



Yr Athro M. Wynn Thomas: Rhagair i 'Cyfan-dir Cymru' / Preface to 'Uniting Wales'

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M. Wynn Thomas yw'r Athro Emyr Humphreys mewn Saesneg ym Mhrifysgol Abertawe, ac mae e'n Gymrawd yr Academi Brydeinig. Mae e wedi cyhoeddi ugain o lyfrau ar farddoniaeth Americanaidd ac ar ddwy lenyddiaeth Cymru. Ei lyfr newydd, **Cyfan-dir Cymru**, yw'r gasgliad o ysgrifau sy'n archwilio rhai o'r dolennau cyswllt cymhleth a chyfoethog rhwng diwylliannau llên Cymraeg a llên Saesneg Cymru dros ganrif a mwy. Yma yw'r rhagair i'r llyfr, gyda fersiwn Saesneg sydd wedi'i addasu gan David Sutton.

Professor Thomas is Professor of English and holder of the Emyr Humphreys Chair of Welsh Writing in English at Swansea University, and a Fellow of the British Academy. He has published twenty books on American poetry and the two literatures of Wales. His new book, **Cyfan-dir Cymru**, is a collection of essays that explore some of the complex and rich links between Welsh language literature and English literature in Wales over a century and more. Here is a preface to the book, with an English version adapted by David Sutton.

"Ynof mae Cymru'n un," ⁽¹⁾ meddai Waldo Williams, ond gan ychwanegu'n onest ac yn awgrymog "y modd nis gwn." "Deufyd digymod yn ymyron sydd yn fy mhreswylfa gyfrin," ⁽²⁾ meddai Alun Llywelyn-Williams, gan gyfeirio'n benodol at y ddau ddiwylliant – diwylliant y Gymraeg a diwylliant Saesneg Cymru – a fu'n feithrinfeydd i'w bersonoliath ac i'w ddawn. Dau ddatganiad, felly, sy'n llwyr wrthwyneb i'w gilydd – neu fel yna ymddengys ar y darlenniad brysiog cyntaf. Ac eto... fe fedraf fi fy hun dystio y gall y ddau argyhoeddiad gyd-orwedd oddi fewn i brofiad amlochrog, amwys, un person. Oherwydd, o ystyried ychydig ymhellach, nid yw'r naill ddatganiad o reidrdd yn gwrth-

"In me Wales is one", said Waldo Williams, but then went on to say with thought-provoking honesty "how that can be I do not know". "Two worlds that cannot be as one/war in my secret dwelling-place", said Alun Llywelyn-Williams, referring in particular to the two cultures – Welsh and English – which fostered his personality and his talent. So, two completely opposing manifestoes – or so it appears on the first cursory reading. And yet... I could myself bear witness to the ability of the two convictions to co-exist in the multifaceted and equivocal experience of the same person. Because, to consider the matter a little further, the one declaration does not necessarily contradict, nor refute, the other. Indeed, it could be argued that the unity of modern Wales is a composite unity. *E pluribus unum* ('out

ddweud, neu'n nacáu, y llall. Yn wir, fe fedrir dadlau mai undod cyfansawdd yw undod y Gymru fodern. *E pluribus unum* yw'r arwyddair a geir ar sêl fawreddog y Taleithiau 'Unedig,' ac mae'n ddisgrifiad teg o Gymru fitw yn ogystal. Ni olyga hynny, wrth gwrs, fod yr elfennau gwahanol sy'n nodweddu'r genedl gyfoes yn cydblethu'n dwt ac yn daclus. Mae'n amlwg ddigon fod y rhan fwyaf o'r priodoleddau hynny'n cydfyw'n hynod anfodlon ac anesmwyth, a'u bod nhw hefyd yn gwrthdaro'n barhaus, gan gystadlu'n ffyrnig o ddinistriol â'i gilydd.

