Her increasing awareness of the 'broad and rather coarse suggestions of the songs she had before sung, without understanding their hidden meaning' show how naïve Mifanwy had been to class and social hierarchy; what was once glamorous to her is now bawdy, and she must reject this version of her identity if she is to marry Ieuan.[512] As she sees Ieuan for the first time in his new upper-class standing in London, while in her own smart dress, she is 'conscious' that 'if he should look at her at all, it would have to be a downward look.'[513] While the circus can 'polish' her up, there is a limit to how far this can be taken, and Mifanwy becomes aware of how much she

[510] *A Welsh Singer*, p.172.
[511] Ibid, p.150.
[512] Ibid, p.150.
[513] Ibid, p.147.

must engage with the social hierarchy in order to gain Ieuan's approval. However, Mifanwy's upward social mobility comes from education, as will be examined in more detail later, and the aim of making herself into a successful, professional singer. The change in dress and appearance are a consequence of a self-development that is required for her to fit the standard of middle-class femininity.

Catrin, unlike Mifanwy, is always conscious of her difference from other working-class women, yet she chooses to engage with certain elements of class expectations on her own terms. Her father's terminal illness prompts her return to the household, an action she could have rejected after years of abuse at his hand. Instead, Catrin's natural empathy and loyalty to the family allows her to return to domesticity, while also showing that she is the same Catrin that roamed the cliffs. Those who have continuously asked for her return to the house are left obeying her orders as mistress with 'silent astonishment', showing how unexpected it is for Catrin to actively choose to take part in domesticity.[514] Catrin is capable of domestic behaviour, yet has not shown this before due to a number of factors: her fear of her father; the oppressive expectations upon her following her mother's death; and her genuine closeness to Welsh nature outweighing the responsibility of domesticity. The narrative suggests that in Catrin's new role, 'the most beautiful traits of her character were developed'.[515] It is important to consider what Raine seeks to convey by establishing that these 'beautiful traits' are developed within the domestic sphere. The narrative seems to advocate domesticity as the appropriate and rightful place of young Welsh women like Catrin. Certainly, Catrin's place as mistress of her own house and farm at the end of the novel suggests domesticity as the working-class feminine ideal. Yet throughout the novel Catrin maintains the 'deep throb of longing' for the 'freedom of the life' she led outdoors, often going outside for the 'sense of communion with nature'.[516] Her place as the mistress of her home at the end of the novel is a testament to the individual growth of Catrin's character. Roberts Jones refers to this, suggesting that the characters growth in *A Welsh Witch* is 'both mental and spiritual', from 'pre-adolescents' to 'mature men and women.'[517] Certainly, Catrin has matured by the end of the novel, something she had been anticipating for some time: she laments that ''tis a pity we must grow up', when reflecting on the time she and Goronwy spend roaming and fishing.[518] Her increasing awareness of the social impropriety of a young man and woman roaming the fields together alone marks the end of her youth and its innocence. Where domesticity is her eventual fate, in line with social expectations, true happiness for Catrin lies within her childhood, a reflection of a Welshness unburdened by class and gender conventions and expectations. Raine stresses Catrin's innocence and joy within nature, which

[514] *A Welsh Witch*, p.169.
[515] Ibid, p.174.
[516] Ibid, pp.172-174.
[517] Sally Jones, p.44.
[518] *A Welsh Witch*, p.132.

demonstrates approval for Catrin's representation of Welshness and, in particular, Welsh womanhood. The cost of Catrin's development into maturity is the loss of freedom; societal expectations, pushed by an anglicised force, attempt to dilute Welsh identity. Raine makes sure that her protagonists' Welshness is not erased.

Both *A Welsh Singer* and *A Welsh Witch* are important in demonstrating the complex relationship Mifanwy and Catrin have with their working-class origins. The prejudices shown towards them from English upper-class society, and crucially, from their own working-class communities makes it more significant that they achieve upward social mobility while holding on to their Welshness. Through these two characters, Raine presents a path to modernity for Welsh women which does not involve a process of total anglicisation. If we read both novels as examples of the Welsh *bildungsroman*, we see that they explore possibilities of 'reconciliation between the desire for individuation (self-fulfilment) and the demands of socialisation (adaptation to a given social reality)' in a Welsh context.[519] The ways in which Mifanwy transforms from shepherdess to renowned singer, and Catrin becomes the mistress of her own farm, demonstrate the possibility of social mobility – and the movement into middle-class modernity in particular – for working-class Welsh women. Changing appearance alone is not enough for Mifanwy to demonstrate a complete change in class identity; she does not fully engage in anglicisation, as defined in colonial and racial terms, that risked altering her overall Welsh nationhood. Significantly, both actively engage with and embrace their Welshness. It is significant that Raine represents their Welsh communities' refusal to tolerate these female characters' challenges of social norms as backwards. Critiquing the hurdles that both the upper and working classes put in the way of Mifanwy and Catrin gives Raine a bigger platform to emphasise Welsh womanhood's path to modernity. By showing how Mifanwy and Catrin overcome both Welsh and English opposition, Raine endorses a new version of modern Welsh womanhood.

Education and its role in the social mobility of working-class women

This section examines the representation of education in Raine's texts, in particular its role in the novels' depiction of Welsh working-class women's social mobility. I focus on how the *bildungsroman* novels suggest that education is a means of helping Mifanwy and Catrin to become modern women, without the need to accept anglicisation as part of their identity. The options for nineteenth-century Welsh women were: first, to stay local and reject anglicisation and, consequently, modernity, as Hannah does in *A Life's Mistake*; second, to accept anglicisation as means of modernity, but completely reject Welshness. Raine's texts show that these choices are not black and white: social modernity is achievable without discarding Mifanwy and Catrin's Welshness. While the education of both women is unconventional, it nonetheless builds on their Welshness rather than seeking to dilute

[519] Rau, p.1.

it. This section will also explore the role of the Welsh language within these characters' education and social mobility. The Welsh language is predominantly spoken by the working classes in Raine's novels. However, its continued use by Mifanwy and Catrin, even after their success, emphasises a cultural Welshness that defies the predominant nineteenth-century view that English was the sole language of Welsh modernity. Raine's characters are therefore representative of a successful Welsh modernity that challenges anglicisation as the only means of modernity.

In nineteenth century Wales, more attention was given to educating boys than girls. The Blue Books reflected on this educational inequality, noting how 'the female population is left to preponderate in the rural nurseries of labour, [while] its educational destitution is comparatively greater than that of the other sex.'[520] Later in the *Report*, the authors elaborate on this disparity, noting that

> The reason for this inferiority is, that, money being the sole motive for acquiring the little education that exists, that inducement is much less strong with respect to females than with regard to males, for men are supposed to be more in need of arithmetic and writing for their advancement in life. Another reason is the preponderance of schoolmasters over schoolmistresses. Each favour their own sex and neglect the other as a general rule; […] the girls for the most part are more imperfectly instructed, if possible, than the boys. The effect is observable in the gross ignorance of the female peasantry[.][521]

The *Report* notes that most Welsh women did not learn basic skills in numbers and writing because it was expected that they would carry out domestic or agricultural work. The Education Act of 1870 addressed these disparities. It ensured that, as John Davies explains, 'there would be a complete network of elementary schools which would give basic skills to the children of the lower classes'.[522] However, by this point English as medium of education had been effective for over a decade. Schools were rewarded for tests completed by the children, where they were 'restricted to knowledge of arithmetic and the ability to read and write English', meaning 'Welsh was driven out of the schools.'[523] Some schools in mid-nineteenth century Wales punished the use of the Welsh language, through utilising the Welsh Not: a piece of wood worn around the neck of a child found to be speaking Welsh in the classroom, with the last one wearing it at the end of the day being punished. This helped to foster a sense of fear in speaking Welsh, which in turn played a small part in the decreasing number of Welsh speakers by the end of the nineteenth century; in the 1891 Census, '54 per cent of the inhabitants of Wales could speak Welsh and 69 per cent could speak in English.'[524] The aim to discourage Welsh as language of education clearly stemmed from the *Report*'s criticism of it,

---

[520] *Report*, p.32.
[521] Ibid, p.227.
[522] John Davies, *A History of Wales*, p.435.
[523] Ibid, p.437.
[524] Ibid, p.437.

suggesting monoglot Welsh speakers were educationally inferior to those who could speak English. Reverend James Denning of Brecon called on the Commissioners to 'give us English schools, and you may, under God, be made the means of conferring on poor Wales a great and lasting blessing.'[525] The state of mid- to late-nineteenth century education in Wales, then, suggests an anglicised approach that sought to bring Wales more in line with its neighbour. Welsh was still taught in some educational settings, especially in Nonconformist Sunday schools; however, in Raine's novels, Mifanwy and Catrin are taught in Welsh outside traditional educational spaces. Education as presented in Raine's texts, then, demonstrates a need for a learning experience that does not reject Welshness or the Welsh language.

A non-standard education is an important part of Catrin and Mifanwy's path to modern womanhood as it enables each to escape from the standard education which, as we have seen, provided girls with a training for the domestic and / or agricultural work that was expected to await them. Instead, their non-standard education, by Welsh speakers and with Welsh language elements, provides each with the space to become inspired, and to develop their own interests. Catrin is the beneficiary of Goronwy's kindness in educating her, where he teaches her how to read and write, mostly in their native Welsh language. Goronwy, a working-class boy, 'devoted many an hour to Catrin's education, the hard, dry sand being her book – her pen, a feather dropped from some sea bird's wing'.[526] He uses natural elements to foster and develop her education, a kinder approach towards Catrin than forcing her indoors to learn. Catrin's enthusiasm for education makes her a quick learner, yet she does question the importance of arithmetic, as she connects the skill to money. Her connection with nature means she dismisses the need for money as it 'cannot buy sky nor sea nor air nor moonlight – nor anything', the most important possessions she has.[527] Catrin rejects money as the means of paying for food and clothes, as nature's creatures do not need money to survive. Placing herself among the 'birds and flowers' and using natural elements as educational equipment allows Catrin to be separated from the formal education process.[528] Catrin does, however, welcomes the opportunity to learn to read and write, as is shown through her joy in receiving the simple gift of 'a copybook, a pen, and a bottle of ink' from Goronwy.[529] Receiving a non-standard education opens up paths to womanhood that would not otherwise have been available to her. Instead of a training in domestic and agricultural work, Catrin is inspired by literature which opens her mind to other possibilities. She later takes to 'poring over her books, a dog-eared *Robinson Crusoe* and an equally tattered Bible', and 'she drew both instruction and delight' from reading *Pilgrim's Progress*'.[530] The choice of books here is interesting:

[525] *Report,* p.359.
[526] *A Welsh Witch,* p.118.
[527] Ibid, p.118.
[528] Ibid, p.119.
[529] Ibid, p.119.
[530] Ibid, p.175.

Robinson Crusoe (1719) can be read as a novel of a young man defying social expectations to pursue a life outdoors; the Bible is representative of her belief that, while Goronwy teaches her how to write, 'God will teach me the rest', referring to moral and spiritual teachings; and *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) represents a journey towards Christian knowledge and understanding, an early hint of Catrin's own journey to modern Welsh womanhood.[531] *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe spawned many iterations over the prevailing centuries, so much so it 'became a separate genre, the *Robinsonade*.'[532] Much of its popularity was attributed to the developing interest in 'ideas of isolation, concepts of the importance of the private life, a sense of exploring a new world […] and a fascination with the primitive.'[533] These are all themes relevant to *A Welsh Witch,* with a Welsh woman at the helm of this exploration of the self. *Robinson Crusoe* is, however, considered a text about colonisation, and often read as a justification for British imperialist ventures, which does not fit quite so well with *A Welsh Witch*'s argument against anglicisation. The first part of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress,* where 'the early stages of Christian's journey reflect the darkness and isolation of the social outcast' is also particularly reflective of Catrin's life.[534] Indeed, the journey of Catrin's character echoes that of the main protagonist in *The Pilgrim's Progress*; she is a spiritual young woman who, thanks to her own efforts, has gained Christian knowledge and acceptance, moving in the process from social outcast to modern woman. In this sense she forges a path to modern Welsh womanhood, and might be seen as a pilgrim of Welsh woman's progress.

Mifanwy's education is also led by a Welshman, however, it is much more English-driven compared to Catrin, and therefore is a large part of the attempted anglicisation process of Mifanwy's character. While Mifanwy inherits what might be described as Arnoldian ideas of Celtic emotion, she also shows a rigour and education which challenges these stereotypes. From the novel's outset, she demonstrates her ability to understand the emotion and tone of an English song, despite not knowing the meaning of the words. Rhys Morgan, her tutor, praises the 'rich, full tones' and 'depth of tenderness' in Mifanwy's voice, emphasising the talent Mifanwy has to convey emotion, without the need to fully understand the words.[535] While Arnold recognises the Celtic nations' emotional relationship to music, he also remarks that

> With all this power of musical feeling, what has the Celt, so eager for emotion that he has not patience for science, effected in music, to be compared with what the less emotional German,

---

[531] *A Welsh Witch,* p.175.
[532] Anne Marie Fallon, 'Anti-Crusoes, Alternative Crusoes: Revisions of the Island Story in the Twentieth Century', *The Cambridge Companion to 'Robinson Crusoe'* ed. by John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp.207-220 (p.208).
[533] Maximillian E. Novak, 'Robinson Crusoe and Defoe's Career as a Writer', The Cambridge Companion to 'Robinson Crusoe' ed. by John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp.32-48 (p.32).
[534] Janet Bertsch, *Storytelling in the Works of Bunyan, Grimmelshausen, Defoe, and Schnabe*l (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2004), p.32.
[535] *A Welsh Singer,* p.47.

> steadily developing his musical feeling with the science of a Sebastian Bach or a Beethoven, has affected?[536]

Arnold's criticism here is focused on the absence of 'science', the skill and education needed to excel at music. Raine challenges this by showing that Mifanwy, while inheriting the emotion of her cultural heritage, also shows qualities that Arnold reserves for the 'Saxon'. It is the combination of these qualities which leads to her overwhelming success as a professional singer. While this would suggest that Mifanwy accepts a form of anglicisation, she retains her cultural heritage to such an extent that it is heard in the emotion of her voice. It is significant that a Welshman leads her education, because he is a man that teaches her the 'science' of learning but who is also sympathetic to Mifanwy's spiritual nature. By contrast, Elizabeth is a skilful singer, but her 'want of soul' is to her overall detriment.[537] In this sense, Mifanwy outshines her rival because she combines her Welshness with Saxon pragmatism. She retains elements of both Welsh and English education to forge a successful career; by rejecting her Welshness, Elizabeth also rejects an opportunity to improve and be recognised as more than just an English singer. Raine's representation of Welsh success borrows some Arnoldian elements; the key difference is that Arnold is writing for the benefit of the English. It is up to the philistine English to reconnect with their emotion by learning from Celtic culture. The role of the Celt is simply to rescue the English from their philistinism. However, while Raine's novel seems to endorse the Arnoldian categories, it is the figure of Mifanwy, rather than the anglicised Elizabeth, who benefits from the fusion of Celtic 'soul' and Saxon rigour.

Mifanwy's use of the Welsh language represents another way in which Raine challenges Arnoldian views. It also shows that most of the important elements of her education – such as literacy – are used to strengthen her connection to her Welshness, rather than support the need for anglicisation. Raine's novel registers the pressure to learn English, and the idea that English is the language of 'getting on'. We see this, for example, when Mifanwy joins the circus as a maid. At this point, Mrs Pomfrey states she does not 'want no one as can't speak the English language', identifying Mifanwy as a 'foreigner' upon learning she only speaks Welsh.[538] English is seen as the language of work here, something that Mifanwy seems to accept as a means of forging a path to London. On accepting the job, she is warned by a family friend that 'thou'lt learn to speak English soon; but don't thee forget thy Welsh now.'[539] Learning English is important, yet here the focus is on retaining the Welsh language, in the understanding that Mifanwy will eventually return to Wales. This is a lesson Mifanwy takes on board: 'I am going to learn to read and write, and, when I can write myself, it will be Welsh, the dear old

[536] Arnold, pp.103-4.
[537] *A Welsh Singer*, p.155.
[538] Ibid, p.118.
[539] Ibid, p.119.

Welsh.'[540] She refers here to Tom's help in writing her earliest letters for her, in the English language. When he 'paraphrase[s] her words' in a letter home to her foster mother, Mifanwy's identity and language are erased, replaced by an anglicised version of Mifanwy's intimate thoughts.[541] By stating she wants to write for herself, and in Welsh, Mifanwy is reclaiming her Welshness that was briefly lost to Tom's letter-writing. Moreover, when receiving a more middle-class education – at the hands of Rhys Morgan in London – Mifanwy retains a strong dedication to the Welsh language, as demonstrated when 'they discussed a subject of deeper interest than usual, [where] they would glide unconsciously into their native tongue.'[542] In the heart of middle-class London, the Welsh language prevails as means of social communication. This challenges the infamous Arnoldian view that the Welsh language should be erased as a contemporary language of modernity: the 'sooner the Welsh language disappears as an instrument of the practical, political, social life of Wales, the better; the better for England, the better for Wales itself.'[543] Arnold takes this further, arguing that in 'modern literature' the 'language of a Welshman is and must be English' for matters of 'real importance.'[544] Raine herself writes in English, which seems to support this Arnoldian prejudice, yet her novels distinctly encourage the day-to-day use of the Welsh language, especially for matters of importance, as demonstrated by Mifanwy and Rhys conversing in Welsh when speaking of 'deeper' subjects.

Daniel G. Williams emphasises how Arnold's suggestion of eliminating the Welsh language 'is to deny the Welsh any vestiges of nationhood', and worse, to 'deny them a future as Welshmen.'[545] Raine counters Arnold through Mifanwy, who accepts the English language as only one possible language of modernity, while also suggesting that through the Welsh language, it is Welsh women who have a future, and – perhaps – through Welsh women that the Welsh language has a future.

While English is still crucial in establishing Mifanwy as a respectable professional singer, Raine's text is notably polyglot, at least in the sense that it places English in a context of European languages. Mifanwy finds foreign languages much easier to learn than English. As the narrator suggests, it is 'a curious fact that a Welshman learns a foreign language with great ease', which initially seems to emphasise that others often see Mifanwy as non-British.[546] However it is also demonstrative of her success, as she comes to learn these 'foreign' languages in order to travel and sing in European countries. This locates Wales within European culture. It is not merely a 'Celtic' adjunct to a dominant Saxon culture. Raine, instead, bypasses England to place modern Welshness within

[540] *A Welsh Singer*, p.130.
[541] Ibid, p.130.
[542] Ibid, p.185.
[543] Arnold, p.12.
[544] Ibid, p.13.
[545] Daniel G. Williams, *Ethnicity and Cultural Authority: From Arnold to Dubois* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp.51-2.
[546] *A Welsh Singer*, p.185.

European culture. English is not the only language of success in *A Welsh Singer*, defying the Arnold call for the 'Welshman to speak English' due to the 'practical inconvenience of perpetuating the speaking of Welsh.'[547] Multilingualism resists any attempt to dismiss any one particular language as 'inconvenient'.

In the Blue Books, the fear of the Welsh language is a fear of cultural difference, which can only be managed, according to the *Report*, through the promotion of an English education. As one observer remarked in the *Report*, '[when] the English language shall supplant the Welsh, I doubt not that it will at the same time banish many prejudices that the people seem now to imbibe from their vernacular tongue, and improve their tastes and habits.'[548] Mifanwy is an example of a Welsh defiance of this attitude: her ability to learn other European languages is an element of her success, one which is associated with her capacity to speak Welsh. What education has given her is the means to start the 'real business of life: the deep-seated thirst for knowledge, and the means of satisfying that thirst; but, above all, the entrancing delight she found in the culture of her voice.'[549] Her education serves to elevate her voice, Raine's way of advancing Welsh womanhood in an anglicised society.

In *A Welsh Witch*, Raine explores the relation between modernity and the Welsh language through the character of Yshbel. She initially seems to be caught between the two languages: on the one hand, she is ridiculed for learning English in school by Walto's mother, who asks 'what use she meant to make of it I don't know.'[550] Mrs Gwyn speaks for a Welsh-language culture which is depicted as backward-looking when she suggests that Yshbel should 'stick to her shells and her fish then. That will do for her, I expect. English indeed! Ach-y-fi! what's the world coming to?'[551] This is a clear rejection of Yshbel's intention to 'get ahead' in life, instead saying Yshbel should be happy with staying local and not have any ambitions beyond 'shells and her fish'. Of course, this reinforces the stereotype that English, not Welsh, is the language of 'getting on'. On the other hand, Yshbel is also derided by her rich Welsh relatives for speaking Welsh in better society. Yshbel's uncle and aunt, who have moved into the upper classes due to a fortune made in coalmining, have turned their back on the Welsh language. Upon agreeing to stay with them in Glamorgan Yshbel is urged to 'drop the Welsh' and adopt English as the language of upper-class society.[552] Furthermore, she is renamed 'Isbel' by her aunt, taking on the anglicised form of her name. By removing her from her working-class living, and physically separating her from her engagement with Goronwy, Mr and Mrs Jones are seeking to anglicise Yshbel, despite being born and bred Welsh people themselves. In direct

[547] Arnold, pp.11-13.
[548] *Report*, p.312.
[549] *A Welsh Singer*, p.185.
[550] *A Welsh Witch*, p.97.
[551] Ibid, p.98.
[552] Ibid, p.217.

opposition to Mrs Gwyn's attitude that Yshbel should stay local, her aunt and uncle seek to eliminate her Welshness in favour of an anglicised version. *A Welsh Witch*, then, seems to suggest that there can be only one or the other: to reject modernity by staying local in Wales, or to accept modernity and reject Welshness. Much like Mifanwy and Catrin, Yshbel challenges this assumption, with both of Raine's novels demonstrating the possibility of Welshness and anglicisation coexisting, but with Welshness the dominant force, and of forging ahead into modernity without losing their cultural identity. Marrying Walto, Yshbel becomes a successful middle-class young woman, but she does so by defiantly retaining her Welshness rather than suppressing and succumbing to her family's wishes. Raine thereby opens up a path of self-improvement, without rejecting Welshness. As consequence, the novels reject both the Blue Books and Matthew Arnold's view that modernity in Wales can only be achieved through English. Raine presents an alternative vision for Wales.

Raine in her two novels, presents young women whose Welshness is not removed by their education. Instead, their Welshness becomes an important part in their development as modern young Welsh women. Instead, Raine's protagonists do not need the English language to gain approval; although Mifanwy's career is mainly established through the medium of English, it is the qualities associated with her Welshness that drive her success. Catrin embraces the opportunity to gain knowledge to broaden her mind to new worlds and ideas, while using education to strengthen her connection to the nature which defines her Welshness. Yshbel also balances the judgments of family members to reject anglicisation, with no real threat of the English language usurping Welsh. These hardworking and determined young women represent a modern Welsh womanhood that succeeds without the anglicisation enforced through the formal education system.

Mifanwy's success as representative of successful Welsh womanhood

This section argues that Mifanwy's success in London is a powerful validation of modern Welsh womanhood, led by a young woman who embraces her Welshness. Mifanwy's success is shaped by her Welshness, shown by how she rejects attempts to alter her identity throughout the novel. Her sense of nationhood and identity sets her apart from Elizabeth, allowing the novel to celebrate Welsh success on its own merit without having to equate it with anglicisation. By contrast, the success of the anglicised Elizabeth is disrupted by the arrival onto the London scene of Mifanwy. Although disguised, Mifanwy manages to utilise her Welshness to forge a successful path in society. As a consequence, Mifanwy achieves the feat of successful modern Welsh womanhood. She represents what can be achieved in spite of the attitudes of the Blue Books and Arnold, but also support their encouragement of improved female education, in which the English language and English culture have some part to play. However, Raine argues that there is a limit to the need for anglicisation as can be seen in the story of Mifanwy's success.

Mifanwy's Welshness is represented as an important basis for her success in London, rather than seen as a detriment. Mifanwy's singing talent is representative of the nation's cultural heritage: her participation at the Ynysoer Eisteddfod, and her singing in Welsh on the hills while she works, shows the deep connection she has with her culture. She sings in English in the Eisteddfod, but this is a reflection on the transformation of that cultural institution during the nineteenth century, when, as Hywel Teifi Edwards notes, it became clear that 'Victorian culture reflected the neuroses of a people ever conscious of the need to prove themselves to that great neighbour ever ready to voice disapproval.'[553] Despite her singing in English, though, Mifanwy does not speak English and therefore does not seem to be pandering to English audiences as much as Laissabeth. Mifanwy is a young Welsh woman proudly singing in her first language amid the wildness of nature, and celebrates her ability to do so with passion and emotion. Early in the novel while Mifanwy is in the fields, the

> silence was broken ere long by the girl's crooning, in a low tone, one of the old pathetic hymns of her nation, that must surely have been caught by her ancestors from the sound of the wind as it whistled over their bleak moors, or sighed through their deep forests in the early ages, so closely do some of the melodies imitate its weird and mournful tone.[554]

This presents almost a stereotypical, essentialist version of Welshness, whereby the Welsh love for music and singing is presented as more a product of nature than culture, playing into the trope of wild Wales. This essentialism is also apparent in Raine's description of Mifanwy's voice, which shows an 'intense love of music, characteristic of their nation'.[555] As it leans into the essentialist view of the Welsh, the passage also emphasises the importance of Mifanwy's Welshness. By turning her into a representative of the innately Welsh love of singing, the novel firmly sets her apart from other singers, especially Laissabeth. Several comments are made that Laissabeth's singing 'was good and the timbre excellent', but listeners also wonder 'where was the soul?'[556] The reference to the lack of 'soul' in Laissabeth's singing recalls Arnold's view of the Welsh as being too sentimental, and his call for more 'science' to even out this sentimentality. In this instance, Laissabeth has the control and the learning, but not the emotion that Mifanwy – the representation of Welshness in the novel – possesses naturally. Arnold encouraged more sentimentality in the Saxons, but in *A Welsh Singer* a Welsh woman, who is eager to accept anglicisation, demonstrates the result of a lack of emotion: she is considered good, but not memorable. By contrast, Mifanwy has the 'most unusual beauty both in tone and expression, not so clear and limpid, perhaps, as Laissabeth's, but with a depth of feeling that could not fail to strike a responsive chord in every music-loving heart.'[557] Each young woman has

---

[553] Hywel Teifi Edwards, *The Eisteddfod* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2016), p.27.
[554] *A Welsh Singer,* p.8.
[555] Ibid, p.9.
[556] Ibid, p.26.
[557] Ibid, pp.26-7.

what the other lacks – Laissabeth lacks the 'soul' and Mifanwy the technical ability. Yet it is the 'soul' that is considered most important, and which eventually allows for Mifanwy to succeed further in London than Laissabeth. Mifanwy acknowledges her own talent as a 'power which she possessed to express the good and beautiful', a power that seems to reflect upon her nation.[558] Mifanwy's emotion and talent gains her the attention of M. Valpré, the prestigious music teacher, who 'paid the shy Welsh girl great attention', 'sometimes deigning to give a word of commendation which, from Valpré, expressed a great deal.'[559] Valpré's acceptance of a Welsh woman, unashamed of her Welsh identity, reflects Raine's privileging of soul over science; once again the soul, associated with Welshness, is triumphant. Mifanwy does not seek to change the passion and emotion – representative of her culture – that she naturally possesses in her voice, but she gladly accepts the opportunity to seek education and success. Thus, her career perfectly represents the modernity Raine envisages. Mifanwy makes a name for herself on the London scene, and across Europe, while not only maintaining her Welshness, but also capitalising on it to advance her career. Significantly, it is a French music teacher who recognises the promise of her cultural roots, echoing my earlier point about Welshness aligning with European culture. Had Mifanwy had an English singing teacher, perhaps they would have encouraged her to lose her Welshness in the process of gaining fame and success.

Mifanwy's cultural identity allows her to 'eclipse any [singers] who have preceded her, this century', emphasising the uniqueness of her success.[560] Not only can she sing, but her ability to reflect her culture within her voice sets her apart from any other young woman. Success does not change her character, and the narrator suggests that 'it was [her] earnest simplicity of character that charmed almost everyone who came within her influence.'[561] This is crucial in establishing Mifanwy as representative of successful Welsh womanhood. Although now a renowned singer, she essentially remains Mifanwy. Her love of music, and her ability to express it to others define her, rather than success. She states that she could 'abandon public life without regret, if [she] might keep [her] voice, and still sing to [her] own friends, and in [her] own home.'[562] Fame in London and beyond has no exclusive hold on Mifanwy, and she could easily return to Wales and feel the same sense of achievement when singing to her friends and family. Mifanwy is not beholden to fame, but appreciates the power singing gives her, to make her own money and to live the life she wants to lead. Success 'has a certain charm', she admits, but it 'lies less in the flattery and admiration of the public than in the feeling of power and influence it gives you over your fellow-creatures […]. You can convey through music what you could not say in words'.[563] The reference to fame as a 'power' is

[558] *A Welsh Singer*, p.179.
[559] Ibid, p.187.
[560] Ibid, p.200.
[561] Ibid p.213.
[562] Ibid, p.263.
[563] Ibid, p.263.

important here, as it places Mifanwy – for the first time – in a position of influence. Her voice is her most powerful instrument, which she uses to reflect her 'soul', born and developed in Wales.

However, it is important to note that the audience do not identify her as a Welsh singer, suggesting that the 'power' of her singing is somewhat limited in promoting Welshness. The audience can sense that she is 'foreign', but they cannot identify her Welshness. Raine thus reflects the ignorance and cultural prejudices of the English about Wales and Welsh culture. The Blue Books, among other sources, conditioned English attitude toward Welshness, which was often negatively perceived. Mifanwy, as a renowned and celebrated singer, contradicts this established image, so it is unsurprising that she is not fully recognised as being Welsh. Nevertheless, Raine here tells a story of Welsh success – in particular, the success of a Welsh woman who does not tie herself, and her accomplishments, to England and anglicisation, but only uses England as a platform to further educational and personal development. That Mifanwy's success is felt in Wales is another testament to the far-reaching influence she now possesses. Although her neighbours are unaware she is La Belle Russe, the revelation that she is the famous songstress is greeted with jubilation and pride by her foster parents, and to Mifanwy, the recognition of her success in her homeland is 'better and sweeter to the taste than all the plaudits of the London public; it was the crowning triumph of her life'.[564] This recognition by the people besides whom she grew up, who knew her simply as Mifanwy, means much more to her than plaudits from unknown audiences in London, Milan or Paris. It also reveals the possibility of distinctly Welsh patriotism, celebrating a Welsh cultural icon triumphantly visiting her homeland. Although the novel does not explore the wider reception of Mifanwy in Wales, this is still undeniably a Welsh success story.

The origin of her success is fundamental in understanding the significance of her triumph. Her hopes of going to London rested on Ieuan's initial promise to 'come and join [him] as soon as ever [he] ha[d] got money enough to keep thee.'[565] Mifanwy initially appears as a woman who relies on a man to save her from her life of poverty. Ieuan's promise to 'come and fetch Mifanwy' represents a literary tradition of men promising upward mobility to poor women, a promise that usually remains unfulfilled and results in the 'fallen woman' trope.[566] As Nina Auerbach notes, the fallen woman '[seemed] to enlightened minds a pitiable monster, created by the neurosis of a culture that feared female sexuality and aggression and so enshrined a respectably sadistic cautionary tale'.[567] Nineteenth- century novels such as Elizabeth Gaskell's *Ruth* (1853) and Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) show women falling into destitution when failed by middle- or upper-class

[564] *A Welsh Singer*, p.353.
[565] Ibid, p.62.
[566] Ibid, p.64.
[567] Nina Auerbach, 'The Rise of the Fallen Woman', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 35 (1980), 29-52 (31), https://www.jstor.org/stable/2933478.

men's romantic promises. Charlotte Brontë's *bildungsroman* novel *Jane Eyre* (1847) also plays with the fallen woman trope when Rochester is revealed to be already married, but the protagonist defies the stereotype and retains her moral integrity throughout the text. Mifanwy goes further than Jane Eyre and actively seeks a different path to marriage and happiness, while also never straying into immorality. Mifanwy decides to achieve social mobility herself rather than wait for Ieuan to 'fetch' her, demonstrating that Raine is not interested in showing the 'fallen woman' in her text. Instead, her protagonist does not settle for waiting, and manages to become a success in her own right.

Mifanwy is an example of a modern, successful Welsh woman defying the numerous attempts in the novel to misidentify her Welshness. She is a self-made woman, using the means at her disposal to become a better version of herself. Setting out in London as Belle Russe is a choice Mifanwy makes herself, as a means to disguise herself from Ieuan, and to allow her the time to improve herself on her own terms. The name of La Belle Russe, however, is an identity placed upon her involuntarily, although she does not shy away from it or make any attempt to reclaim her name. This shows a level of confidence in her own Welshness permitting her to be unafraid of attempts to stamp a different identity upon her; she retains a sense of Welshness as something innate to her, despite external changes. This is perhaps reflected by the informality of the title being bestowed upon her, where an audience member casually refers to her as La Belle Russe as if it is already the norm in London society. The connection to Russia comes when the novel remarks how the 'little Russian song had given an impression that she was singing one of her own national airs, an impression that perhaps was strengthened by her name and her slightly foreign accent.'[568] There is little reference to Mifanwy being Welsh while in London, where she does not sing in her native language. Therefore, the accent and the use of other languages builds a picture of a 'foreign' identity, an exotic young woman from afar, rather than the nearer hills of Wales. Although Mifanwy does not actively throw off the moniker of La Belle Russe, the comfort in her own Welsh identity allows La Belle and Mifanwy to be two separate beings. This pseudonym, however, is later reclaimed by Mifanwy's Welsh neighbours: upon her return to the village a neighbour declares that 'Mary the Mill's little bird is called Labelrŵs.'[569] Although unconscious of Mifanwy being La Belle, her people have taken the name given to her with their own Welsh take on it – the circumflex on 'w' replicates the elongated sound in 'Russe'. To reclaim La Belle Russe allows Mifanwy to fully own her success, on her own terms. It fulfils her dreams of

> [making] a name for myself, to be a good singer, to gain fame and riches; enough to repay all my kind friends; enough to go home to my beloved rocks and sea-birds, to roam the hills as I

[568] *A Welsh Singer*, p.212.
[569] Ibid, p.352.

> please, to be out in moonlight and the sunshine, on the golden sands, and on the blue sea, and to have enough money for Ieuan as well as for myself.[570]

Raine here draws on the stereotype of the wild Welsh woman roaming the hills, echoing the early chapters of the novel. Yet this time, Mifanwy will be among the Welsh hills having made a name for herself, gaining 'fame and riches' in the process, and in turn, being able to offer financial support to Ieuan. Rather than be the stereotypical heroine waiting for a man to come for her, she is willing and able to support her spouse. Mifanwy could have chosen to stay in Wales and become a well-known singer there, but by going to England, she has sought a different type of fame, giving her the opportunity to better herself without her reputation in Wales preceding her. By choosing to return to Wales, Mifanwy's Welshness becomes a conscious, modern choice. The novel's representation of Mifanwy's development is a powerful validation of authentic Welsh womanhood, and of the culture that she proudly represents.

Conclusion

The texts examined in this chapter present Welsh womanhood in the late nineteenth century in ways that both draw on and challenge stereotypes of Welshness. On the one hand, Raine seems to agree with the Blue Books that the Welsh need to become anglicised to become successful. Mifanwy goes to England, where she receives most of her education and learns English. However, she is educated by a Welshman, who ensures that Mifanwy retains her Welsh language and identity while she becomes a famous singer. Similarly, her now refined character – like Catrin's in *A Welsh Witch*, seems to reflect the need to temper wild Welshness as presented in the Blue Books. Yet, Raine is careful to present these young women as distinctively Welsh: from their use of everyday Welsh language, their reflection of Welsh culture, and their unending love for the Welsh countryside and nature. Raine also engages with some racist and colonialist views of Wales, as shown by her descriptions of the appearance of both Mifanwy and Catrin. Mifanwy's increasingly light skin suggests an endorsement of the view that Wales needs an English guiding hand to become more civilised and 'respectable'. Yet the complexity of these texts also shows Raine to be defying anglicisation within all aspects of Welsh life. Stephen Knight states that Raine 'deserves recognition as a post-colonial, rather than simply colonial writer' due to her 'quite complex treatment of her themes'.[571] Both texts examined in this chapter attest to this argument, showing Raine to be battling with long-held colonialist views of Wales and presenting a different version of Welshness to an English audience. What Raine's texts show is that the path to modernity for Welsh women – of independence and self-driven success – is not simple, and does require some engagement with

---

[570] *A Welsh Singer*, p.202.
[571] Stephen Knight, *A Hundred Years of Fiction*, p.17.

anglicised ideals of femininity, especially in appearance and education. However, for Raine, it is evident that Welsh modernity can be achieved and thrive on its own merit. Raine shows this through the structure of the romance novel, combining complex characterisations with romance tropes. By drawing on elements of the *bildungsroman* in *A Welsh Singer* and *A Welsh Witch*, she emphasises the importance of the development of working-class Welsh women. Both texts, in tracing the development of their female protagonists, suggest that Welshness is not only a part of, but the very reason, for their successes.

Chapter Four. The Welsh New Woman

This final chapter examines the representation of Welsh women at the turn of the twentieth century. By this point, the 1847 *Report* was becoming a part of Welsh history, yet its legacy continued to be felt at the end of the nineteenth century. The number of Welsh speakers was declining; a consequence, in part, of the *Report*'s evisceration of the Welsh language within an educational setting: the 1891 census showed 54.4% of the Welsh population spoke Welsh, falling to less than 50% in the 1901 census.[572] However, following the previous chapter's exploration of literary representations of a proud Welsh womanhood that rejected anglicisation as the only means to success, this chapter explores the presence of the New Woman within Welsh literature, and Welsh society itself. This chapter seeks to discover if the New Woman concept existed within Wales and what particular form she took. Then, after establishing her existence, I will consider her relation to previous iterations of Welsh womanhood, in particular to the pious, traditional Welsh womanhood that emerged as a conservative reaction to the *Report*. By looking at both fiction and non-fiction texts – including newspaper reports and essays – during this period, this chapter seeks to establish the difference between the New Woman in Wales and her English counterpart. This chapter examines whether the New Woman helped to finally banish the memory of the Blue Books, or actively worked to protest the traditional image constructed of Welsh women following the Blue Books' publication. Throughout I explore the New Woman from a Welsh perspective, by discussing Anglophone-Welsh short stories by women writers, specifically Bertha Thomas and Sara Maria Saunders. The New Woman prominently featured in the short story form; therefore, the genre will form the basis of this chapter, alongside newspaper articles and essays from prominent Welsh media and Welsh women of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. The New Woman is slowly incorporated into Anglophone Welsh literature, as the image of the traditional Welsh womanhood is allowed to fade. That is not to say that traditional Welsh womanhood disappeared altogether – the literary work of Kate Roberts, for example, incorporate traditional Welsh womanhood, in particular the image of the Welsh Mam in the twentieth century. However, the idea of traditional Welsh womanhood – as portrayed and encouraged by the middle classes following the accusations of the Blue Books – is slowly eroded by the end of the nineteenth century, as shown by the short stories examined in this chapter. The stories by Sara Maria Saunders explore the Welsh New Woman from a rural perspective, while Bertha Thomas' stories offer an urban, Anglophone perspective. The comparison allows for insight into the Welsh New Woman from different social and geographical viewpoints, yet reveals fairly similar representations of the Welsh New Woman.

[572] Keith O. Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation*, p.95.

Who was the New Woman?