Ac, o fyfyrion ymhellach, fe geir fod modd mentro cam neu ddau arall i'r dyfnderoedd. Oherwydd os taw ffrwyth cyd-berthyn a thynnu croes gwahanol elfennau yw undod cenedl ar un olwg, yna ar olwg arall, yr undod sy'n cynhyrchu'r profiadau amrywiol hyn o gydberthyn a chroesdynnu. Eto fyth, nid elfennau gosod mo'r cynhwysion gwahanol hyn, oblegid gwelir hwy'n trawsnewid yn barhaus o gyfnod i gyfnod ac o genhedlaeth i genhedlaeth. Mae'r cyfan oll yn symudol; yn fythol adnewyddol a thrawsffurfiannol. A phan y byddwn ni'n synied am 'Hanes Diwylliant,' at hyn y byddwn ni mewn gwirionedd yn cyfeirio, er mai prin iawn, iawn, ysywaeth yw'r haneswyr – boed nhw'n haneswyr diwylliannol neu'n haneswyr cymdeithasol - sy wedi sylwi ar hynny.

Y broses hon – ac yn bennaf y berthynas gymhleth, gymysg rhwng y ddau ddiwylliant -- sy'n nodweddu bywyd diwylliannol y Gymru gyfoes. Hyhi sy'n creu ac yn cynnal 'undod' y mae ei gyfansoddiad yn unigryw i'r genedl. Ni all yr union batrymwaith hwn fodoli oddi fewn i unrhyw gyfanwaith arall. Er da, a hefyd ysywaeth er drwg, y cymhleth tensiynau hyn yw'n cwlwm perthyn arbennig ni fel pobl, ac mae'r ysgrifau a gesglir yn fy nghyfrol ddiweddaraf *Cyfan-dir Cymru* – cynnyrch ugain mlynedd – yn ymdrech i ymgynabod â hynny, nid drwy drafod y testun yn benodol ond drwy gyd-osod dwy lenyddiaeth Cymru a'u trafod ar y cyd. Oherwydd, fel y pwysleisir yn nheithl y gyfrol hon, nid rhyw undod gosod, digyfnwid, mo undod cenedl, eithr ffrwyth proses anodd, barhaus, o gyfannu. Felly, mae'r ysgrifau a gesglir yn fy nghyfrol ddiweddaraf (*Cyfan-dir Cymru, Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 2017*) yn enghraifft o'r weithred allweddol, bythol ansicr, honno.

Ac yn gysail i'r gyfrol gyfan y mae'r argyhoeddiad a fynegais gyntaf yn y gyfrol 'Corresponding Cultures' ⁽³⁾. Mynnu yr oeddwn bod mawr angen meddwl yn 'cross-cultural terms, to think, for instance, of writers in the two languages of twentieth-century Wales as deriving from a common cultural source and as sharing social experiences. To think in these terms may be beneficial to our apprehension and appreciation of particular writers, and it should sharpen our sense of the magnitude and hospitable capaciousness of modern Welsh literary culture. But, above all else, to think in these terms is to begin the process of making connections, finding associations, across the cultural divide that has been both the making and undoing of modern Wales, so as to begin the delicate work of stitching Wales together again, and producing an image not of a simple monolithic entity but of a remarkable profusion of significant differences, creative hostilities, silent interconnections and hidden attachments.'

Mae hi'n ugain mlynedd bellach ers i'r anogaeth hon gael ei chyhoeddi, ond trist gorfod adrodd ein bod ni'n dal i aros yn ein hunfan, gan ddisgwyl yn ofer o hyd am ymateb priodol. Pa

of the many, one') is the motto to be found on the great seal of the 'United States, and it is a fair description of little Wales as well. That does not mean, of course, that the various disparate elements which characterise our nation today are woven together in a neat and tidy way. It is obvious enough that the greater part of those attributes co-exist in a notably discontented and uneasy state, and also that they are in a state of constant contention, fiercely and destructively competing the one with the other.