The New Woman was essentially an English and American-centred concept, which focused on challenging the ideology of separate spheres, women's lack of education as well as civil and political rights. It was an idea that centred predominantly on middle-class English women resisting the stereotype of the 'angel of the house' and educating themselves in matters that affected women. The first introduction to the term New Woman came in Sarah Grand's essay 'The New Aspect of the Woman Question' (1894), published in the *North American Review*, which called for a change to the patriarchal structure of society, and encouraged women to take a more active stance in society and 'make the world a pleasanter place to live in.'[573] However, iterations of the New Woman had appeared earlier in the century. Early and mid-nineteenth century literature, such as the works of Charlotte Brontë and Elizabeth Gaskell, included exploration of women who are independent thinkers and enlightened to society's ills. Indeed, New Woman ideas appeared as early as 1792, in Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Grand gave a much-debated name to a concept that had, in various shapes, existed for centuries previously: of the independent, educated, and politically involved woman.

Grand states that men, especially middle- and upper-class men, took it for granted that they were society's leaders, despite being hypocritical and cruel for defying others' – namely women's – right to equality.[574] For Grand, this hypocritical behaviour included depriving women of 'proper education', 'call[ing] us bad names' and '[arranging] the whole social system' to benefit man.[575] She calls for women to become equal to men as a way of rectifying this, yet notes that men have always looked upon women who 'ventured to be at all unconventional' as a possible threat to the running of society, and sough to 'slander [women] with the imputation that she must be abandoned'.[576] By seeking to dismiss women who are 'unconventional' for stepping out of gendered and social norms as the New Woman does, man here deliberately undermines these women so as to delegitimise the genuine cause for equality and rights. In the periodicals of the day, suggests Grand, men would disparage women who stepped out of their assigned submissive role. Grand paraphrases the 'ridiculous' arguments men made about the possible effects of women gaining more rights, including the fear that they would

[573] Sarah Grand, 'The New Aspect of the Woman Question', in *The North American Review*, 158, (Mar., 1894), 270- 27 (270) https://www.jstor.org/stable/25103291
[574] Ibid, p.271.
[575] Ibid, pp.271-2.
[576] Ibid, p.273.

> be afflicted with short hair, coarse skins, unsymmetrical figures, loud voices, tastelessness in dress, and an unattractive appearance and character generally, and then he will not love us any more or marry us.[577]

As Grand suggests, the idea that women would be discouraged from this fight for equality by learning that men would find them 'unattractive' simply reveals how little these women were understood by some of their male contemporaries. With wry humour Grand adds that the threat is mostly harmless, as man 'has said and proved on so many occasions that he cannot live without us whatever we are.'[578]

Grand's focus is to encourage women to step out and be productive members of society, not to allow imperfect men to police women's actions. To reassure the male audience, Grand stresses that 'womanliness is not in danger', as the 'sacred duties of wife and mother will be all the more honourably performed when women have a reasonable hope of becoming wives and mothers of *men*.'[579] The statement allays fears that women will become masculine through seeking greater freedoms for themselves; in fact, Grand claims that women will become better wives and mothers if allowed to explore freedoms outside of the household. Grand offers a redefinition of 'man', from the patriarch who sought to keep women within the household to a New Man who supports women's rights; this suggests that the definition of 'man' and 'woman' changes in relation to each other.

One of the defining critical texts on the New Woman is Sally Ledger's *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin de Siècle*. She defines the New Woman as having a 'multiple identity', namely

> a feminist activist, a social reformer, a popular novelist, a suffragette playwright, a woman poet; she was also a fictional construct, a discursive response to the activities of the late nineteenth-century women's movement.[580]

Ledger categorises the New Woman as both a non-fictional and fictional construct, allowing her to inhabit a hybrid identity dependent on the literary form she appears in. The image of the New Woman opened itself up to countless interpretations of New Womanhood within the press of the time: the New Woman was 'the "wild woman", the "glorified spinster", the "advanced woman", the "odd woman", the "modern woman", "Novissima", the "shrieking sisterhood", the "revolting daughters"'.[581] This multitude of interpretations and identities of the New Woman illustrates the fear many Victorians, perhaps especially Victorian men, experienced in response to this concept that challenged nineteenth-century norms. Indeed, Ledger argues that the

---

[577] Grand, p.274.
[578] Ibid, p.274.
[579] Ibid, pp.274-5.
[580] Sally Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin de Siècle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p.1.
[581] Ibid, p.3.

> elusive quality of the New Woman of the fin de siècle clearly marks her as a problem, as a challenge to the apparently homogenous culture of Victorianism which could not find a consistent language by which she could be categorised and dealt with. All that was certain was that she was dangerous, a threat to the *status quo*.[582]

This is evident in the way some periodicals and newspapers presented the New Woman. By presenting the New Woman as a 'threat' and danger to Victorian societal norms, these periodicals could minimise her impact. Several cartoons appeared at the turn of the century, demonstrating the 'contradictions' of the New Woman image in the press. Often periodicals would ridicule the New Woman for her manly appearance or behaviour. The English satirical magazine *Punch* published several cartoons deriding the masculinity of the New Woman, including 'Passionate Female Literary Types' (Figure 225)

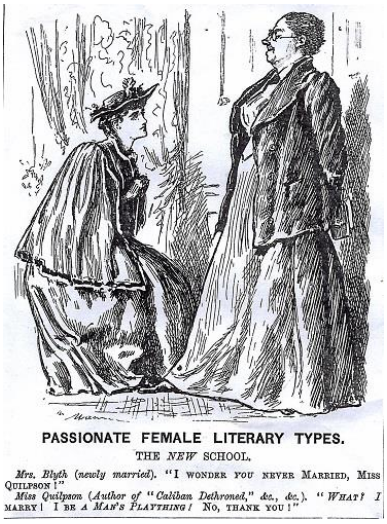

Figure 225 'Passionate Female Literary Types', *Punch* Magazine (1894)

This cartoon deliberately contrasts feminine womanhood with masculine womanhood, caricaturing New Women as women who have lost their femininity and become like men: Mrs Blyth is in feminine dress and in a submissive, meek stance, compared to Miss Quilpson who is broad-shouldered and authoritative. The masculine facial features, alongside references to Miss Quilpson having never married, create an image that both supports and subverts the perceived New Woman's rejection of marriage as the norm: rather than representing her spinster status as a choice, the cartoon plays with the idea that no man wanted to marry her due to her unconventional looks and manner.

As the cartoon suggests, the term 'New Woman' raises the stereotypical image of a woman dressed in men's clothes, smoking, cycling, and engaging in sporting activities. This image was largely a creation of *Punch* magazine's own making, and originated as early as 1885, as Tracy J. R Collins

[582] Ledger, p.11.

argues in her essay 'Athletic Fashion, "Punch", and the Creation of the New Woman'. Collins states that, while the New Woman was 'young, middle-class, and single', and 'exhibited emancipated behavio[urs] such as smoking, riding a bicycle, and taking the bus or train unescorted', a physical manifestation of these behaviours did not particularly exist until *Punch* manifested an 'athletic' body for the New Woman.[583] Indeed, she stresses that '*Punch* rarely missed the chance to depict the New Woman as athletic', which in turn 'acknowledged her and therefore enabled her (which is the beginning of validation) well beyond the limit of *Punch*'s intention.'[584] This suggests that the stereotypical view of women preceded the New Woman in Grand's 1894 essay, in as much as *Punch* created the image that the New Woman later embraced as her own. Certainly, the wearing of trousers or divided skirts was a 'practical costume' for women who wanted to partake in activities such as horse-riding and cycling, which only exacerbated the fear the 'paranoid guardianship of gender hegemony' had of the New Woman.[585] This fear was embodied in a visual representation of a femininity straddling masculinity, therefore although women could engage in some 'masculine' activities such as sports, the fact these women dressed the part too emphasised the 'coming changes in late Victorian gender norms.'[586] Amy Dillwyn is an example of a woman who combined masculine and feminine gender markers, as stated in Chapter One, adapting a practical uniform for a woman concerned with business. That the masculinised image of the New Woman was spread as the norm in the pages of *Punch* over the years illustrates how the New Woman in England was mostly defined by the press. The New Woman's aesthetic was an easy target, instead of the political causes the New Woman stood for; Collins notes how 'if you wanted to depict a woman concerned about marriage and marriage laws you could do so by picturing one wearing men's clothes and using sporting equipment.'[587] Not all women concerned with these matters dressed in the New Woman emblem, of course; such women were not as easy to ridicule, however, suggesting that the popular caricatures of New Women were a strategy which allowed the press to dismiss their worries or campaigns. *Punch* presented the New Woman as a physically unnatural being that was worthy of ridicule.

In a non-fictional context, especially in the English media, the New Woman was often presented as a threat to patriarchal society. New Woman literature, however, provides a more sympathetic outlook of the New Woman figure, without shying away from presenting the oddities and contradictions of her character. Sally Ledger argues that the constant attacks on the New Woman in the press 'unwittingly prised open a discursive space for her' which 'was quickly filled by feminist textual productions sympathetic – not antagonistic – towards the claims of the New Woman and her sisters

[583] Tracy J. R Collins, 'Athletic Fashion, "Punch", and the Creation of the New Woman', in *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 43 (2010), 309-335 (310), https://www.jstor.org/stable/41038818.
[584] Ibid, p.310.
[585] Ibid, p.311.
[586] Ibid, p.318.
[587] Ibid, p.317.

in the late nineteenth-century women's movement.'[588] Literary writers such as Olive Schreiner and Sarah Grand portrayed the New Woman in her many forms, as the wife, mother, and independent woman. Through these, New Woman literature could address issues such as inequality, motherhood, sexuality, and marriage. New Woman literature, therefore, is a form of addressing issues that mainly women had to face by presenting different versions of womanhood: the masculine woman; the suffragette; the independent woman, and so forth.

Welsh Women's Writing prior to the term New Woman

With the emergence of the New Woman in England, the readiness to accept the concept in Wales is shaped by the small press in Wales. While essentially conservative, this press contained elements of progressive vision. Following the publication of the Blue Books in 1847, 1850 saw the emergence of *Y Gymraes*, a Welsh periodical aimed at women which 'perpetuated an ideal to which the women of Wales could aspire.'[589] This came in the form of a 'true "Cymraes"', who 'should make every effort to ensure that Welsh was the language of her family', challenging the Blue Books' animosity towards the language, while also being 'proud of her Welshness, wearing at all times the native dress of Welsh flannel and a beaver hat.'[590] The now stereotypical image of Welsh womanhood was eagerly promoted to Welsh women in *Y Gymraes* following particular criticism towards women in the Blue Books. The magazine's aim was to share, as Sian Rhiannon Williams notes, 'advice and commands which, if obeyed, would create the perfect 'Cymraes', at all times neat and tidy, modest and unassuming, thrifty, loyal, pure and religious.'[591] Following criticism of women in the Blue Books, it is not surprising that a Welsh periodical sought to construct the complete opposite of the immoral, unruly women that the Commissioners portrayed. Yet the magazine's 'advice and commands' were mostly aimed at a particular type of woman – middle-class and educated. *Y Gymraes*, created and edited by Ieuan Gwynedd, was produced and written by mostly middle-class men, whose intended audience excluded working-class women.[592] After *Y Gymraes* ceased publication in 1851, its values reignited when *Y Frythones* began publishing in 1879: the 'image of the perfect 'Brythones', like the perfect 'Cymraes', was of pure and virtuous wife and mother, who, restricted to her own sphere of activity, gave her all for the sake of the well-being of her children.'[593] Established by Sarah Jane Rees ('Cranogwen'), *Y Frythones* published some progressive articles, exploring education for girls and discussions on issues such as the suffrage movement. Sian Rhiannon Williams argued that *Y Frythones* 'had a rather condescending attitude towards working-class women', while the 'heroines

---

[588] Ledger, p.9.
[589] Sian Rhiannon Williams, 'The True 'Cymraes': Images of Women in Women's Nineteenth-Century Welsh Periodicals', in *Our Mother's Land: Chapters in Welsh Women's History 1830-1939*, ed. by Angela John (Cardiff: University of Wales press, 2011), pp.73-94 (p.76) http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qhfrn.
[590] Ibid, p.77.
[591] Ibid, p.78.
[592] Ibid, p.79.
[593] Ibid, p.84.

of *Y Frythones* were Englishwomen of the middle class, Hannah More, Amelia Opie, Sarah Martin, Elizabeth Fry and Florence Nightingale.'[594] These women were revered for advocating social reform, prison reform, and anti-slavery, yet as Williams notes, they were all English; she does not find any inspirational Welsh women in *Y Frythones*. However, these women would mostly appear on the cover of editions to initially attract a readership, as there were not many photographs of Welsh women of a similar calibre. The periodical did include many portrayals of inspirational Welsh women, with articles on writers and musicians, to community reformers; these included women from working-class backgrounds. Despite this, arguably *Y Frythones*'s aims of improving women's prospects did not quite reach those who would have gained more from its guidance and advocation of education than middle-class Welsh women.

Following *Y Frythones* came a second iteration of *Y Gymraes* in 1896, which demonstrated a more radical vision of women's standing in society, prompted by social and political developments that placed women at the forefront of campaigns. Sian Rhiannon Williams argues that, despite following *Y Frythones* and the first *Y Gymraes*'s moral and religious ethos, the second *Y Gymraes* nevertheless 'paid more attention to the achievements of Welsh women […] and encouraged women to take an active part in public life, albeit in the "limited" spheres of Sunday school, chapel and the temperance movement.'[595] Its progressive vision allowed for the New Woman to become a more prominent figure in Wales, and provided space in which a distinctively Welsh New Woman could develop, one that focused on particular Welsh issues. In between these two periodicals progressive female writing appeared in the bilingual periodical *Cymru Fydd* (1888-1891). Although it was not designed solely for women, it allowed space for Welsh women to write on key political matters such as Home Rule. Its later iteration of *Young Wales* (1895-96) in particular supported rights for women, including suffrage, and 'devoted a number of pages each month to accounts of women's social, political and educational development, pages which were written for the most part by female contributors.'[596] This platform allowed women a greater voice in matters of politics and society, changing the periodical landscape from a purely conservative outlook on women's place in society to active encouragement of female activism.

One key issue for the Welsh New Woman, and one that distinguished her from her English counterpart, was temperance. Writers and contributors such as Cranogwen, Ellen Hughes and Alice Gray Jones (the editor of the second *Y Gymraes*) were prominent temperance campaigners, using the periodical to widen the influence of the cause. The temperance campaign plays a significant part in our understanding of Welsh New Womanhood, as the movement was actively encouraging women

[594] Rhiannon Williams, p.86.
[595] Ibid, p.89.
[596] Jane Aaron, *Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in Wales: Nation, Gender and Identity*, p.162.

to lead a campaign in the fight against the stereotyping of Welsh people as drunks. Women used the existing social structures available to them, such as chapels, to reach the wider community, gradually embedding this new vision of womanhood in society. This helped to entrench the idea of the Welsh New Woman that was different from the English New Woman. While *Punch* led perceptions of the English New Woman as sexually liberal, focused on appearance (dress) and masculine actions (smoking, cycling) as means of defying gendered norms, Welsh New Womanhood focuses more on improving women's lives within society and their communities. While English New Women also pursued social and political reform, through campaigns like suffrage, Welsh New Women used movements like temperance to reach working-class women. They sought change that benefited women of all social backgrounds, rather than the predominantly upper middle-class.

Despite the initial conservative response to the Blue Books, with the advocation of the ideal Welsh Mam and traditional attire for women, concerns adopted by the New Woman were raised in Wales before the 1890s, showing a progressive attitude that allowed the New Woman concept to enter smoothly into the gender discourse in Wales. The Anglophone Welsh writer Bertha Thomas (1845-1918) penned the satirical essay 'Latest Intelligence from the Planet Venus' in 1874, in relation to the suffrage movement. Thomas' Welsh connections came from her father's side, as she was the daughter of a Carmarthenshire-born Reverend, whose own father had been a Magistrate in Carmarthen. Although there is little record of Thomas visiting Wales, her literary work does include references to Wales, from setting to characters. Thomas published novels and short stories, including *Cressida* (1878), *Camera Lucida: or, Strange Passages in Common Life* (1897) and *Picture Tales from Welsh Hills* (1912). In 'Latest Intelligence from the Planet Venus' she creates a planet where women lead government, with men unable to vote. This is a response to earlier articles, such as the one published in *The Aberdare Times* on 7th of December 1872, which dismissed female suffrage by questioning whether women 'would [...] be any better off, socially, morally, or politically, if they had votes? We think not.'[597] Thomas subverts the argument against allowing women the vote which focused on the fear of women neglecting their domestic duties as both wife and mother. This was a genuine worry at a time when Wales was still reeling from the judgements of the Blue Books, as shown in the periodicals' encouragement of moral, pious women. Instead, Thomas turns the argument on its head: she uses women's position, being largely confined to the home, as a means of arguing they are better placed to be in government due to having more time to truly engage with serious political issues. Woman, according to Thomas, has 'finer perceptions than man' and is less ungovernable in her emotions, quicker and clearer in intellect, physically better fitted for sedentary

[597] Unknown, 'Woman Suffrage', in *The Aberdare Times* (December 7th, 1872) https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3023392/3023396/37/new%20woman.

life, more inclined to study and thought, everything seems to qualify her specially for legislation.'[598] Indeed, Thomas uses motherhood and domestic duties as an example of good governance by women, as they are left to take care of both duties while men have 'little time or thought […] to spare for household superintendence.'[599] In return, Thomas notes that women would make for 'bad soldiers, bad ships, bad machines, bad artisans', as men are 'decidedly [women's] superiors in physical power', as shown in their pursuit of 'violent games and athletic exercises'.[600] By repeating the truism that men are physically more powerful than women, the essay indicates that not only are men less able to govern due to lack of time, but also pose a threat to the safety of society: 'the muscular force of the community being male, an opportunity would be afforded for an amount of intimidation it would shock us now even to contemplate.'[601] Thomas suggests in the extreme case that men would 'oust women altogether from the legislature', causing a decline in women's education and place in society.[602] Compare this to *The Aberdare Times*'s argument against giving women the vote:

> The very same arguments that are employed in the advocacy of female suffrage need be pushed only a little further to advocate the election of women as representatives; and as members of the Ministry are chosen from the legislature, another step might be to have ladies in the Cabinet; and who shall say that at some distant period perhaps, we might not have a House of Ladies as well as a House of Lords.[603]

Thomas successfully satirises arguments like these, showing the absurdity of not allowing women the vote purely for the fear of them taking a place in the chambers of Parliament. *The Aberdare Times* does not explain in exact terms why women should not be allowed to be elected as MPs and other public offices, yet Thomas mirrors anti-Suffrage journalists' technique by exaggerating perceptions of the stereotypical gendered view of men. This threat of physical violence, alongside men's temperament unsuitable for governance, allows a space for women to use their 'organisation, habits, and condition' to 'best enable them to study political science.'[604] Thomas dismisses opinions like that expressed in *The Aberdare Times*, that 'to give women votes […] is a step which the country is not yet prepared to take, and which we maintain women do not desire should be taken.'[605] Thomas' essay suggests this is not the case, albeit from the perspective of an Anglophone Welsh woman living in England. 'Latest Intelligence from the Planet Venus' demonstrates how New Woman ideas that become prominent in the 1890s – of female autonomy and suffrage – started decades prior. This

---

[598] Bertha Thomas, 'Latest Intelligence from the Planet Venus', in *Stranger Within the Gates* ed. by Kirsti Bohata (Dinas Powys: Honno Press, 2008), pp.263-269 (p.265-6).
[599] Ibid, p.266.
[600] Ibid, p.265.
[601] Ibid, p.267.
[602] Ibid, p.268.
[603] Unknown, *The Aberdare Times.*
[604] Thomas, p.268.
[605] Unknown, *The Aberdare Times.*

suggests that the introduction of the New Woman in Wales is not entirely unexpected; even the emergence of periodicals like *Y Gymraes* and *Y Frythones*, despite their largely conservative outlook, allowed Welshwomen to occupy space in Wales' social development following the Blue Books' publication.