And, to consider the matter further, one may wish to venture another step or two into these deep matters. Because if the fruit of this coexistence, this drawing together of disparate elements, can be seen from one point of view as a national unity, seen in another light it is that same unity which produces the different experiences of coexistence and creates disharmony. Then again, the elements that go to make up these different contents are not fixed, because they can be seen to be constantly changing from epoch to epoch and generation to generation. The whole thing is in a state of motion, of perpetual adaptation and transformation. And when we consider 'Cultural History', it is to this that we are in fact alluding, although, more's the pity, those historians, be they cultural historians or social historians, who have paid attention to this are thin on the ground indeed.

It is this process – and above all the complex, mixed relationship between the two cultures – that characterises the cultural life of Wales today. It is this that creates and maintains the 'unity' which is a unique feature of the modern Welsh nation. This pattern cannot be found in any other such melding. For better, and also, alas, for worse, it is these complex tensions that form the special relationship binding us together as a people, and the writings below – the product of twenty years – are an attempt to acknowledge this, not by a conventional treatment of the subject but by juxtaposing two Welsh literatures and discussing them together. Because, as is emphasised in the punning title of my most recent volume, *Cyfan-dir Cymru*, the unity of our race is not a fixed, immutable unity, but rather the product of an intricate and continuous process of consolidation. So, the writings collected together in (*Cyfan-dir Cymru, University of Wales Press, 2017*) are an example of this crucial, perpetually uncertain work.

And fundamental to the whole volume is the conviction that I first set out in the work 'Corresponding Cultures'. That is, the insistence that there is a great need to think in 'cross-cultural terms, to think, for instance, of writers in the two languages of twentieth-century Wales as deriving from a common cultural source and as sharing social experiences. To think in these terms may be beneficial to our apprehension and appreciation of particular writers, and it should sharpen our sense of the magnitude and hospitable capaciousness of modern Welsh literary culture. But, above all else, to think in these terms is to begin the process of making connections, finding associations, across the cultural divide that has been both the making and undoing of modern Wales, so as to begin the delicate work of stitching Wales together again, and producing an image not of a simple monolithic entity but of a remarkable profusion of significant differences, creative hostilities, silent interconnections and hidden attachments.'

It is now twenty years since this exhortation was published, and it is sad to have to admit that we are still in the same place, still living in the vain expectation of a satisfactory answer. For example, what effort has been

ymdrech a wnaed yn y cyfamser, er enghraifft, i olrhain hanes dyrys cydberthynas gymhleth a chyson gyfnewidiol dau ddiwylliant Cymru, gan gychwyn gyda cyfnod y gwrthdaro (o ymddangosiad My People, casgliad dadleugar Caradoc Evans yn 1915, dyweder, hyd at yr Ail Ryfel Byd) a gorffen gyda dadansoddiad o'n cyfnod amwys ac amlweddod ni o gydnabod a chydberthyn, cyfnod yr esgorodd degawd chwyldroadol y chwedegau a chyfraniad gweddnewidiol Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru arno a datblygiad sy bellach yn cael ei gefnogi'n swyddogol drwy nawdd Llywodraeth Cymru? Ac, o ganolbwyntio ar lenyddiaeth Gymraeg yn unig am y tro, pwy sy wedi mentro ystyried y posibilrwydd cryf fod dadeni disglair llenyddiaeth yn y Gymraeg ar ddechrau'r ugeinfed ganrif yn bur ddyledus i ddatblygiad bygythiol diwylliant Saesneg y Gymru ddiwydiannol newydd? Does neb, chwaith, wedi trafod yn ystyrlon effaith presenoldeb y Gymraeg ar driniaeth yr iaith Saesneg gan lenorion Cymreig. Ac fe fydde'n hawdd amlhau enghreifftiau eraill o'r diffygion sylfaenol amlwg yn ein dealltwriaeth ni o Gymru ddeu-ddiwylliannol yr ugeinfed ganrif.