The definition of the Welsh New Woman

New Woman ideas appeared much earlier in Wales than the official term 'New Woman' in 1894, as of course they also did in England. However, with the emergence of the term came an opportunity to reshape what the New Woman was within Wales, making her independent of the English New Woman. The definitive explanation of the Welsh New Woman appeared in 1896 in Ellen Hughes' essay 'Y Ddynes Newydd' ('The New Woman'), published in *Y Gymraes*. The essay is an essential exploration of feminism and the New Woman in Wales, and has been highlighted by Aaron in *Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing* as one of the most important pieces of writing in the century. Aaron gives an overview of how Hughes helped shape the progressive attitudes of the periodical press with her numerous essays ranging on topics from opportunities for women to imperial wars, with 'Y Ddynes Newydd' playing a part in the developing role of Welsh gender discourse.[606] This chapter closely examines Hughes' essay in order to explore how it helped shape a definitively Welsh New Woman, separate from her English equivalent. Hughes' exploration of the New Woman in Wales engages with and challenges *Y Gymraes*'s usual emphasis on 'familial duty and moral and religious observance', breaking new ground in its portrayal of a more progressive vision of Welsh womanhood.[607] It also demonstrates how attitudes of both sexes towards women's role in society had evolved, from a focus on being good wives and mothers to advocating for women to take leading roles in social and political campaigns. The Welsh New Woman figure, as this chapter argues, paves the way for a modern Welsh womanhood at the turn of the twentieth century, aiming to further distance itself from the Blue Books.

Hughes was a writer from Llanengan, North Wales who supported the suffrage and temperance movements. As well as articles in periodicals such as *Y Frythones* and *Y Gymraes*, she also published poetry and prose in *Sibrwd yr Awel, sef Cyfansoddiadau barddonol* (1885) and *Murmur Y Gragen. Sef Detholion O Gyfansoddiadau Barddonol a Rhyddiaethol* (1907). 'Y Ddynes Newydd' is an essay that stresses from the outset that the New Woman, as represented in some quarters of society, is not a figure of fun or ridicule. The New Woman, from a Welsh perspective, is 'ddim byd i gynhyrfu chwerthin' ('nothing to excite laughter'), except among those that do not exhibit 'tegwch a

[606] Aaron, p.167.
[607] Rhiannon Williams, p.89.

boneddigeiddrwydd' ('fairness and gentlemanliness') towards her.[608] Thus Hughes criticizes people – men in particular – for their unfair portrayal of the New Woman.[609] Hughes instead describes the Dynes Newydd figure as one championing equality, encouraging all women to strive for self-improvement and education. She explains:

> Yr holl sefyllfaoedd y mae merched yn eu llenwi yn awr [...] – y gwaith amrywiol y maent yn ei gyflawni gyda'r fath sirioldeb a gobaith – onid oes miloedd o'n chwiorydd […] wedi bod yn teimlo eu hunain yn cael eu gwasgu i gylch bron yn rhy gyfyng iddynt allu anadlu yn rhydd ynddo, ond yn gwneyd eu goreu i gredu ar hyd eu hoes mai yn yr ystafell fyglyd, gyda'r ffenestr a'r pedwar cwarel bychan, yr oedd eu lle hwy, ac mai i eraill yr oedd yr "allan fawr," gyda'i holl brydferthion a'i ryfeddodau?[610]
>
> (All the situations that women now occupy […] – the varied work they carry out with such cheerfulness and hope – have not thousands of our sisters […] been feeling themselves squeezed into a circle almost too tight for them to breathe freely in, but doing their best to believe during their lives that their place is in that smoky room, with its window and four small panes, and that the 'great outside' was for others, with all its beauty and wonder?)

Hughes argues that women have always wanted to enter the 'allan fawr' and participate in its social and educational possibilities, but have been made to feel that their place is firmly within the domestic sphere. While some women by the late-nineteenth century were exercising greater freedoms, many had not been made to feel they were also able to do so. Hughes' argument needs to be put in the context of her work in the temperance movement, which still reinforced the 'view of women as wives and mothers above all', responsible 'for keeping the home free of alcohol, and making it a comfortable place so that husbands should not be tempted to leave it for the rival attractions of the public house.'[611] The 'allan fawr', for Hughes, would involve activities related to temperance, which included writing, meetings and lecturing, activities more open to middle-class women in Wales. However, involvement in this campaign does allow women opportunities to start exploring the 'allan fawr', making the temperance movement a steppingstone to further women's prospects in society. This, in turn, makes the temperance movement part of the distinctiveness of Welsh New Womanhood. What Hughes encourages in her essay is better understanding of what the Dynes Newydd genuinely represented,

---

[608] Ellen Hughes, 'Y Ddynes Newydd', in *Y Gymraes* (November 1896), https://journals.library.wales/view/2484001/2676625/13#?xywh=-746%2C-33%2C4358%2C2874, pp.28-29 (p.28). All translations in this chapter are my own work, and will immediately follow the Welsh text within the body of the thesis.
[609] Ibid, p.28.
[610] Ibid, p.28.
[611] Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan, 'From Temperance to Suffrage?', in *Our Mother's Land: Chapters in Welsh Women's History 1830-1939*, ed. by Angela John (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011), pp.134-156 (p.141-6), https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qhfrn.

which was the drive towards greater opportunities for women, including working-class women, countering the satirical take on her as seen in the English press. Instead, the Dynes Newydd has

> Wedi deffro i ystyriaeth o'i *hawliau* a'i *chyfrifoldeb.* Cred yn ddiysgog mai person ydyw, ac nid peth. Nid ydyw yn ofni ei bod yn ysbeilio neb arall wrth osod pwysigrwydd ar ei hawliau ei hunan, gan ei bod yn gwybod fod cyfiawnder a thegwch yn rhwym o lesoli cymdeithas yn gyffredinol. Nid ydyw am ymwrthod a'i chyfrifoldeb, ond creda fod hwn yn cynwys ei dyledswydd tuag at ei hun, yn gystal ag at eraill.[612]
>
> (Awakened to the consideration of her *rights* and *responsibilities*. She firmly believes that she is a person, and not a thing. She is not afraid she is depriving anyone else by placing importance on her own rights, as she knows that equality and fairness in general is bound to improve a community. She does not want to renounce her responsibility, but believes this includes a duty to herself, as well as to others.)

This is an important definition of the role of the Welsh New Woman: she embraces her newfound rights and responsibilities, while reassuring those that fear the New Woman's emergence would threaten social norms. Hughes does address one particular issue concerning the New Woman: being the choice not to marry or have children. Hughes merely asks 'os ydyw yn fynych yn ymgyleddu cylch lletach na'r un teuluaidd, a ydyw hyny yn golled i rywun?' ('if she frequently undertakes a wider circle than the familial one, is that a loss to anyone?'); the 'circle' around a woman does not necessarily have to be one of family and children, but could also consist of friends and likeminded individuals.[613] A woman's decision not to have children, Hughes emphasises, should not affect others, as woman can have impact throughout her life in different forms. Hughes uses Cranogwen as an example of a Dynes Newydd who defies expectations of marriage and children: 'A ydyw merched fel Miss Willard a Cranogwen yn llai ddefnyddiol, yn llai rhagorol, yn llai benywaidd, na merched nad oes ond eu teuluoedd eu hunain yn manteisio yn uniongyrchol ar eu gwasanaeth?' ('Are women like Miss Willard and Cranogwen less useful, less admirable, less feminine, than women whose service only directly benefits their families?')[614] 'Miss Willard' is most likely a reference to American suffragist Frances Willard which, while strengthening her argument that women do not necessarily have to be a wife and mother to affect change, also serves to place Welsh culture directly into an international context. Here, however, I will focus on the reference to Cranogwen. Cranogwen (1839-1916) was a teacher, poet, and editor of *Y Frythones* when it first published Hughes' poetry. She was also noted for her proud singledom, making her significant to Hughes's argument that the traditional

[612] Hughes, p.29.
[613] Ibid, p.29.
[614] Ibid, p.29.

family structure should not be the exclusive norm. Additionally, Hughes stresses that a New Woman is no less a woman for lack of motherhood, this pushing beyond the periodical's general amplification of women's traditional roles in marriage and motherhood.

Cranogwen faced harsh criticism on her apparent masculinity, as noted by Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan in 'From Temperance to Suffrage?'. Lloyd-Morgan quotes Revd D. G. Jones, Cranogwen's biographer, as saying in reference to the audience at a Cranogwen lecture:

> When they saw Cranogwen in the pulpit addressing a crowd of men, they thought that the end of the world had come. They thought it excellent to suggest that she was a man in female form, or woman in masculine form, and we heard some suggest that she belonged neither to the one sex nor the other.[615]

The response to Cranogwen that is described here begins to echo the fearful reaction to New Woman that we have seen in publications like *Punch*: that she was too masculine. Hughes seeks to rectify this image by stating that women like Cranogwen are not a threat to an already-nervous patriarchal society; instead, New Women like Cranogwen offer something different to society than marriage and children. Cranogwen's inclusion in Hughes' essay necessitates an exploration into Cranogwen as a Dynes Newydd, and what that suggests about the Dynes Newydd in Wales. Like Hughes, Cranogwen was a temperance reformer. As stated earlier, *Y Frythones* echoed the first *Y Gymraes* in encouraging women to emulate domestic ideals, and as its editor Cranogwen believed in the 'social importance of a highly moral, religious and Welsh-speaking wife and mother', following the Blue Books' accusations.[616] Cranogwen was not a wife and mother herself, though, and she was a vocal supporter of Welsh-language education for girls in Wales; Sian Rhiannon Williams noted that 'the importance of establishing secondary schools for girls was the subject of the editor's New Year address for 1888.'[617] Furthermore, as a periodical, *Y Frythones* was 'much more prepared to recognize' than the first *Y Gymraes* 'that women worked outside the home'.[618] This reflects social development in Wales during the second half of the nineteenth century, while still not entirely recognising equality for women in every aspect of life. It was certainly progress from the first *Y Gymraes*'s ethos, which saw female education as merely 'learning, not as much for her own sake, but so as to be able to serve her husband and instruct her children.'[619] Hughes' 'Y Ddynes Newydd' in 1896 reverses this and explicitly calls for women's education to support self-improvement: 'Y mae am feddu cymaint o adnoddau ynddi ei hun ag sydd yn bosib, a chroesawa bob ymarferiad corfforol a meddyliol ag sydd

[615] Revd D. G. Jones as quoted in Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan 'From Temperance to Suffrage', p.147.
[616] Rhiannon Williams, p.77.
[617] Ibid, p.85.
[618] Ibid, p.85.
[619] Ibid, p.79.

yn tueddu i'n gwneyd yn gryfach a mwy annibynol.' ('She wants to possess as many resources in herself as is possible, and she welcomes every physical and mental exercise that tend to make her stronger and more independent.')[620]

Although not against motherhood, Hughes' essay offers a different perspective of what women can offer society. Hughes places women's influence as key in forging a better society: 'Ond y mae i bob un ei chylch ei hun, yn yr hwn y gall trwy ymroddiad a phenderfyniad, ynghyd âg amcan teilwng brofi ei hun y naill ddydd ar ol y llall yn Ddynes Newydd. Rhwydd hynt iddi!' ('But everyone has their own circle, in which it can through dedication and determination, together with a worthy objective prove itself day after day a New Woman.')[621] Placing particular interest in the social sphere is an important feature that makes the Welsh New Woman distinct, in a manner that places real social issues – such as temperance – at the heart of what it is to be a Welsh New Woman. There is no particular way to be a New Woman in Wales; Hughes is not prescriptive about the characteristics of the New Woman. New Women engage and affect others in a manner that respects and elevates their place in society; they are allowed to access education and a platform to explore their rights.

The Welsh New Woman in Fiction

This section explores how Hughes' definition of the Welsh New Woman as a figure concerned with social issues and communal life is developed in the short stories of Sara Maria Saunders and Bertha Thomas, published in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Saunders' stories focus on religion as a form of advocacy for a more moral society, with women predominantly leading the charge. Women mainly appear in two ways in the stories: as the singular woman advocating for her fellow women's equal place in society; or as part of a group of women collectively taking on social issues. Saunders' female characters are moral leaders of their communities, highly respected and influencing others to forge a better life for themselves. Her fiction echoes Thomas' imagined planet in her suffrage essay, in that women are the ones 'ruling', with men allowed to pursue their own interests without interfering with women's positions in society. Analysis of Bertha Thomas' short stories will also draw parallels to her earlier feminist essay, while focusing on how Thomas portrays New Womanhood from an anglicised perspective. Thomas' inclusion of English New Women in her stories suggests that Welsh New Womanhood is far subtler compared to her English counterpart, in that the Welsh New Woman is focused on social change rather than aesthetics. In comparing the two women writers' stories, this section argues that Saunders portrays strong female network of Welsh New Women, formed from largely feminist communities, while Thomas often displays Welsh New

[620] Hughes, p.29.
[621] Ibid, p.29.

Woman as a lone figure, fighting against societal and gendered expectations within communities that will not necessarily welcome change.

Sara Maria Saunders (1864-1939) was a Welsh writer from Ceredigion who often published under her initials S.M.S, writing both in Welsh and English. Her published works include *Llon a Lleddf* (1897), *Y Diwygiad ym Mhentre Alun gyda ysgrifau eraill* (1907); stories from both collections will be discussed in this chapter. Hailing from a Methodist family, and married to Methodist preacher John Saunders, religion is a prominent theme in her works, which also incorporates strong female characters that challenge the image of traditional womanhood within rural Wales. Saunders writes predominantly of and about women in her short stories, exploring women's quest for and capacity for independence from men. Saunders' stories provide a critical representation of Welsh New Womanhood that is specifically concerned with social issues that directly impact Welsh women, especially Welsh working-class women. This makes her place in this chapter a critical one, as despite using some of her Welsh-language texts, she can also be considered as part of the younger tradition of Welsh Writing in English.

Saunders' 'Nancy on the Warpath', which appeared in *Young Wales* in 1897, part of a collection of short stories titled *Welsh Rural Sketches* (1896-9), emphasises how Welsh New Womanhood is focused on everyday feminist issues. In response to domestic abuse, a woman here leads the charge in allowing others to escape domestic tyranny. The story presents the Welsh New Woman's impact from a localised perspective. The story is part of a narrative that focuses on the village of Pentre-Rhedyn and the animosity between the local deacon and preacher. Nancy, the preacher's daughter, marries the son of the deacon. She is a young woman defying the stereotype of women as non-confrontational and focused only on her own domestic space, as she actively involves herself with her father-in-law's household. Unlike Nancy, her mother-in-law Mrs Morris is 'poor, weak', having 'been under subjection for thirty years, [losing] the capacity for self-assertion' in the face of her husband's bullying manner.[622] When Mr Morris refuses to let his wife see her severely ill son, Nancy confronts him without hesitation, entering the house as 'Edward's wife ought to enter her father-in-law's house through the front door.'[623] She calmly and resolutely states her purpose – to take Mrs Morris to see her son – and leaves Mr Morris with the parting shot that 'I'd like you to be able to feel, when you lie on your dying bed, that you hadn't this cruelty on your conscience, the cruelty of having kept a mother from her only child when he was on his death bed.'[624] This shows Nancy's initial dismissal of her father-in-law, a cold-hearted, strict man who frightens every character bar her. Her

[622] Sara Maria Saunders, 'Nancy on the Warpath', in *A View Across the Valley: Short Stories by Women from Wales c.1850-1950* ed. by Jane Aaron (1999) (Dinas Powys; Honno Press, 2002), pp.70-89 (p.70).
[623] 'Nancy on the Warpath', p.29.
[624] Ibid, p.30.

victory is short-lived, but when Mrs Morris is removed from her son's bedside by her husband Nancy's determination in the face of male tyranny is strengthened. Her resolve is far stronger than her husband's, who refuses to remove his ill mother from her household, showing how Nancy's actions defy gendered norms. Her actions also show how a woman's caring nature can be used for good; unwilling to allow her mother-in-law to suffer, she goes to rescue her: 'You've tried your way for nearly six years, try my way for once.'[625] She challenges men's passiveness on domestic issues, actively responding to domestic abuse in another household, in which she should, according to convention, not get involved. Self-assured and dismissive of social conventions, Nancy merely enters the house again and immediately assumes the business of running the house, as she is a 'good one for getting [her] way'.[626] Nancy does not accept being simply a wife and mother, supportive of her husband and focused on her role as mistress of her own household. Instead, she takes the initiative to rescue another wife and mother from domestic tyranny. The conversation between herself and Mr Morris is almost a meeting of equals, as she demands to speak to him concerning Mrs Morris, albeit politely and in a way that conforms to contemporary rules of behaviour for women: 'I am ready as soon as you can leave your writing to attend to me, I'll tell you all I have to say, but of course, if you are busy, I'll stay till you have a little time to spare.'[627] Although seemingly in submission to him, Nancy wields the real power in the dynamic, as she knows he will have to yield to listening to her. When challenged by him for her behaviour, Nancy 'calmly' suggests that he has 'got to listen to me either here or in chapel next Sunday', once again holding power over him, by politely threatening to expose him in front of his congregation.[628] Her statement that she is her 'mother's daughter' and 'has never yet been afraid of anyone, *and she's not afraid of you*' shows her unwillingness to let men to hold all the power.[629] By giving Mr Morris the ultimatum between allowing her to help Mrs Morris in private, or exposing his abuse in the public space of the church, Nancy forces him to concede to her demands. Her strength lies in her capacity to care for and love others, at odds with Mr Morris whose tyrannical nature incites fear. Nancy does not want to be feared, but seeks respect and equality with a man she refuses to be afraid of. While obeying his order to 'pour out the tea, [as] it's woman's work' she demonstrates her ability to recognise when to perform domestic submissiveness.[630] The story ends with Mr Morris telling his son he has 'married a woman of spirit', which can be taken as either a slight or a compliment.[631] Although not explicitly referencing the term New Woman, 'Nancy on the Warpath' is the story of a young woman exercising autonomy, not for her own purposes but for the purpose of 'rescuing' a woman subjected to domestic abuse. The traditional Welsh ideal

[625] 'Nancy on the Warpath, p.32.
[626] Ibid, p.33.
[627] Ibid, p.34.
[628] Ibid, p.34.
[629] Ibid, p.34.
[630] Ibid, p.35.
[631] Ibid, p.36.

promoted the woman's role in maintaining a clean, respectable household. Nancy manages to combine this traditional post-Blue Books ideal with a progressive New Woman identity, challenging some of the patriarchal attitudes of Welsh society.

Saunders' Welsh-language texts focus on religion, using her Methodist background to emphasise the importance of Christ to redeem people of their sins. However, her Welsh short stories cannot be dismissed as simply religious proclamations. In her introduction to a collection of Saunders' writings, *Llon a Lleddf a Storiau Eraill* (2012), Rosanne Reeves references the Dynes Newydd as a key aspect of Saunders' writing. Reeves states that Saunders writes of 'cyfraniad menywod hyderus, duwiol a gweithgar a gadwai lygad barcud ar gyflwr ysbrydol eu cymunedau lle'r oedd bywyd yn troi o gwmpas y capeli' ('the contribution of confident, godly and industrious women who kept a watchful eye on the spiritual state of their communities where life revolved around the chapels.')[632] Although the focus is still on religion, the New Woman figure is tied to women's recent development as speakers and campaigners for Methodism and temperance; women were now at the forefront of public life and no longer stuck in their aprons at home. Thus, the chapels become a prime space for the Welsh New Woman to thrive and take her message of women's rights and responsibilities beyond the middle- and upper-class audience of English New Womanhood. It must be emphasised, nevertheless, that working-class women were not as actively involved in these movements and subsequently are not as visible in the New Woman movement. Saunders' female characters, however, embody women of varying class identity, all seeking redemption or promoting Christ's love for all people, while also working towards sexual parity. As Reeves argues, it is 'thrwy dröedigaeth y gellid newid cymdeithas er gwell a dileu'r anghyfartaledd rhwng y rhywiau' ('it was through conversion that society could be changed for the better and gender inequality eliminated.')[633] Saunders' depiction of the New Woman in her short stories focuses on the elevation of women to a more prominent position within the community. Indeed, male characters often only play a supportive role within these stories, compared to the central role women play in the goings-on of the community. The prominence of women reflects Ellen Hughes' observation that the Dynes Newydd is 'dim llai na chwyldroad cymdeithasol, os y cymharwn sefyllfa merched ein dyddiau ni a'r eiddo eu chwiorydd ddechreu y ganrif hon' ('no less than a social revolution, if we compare the position of women of our day with those of their sisters at the beginning of this century.')[634] Through involvement of the chapels, Saunders's characters reflect this social revolution whereby women become the key influence and leaders within a community who can and do directly impact on women's lives.