Nid ymdrech gyson i ymateb i'r her nac i lenwi'r bylchau a geir yn y gyfrol. Ymdrech yn unig ydyw i sicrhau fod y ddwy lenyddiaeth yn cydorwerdd yn y meddwl ar hyd yr adeg a thrwy hynny fod y sgwrs ddiwylliannol sy'n cyfoethogi'n hadnabyddiaeth ohonon ni'n hunain fel pobl yn cael ei chydabod. Digon amrwd yw'r rhaniadau oddi fewn i'r gyfrol a phenawdau breision a osodwyd arnynt. Arwyddbyst ydynt yn dynodi rhediad y meddwl, ac fe geir awgrym hefyd o ddilyniant amser, gan mai trafod Cymru'r canrifoedd a fu y mae'r penodau am 'Y genedl grefyddol' ac felly hefyd y penodau dilynol a grynhoir dan bennawd bras 'Dadeni Cymru Fydd'. Ym mhob achos ceisir arddangos yn dawel fod angen symud yn gyson yn ôl ac ymlaen rhwng dwy iaith a dau ddiwylliant Cymru os am lawn amgyffred datblygiadau allweddol yn hanes y genedl. Eithr ni fynegir yr argyhoeddiad hwnnw'n ymosodol o groch ar ffurf dadl; islais yn unig ydyw.

Wrth fynd heibio, crybwyllir dyled arwyddocaol T. Gwynn Jones i'r awduron Saesneg a fu'n trafod y testun Arthuraidd, ac yn sgil hynny nodir y gallai T. Gwynn Jones ei hun yn hawdd fod wedi dewis barddoni yn y Saesneg yn hytrach na'r Gymraeg, nid yn unig am ei fod wedi ymserchu'n ifanc yng ngherddi'r iaith fain ond am ei fod yn ymwybodol iawn y gallai'r Saesneg lwyr ddisodli'r Gymraeg yng Nghymru. Y mae'r adran nesaf yn y gyfrol yn trafod gwaith tri bardd arall y bu'n rhaid iddynt ddewis yn fwrriadol ym mha iaith y dymument sgrifennu, am mai'r Saesneg oedd eu mamiaith ond eu bod wedi dysgu'r Gymraeg ac wedi ymdrwytho yn ei llenyddiaeth hi. Y mae achosion Alun Llywelyn-Williams a Pennar Davies eisoes yn adnabyddus ddigon, ond nid felly achos Waldo Williams. Anghofir fel arfer ei fod wedi ei eni a'i fagu ar aelwyd Saesneg, ac na ddysgodd y Gymraeg tan i'r teulu symud i Fynachlog-ddu pan oedd eisoes yn saith mlwydd oed. Mae'r ffaith mai prin iawn y bu'r trafod ar y wedd allweddol honno ar ei hanes yn enghraifft drawiadol o'n hamharodrwydd ni o hyd i gyfannu'n gweledigaeth o Gymru drwy ddwyn deupen y llinyn diwylliannol Cymreig ynghyd.

made in the meantime to trace the tangled history of the complex, constantly changing interrelationship of the two Welsh cultures, beginning with the period of conflict (from the appearance of 'My People, Caradoc Evans' notoriously controversial collection of short stories in 1915, let us say, up to the Second World War), and ending with an analysis of our own ambiguous and multifaceted era of inter-cultural interaction and interrelationship, an era to which the revolutionary decade of the sixties and the transformative contribution of the Welsh Arts Council gave birth, a development which has gone on to receive official support from the Welsh government? And, to concentrate for the time being on Welsh literature alone, who has ventured to consider the strong possibility that the brilliant renaissance of literature in Welsh at the beginning of the twentieth was wholly indebted to the development of an English culture threatening the newly industrialised Wales? Nor has anyone seriously discussed the effect of the Welsh presence on the handling of the English language by Welsh writers. And it would be easy to multiply other examples of the fundamental gaps evident in our understanding of bi-cultural Wales in the twentieth century.