---

[632] Rosanne Reeves, 'Rhagymadrodd', in *Llon a Lleddf a Storiau Eraill: gan Sara Maria Saunders*, ed. by Rosanne Reeves (Dinas Powys; Gwasg Honno, 2013), pp.11-28 (p.20).
[633] Ibid, p.23.
[634] Hughes, p.28.

Saunders addresses the treatment of single Welsh women, prior to the arrival of a Welsh New Womanhood that encompassed all women in its fight for equality. The foundation for the development of Welsh womanhood is depicted in Saunders' collection *Llon a Lleddf* (1897), showing Welsh women playing a crucial role in the community. 'Merch y Brenin' is the story of Peggy, a relatively wealthy woman in the community 'gan fod iddi fferm fechan ar ben y mynydd gwerth chwe swllt yr wythnos' ('because she had a small farm at the top of the mountain worth six shillings a week.')[635] She is a 'hen ferch' who has remained single, 'nid oherwydd na ches i *ddigon* o gynigion, ond am fy mod i yn leicio bywyd sengl' ('not because I didn't get enough offers, but because I liked living the single life.')[636] As an unmarried woman with financial means, she fulfils her social obligations by donating to the church book. Although being able to contribute herself, she is nevertheless eager to ensure that everyone else contributes fairly also: 'mor ddirmygus y gallai Peggy edrych ar y rhai oedd yn cyfrannu llai na hi at y llyfr eglwysig' ('Peggy could give such a look of contempt to those who contributed less than her to the church book.')[637] Furthermore, 'yr oedd yn disgwyl ar bawb fod yn ddiolchgar' ('she expected everyone to be grateful') for her kindness, as her offers of charity – such as washing others' clothes – and the energy spent helping others would feel to be wasted without the proper appreciation of her efforts.[638] While this portrayal of a woman who expects '*Thenkye*' for a seemingly selfless act of charity could be considered unflattering, it also demonstrates Peggy's active role in the community.[639] As an unmarried, childless woman with some wealth, she would be seen as having the time and means to help the community. By expecting gratitude for her actions, Peggy shows that she does not act merely due to pressure of what others expect of her as a single woman without other dependents or demands on her time and money. It is a cruel, unexpected twist that she loses her small farm when it becomes someone else's property. Although Saunders does not elaborate, it is likely that the farm falls into ownership of a male relative. Peggy is left to ask for 'gymorth plwyfol' ('parish assistance'), before two years later she is told that the 'tloty oedd y lle gorau i hen wraig o oedran Peggy' ('workhouse was the best place for an old lady of Peggy's age'), especially as she also suffers from rheumatic disease.[640] Placing a woman who has contributed both financially and physically to society in the workhouse highlights the easy dismissal of single, elderly women when they can no longer be of use. Peggy has the last word, however, as she dies at home before being removed. This last act of resistance challenges society's dismissal of older, single women. Saunders' stories reject the idea that women are no longer useful when reaching old age, or if they remain unmarried and childless. By exploring Welsh women's status in one of the

[635] Sara Maria Saunders 'Merch y Brenin' in *Llon a Lleddf a Storïau Eraill* (Dinas Powys; Gwasg Honno, 2013), pp.51-56 (p.51).
[636] Ibid, p.51.
[637] Ibid, p.51.
[638] Ibid, p.51.
[639] Ibid, p.52.
[640] Ibid, p.56.

earliest stories of her first collection, Saunders' story lays the foundation for other explorations of the New Woman to emerge in her later fiction.

Peggy's death might suggest that she plays no part in Welsh New Womanhood, yet this literary example of women's control over the narrative of their own lives emphasises how defiance to patriarchal society took place long before the New Woman officially arrived. A similar theme occurs in Allen Raine's 'Home, Sweet Home', which appeared posthumously in *All in a Month and Other Stories* (1908). Nancy Vaughan is the stereotypical image of the Welsh woman 'becloaked and hatted' and in her 'full frill of her lace cap, kept in place by a kerchief of black silk tied under her chin'.[641] She has become 'accustomed to neglect and loneliness' in her old age, as she is seen as having done her part of playing wife and mother.[642] Nancy accepts this, and recognises that it is 'not right for the old mistress to interfere with the new', as her son marries and takes over the farm.[643] She is ready to make way for another woman, who embodies a different version of womanhood from the one she had represented herself, a version presented by Raine as unkind and unsympathetic to her mother-in-law's influence. Sent to the workhouse under false pretences by her son, Nancy initially loses her identity, before finding her determination spurred by the 'longing for the old home'.[644] After walking out of the poorhouse in her determination to reach home, Nancy dies along the way, blanketed in snow. Both Nancy and Peggy's narratives have melancholy endings, with the real or imagined loss of their home bringing about their deaths. The deaths of these women – one defined by her single childlessness, the other the end of her womanly duties – allows for the emergence of a new kind of woman who straddles both the traditional ideal womanhood and the New Woman. The shape of New Welsh womanhood remains indeterminate, but Saunders' later stories present women who defy gendered norms in the late nineteenth century. By staging the death of one kind of woman, Saunders paves the way for other types. Rosanne Reeves said that Saunders' stories 'osgoi confensiwn y "teulu niwclear", felly, canieteir i weddwon, merched ifanc sengl, a hen ferched feddiannu'r llwyfan a dweud eu dweud a llunio barn' ('avoid the "nuclear family" convention, so that widows, single young women, and old women are allowed to occupy the stage and have their say and make judgments'): within the structure of the collection, 'Merch y Brenin' is the short story to propel this developing representation of Welsh womanhood, the emerging Dynes Newydd.[645]

Saunders' Welsh New Women appear in two ways: first, as individual matriarchs of the community, and figures of influence and respect; and second, as a group of women working collectively to create

---

[641] Allen Raine, 'Home, Sweet Home', in *A View Across the Valley* ed. by Jane Aaron (Dinas Powys; Honno Press, 2002), pp.45-58 (p.45).
[642] Ibid, p.45.
[643] Ibid, p.47.
[644] Ibid, p.56.
[645] Reeves, p.27.

a fairer, kinder society for other women. Although different, both types of women work together to symbolise a strong female network compromised of capable women succeeding in a largely female society. The matriarch encourages the development of the younger women and gives them the opportunity to thrive within a supportive community.

The figure of the matriarch defies the patriarchal idea that men are always best placed to lead by moral example and legislate for the rest of society. Instead, women such as Betsy Jones in 'Y Sunamees Honno', a widowed mother who is 'bob amser yn barod i wrando arnom ac i'n helpu' ('always ready to listen to us and help us'), commands the respect of their communities.[646] Compared to how Peggy was treated, forced to enter the poorhouse once her frailty shows, 'doedd neb yn ohonom yn edrych arni [Betsy] fel hen wraig' ('none of us looked at [Betsy] as an old woman') because 'yr oedd rhyw ieuenctid diddarfod o'i chwmpas ac yr oedd yn taflu ei hunan i mewn i fywyd y bechgyn a'r genethod, yn chwerthin mor iachus â hwythau ac yn cymeryd cymaint o ddiddordeb yn eu hamgylchiadau a phe buasent yn eiddo iddi hi' ('she was surrounded by endless youth and threw herself into the lives of the boys and girls, laughing as healthily as them and taking as much interest in their circumstances as if they were her own property.')[647] This sense of youthfulness and connection with people of all ages defies the gendered expectation that women like Betsy should disappear from active social life, as happens with Peggy and Nancy. Betsy chooses to defy the norms, and plays a hugely active part in the social life of the community. The narrator of the story explains that there is 'rhyw *fascination* ynglŷn â hi oedd yn ennill serch pawb' ('some *fascination* about her that won the love of all').[648] Although she does not possess stereotypical New Woman characteristics, she nevertheless is a 'fascinating' woman who commands respect, to the point that poets seek her approval of their work ahead of *Eisteddfodau*. Betsy Jones epitomises Ellen Hughes' view of Y Ddynes Newydd as she embraces her rights and responsibilities and exercises her position of relative power to encourage and support young people on their journey to adulthood. Although 'na chafodd [Betsy] fanteision addysg' ('[Betsy] was not given the advantages of education') that does not prevent her from being admired for being a 'foneddiges berffaith' ('perfect lady') due to her charitable nature.[649] While it is too late for her to take advantage of the new educational opportunities for women by the late-nineteenth century, she does not allow her lack of education to prevent her from taking not only an active but a leading part in the community. Betsy is gently criticised by the narrator for failing to direct her power to religious matter – 'pe buasai wedi dweud rhagor am grefydd y buasai wedi gadael mwy o ddylanwad ysbrydol ar yr ardal' ('had she said more on religion she would have

[646] Sara Maria Saunders, 'Y Sunamees Honno', in *Llon a Lleddf a Storïau Eraill* (Dinas Powys; Gwasg Honno, 2013), pp.57-64 (p.58).
[647] Ibid, p.58.
[648] Ibid, p.58.
[649] Ibid, p.59.

left more of a spiritual influence on the area').[650] But while Betsy Jones is not a 'leader' in terms of spiritual enlightenment, her presence as a strong and supportive woman allows her influence to be felt by all. She is a Dynes Newydd in her ability to connect to all persons in the community, and set an example of a good, long life.

The matriarch's ability to extend her influence on the wider community is a common theme in Saunders' short stories, and this influence extends most effectively to other women, demonstrating a wider understanding of women's issues that is both sympathetic to and illustrative of the strong female network within Welsh communities. 'Elen Wern-goch' illustrates women extending forgiveness and tolerance to other women for perceived immoral or non-respectable behaviour. By eloping with an Englishman, Elen rejects expectations of marrying a dependable Welshman, choosing love over a life of 'godro gwartheg a gwau sanau' ('milking cows and knitting socks.')[651] Her defiance backfires, as it is revealed that her husband is a 'creadur drwg' ('bad man') and a likely bigamist.[652] This plot suggests a condemnation of women who defy gendered norms, as Elen is punished with a difficult life that takes both an emotional and physical toll – having left a young pretty girl, ten years later Elen is 'hen ac yn welw' ('old and pale').[653] Elen is treated harshly by her sister-in-law, who makes her a servant and inflicts frequent verbal abuse. This further supports the notion that Saunders is condemning Elen for her actions. However, the sympathetic response of the narrator's mother in the story demonstrates a different approach, one that is more open towards forgiveness and understanding of Elen's situation. By showing kindness and welcoming Elen to her home, the narrator's mother grants Elen redemption. Indeed, the mother's instant defence of Elen soon after the latter's elopement suggests a willingness to understand her situation. She welcomes home a lost daughter of the community, now returned and deserving of wider acceptance. This sympathetic approach affects Elen emotionally – 'yr oedd serch, a diolchgarwch, a pharch, ynghyd â llawer iawn o ostyngeiddrwydd, yn yr edrychiad yna' ('there was love, and gratitude, and respect, together with a great deal of humility, in that look') – and impacts on her immediate future.[654] Having talked sternly with Elen's brother, the mother ensures that Elen is given fairer treatment, a home of her own and, later, a return to her family home following her sister-in-law's death. Saunders thus emphasises the impact women could have on the community, an impact that centres on familial, local matters rather than society at large, yet also makes a more general case for fairer treatment of women who are perceived to act immorally within a particular community. The narrator, Ifan, is keen to stress that Elen would have struggled without the support of his mother, so much so she would have likely

[650] 'Y Sunamees Honno', p.58.
[651] Sara Maria Saunders, 'Elen Wern-goch', in *Llon a Lleddf a Storïau Eraill* (Dinas Powys; Gwasg Honno, 2013), pp.87-98 (p.88).
[652] Ibid, p.89.
[653] Ibid, p.92.
[654] Ibid, p.96.

drowned herself, allowing him to reflect that: 'wy'n teimlo'n amboidus dros ferched yn yr un cyflwr ag yr oedd Elen, ac yr wy'i yn meddwl y dylasai menywod crefyddol fod yn hynod o garedig a thosturiol tuag at eu chwiorydd sydd mewn trallod o unrhyw fath' ('feel fearful for women in the same condition as Elen was, and I think that religious women should be extremely kind and compassionate to their sisters in any kind of distress.')[655] This places the onus of forgiveness on women, who must take personal responsibility for their 'chwiorydd' and their misdeeds. Echoes of the Blue Books and the initial response can be found in the narrator's argument, but the story also suggests the possibility of collective solidarity between women, and of showing compassion instead of scorn. The Welsh New Woman demonstrates leadership that is expressed in kindness towards all women, rather than rejection of those considered immoral and unseemly – a counter to the response to the Blue Books.

Welsh women taking responsibility for their 'chwiorydd' show a unity that is not defined by the wearing of Welsh traditional dress or by extreme piousness. Although Saunders' stories rely heavily on Methodism as a source Christian enlightenment, which sets people upon the path of moral righteousness, they also portray women who affect real, tangible change, never for personal gain but for the protection of their sisters. Sarah Thomas in 'Gwraig Tŷ Capel' and 'Yr Ail a'r Trydydd', for instance, is strong-willed and prepared to defend her fellow widows in the face of men's tyranny or faults. Married three times to men that were either drunk or too submissive, she is quick to note that other widows have also been subjected to drunkenness and physical abuse over the years. While vying for the position of tending to the preachers, Sarah's defence of her fellow women is to emphasise that the widows should not be judged in light of their husbands' actions. Sarah's statement that the 'Hollalluog wedi rhoi tafod i fi […]: os gwela i rhywun yn gwneud cam â'r gwan, does dim ofn arna i siarad' ('Allknowing has given me a tongue […]: if I see someone do wrong by the weak, I'm not afraid to speak') specifically refers to protecting and standing up for women, suggesting the need for leadership in the project of uniting women in Wales.[656] This makes it possible to read Sarah as a Dynes Newydd, further illustrated by her light-hearted mocking of social conventions: at the altar she coughs when the preacher asks her to 'ufuddhau i ddyn dwl' ('obey a stupid man') because 'does dim synnwyr mewn peth fel'na' ('there is no sense in that'), referring to her refusal to be a maid to this particular husband.[657] Rather than being anti-marriage, as some accused the New Woman of being, Sarah resists the expectation for women to unconditionally serve their husbands, and sacrifice their sense of self to marriage. This is amplified when she insists on being called Sarah rather than Mistress

[655] 'Elen Wern-goch', p.97.
[656] Sara Maria Saunders, 'Gwraig Tŷ Capel', in *Llon a Lleddf a Storïau Eraill* (Dinas Powys; Gwasg Honno, 2013), pp.175-181 (p.177).
[657] Sara Maria Saunders, 'Yr Ail A'r Trydydd', in *Llon a Lleddf a Storïau Eraill* (Dinas Powys; Gwasg Honno, 2013), pp.182-188 (p.187).

Thomas, insisting on her own identity rather than being defined by her husband's, especially as she has 'dipyn o synnwyr' ('plenty of sense') herself.[658] Additionally, by defending other women who have experienced abuse or mistreatment by their husband, Sarah champions resistance to the nuclear family, as Hughes defined it, and is allowed to 'feddiannu'r llwyfan' ('occupy the stage') to amplify her voice for the benefit of other women in similar situations.

Ellen Hughes' discussion of the 'nuclear family' – consisting of a mother, father, and child(ren) – allows for alternative models of family, in particular single-mother families, and households where women rather than men are dominant. Such models appear in several of Saunders' stories, and further highlight the Welsh New Woman as a leader, rather than submissive member, of the community. 'Y Can' Cymaint' is the story of Rachel, a widow who raises seven children on her own. Her success is cause for wonderment in the community: 'Sut yr oedd wedi llwyddo i fagu ei phlant, heb bwyso ar neb na dim ond ei hunan, oedd y dirgelwch mawr i bobl ddigrefydd yr ardal' ('How she managed to raise her children, without pressure on anyone but herself, was the great mystery to the area's non-religious people').[659] The religious people put it down to God helping those in distress. Although Rachel herself worries about not praying enough to enable her children to grow up respectable, her strength as a single mother ensures that her children are always decent members of society. This story makes the case for women's competence, showing a single mother leading the community by example. The pressure on mothers, especially following the Blue Books, to prevent children from 'droi allan yn ddrwg' ('turn out bad') is evident in this story, as Rachel states how the effort is enough to '*just* â'm lladd i, mae cymaint o ofn arna i' ('*just* enough to kill me, I am so scared').[660] Her success is shown by her children attending chapel, working, and getting married, much to the jealousy of other mothers: 'mewn ardal lle yr oedd llawer o anfoesoldeb o bob math, yr oedd y teulu hwn wedi cadw cymeriad glân a disglair' ('in an area where there was a great deal of immorality of all kinds, this family had kept a clean and bright character').[661] Rachel quietly gets by, affecting no real impact on the community but her achievement of raising seven children in respectability and morality is a testament to the non-nuclear family, and an example of Welsh womanhood that redefines the ideal Welsh Mam within a secure family unit. Although playing into the traditional view of women as ideal mothers, this story still emphasises women's competence and independence when required, and underpins New Woman arguments for emancipation. Additionally, this story demonstrates how women's ability to manage the household and raise children make women qualified to participate in public life, as Thomas argues in 'Latest Intelligence from the Planet Venus'. That Rachel can manage

[658] 'Yr Ail a'r Trydydd', p.182.
[659] Sara Maria Saunders, 'Y Can' Cymaint', in *Llon a Lleddf a Storïau Eraill* (Dinas Powys; Gwasg Honno, 2013), pp.79-86 (p.79).
[660] Ibid, p.80.
[661] Ibid, p.81.

to raise seven children by herself, and have them turn out as model citizens emphasises the possible impact women can have as leaders within their community. This is a Welsh New Woman that straddles the traditional ideal womanhood and the causes that the New Woman championed, such as greater independence rights for women.

Saunders' Welsh New Woman demonstrates the ability to encompass several different roles within a familial unit, usually ending up as the leading family figure. Saunders reflects on this image in 'Gwen Fy Chwaer', where the titular character cares for her mother and sibling following the death of the father. The father asks her to take on this role because 'ti yw'r *mab* hynaf' ('you are the eldest *son*'), with a deliberate stress on the 'mab' to signify the way the father looks upon Gwen: as a figure of trust, authority, and leadership, bypassing his only son to declare a woman the head of the family.[662] Gwen becomes head of the household by assuming responsibility based on her strength as a supportive daughter and her diligent work ethic. Due to weight of family responsibility and loyalty to her father, she calls off her engagement to Joseph, a preacher. Personal sacrifices for the sake of her family show devotion and respect to the responsibility bestowed upon her, but they also illustrate a level of independence from social expectations. By rejecting marriage, she chooses her own role within both a familial and social sphere. This decision is possibly made easier by the fact Gwen shows almost no maternal instincts, as 'nid oedd yn hoff o blant; edrychai arnynt yn unig fel rhyw greaduriaid bach anniddig iawn ag yr oedd yn rhaid eu dioddef, oherwydd yn y dyfodol buasent, hwyrach, o ryw ddefnydd yn y byd a'r eglwys' ('she disliked children; she only looked upon them as some very irritable little creatures that she had to endure, because in the future they might be of some use in the world and the church').[663] What is seen as a humorous characteristic by Gwen's brother nevertheless indicates defiance of a gendered path toward marriage and motherhood, in order to become a figure of authority within her own right. Gwen's devotion to her role can be seen as controlling, especially when she leaves her family for a trip to London, with very strict instructions on how to take care of household chores in her absence. This level of control appears nearly excessive, but must be understood in light of the fact that her visit to London is prompted by the need to be treated for an unspecified, serious illness. Fear of death leads Gwen to lay the foundations for the possibly that she might not return home; her instructions allow her to exert her care beyond death. As Hughes notes in her essay, women recognise their duty not only to themselves, but also to others, and Gwen is the epitome of selflessness and strength for the purpose of others. Rosanne Reeves, in her introduction to the collection similarly acknowledges Gwen's potential as a Welsh New Woman, stating how Saunders 'tanseilio'r syniad na fedra merch fod yn benteulu' ('undermine[s] the idea that

[662] Sara Maria Saunders, 'Gwen Fy Chwaer' in *Llon a Lleddf a Storïau Eraill* (Dinas Powys; Gwasg Honno, 2013), pp.123-145 (p.125).
[663] Ibid, p.126.

a woman cannot be the head of the family.')[664] Gwen is a key figure in the exploration of Saunders' short stories of what it is to be a Welsh New Woman – prioritising her social standing and responsibilities above expectations to marry and have children. Her later marriage to Joseph the preacher does not negate her prior actions, instead cementing the reader's impression of her discipline and responsibility. Gwen remarks that the maid has fulfilled all her instructions so perfectly that she has no work left to do, allowing her to move to another household and start taking care of someone else. Her excellent household management skills are also demonstrated when she picks her own wedding ring because 'rai sâl yw'r gwrywiaid' ('those men are awful') who tend towards extravagant romantic gestures rather than the frugal sense she exercises.[665] Gwen is an admirable example to others within the community, and despite being defined by her role within the household, she stretches the boundaries of what it means to be a woman within the home. Also, this is another example of the New Woman attitude that women were ideally equipped to participate in public life precisely because of these domestic accomplishments, not at the expense of domestic responsibility. Saunders, in this respect, plays with the boundaries of the domestic sphere, and provides an opportunity to demonstrate the Welsh New Woman's capabilities in public life.