Cyfan-dir Cymru is not a sustained and extended attempt to answer the above challenge nor to fill in the gaps. It is merely an attempt to ensure that the two literatures are considered in conjunction with each other, and that the cultural discourse enriching our self-recognition as a people should thereby be recognised. The divisions within the book are approximate, and the chapters imposed upon it somewhat rough and ready. They are signposts that denote a course of thought, and they also serve to suggest a sequence in time, since the chapters on 'A Religious Nation' deal with the past centuries of a chapel-going Wales and likewise the chapters that follow on the Wales of the Cymru Fydd/ Young Wales movement/ moment of the turn of the nineteenth into the twentieth century can be summed up under the general heading 'Rebirth of a Wales To Be'. In every case an attempt is made in the essays in *Cyfan-dir Cymru* to show, in a quiet way, that it is necessary to move back and forth between the two languages and two cultures of Wales if one wishes fully to understand the key developments in the history of the nation. But let it not be thought that this publication is intended as a loud, aggressive polemic: mine is a quiet voice only

In passing, mention is made of the significant debt of the great Welsh-language poet T. Gwynn Jones in his masterpiece 'Ymadawiad Arthur' (1902) to the English authors who had dealt with the matter of Arthur, and along with this it is noted that T. Gwynn Jones himself could easily have chosen to compose verse in English rather than Welsh, not only because he had fallen in love as a young man with the poems of the 'thin language' of English but because he was very conscious that English might come during the twentieth century completely to supplant Welsh in Wales. The next part of the book discusses the work of three other poets who had to make a conscious decision as to what language they were to write in, given that English was their mother tongue but that they had learned Welsh and had steeped themselves in its literature. The cases of Alun Llywelyn-Williams and Pennar Davies are already sufficiently well known, but this is not the case with Waldo Williams. It is usually forgotten that he was born and brought up in an English-speaking home, and did not learn Welsh until his family moved to Mynachlog-ddu when he was already seven years old. The fact that there has been very little discussion of this crucial aspect of his story is a striking example of our continuing reluctance to consolidate our vision of Wales by bringing together the two strands of Welsh culture.

A siarad yn fras iawn, fe fu'n duedd gan y Cymry Cymraeg tan yn ddiweddar uniaethu ag Ewrop ac i ffeiddio'r Unol Daleithiau tra bo'r Cymry Saesneg yn troi eu golygon yn groesawgar i gyfeiriad y Taleithiau Unedig ond yn anwybyddu gwledydd Ewrop bron yn gyfan gwbl. Dyna fan cychwyn ail adran y gyfrol, sy'n cynnig gorolwg i ni o ymateb llenyddol y ddwy garfan i'r ddau gyfandir. Yn y broses amlygir yn glir rhai o'r gwahaniaethau dyfnaf rhwng dau ddiwylliant Cymru. Ond os mai perthynas groes fydd y berthynas rhyngddynt yn aml, o bryd i'w gilydd ceir enghreifftiau ffrwythlon hefyd o gyd-gyswllt creadigol, ac ar hynny y canolbwyntir yn adran olaf y gyfrol, dan y pennawd gobeithiol 'dolennau cyswllt.'