A second aspect of Saunders' depiction of Welsh New Womanhood is the image of a group of women who come together to affect change; rather than being a single entity, the Welsh New Woman tends to appear as part of a strong female network working together within their communities, through the encouragement of the temperance movement, and Methodist teachings. This is not always successful. For various reasons, some of the female characters in Saunders' stories reject the 'interventions' of other women; sometimes, for example, a character might drink, refuse to attend chapel, and fail to perform household chores. While Saunders includes women who were criticised in the Blue Books for similar actions, she also allows for their existence to be seen as an eccentricity, an anomaly that cannot be changed and therefore can be left alone because it does no real harm to others in the community. That does not negate the efforts of the group to help their fellow women. Moreover, despite the occasional lack of success, the group of women who try to change other women's lives for the better show care and compassion, demonstrating an empathetic response to supposedly immoral women. This shows Welsh New Womanhood as a liberal, supportive network, which does not force its beliefs onto others, but which allows for, and encourages, the possibility of change. In this respect, the Welsh New Woman is a socially engaged, communitarian figure.

However, from this collective comes a third type of Welsh New Woman, the 'Newer Woman', although she is not quite as prevalent as the first two versions. The occasional failures of the New Women network allow for the emergence of a New Woman who refuses to be held to the high

[664] Reeves, p.25.
[665] 'Gwen Fy Chwaer', p.144.

standards of morality other women expect. This Welsh New Woman is not necessarily as endorsed by Saunders as the first two types of Welsh New Women, as there are condemnatory elements within the stories that are reflective of Saunders' nonconformism. However, their depiction in the stories opens the door to another path towards modern womanhood. Despite displaying many of the Blue Books' observations on immoral behaviour, especially on drinking and unkempt homes, the women's refusal to conform to a Victorian sexual and domestic morality underpins the New Woman's aims for female emancipation and independence. The good intentions of the Welsh New Woman network are the predominant focus in the following stories, however the inclusion of the Newer Woman allows Saunders to allow for the possibility of another path towards Welsh modernity.

'Priodas Lisa Bennet' in Saunders' 'Y Diwygiad ym Mhentre Alun' explores the benefits and limitations of an evangelical Welsh New Womanhood. It suggests that collective Welsh womanhood does not always effect positive, successful change, but is always well-intentioned and sincere. Initially, the three women in 'Priodas Lisa Bennet' disagree on the approach to help supposed sinners, with the youngest, Wini, far more hopeful of redeeming the sinners than the older Sali, who argues that sinners in the community are a lost cause. When discussing the sins of the people, the sins range from theft, to drinking, yet it is Lisa Bennet's dirty, unkempt home that is seen as a particularly difficult sin to address. Lisa is a 'gawres o ddynes' ('giant of a woman'), who does not believe in 'glendid ac yr oedd yn byw yng nghanol llwch a baw ddigon i ladd pobl gyffredin' ('cleanliness and was living in enough dust and dirt to kill ordinary people.')[666] Lisa makes her living by travelling to collect carpets and rags and bones, which leaves her little time to take care of the house, something she readily – and reasonably – accepts as a consequence of her working life. She is suspicious of Wini's attempts to engage her in Christ, especially the appeal to help the fund for missionaries to India. Lisa's statement that 'dydw i ddim yn gweld fod pobol y capelau yn well na phobl eraill, a falle bod y bobol dduon llawn cystal heb yr Efengyl' ('I don't see the people of the chapels as better than other people, and maybe the black people are just as good without the Gospel') expresses a recognition that there can be too much interference in the lives of others, when the people themselves do not seek help.[667] It thus serves as a comment on her own situation as well as a rejection of Welsh nonconformism's involvement in Britain's imperialist project. Lisa agrees to donate weekly to the fund on the understanding that when Wini visits her, she cannot speak of religion. This shows that what she values most is not the moralising influence of religion – which she finds suspect – but simply the company of other women. Although Wini's acceptance of Lisa's terms stems from her commitment to the missionary cause and the desire to raise money for it, Wini's visits to Lisa are

[666] Sara Maria Saunders, 'Priodas Lisa Bennet' in *Llon a Lleddf a Storïau Eraill* (Dinas Powys; Gwasg Honno, 2013), pp.216-28 (p.220).
[667] Ibid, p.221.

nonetheless based on acts of kindness and empathy for a fellow woman. By extending friendship to Lisa where others have not tried, Wini allows for the possibility of positive change in Lisa's life, including an end to her loneliness. At this point, the story represents a successful intervention by a group of New Women into the life of a female character. However, by continuing to press evangelically for Lisa to become converted, the group oversteps the mark, resulting in Lisa's death. The group of women clean and tidy Lisa's house, effecting the physical changes which reflect Lisa's turn towards Christ. They leave a home that is now 'llwm ac oeraidd iawn' ('bleak and very cold'), while the 'hen gartref wedi diflannu' ('old home had disappeared').[668] In the process of helping Lisa spiritually, the women's well-meant intentions have effectively stripped Lisa of her personality, and she dies a few days later.

Lisa does not belong within this network of Welsh New Womanhood, which seeks womanly unity in belief in Christ, yet arguably Lisa represents the Newer Woman. She successfully lived a happy life, working for herself and no one else – no husband or family to depend on her, just her animals. Through efforts to embed her with other Welsh New Women, especially ones that define Welsh New Womanhood as led solely by religion, Lisa's own Welsh New Womanhood disappears, and without it she cannot survive. The women's attempts to redeem Lisa go against Hughes' claim that the Dynes Newydd 'galw am i'r hon sydd yn parchu ei hawliau ei hun i barchu hawliau pobl eraill' ('calls for her who respects her own rights to respect the rights of others').[669] In this particular story, they do not necessarily respect Lisa's right to live her life the way she sees fit, although attempts to convert her are gentle and careful. This is not a wholly positive vision of Welsh female community, yet it does succeed in showing how women can work together, without male input, to try and effect positive change in other women's lives. 'Priodas Lisa Bennet' is, effectively, a story where two different versions of Welsh New Womanhood collide: the first features Lisa, living an independent life free of the constraints of domesticity; the second depicts a collective of women who seek to help their fellow women where others have not dared try. The story's conclusion would suggest that the two versions cannot exist alongside one another, with the lone figure of Lisa left to suffer the consequences. While it can be argued that this is Saunders condemning the Newer Woman's existence, she also shows the limitations of the Welsh New Woman collective. The two versions of Welsh New Womanhood had co-existed prior to the events of the story. The collective's direct involvement with Lisa, however, was too much for her to be able to exist peacefully from then onwards. This might suggest that the world was not yet ready for Lisa's version of Welsh New Womanhood, yet the story is also a warning that too much direct involvement in other women's lives can have detrimental consequences. A balance must be found between helping and interfering with other New Women.

[668] 'Priodas Lisa Bennet', p.227.
[669] Hughes, p.29.

The story 'Poli Pat' also demonstrates the limitations of the interventionist, Nonconformist Welsh New Womanhood. In this story, Saunders presents a woman that is more comfortable with her flaws than ready to convert to Christian life. It was 'anodd meddwl am un pechod nad ydoedd Poli wedi bod yn euog ohono' ('hard to think of one sin that Poli was not guilty of'), but the narrator in particular notes drinking alcohol as a sin, as 'os byddai ceiniog ganddi, byddai yn yfed nes meddwi' ('if she had a penny, she would drink until drunk').[670] Poli resorts to stealing and prostitution to obtain money for drink, living 'mewn anfoesoldeb a phechod cyhoeddus' ('in public immorality and sin').[671] Poli unapologetically defies the image of the Welsh woman curated in response to the Blue Books: that of the pious, morally good woman devoted to her home and family. When a wealthy deacon, who sees her as his opportunity to demonstrate redemption in the community, pays her particular attention, her only visit to the church occurs out of sympathy for his wife, who dutifully walked many miles to support her husband's attempts at charity. Poli shows support for another woman who 'credais i y tro diwethaf y buasai yn cwymp yn farw yn y cyntedd' ('I thought the last time would fall dead in the hallway') due to the effort made to get Poli to church.[672] Upon her visit to church, Poli is asked if she repents of her sins, a question she answers with: 'mae digon o waith gen i i dreio byw o ddwrnod i ddwrnod, heb drafferthu am y dyddiau sydd wedi mynd heibio' ('I've got enough work to go about living day to day, without bothering with the days gone by.')[673] Here, she stresses the hardships of a life rendered more difficult when she is falsely accused of every sin by the community. She confidently states that she is just like half the women there, as everyone sins, yet she is the only one willing to live comfortably with that knowledge: 'os ydw i wedi bod yn ddynes drwg, mae'n gysur mawr gennyf gofio mai pobol go ddrwg ydych chy hefyd, er eich bod yn y tŷ cwrdd' ('if I have been a bad woman, it gives me great comfort to remember that you are also bad people, even though you are in the meeting house.')[674] Poli is holding up a mirror to her own community, who hide their own sins behind the figure of Poli, who, as a lone woman, is an easier target for condemnation. She calls out their hypocrisy, while she herself openly lives outside the standard moral code.

Like Lisa, Poli offers a different vision of Welsh womanhood, and arguably, a different Welsh New Woman. Both women can be seen living happily within their own boundaries, and only Poli reacts to being forcibly questioned about her sins. It is interesting to note that it is men who question Poli's intentions in the church, not the women, suggesting that women are either steering clear of Poli, or they understand her plight and do not try to change her. This is not a criticism of the women in the community, however. This is a story of a woman who unapologetically leads a life that is defined by

[670] Sara Maria Saunders, 'Poli Pat', in *Llon a Lleddf a Storïau Eraill* (Dinas Powys; Gwasg Honno, 2013), pp.168-174 (p.171).
[671] Ibid, p.171.
[672] Ibid, p.174.
[673] Ibid, p.172.
[674] Ibid, p.173.

her drinking, thus defying the moral codes of her time. By standing up to the male characters in the story, Poli shows how women control their own narrative, and exercises her right to live the life she wants, albeit at a possible detriment to her health and reputation.

Saunders' short stories are an important exploration of Welsh women's lives at a time when women were assuming more visible roles, by writing, speaking, and campaigning for various causes that directly impacted women's lives. In her collection, which depicts characters in one single community, Saunders provides a model for how communities should operate – helping others, allowing women to take leading positions in institutions like the church, and, most importantly, providing space for Welsh women to thrive together. Saunders does not seek to construct an image of perfect Welsh womanhood; Reeves argues that Saunders ignored the image of the Angel of the House that was found in England, as 'nid oedd y system hon wedi cyrraedd cymunedau Llanestyn a Phentre Alun, a chwbl anaddas felly oedd priodoli i Gymraesau'r pentrefi hynny nodweddion yr Angyles Saesnig' ('this system had not reached the communities of Llanestyn and Pentre Alun, and it was wholly inappropriate therefore to attribute to the Welshwomen of those villages the characteristics of the English Angel').[675] Indeed, Saunders does avoid the trope of the English Angel in the House, as well as the English New Woman trope. By presenting Welsh New Women as a tolerant community interested in female solidarity and support, her work shifts away from the classic image of New Woman on the other side of the border of a smoking, cycling, masculine-dressed woman. Instead, the Welsh New Woman is concerned with the daily grind of community life, making the Welsh New Woman a far more local and grounded character. This New Woman is a communitarian, working through existing institutions in the community like the chapel, and engaged in social movements such as temperance that allows for greater involvement from working-class women.

At the same time, Saunders' portrayals of women who incorrigibly refuse to live by the Victorian morality of their community prise open a space for an alternative, yet more modern, construction of Welsh womanhood – one which is not necessarily endorsed by Saunders' stories, but which anticipates twentieth- and twenty-first-century sensibilities. Through this possibility of other New Women comes a redefinition of the immoral Welsh womanhood that the Blue Books portrayed. While the responses to the Blue Books sought to distance itself from the *Report*'s accusations, Saunders' stories allow for their existence within a limited frame. As shown in 'Poli Pat' and 'Priodas Lisa Bennet', women could live an immoral existence, because, as single women, they were not directly harming the community. As Poli states, all those in the community behave immorally but are unwilling to admit it. Through Poli and Lisa, Saunders shows a different womanhood free from social constraints, and who live happier lives because of it. The failure of the network to change their

[675] Reeves, p.27.

behaviour indicates that they can exist alongside other Welsh New Women, as long as they are kept as separate entities.

Bertha Thomas' Welsh New Woman

Bertha Thomas is a key author in this chapter's exploration of the New Woman in Wales. Her essay on female suffrage, as discussed above, illustrated that New Woman ideas existed before Sarah Grand coined the influential term; her short stories, often set in Wales, continue to explore New Woman themes. Thomas, however, offers her own interpretation of Welsh New Womanhood which draws parallels with Hughes' description, but predominantly focuses on the Welsh New Woman as an emancipated figure thriving within communities that still largely treat women as inferiors or expect them to fit into stereotyped gendered norms. The Welsh New Woman also exists in Thomas' stories without engaging with stereotypical English New Woman characteristics such as mode of dress, smoking and cycling. Indeed, when these characteristics do appear, they are attached to English New Women, and derided for being cliched and unrepresentative of real women's lives. Kirsti Bohata's essay 'Bertha Thomas: The New Woman and Anglo-Welsh Hybridity' provides an in-depth exploration of Thomas' depiction of the New Woman, and argues that

> Thomas finds herself outside of, or detached from, fashionable New Women, whom she depicts as rather absurd, perhaps even a little coarse – there are plenty of peripheral 'fast' New Woman characters who, while they provoke fascination from those around them and whose actions are vital to the plot, are nevertheless little more than sketchy, two-dimensional characters.[676]

This section supports this argument, by comparing the Welsh and English iterations of New Womanhood in Thomas' stories in order to emphasise how Welsh New Womanhood is best represented by rural, predominantly working-class women. Mockery of the English New Woman is a tool for portraying Welsh New Womanhood as mainly concerned with localised matters, while avoiding the cliched characteristics of the New Woman as portrayed in the English press.

The contrast between Welsh and English New Woman is seen in two of Thomas' stories: 'The Madness of Winifred Owen' and 'The Only Girl', both showing Welsh New Women with a subtler, quieter attitude towards the advancement of women as compared to her English counterpart. 'The Madness of Winifred Owen' is narrated by an English New Woman who in 1899 comes from London to Wales 'nominally to look up the tombs of forgotten Welsh ancestors in undiscoverable

[676] Kirsti Bohata, 'Bertha Thomas: The New Woman and Anglo-Welsh Hybridity', in *New Woman Hybridities: Femininity, Feminism, and International Consumer Culture, 1880-1930* ed. by Margaret Beetham & Ann Heilmann (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2004), pp.17-34 (p.25).

churchyards'.[677] She comes on her bicycle, as the 'cycling fever was at its heights in all spinsters of spirit' at that time, instantly referring to a recognisable New Woman characteristic.[678] It is likely, then, that the narrator is wearing athletic clothing that would allow her to cycle more easily, echoing *Punch*'s 'pictorial representation of the New Woman [...] that showed a sporting costume on women who rode bicycles.'[679] Within the first few paragraphs of the story Thomas thus acknowledges some of the most prominent New Woman stereotypes. In contrast to this stereotype is Winifred Owen, a 'woman well on in the fifties, stout and grey, form and features thickened by years and wear of life; a woman substantially and spotlessly clad in black stuff skirt, white apron and cross-over, and crowned by a frilled cap as awe-instilling as a justice's wig.'[680] Winifred wears the uniform of the traditional Welsh woman as initially promoted in response to the Blue Books: the only missing part of the costume is the hat. However, while Winifred may be wearing traditional Welsh dress, the uniform does not define her as a traditional Welsh woman. Her life, by contrast, is defined by acts of independence and defiance towards traditional gendered norms. The narrator affirms the strength of her character by proclaiming that Winifred 'simply towered – not by dint of any self-assertion – but by the sheer sense she conveyed of force of character.'[681] The narrator, an intelligent and independent New Woman, feels inferior in Winifred's presence, suggesting that the older woman's sense of self does not require external validation. Winifred's strength of character has been forged by her show of independence as a young woman when she defied her father's wishes for her to marry a local farmer in order to marry an Englishman instead. She is attracted to this Englishman as he 'gave [her] a chink view into a new life and world' that stretched far beyond Wales, providing her with a glimpse of a life that is not stuck within the Welsh hills.[682] Thomas's vision of the Welsh New Woman appears to involve a broadening of knowledge and understanding of the world that can only be achieved by leaving Wales. However, Winifred's return to Wales later in life implies that she cannot let go of her Welshness, even as she pursues education and experience. To leave Wales, Winifred has to make her own way out of it after her lover leaves, visiting a doctor in the community who focuses on experiments with the mind. Although desperate to marry the Englishman, she seeks her own path in life, which is not marked for her by men who do not care for her personal wants. She wants to embrace marriage, but on her own terms. Winifred is willing to appear mad to achieve her goal, accepting a stigma that could ruin any prospects for her in Wales. The scheme allows her to explore the world beyond Wales' boundaries. Her life beyond Wales is not perfect, as she comes to see the 'new and

[677] Bertha Thomas, 'The Madness of Winifred Owen' in *A View Across the Valley: Short Stories by Women from Wales c.1850-1950* ed. by Jane Aaron (1999) (Dinas Powys; Honno Press, 2002) pp.70-89 (p.70)
[678] Ibid, p.70.
[679] Collins, p.330.
[680] 'The Madness of Winifred Owen', p.70.
[681] Ibid, p.74.
[682] Ibid, p.79.

complicated world, the world of infinite good and evil', yet it gives her a broader knowledge.[683] She returns to Wales upon her husband's death, and becomes the landlady of a pub. Winifred is a different model from the conventional womanhood: she defies temperance campaigns at the height of the movement's influence and forges a career path that contradicts the moral teachings underpinning the movement. Winifred as a Welsh New Women can exist alongside Welsh New Women concerned with temperance, however; as argued in the previous section, Saunders did include women in her stories who drank alcohol, did not partake in household chores, or were unmarried. All of these women have characteristics of the Dynes Newydd, predominantly her insistence on her rights and responsibilities.