Fe gyhoeddwyd ambell un o'r ysgrifau yn *Cyfan-dir Cymru* yn y Saesneg yn wreiddiol, ac wrth eu cymhwyso at y gyfrol hon fe'm hatgoffwyd unwaith yn rhagor am y gwahaniaethau sylfaenol rhwng sgrifennu ar gyfer darllenwyr Cymraeg a darllenwyr Saesneg eu hiaith. Yn anorfod, y mae angen darparu cyferiadaeth newydd a gwybodaeth gyd-destunol wahanol. Hawdd nodi hynny, ond anoddach, cynilach a mwy cymhleth yw'r gwahaniaeth cywair rhwng sgrifennu yn y naill iaith a'r llall. Fe all yr arddull anffurfiol, agos-atoch sy'n arferol hyd at fod yn ofynnol mewn triniaethau yn y Gymraeg hyd yn oed pan y bônt yn academiaidd ymddangos yn gwbl amhriodol yn y Saesneg. Hynny yw, rhaid cadw mewn cof ddisgwyliadau 'darllenydd dychmygol' yn y Saesneg nad yw mor barod i gael ei drin fel petai'n rhannu'r un gwerthoedd ac yn aelod o'r un gymuned â'r awdur. Nid awgrymu yr wyf bod y naill ddull o sgrifennu yn well na'r llall. Mae i'r ddau nodweddion da a drwg – er enghraifft, fe geir yn y Gymraeg amharodrwydd weithiau i ddefnyddio'r cysyniadau anghyfarwydd a'r ymadroddion cymhleth a all fod yn ofynnol os am ddatblygu trafodaeth flaengar, gymhleth, ddysgedig, soffistigedig. Y gofid yw y byddai gwneud hynny'n debyg o elynieithu'ch cynulleidfa ac yn arwain at y cyhuddiad o fod yn ymhonnus. Y canlyniad anffodus yw y gall trafodaeth Gymraeg weithiau gael ei chyfyngu oddi fewn terfynau cyfforddus y cyfarwydd, yr arwynebol a'r ystrydebol. Ac mae'r gwrthwyneb yn wir am drafodaeth yn y Saesneg ar brydiau, sef y gall fod tuedd i geisio gwarantu deallusrwydd mentrus ac i arddangos eich soffistigedigrwydd drwy amlhau theorïau ac arfer ieithweddau academiaidd astrus cwbl ddiffwrwyth a diangen.

To speak very roughly, there was a tendency in Welsh-speaking Wales until lately to self-identify with Europe and strongly reject the United States while English-speaking Wales was turning a welcoming gaze in the direction of the States but ignoring the countries of Europe almost entirely. Accordingly the second section of *Cyfan-dir Cymru* begins by offering us an overview of the literary response of the two cultures to the two continents. In the process, attention is drawn to some of the most fundamental differences between the two Welsh cultures. But if the relationship between them is often a cross-grained one, from time to time we also find fruitful examples of a creative juncture, and this forms the central point of the last part of the book, in the chapter hopefully entitled 'connective links'.

A few of the essays in *Cyfan-dir Cymru* were originally written in English, and adapting them for this book has reminded me once again of the fundamental differences between writing for Welsh readers and readers whose language is English. Inevitably, there is a need to make provision for a different frame of reference, and a different contextual knowledge. As for the difference in tone and register between the two languages when constructing an acceptable academic discourse, that is a fundamental issue easy to note but extremely difficult to address because of the nuances and complex features involved. The informal, intimate style which is customary when treating a subject in Welsh even in an academic context can appear wholly inappropriate in English. That is, one must keep in mind the expectations of the 'imaginary reader' in English, who may be less prepared to be treated as if s/he shared the same values and was a member of the same community as the author. I am not suggesting that the one style of writing is better than the other. There are good and bad features to both – for example, one sometimes finds in the Welsh a reluctance to use the kind of unfamiliar constructs and complicated neologies which can be required if one wishes to develop an advanced, complex, learned and sophisticated argument. The problem is that this would be likely to arouse antipathy in one's readership and lead to an accusation of being pretentious. The unfortunate consequence is that the discussion in Welsh can sometimes be limited to the use of comfortably familiar terms, and so be superficial and platitudinous. But the contrary is true at times when treating a subject in English: that is to say, there can be a tendency to attempt to flaunt one's daring intellectual credentials and show one's sophistication by a proliferation of theories and the use of an abstruse academic diction that is wholly unproductive and uncalled for.

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(1) 'Cymru'n Un,' Waldo Williams, *Dail Pren* (Llandysul: Gomer, 2010), p78.

(2) Alun Llywelyn-Williams, *Cerddi* (1934-1952) (Llundain: Gwasg Gymraeg Foyle, 1942), p35.

(3) M. Wynn Thomas, *Corresponding Cultures: the two literatures of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999), p74.

Y MEDDWL A'R DYCHYMYG CYMREIG

CYFAN-DIR CYMRU



YSGRIFAU AR GYFANNU DWY
LENYDDIAETH CYMRU

M. WYNN THOMAS