Thomas' 'The Only Girl' portrays yet a different version of Welsh womanhood but one which is also as removed from the English New Woman as possible. 'The Only Girl' is far more explicit in portraying the English New Woman as a more ridiculous entity than 'The Madness of Winifred Owen', making the Welsh New Woman appear as a far simpler concept: one that is concerned with local issues rather than engaging with cliched characteristics of the New Woman. Catrin is a 'skinny and bony creature', 'pallid-skinned, with a high colour in her cheeks, and a countenance plainly observant, plainly uncomprehending.'[684] She is a spinster who has mental and physical health issues. Catrin's life is defined by her housework, uncomplainingly taking on tasks with which her parents cannot cope. She leads a simple life that is happy, despite her dependence on her parents. In contrast, the narrator and her friend Edith are outsiders to this part of Wales, and Edith in particular is a caricature of the English New Woman: a 'specialist in Social and Educational Reform when in town, an indefatigable amateur landscape painter when in the country' and a 'vegetarian on principle'.[685] Upon meeting Catrin, she expresses eugenicist ideology and suggests people like Catrin should not be allowed to 'live out a life of misery'.[686] Eugenics, Ledger argues, played a part in the development of the New Woman iteration, as the

> eugenics movement was heavily implicated in the new imperialism of the *fin de siècle*; at the same time, eugenics appealed to many feminists because it seemed to offer a channel (and a language) through which women could influence public events. Eugenics seemed to offer feminists an illusion of power without challenging the existing separation of male and female spheres of influence.[687]

[683] 'The Madness of Winifred Owen', p.88.
[684] Bertha Thomas, 'The Only Girl' in *Stranger Within the Gates* ed. by Kirsti Bohata (Dinas Powys: Honno Press, 2008), pp.21-34 (p.25).
[685] Ibid, pp.22-27.
[686] Ibid, p.25.
[687] Ledger, p.70.

Ledger refers to literary texts in which women choose who to marry based on physical attributes that would best continue the vision of ideal motherhood, while in 'The Only Girl' Thomas has Edith question Catrin's existence from a London-centric viewpoint that would have Catrin 'if rich, be with a trained nurse or medical guardian somewhere out of sight; or if poor, in an Institution for those similarly afflicted.'[688] Edith attempts to show compassion for Catrin's position here, but ignores Catrin's valuable contribution to her home; she is the 'mainstay of the family prosperity, and [...] without her the whole fabric of their farm life would come tumbling around their ears.'[689] Upon her death her family give up the farm, not being able to cope with all its demands, having depended entirely on Catrin to keep it running smoothly. She is irreplaceable and plays a significant part in the running of the family farm, illustrating how Edith's eugenic perspective devalues Catrin's vital contribution to the family business. By advocating for the institutionalisation of Catrin, Edith fails to see the potential growth of a woman who provides a service to the community. Thomas' English New Woman appears patronising and lacking in insight about other women's lives. Bohata argues that the narrator is 'as informed and at home in rural Wales as she is with her (presumably English) readership', while Edith is 'rather undermined, her beliefs questioned and shown wanting.'[690] This is evident in Thomas' sympathetic portrayal of Catrin, which shows the English New Woman as out-of-touch with working-class, rural women.

Welsh women, in Thomas' texts, are far less concerned with deliberately portraying themselves as independent figures, forcibly defying gendered and social norms through dress, smoking, and sports, as the caricature of the New Woman was portrayed. Instead, the Welsh woman is fearful of her English counterpart, seeing England itself as an immoral country that Welsh people should avoid. This fear of immorality coming not from their fellow Welsh, who the Commissioners derided so forcefully, but from those in their neighbouring country speaks of a nation that is forging its own identity, and fearful of outside influences. 'The Way He Went' is another story that pits Welsh and English women against each other, showing, in Bohata's analysis, a 'certain ambivalence in [Thomas's] ideas about how women ought to go about exercising their abilities and rights, with her earlier radicalism perhaps becoming a little conservative with age.'[691] In the story, a young man foregoes a settled life in Wales and enters education and its opportunities in England; it does not initially appear like New Woman fiction. However surrounding Elwyn Rosser are women of varying depictions: from the stoic and anti-English Mrs Rosser to the ideal English woman Aline, to the hardworking sisters, and the New Woman Gerty King. While Elwyn's restlessness indicates uncertainty about his place in the world, the women in his life are far more settled with their respective

[688] 'The Only Girl', p.25.
[689] Ibid, p.34.
[690] Bohata, pp.29-30.
[691] Ibid, p.28.

roles in society, comfortable that they are performing them to the best of their abilities. They are discomfited, however, by the intrusion of other versions of womanhood, in particular when Elwyn embraces anglicisation through education and marriage.

The role of Elwyn's sisters as tenant farmers serves to emphasise the New Woman's independence, and challenges the Victorian conventions that the woman's place was in the home, or performing domestic roles. In contrast to Elwyn's search of acceptance in England, Elwyn's sisters quietly and masterfully perform his duties as tenant farmers, making them, in effect, the heads of the households without the formal recognition. Gwladys and Gwen dismiss cliched job roles for women, such as teaching and millinery, and are 'running the farm for their mother' in the absence of the brother.[692] The narrator states that the 'Miss Rossers had a higher opinion of their sex', where other girls believed farm work was not women's work. Instead, the Rosser sisters reject this gendered narrative and run a successful working farm without feeling the need to feminize the role by turning the farm into a 'model pony-farm'.[693] Men are also 'deterred' from courting the girls because 'there was that about these comely young women', suggesting there is a particular reason why men do not approach them. It does not trouble the girls, however, as they are independent women, secure with running the farm in their brother's absence.[694] That they do not rely on men reflects Hughes' encouragement to women to take advantage of their rights and explore beyond the walls of the home. Although not straying further than their farmland, Gwladys and Gwen nevertheless demonstrate an expansion of the boundaries of womanhood, and much like Gwen in Saunders' 'Gwen Fy Chwaer', they assume a usually male position. Gwladys and Gwen seem undeterred by their brother's quest for anglicisation, content with their own Welshness because it allows for greater independence. Even when Elwyn delays Gwladys' wedding, it is a minor inconvenience that she can muse upon 'while adding to her garden produce, devising improvements in the dairy, and generally upholding the standard of efficiency in housekeeping and the farming industry.'[695] This suggests that Welsh New Womanhood is unaffected by matters beyond the boundaries of Wales, and entirely focused on the important matters much closer to home. This is a far more inward-looking Welsh womanhood, compared to the modern women seen in Raine's novels, who are aligned with Europe. Gwladys and Gwen are assuming male roles with confidence and quietly getting on with it. Bohata argues that 'Thomas goes to some lengths to show how female resourcefulness, ingenuity and perseverance may be found in traditionally female spheres of home and marriage'.[696] The Rosser sisters, Gwladys in particular,

[692] Bertha Thomas, 'The Way He Went' in *Stranger Within the Gates* ed. by Kirsti Bohata (Dinas Powys: Honno Press, 2008), pp.35-108 (p.40).
[693] Ibid, p.40.
[694] Ibid, p.41.
[695] Ibid, p.60.
[696] Bohata, p.26.

show ‘resourcefulness’, although they also push the definition of ‘home’ – their work takes place outside of the boundaries of the domestic hearth.

By contrast, Mrs Rosser, Elwyn’s mother, provides the perspective of a generation offered limited choice in what roles they were given in society. She is a widow, ‘poor, proud and conscientious’ who advocates for a Welshness that resists anglicisation.[697] She is representative of ‘Old’, traditional women who would have thrived as New Women, had they been given the opportunity. She is proudly Welsh, and tries to instil that pride in the next generation, through her years-long dedication to Elwyn’s Welsh education: his growing anglicisation is almost an insult to her when she has brought him up to respect and be proud of his Welshness. This is especially hurtful to her considering her own lack of Welsh-speaking skills:

> it was her misfortune, not her fault, to have belonged, by birth and bringing up, in recreant Radnor, that English-speaking shire; and though her present acquaintance with the vernacular sufficed amply for all workaday farm and household purposes, she had so much more to say that she could express better in the simpler, easier, English tongue.[698]

While she would like to speak Welsh, she remains outside the community due to speaking mostly English: she yearns to go to chapel, instead of the church, and be part of the Welsh-language community, although the story does not indicate that she does actually start learning Welsh. Although her Anglophone Welshness is not fully accepted, she is determined that Elwyn should be embraced by the community, which makes it all the more disappointing for her that he shuns his Welshness and instead embraces English education and manners. Having mostly educated Elwyn herself, what should be a proud moment of watching him extend his learning in Oxford is a cause of frustration. She herself has not been given the same opportunities in life as her son, and she ‘dreamt wistfully of imaginary heights to which she might have arisen in the world had she adopted the scholastic profession.’[699] She represents a lost Dynes Newydd generation, as addressed by Ellen Hughes, as one of the Welsh women in the early-nineteenth century who were not given the opportunities – or rights – to expand their knowledge, and to seek a better, more fulfilling life beyond the four walls of the house. And although Mrs Rosser should be happy for her son, her own lost opportunity is a regret that she never truly overcomes. Left a widow with three children to care for, she expects her only son to become the head of the household and a tenant farmer; instead, she lives constantly in the ‘darkest, gloomiest apprehensions’ about Elwyn’s life in England.[700]

---

[697] ‘The Way He Went’, p.35.
[698] Ibid, pp.39-40.
[699] Ibid, p.36.
[700] Ibid, p.48.

Although 'The Way He Went' focuses on two English women – Aline and Gerty King – this last section looks primarily at Gerty, because she is a character that best reflects the differentiation between Welsh and English New Women. Both versions of New Womanhood prove far more interesting than any development portrayed in Elwyn's character, showing that Thomas' focus is always on the growth of women and what womanhood means.

Gerty King is meant to be a largely unsympathetic character, often stressed by Elwyn's opinion of her: he is 'not fond of Gerty'.[701] She is described at one point as 'slithering though the crowd like a lizard' to 'give one of her masterly asides'.[702] Her 'usual tone of *badinage*', her habit of collecting 'photos of her men friends', and her 'dauntless manners and outspokenness' are characteristics that can be connected to contemporary caricatures of the English New Woman.[703] These modern characteristics suggest an Avant Garde New Woman, although the derision shown in the text towards Gerty effectively suggests a policing of her behaviour. She seems sexually liberal and expresses her unsolicited opinion on many subjects. Gerty attends lectures as a self-described '[lady] of leisure [of] independent means', further entrenching her within the English New Woman iteration.[704] Without intending to elicit sympathy for her character, Thomas does, however, inspire respect for Gerty. Although not 'fond' of Gerty, Elwyn benefits hugely from Gerty being an 'expert little schemer, who could get round most men and all women': without her intervention, he would never marry Aline.[705] Gerty uses her skill, which Bohata describes as 'vocal [and] opinionated', to help others, with only minor selfish motives involved – Aline agreeing to marry Elwyn opens an opportunity for Gerty to marry Captain Soanes. Gerty's character is essentially taken advantage of by Elwyn, who claims he does not like her yet allows her to play a significant part in his future happiness. That does not make Gerty a wholly pathetic character, however, as she is entirely conscious of her own role and the effect it has on others. Gerty, like Gwladys and Gwen, is comfortable with her role in life, and executes it to the best of her ability.

As a piece of New Woman literature, 'The Way He Went' is an interesting exploration of different versions of womanhood converging and connecting with each other. By the end of the story, English and Welsh womanhood are separated, their differences cannot be bridged and both versions of womanhood remain intact. They are two separate constructions: the Welsh New Woman is a resilient, strong-willed force who must survive on her own ingenuity and with the skills learnt mainly through hardship; the English New Woman is a fairly stereotyped caricature who is only briefly allowed to display her significance within urban society. Saunders and Thomas provide fairly different

[701] 'The Way He Went', p.75.
[702] Ibid, p.70.
[703] Ibid, p.76, p.59, p.65.
[704] Ibid, p.73.
[705] Ibid, p.65.

representations of the Welsh New Woman. Saunders depicts the Welsh New Woman as a figure seeking to elevate other Welsh women in her communities. Thomas, meanwhile, shows a Welsh New Woman who thrives independently within Welsh communities. Both versions differ markedly from the New Woman caricature created by the English press. None of the texts examined in this chapter have focused on dress, smoking, cycling, or any other cliche English New Woman characteristics. Instead, the Welsh New Woman is created as an entirely separate being from her English counterpart. In Saunders and Thomas' texts, as supported by Ellen Hughes' authoritative essay, the Welsh New Woman is a largely community-minded being, supportive of other Welsh women despite their flaws, independent, and entirely focused on the Welshness of their characters, rejecting the need for anglicisation or any connection with England. This suggests that the Welsh New Woman is a version of womanhood that seeks to stand separately from the English New Woman, allowing for both to exist at the same time without the Welsh New Woman becoming anglicised.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the New Woman in Wales, and whether her existence helped to banish the Blue Books from Wales' psyche. I have considered the existence of a distinctively Welsh New Womanhood, born at the cusp of a new century, who moved beyond the conventions of traditional Welsh womanhood. Entering the twentieth century, the Blue Books could be consigned to history, although some elements of their legacy continued – through the decline in the Welsh language, alongside the emergence of further educational opportunities. The Blue Books caused people to feel ashamed of their Welshness – shame was attached in particular to Welsh women, who were heavily criticised in the *Report.* The stories examined in this chapter show that, the late-nineteenth century, Welsh women were moving beyond shame and humiliation, to construct a more active, productive womanhood. In particular, these stories present Welsh women who are defiant, proudly moral, and independent in their aim of improving their own and other women's lives. In this way, they might be perceived as continuing the project of moral improvement that was launched in response to the Blue Books. Yet this chapter demonstrates a version of femininity that is more productive and modern in approaching change; the need for self-improvement and the improvement of others has a long tradition for Welsh women, but the attitude to such improvement is more confident, and no longer rooted in shame, by the turn of the twentieth century. Women no longer fear the repercussions of the *Report* to the same extent, and as Wales moved into a new century, a plethora of Welsh women writers were emerging in a post-Blue Books era.

Ellen Hughes' essay is a pivotal text in our understanding of the Welsh New Woman, as it clearly defines what it means to be a Dynes Newydd in 1890s Wales. Women are no longer confined to their homes, but encouraged to further their experiences and education, not only for their own sakes, but for their own communities. Having never before 'gwybod beth oedd yr achos o'u hanesmwythder,

a'u hymdeimlad aneffiniadawy o gaethiwed' ('know the cause of their restlessness, and their unfathomable sense of captivity'), women would claim new rights at the turn of the century.[706] Furthermore, Hughes' essay laid the foundations for future campaigns for equality in the twentieth century, with more Welsh women writers emerging because of it. Katie Gramich states how

> Different women writers [in the twentieth century] defended their land and gender in differing ways, but all show the influence of contemporary social and political developments, such as the movements for home rule, temperance and suffrage [...] from a distinctly female point of view.[707]

The readings in this chapter help to emphasise how the groundwork for change and the amplification of women's voices in literature and the press was laid in the nineteenth century.

[706] Hughes, p.28.
[707] Katie Gramich, *Twentieth-Century Women's Writing in Wales*, p.53.

Conclusion

The texts analysed in this thesis demonstrate Welsh women's complex endeavours to define their identity in the post-Blue Books era. After the *Report* had labelled them as the main reason why the Welsh were effectively an immoral people, middle- and upper-class Welsh society tried to emphasise a different image of womanhood: that of the traditional, pious wife and mother. Through articles and essays in periodicals such as *Y Gymraes* and *Y Frythones*, the image of the ideal Welsh woman was widely circulated, albeit largely within the writers' and editors' own social circles. This encouraged more middle-class women to extend their influence over working-class Welsh woman, seen as desperately in need of rehabilitation in order to be accepted as what Lady Llanover called 'proper' Welsh women. The texts in this thesis show the limitations and failures of this influence, which restricted working-class women in how much they can 'improve' their social standing. Working-class women were supposed to know their place, and remain in the working class according to the dominant Victorian views. Raising themselves to a higher class standing was discouraged. Indeed, they had to remain working class because without these women in roles of servitude, answerable to their middle- and upper-class mistresses, the latter would be unable to claim that their own households meet the ideals they themselves promoted.

Writers such as Amy Dillwyn, Anne Beale and Allen Raine wrote for a predominantly English audience. Moreover, the writers included in this thesis are themselves predominantly middle- or upper-class, and their writing often betrays an intended readership which is largely female and middle-class. Therefore, it may be unsurprising that some of the earlier nineteenth-century texts presented in this thesis pandered somewhat to the idea of the struggling working class, and the ultimately more successful middle and upper classes. As seen in Chapter One, an Anglophone Welsh middle and upper-class womanhood is celebrated as the ideal version of womanhood, with a suggestion that Welsh working-class women should remain within their class sphere. However, as Ellen Hughes notes in her essay 'Angylion yr Aelwyd' ('Angels in the House'), it is 'impossible for a woman to succeed except as a woman, but that does not mean she cannot succeed in many circles and on many occasions from which the world has been accustomed to debar her.'[708] Although Hughes is cautioning that women can succeed only as women, which suggests that they should stick to certain gendered types of activity and activism, she also suggests that women can enter 'circles' that would not be otherwise open to women. The texts analysed in this thesis go some way in proving Hughes' latter point, by presenting working-class women eventually triumphing against those that sought to limit their achievements, by entering 'circles' that had otherwise been closed to them due to their lower-class status.

[708] Ellen Hughes, 'Angels in the House', pp.153-4.

Welsh women's writing in the nineteenth century was often dismissed as frivolous, best considered as a contribution to the popular romance genre. The texts considered in this thesis arguably fit into that genre, yet to dismiss them as mere romance novels or popular texts is to do them a huge disservice. Although some of the texts, especially Anne Beale's *Rose Mervyn* and the Allen Raine novels, contain some cliches of the romance genre, including overly descriptive writing and suspenseful tension between the protagonist and her male suitor, they nevertheless provide important insights into the depiction of Welsh womanhood. The literary representations of the Welsh woman's identity, and in particular the Welsh working-class woman's identity, mark a time of social upheaval for Welsh women, while simultaneously intervening in the public debate on this issue. R. Dansey Green-Price's *Rebecca; or, A Life's Mistake* suggests that Myra should know her place, and stay within her working-class class confines rather than dare to enter higher social spheres. Mifanwy in *A Welsh Singer* offers a typical rags-to-riches story, yet delving deeper into the novel, we can read it as a *bildungsroman*. We see a young working-class girl taking the initiative and opportunities brought before her to make a name for herself, to elevate herself from a shepherdess to a world-renowned singer. Despite the character's flirtation with anglicisation, Raine – as demonstrated by the title of the novel – is keen to emphasise the Welshness of her character, much like in *A Welsh Witch*. The works of Bertha Thomas and Sara Maria Saunders also suggest that a woman's Welshness is not an obstacle, is even indeed a contributing factor, in her path towards modernity. Although not containing as crystal clear an example of individual success as Mifanwy going from shepherdess to singer, Thomas' and Saunders' short stories emphasise that Welsh women's identity develops within society, responding to changes that happen around them to show a Welshness that is accepting of a changing age; an age that was getting further away from the Blue Books. The New Woman is the future of modern Welsh womanhood, community-minded while also allowing for a sense of independence to develop. While not completely accepting certain aspects of Welsh womanhood, including the drinking of alcohol and sexual freedom, these characteristics are not entirely condemned either. They are put down to a woman's individual choice, no longer the responsibility of the entire community and its reputation. In this respect, the Wales that was so disgusted by the *Report*'s accusation is growing up. Leading the way is the Welsh New Woman.

The texts discussed in the first chapter explore the unruly wild Welshness the Commissioners argued existed as the norm in rural Wales. These novels concern themselves with an historic event – the Rebecca Riots - that shaped the image of wild Welshness, as inherently disobedient and unruly. They also respond to the accusations contained in the Blue Books, especially those directed towards Welsh women, and to the ways in which Welsh society responded to these accusations. The Nonconformist response tried to promote the ideal of a pious, morally upstanding Welsh woman dedicated to her domestic work, while others in line with the Commissioners - promoted anglicisation as a key

requirement in the construction of respectable Welsh womanhood. However, as these texts demonstrate, anglicisation is largely the preserve of middle-class women and the Anglo-Welsh upper classes. Rose Mervyn develops from a romantic Welshness, defined by the fable-like countryside around her, into a middle-class Anglo-Welsh woman, married to an English Major; a cliched romantic ending that is not afforded to working-class women in this chapter's texts. For working-class Welsh women anglicisation is inevitably complicated by class. The texts offer examples which suggests that when a working-class woman accepts anglicisation, she has crossed a line, often invisible to her but clearly visible to other middle- and upper-class people who will often not accept her entry into their own class. Myra's story is certainly different to that of Rose. The texts suggest there is a limit to just how far Welsh working-class women can 'improve' themselves, despite a concerted effort in the nineteenth century to promote anglicisation for working-class Welsh women.

The second chapter considered the response to the Blue Books, which promoted the figure of the traditional Welsh woman. The influence of Lady Llanover and her like deserves a broader investigation within the scope of Anglophone Welsh literature. These texts suggest that attempts to alter working-class women are ultimately unsuccessful. The influence of middle- and upper-class women does not necessarily work because they do not take into account the struggles Welsh working-class women face, especially post-Blue Books, when such women came under severe criticism about their appearance and lifestyle. As Amy Dillwyn's novel *A Burglary: or an Unconscious Influence* demonstrates, poverty and hardship do not simply disappear with a wave of a magic wand. Promoting the ideal of traditional Welsh womanhood, and in particular the ideal Welsh Mam and wife, might be a noble endeavour, but it is, again, the preserve of mostly middle- and upper-class women. Certainly, they are more likely to possess this influence, due to the privilege of leisure time that results from having working-class women perform domestic duties for them. Dillwyn effectively exposes the flaws in Ruskin's suggestion that middle-class women should influence other women to live respectably, suggesting it is an easy practice to achieve. Trying to influence a clean and moral home is especially difficult without the financial means and time to do so. These texts do not represent practical solutions to working-class Welsh women's issues.

The third chapter takes a different approach, as it re-examines what had been discussed in the previous two chapters concerning influence and anglicisation, and offers another way of constructing working-class Welsh women's identity. There is an attempt in the texts in this chapter to temper some of the wild behaviour, defined by their closeness to nature, yet rather than encourage an anglicised Welsh identity, these novels support explore other pathways through which Welsh women could become modern. Although Raine's novels express some of the racist ideas of her time, they also place an emphasis on retaining a cultural Welshness which resists anglicisation. A Welsh modernity driven by women can be achieved, with a significant role for Welsh working-class women. The success of both

Mifanwy and Catrin, proudly working-class women, within their respective roles is a testament to the overall success of Welsh modernity. Furthermore, the texts' exploration of modernity demonstrates the need to have the Welsh working-class woman's voice heard within the storm of the response to the Blue Books, as periodicals and pamphlets from 1850 onwards were the work of middle- and upper-class society. Social mobility is an important factor in this chapter. While the response to the *Report* sought to instil on women how to become the ideal version of womanhood within their respective class boundaries, *A Welsh Singer* and *A Welsh Witch* completely defy this by placing social mobility at the heart of the conversation on Welsh identity. The obstacles Mifanwy and Catrin face, from the English upper classes and within their own Welsh communities respectively, are indicative of a cliché narrative of the underdog overcoming boundaries of class and gender. Yet they retain their Welsh identity through it all, showing how this attitude could have been effective in the early years post-Blue Books.

Katie Gramich acknowledges the 'conservative nature of Welsh women's writing in the early decades of the twentieth century', arguing that writers 'still felt the pressure to refute the allegations'.[709] The legacy of the Blue Books was felt for many decades after its publication, but the literary analysis in the fourth chapter suggests that its influence over Welsh women's identity begins to fade at the end of the nineteenth century. The 'pressure' is not necessarily as urgent as it was immediately following the *Report*'s publication, although it highlights the magnitude of the effect the Blue Books had on Wales that it continued to be felt in the next century. Certainly, the figure of the traditional Welsh woman continued into the twentieth century, with prominent writers including Kate Roberts placing most of their female characters within the domestic sphere, but the level of shame by the turn of the twentieth century over the *Report* was not as strong as it had been in the immediate post-1847 years. The short stories by Bertha Thomas and Sara Maria Saunders analysed in this thesis offer an interesting path away from the immediate legacy of the Blue Books. Although still engaging with accusations found in the *Report*, such as drinking and immorality, the stories do not seek to refute the allegations as such but provide a different perspective on these accusations. Rather than placing the blame of immorality on the Welsh working class as a whole, the texts claim individual responsibility. This lessens the pressure, somewhat, on Welsh communities to counter immorality, although there are some attempts to do so, as shown in the chapter. That they are ultimately unsuccessful demonstrates a Welsh attitude that is decidedly less hurt by the *Report*, although it has not disappeared completely, because the allegations have shifted to become personal liability. As Welsh writing entered the twentieth century, the need for a different Welsh womanhood is clear: no longer collectively blamed by the Blue Books but allowed to forge their own identities, embracing their flaws and mistakes, and making their way towards becoming more modern and independent. Gramich

[709] Katie Gramich, *Twentieth-Century Women's Writing in English*, p.10.

is right in saying that Anglophone Welsh writing in early decades of the twentieth century was conservative, but, as this thesis shows, the foundations for a modern Welsh womanhood were already being laid in the 1880s and 1890s, by writers such as Raine, Dillwyn, Thomas, and Saunders.

I now return to the questions posed in the introduction of this thesis: what was the impact of the *Report* on how women were represented in nineteenth-century Anglophone Welsh literature? In what ways did female characters stay within the traditional bounds of Welsh womanhood, and in what ways do they explore different representations of Welsh womanhood? To answer the first question, analysis of my primary texts shows that the construction of Welsh women's identity in the second half of the nineteenth century was defined by a struggle between the *Report's* suggestions of women's immorality and the ideal of piety that emerged in response to these accusations. Some of the female characters in these texts, such as Mifanwy and Catrin, fight to keep their cultural Welshness in the face of the Commissioners' calls for anglicisation, yet there is no great acceptance of traditional Welsh womanhood either. Indeed, to address the second question, to stay within the traditional bounds of Welsh womanhood is difficult when what it means to be a Welsh woman is decided by middle- and upper-class Welsh women who are then tasked with 'improving' their working-class sisters. Texts such as *A Burglary* and Saunders' short stories register a push by some middle- and upper-class female characters to help working-class Welsh women, the texts also suggest that the middle and upper classes cannot truly understand the struggles of the working classes. There is an understanding in some of these texts – *A Burglary* especially – of the limitations of the middle and upper classes in trying to alleviate the levels of poverty within Welsh working-class communities. Sara Maria Saunders' short stories, however, suggest that Welsh working-class women are better placed to help their fellow women.

The representations of Welsh womanhood displayed in this thesis are varied. We have Hannah, the uneducated working-class rural girl who is proud of her Welshness; Rose Mervyn, the embodiment of romantic Wales who marries an Englishman instead of a Welshman; Jill, who crosses social and class boundaries to engage with a working-class existence, yet never truly leaves her own class identity behind; Nancy in 'Nancy on the Warpath' who exposes the hypocrisy of a Welshness that accepted domestic tyranny while outwardly valuing respectability. While this array of characters demonstrates that there is no one Welsh woman's identity following the Blue Books' publication, they all demonstrate the development of Welsh female identity in the late-nineteenth century, and into the dawn of a new century. By the turn of the twentieth century, Welsh working-class woman's identity in a literary context becomes modern in a unique and distinctly Welsh way, embracing cultural Welshness rather than being embarrassed by it, and therefore defying the decades-long shame felt by the Welsh upon the publication of the Blue Books. There was an opportunity to construct a new Welshness, one reborn and ready to accept modernity.

Bibliography: Primary

Beale, Anne, *Rose Mervyn: A Tale of the Rebecca Riots* (London: Griffith Farran Browne & Co. Limited, 1909)

Dillwyn, Amy, *A Burglary: or Unconscious Influence*, ed. by Alison Favre (Dinas Powys: Honno Press, 2007)

---, *Jill* ed. by Kirsti Bohata (Dinas Powys: Honno Press, 2013)

---, *The Rebecca Rioter: A Story of Killay Life* ed. by Katie Gramich (Dinas Powys: Honno Press, 2008)

Green-Price, R. Dansey*, Rebecca; or A Life's Mistake* (London: Roworth & Company Limited, 1882)

Lingen, R., Symons, Jelinger C., Vaughan, Henry R., *Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales* (London: William Clowes & Sons, 1848)

Raine, Allen, 'Home, Sweet Home', *A View Across the Valley* ed. by Jane Aaron (Dinas Powys; Honno Press, 2002), pp.45-58

---, *A Welsh Singer* (London: Hutchinson & Co, n.d)

---, *A Welsh Witch* (Dinas Powys: Honno Press, 2013)

Saunders, Sara Maria (1897-1907), *Llon a Lleddf a Storïau Eraill*, ed. by Rosanne Reeves (Dinas Powys; Gwasg Honno, 2013)

---, 'Nancy on the Warpath', *A View Across the Valley: Short Stories by Women from Wales c.1850-1950* ed. by Jane Aaron (Dinas Powys; Honno Press, 2002), pp.70-89

Thomas, Bertha, *Stranger Within the Gates*, ed. by Kirsti Bohata (Dinas Powys: Honno Press, 2008)

---, 'The Madness of Winifred Owen', *A View Across the Valley: Short Stories by Women from Wales c.1850-1950* ed. by Jane Aaron (1999) (Dinas Powys; Honno Press, 2002), pp.70-89

Bibliography

Aaron, Jane, *Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in Wales: Nation, Gender and Identity* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010)

---, *Pur fel y Dur: Y Gymraes yn Llên Menywod y Bedwaredd Ganrif ar Bymtheg* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1998)

Aaron, Jane, Rees, Teresa, Betts, Sandra & Vincentelli, Moira, *Our Sisters' Land: The Changing Identities of Women in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1994)

Auerbach, Nina, 'The Rise of the Fallen Woman', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 35 (1980), 29-52, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2933478 [accessed July 2021]

Arnold, Mathew, *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1867)

Bertsch, Janet, *Storytelling in the Works of Bunyan, Grimmelshausen, Defoe, and Schnabe*l (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2004)

Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes (November 1892), 'Sir Richard Dansey-Green Price, Bart.', 58, 289-91

Bohata, Kirsti, 'En-gendering a New Wales: Female Allegories, Home Rule and Imperialism 1890-1910', *Beyond the Difference: Welsh Literature in Comparative Contexts*, ed. by Alyce von Rothkirch and Daniel Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004), pp.57-70

---, 'Bertha Thomas: The New Woman and Anglo-Welsh Hybridity', *New Woman Hybridities: Femininity, Feminism, and International Consumer Culture, 1880-1930* ed. by Margaret Beetham & Ann Heilmann (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2004), pp.17-34

---, *Postcolonialism Revisited* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004)

Brantlinger, Patrick, 'Race and the Victorian Novel', *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel* ed. by Deirdre David (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 129-147

Brooks, Simon, *Pam Na Fu Cymru: Methiant Cenedlaetholdeb Cymraeg* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2015)

Chapman, T. Robin (ed.), *The Idiom of Dissent: Protest and Propaganda in Wales* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 2006)

Collins, Tracy J. R, 'Athletic Fashion, "Punch", and the Creation of the New Woman', in *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 43 (2010), 309-335, https://www.jstor.org/stable/41038818 [accessed December 2021]

Combs, Mary Beth, "A Measure of Legal Independence": The 1870 Married Women's Property Act and the Portfolio Allocations of British Wives', in *The Journal of Economic History*, 65 (2005), 1028-1057, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3874913 [accessed May 2022]

Davies, John, *A History of Wales* (London: Penguin Books, 1994)

Edwards, Hywel Teifi, *Codi'r Hen Wlad yn ei Hôl 1850-1914* (Llandysul: Gwasg Gomer, 1989)

---, *The Eisteddfod* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2016)

Ellis, Sarah Stickney, 'The Women of England: Their Social Duties and Domestic Habits', *The Norton Anthology of English Literature,* ed. by Stephen Greenblatt, 8th Edition (London: W. W. Norton & Co, 2006), pp.1584-1585

Fallon, Anne Marie, 'Anti-Crusoes, Alternative Crusoes: Revisions of the Island Story in the Twentieth Century', *The Cambridge Companion to 'Robinson Crusoe'* ed. by John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp.207-220

Garber, Marjorie, *Vested Interests: Cross Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (London: Penguin Books, 1993)

Garlick, Raymond, *An Introduction to Anglo-Welsh Literature* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1972)

Gramich, Katie, *Twentieth-Century Women's Writing in Wales: Land, Gender, Belonging* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008)

---, 'Introduction' in *The Rebecca Rioter: A Story of Killay Life* by Amy Dillwyn (Dinas Powys: Honno Press, 2008), pp.v-xxi

Grand, Sarah, 'The New Aspect of the Woman Question', *The North American Review*, 158 (1894), 270- 27, https://www.jstor.org/stable/25103291 [accessed December 2021]

Griffiths, Beryl Hughes, *Merched Gwyllt Cymru = Wild Welsh Women* (Caernarfon: Gwasg Gwynedd, 2009)

Hall, Augusta, 'Address to the Welsh Women of Wales', *The Very Salt of Life: Welsh Women's Political Writings from Chartism to Suffrage*, ed. by Ursula Masson & Jane Aaron (Dinas Powys: Honno Press, 2007), pp.57-63

Hughes, Ellen, 'Angels in the House', *The Very Salt of Life: Welsh Women's Political Writings from Chartism to Suffrage,* ed. by Ursula Masson & Jane Aaron (Dinas Powys: Honno Press, 2007), pp.152-154

----, ‘Y Ddynes Newydd’ (November 1896), *Y Gymraes* https://journals.library.wales/view/2484001/2676625/13#?xywh=-746%2C-33%2C4358%2C2874, pp.28-29 [accessed November 2021]

Jenkins, Geraint H., *A Concise History of Wales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

John, Angela, *Our Mother’s Land: Chapters in Welsh Women’s History 1830-1939* (Cardiff: University of Wales press, 2011)

Jones, Gwyn, *The Dragon Has Two Tongues* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001)

Jones, Rhian E., *Petticoat Heroes: Gender, Culture and Popular Protest in the Rebecca Riots* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2015)

Jones, Sally, *Writers of Wales: Allen Raine* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1979)

Kalikoff, Beth, ‘The Falling Woman in Three Victorian Novels’, *Studies in the Novel,* 19 (1987), 357–367, www.jstor.org/stable/29532514 [accessed 9th August 2021]

Knight, Stephen Thomas, *A Hundred Years of Fiction: Writing Wales in English* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004)

Ledger, Sally, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin de Siècle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997)

Lewis, Saunders, *Is there an Anglo-Welsh Literature?* (Caerdydd: Urdd Graddedgion Prifysgol Cymru, 1939)

Lloyd-Morgan, Ceridwen, ‘From Temperance to Suffrage?’, *Our Mother’s Land: Chapters in Welsh Women’s History 1830-1939,* ed. by Angela John (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011), pp.134-156, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qhfrn [accessed January 2022]

Lycurgus (8th July 1843), ‘Welsh Riots’, *Monmouthshire Merlin*,

http://newspapers.library.wales/view/3393973/3393977/52/rebecca%20riots [accessed February 2018]

Mathias, Roland, *Anglo-Welsh Literature: An Illustrated History* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press, 1986)

Millett, Kate, ‘The Debate over Women: Ruskin versus Mill’, *Victorian Studies,* 14 (1970), 63-82 https://www.jstor.org/stable/3826407 [accessed September 2020]

Morgan, Kenneth O., *Rebirth of a Nation: A History of Modern Wales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)

Molloy, Pat, *And They Blessed Rebecca: an account of the Welsh Toll-Gate Riots 1939-1844* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 2001)

Nelson, Heather, 'Nothing She Could Allege Against Him in Judicious or Judicial Ears': "Consensual" Marital Abuse in Victorian Literature', *George Eliot - George Henry Lewes Studies,* 69 (2017), 89-119, www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/georelioghlstud.69.1.0089 [accessed January 2018]

Novak, Maximillian E., 'Robinson Crusoe and Defoe's Career as a Writer', *The Cambridge Companion to 'Robinson Crusoe'* ed. by John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp.32-48

Owen, Tomos, '"Never Again Stop the Way of a Welshman" Rioting and Rebellion in Amy Dillwyn's *The Rebecca Rioter*', in *Riots in Literature* ed. by David Bell and Gerald Porter (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 51-73

Painting, David, *Amy Dillwyn* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2013)

Parker, Pamela Corpron, 'Fictional Philanthropy in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* and *North and South*', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 25 (1997), 321-331, https://www.jstor.org/stable/25058392 [accessed June 2021]

Peterson, M. Jeanne, 'The Victorian Governess: Status Incongruence in Family and Society', in *Victorian Studies*, 14 (1970), 7-26, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3826404 [accessed May 2022]

Plunkett, John, 'Of Hype and Type: The Media Making of Queen Victoria 1837-1845', *Critical Survey*, 13 (2001), 7-25, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41557102 [accessed January 2021]

Preston, Margaret, 'Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century Dublin', *The Historian,* 58 (1996), 763-776, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24451909 [accessed June 2021]

Rau, Petra, 'Bildungsroman' (2002), *The Literary Encyclopedia* https://www.litencyc.com/php/stopics.php?rec=true&UID=119 [accessed 10 August 2021]

Reeves, Rosanne, 'Rhagymadrodd', *Llon a Lleddf a Storiau Eraill* (Dinas Powys; Gwasg Honno, 2013), pp.11-28

Roberts, Gwyneth Tyson, *The Language of the Blue Books: Wales and Colonial Prejudice* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011)

Roberts, Harri Garrod, *Embodying Identity: Representation of the Body in Welsh Literature* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009)

Ruskin, John, 'Of Queens' Gardens', *The Norton Anthology of English Literature,* ed. by

Stephen Greenblatt, 8th Edition (London: W. W. Norton & Co, 2006), pp.1587-1588

Shuttleworth, James Kay, 'Instructions', *Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales* (London: William Clowes & Sons, 1848), pp.i-iv

Singer, Rita, 'Re-inventing the Gwerin: Anglo-Welsh Identities in Fiction and Non-Fiction, 1847-1914' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leipzig, 2013)

Sonstroem, David, 'Millett versus Ruskin: A Defense of Ruskin's "Of Queens' Gardens"', *Victorian Studies*, 20 (1977), 283-297

Stephens, Meic, *The New Companion to the Literature of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998)

The Cardiff Times (19th January 1878), "'Rebecca Riots" in Wales', https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3388790/3388795/76/rebecca%20riots%20in%20wales [accessed January 2018]

The Aberdare Times (7th December, 1872), 'Woman Suffrage', https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3023392/3023396/37/new%20woman [accessed January 2022]

The Times, (26th June, 1843), 'The riots at Carmarthen and the state of South Wales', referenced in *And they Blessed Rebecca* by Pat Molloy (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 2001)

'The "Woman Question": The Victorian Debate about Gender', in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt, 8th Edition (London: W. W. Norton & Co, 2006), pp.1581-1583

Thomas, M. Wynn, *Corresponding Cultures: the literatures of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999)

---*Internal Difference: Literature in 20th-Century Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992

---, *The Nations of Wales: 1890-1914* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2016)

Thomas, Keith, 'The Double Standard', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 20 (1959), 195-216 https://www.jstor.org/stable/2707819 [accessed May 2022]

Williams, Daniel G., *Ethnicity and Cultural Authority: From Arnold to Dubois* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006)

Williams, David, *The Rebecca Riots: A Study in Agrarian Discontent* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998)

Williams, Gwyn A., *When was Wales? A History of the Welsh* (London: Penguin Books, 1985)

Williams, Jane, 'Artegall; or Remarks on the Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales', *The Very Salt of Life: Welsh Women's Political Writings from Chartism to Suffrage,* ed. by Jane Aaron & Ursula Masson (Dinas Powys: Honno Press, 2007), pp.18-50

Williams, Sian Rhiannon, 'The True 'Cymraes': Images of Women in Women's Nineteenth-Century Welsh Periodicals', *Our Mother's Land: Chapters in Welsh Women's History 1830-1939,* ed. by Angela John (Cardiff: University of Wales press, 2011), pp.73-94

Wollstonecraft, Mary, 'A Vindication of the Rights of Woman', *The Norton Anthology of English Literature,* ed. by Stephen Greenblatt, 8th Edition (London: W. W. Norton & Co, 2006), pp.170-195