RACE,
ETHNICITY,
WALES AND
THE WORLD

GLOBALISING WELSH STUDIES

DECOLONISING HISTORY, HERITAGE, SOCIETY AND CULTURE

EDITED BY NEIL EVANS
AND CHARLOTTE WILLIAMS

GLOBALISING WELSH STUDIES

SERIES EDITORS' PREFACE

In a rapidly changing world, how we understand nations, their formations and contexts is being transformed. Across a range of disciplines, the focus on race/ethnicity studies is growing. In recent decades, a considerable body of writing and research has been produced that details the place and reception of racial and ethnic minorities in Welsh society, speaking more broadly to Wales's global encounters past and present. These social, economic and cultural connections shape Wales today. This research and cultural output has great significance to the general understanding of *stori Cymru*, the telling of how Wales sees itself and how it relates to the wider world.

The series *Race, Ethnicity, Wales and the World* aims to consolidate attention to this existing work, and to stimulate new and emerging work in the field of study as part of more general trends in both the *globalising* and *decolonising* of Welsh studies. The series is an exploration of the ways in which Wales has been and is being reshaped and reimagined through its racial and ethnic diversity, showcasing and stimulating multi-disciplinary research, and providing accessible works to a broad public and available for cross national comparison and scholarship.

Professor Charlotte Williams OBE and Dr Neil Evans

GLOBALISING WELSH STUDIES

Decolonising history, heritage, society and culture

Edited by

Neil Evans and Charlotte Williams

University of Wales Press
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Contributors

Yvonne Connikie promotes independent Black Film as a freelance film exhibitor. Having founded the Black Film Festival Wales in 2000, Yvonne created a new screening platform named Cinema Golau, to support the work of emerging Black Filmmakers in Wales and curate Black Welsh and Black independent film. Yvonne worked as an assistant Curator (Black London Film Heritage), and curating the first DVD compilation entitled 'Big City Stories' brought together three years' work programming for the Portobello Pop-Up Cinema. Yvonne has recently worked with the Independent Cinema Office, Ffilm Hub Wales, and Artes Mundi on various projects. She is presently programming for the Windrush Caribbean Film Festival, and is a PhD candidate at the University of South Wales researching and writing about the leisure activities of Caribbean Elders in Cardiff and Newport.

Neil Evans is an Honorary research fellow at Bangor University and a Vice-President of *Llafur*: The Welsh People's History Society. He is Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. Neil has published widely in modern Welsh history and was awarded a DLitt degree for his work by Bangor University in 2015. He has written urban history, women's history, and on political culture and social movements amongst other topics. His work as co-editor (with Eberhardt Bort) of *Networking Europe: Understanding Europe from Below* (2002) reflects a long-standing interest in politics and sociology, and with Charlotte Williams and Paul O 'Leary he co-edited *A Tolerant Nation? Revisiting Ethnic Diversity in a devolved Wales* (2015). Neil's role in the latter book arose from a long interest the history of Butetown, Cardiff, on which he published pioneering articles in the 1980s, which later broadened out into more general work on immigrants and minorities in Wales. He has also completed extensive work on Welsh historiography and (with Huw Pryce) edited *Writing a Small Nation's Past: Wales in Comparative Perspective* (2013). He has taught at Coleg Harlech, and in Welsh and German universities.

Gareth Evans-Jones is a lecturer of Philosophy and Religion at Bangor University. His main area of research has been focused on the religious responses of the Welsh in America to the issue of nineteenth century slavery, and a monograph on this topic was published by the University of Wales Press in the summer of 2022, titled *'Mae'r Beibl o'n tu': ymatebion crefyddol y Cymry yn America i gaethwasiaeth (1838–1868).* More recently, he has been exploring Welsh-language writing in Britain with regards to slavery and black people in recent history; as such, John Ystumllyn and his biography have been of great interest.

Marian Gwyn

Marian Gwyn is a heritage consultant who specialises in the history of Wales and the slave trade. Her doctoral research focused on the challenges experienced by the heritage sector in commemorating the 2007 bicentenary of the Parliamentary Abolition of the Slave Trade. She works with heritage organisations to reconcile how assets and artefacts are connected to slavery, and to teach courses on history and heritage at academic and public level. In 2020, Marian sat on the Welsh Government's working group auditing statues and memorials dedicated to slavery and empire, and, in 2021, on the working group that led to the embedding of Black history into the new curriculum for Wales. She publishes on Wales and Atlantic Slavery in peer-reviewed journals, and is currently writing a book on the sugar plantations of the Pennants of north Wales. Marian is an experienced heritage manager, following a near twenty-year-career with the National Trust, where she set up the first exhibition at any of its sites on the slave trade.

Dylan Moore is a writer, editor, journalist and teacher. He holds a first class degree in Cultural Criticism and English Literature from

Cardiff University and a Master of Research in Transnational Writing from Bath Spa University. His books include a collection of travel essays, *Driving Home Both Ways* (2018) and a novel, *Many Rivers to Cross* (2021). The latter is set between Newport and Ethiopia and examines the so-called 'refugee crisis' of the 2010s through multiple perspectives. It won a grant from the Global Academy of Liberal Arts and a Travelling Scholarship from the Society of Authors. As well as being a former Hay Festival International Fellow and Chair of Wales PEN Cymru, Dylan was a co-founding editor of the *Wales Arts Review* before moving to the Institute of Welsh Affairs, where he edited the flagship journal *The Welsh Agenda* and led policy work on media and democracy. Most recently he co-founded *Cwlwm*, a new online magazine which aims to connect communities across the country. Dylan's journalism has appeared widely and he has taught English at south Wales comprehensive schools for over twenty years.

Emmanuel Ogbonna is Professor of Management and Organization at Cardiff Business School, Cardiff University. He gained his PhD from University of Wales Cardiff in 1990 and was awarded a Chair in 2002. His recent research interests have been in the areas of organisational culture, equality, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism. His work has explored racialisation in the UK labour market and the ways in which this impacts Black and minority ethnic groups. He was part of a team that completed the British Academy and Chartered Management Institute sponsored research project on diversity in the management pipelines of FTSE 100 organisations. He is currently extending his work in this area to include the impacts of a range of intra-organisational interventions (such as mentoring, sponsorship, leadership, organisational culture and management control) on diversity, inclusion and anti-racism. He has published over 120 scholarly papers, monographs and edited collections, many of which are leading-edge contributions in high-ranking international outlets. He has also held a number of Ministerial appointments including: member of Welsh Government Equality in STEM Education and Industry Sub-group, member of First Minister of Wales Black, Asian and minority ethnic Covid-19 Advisory Group, Chair of First Minister of Wales Black, Asian and minority ethnic Covid-19 socio-economic sub-group, and Co-Chair (with the Permanent Secretary of the Welsh Government) of the Steering Group that developed the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan. He is currently Co-Chair of the External Accountability Group that is leading the implementation of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan. Emmanuel has been elected to the Fellowships of Academy of Social Sciences, British Academy of Management, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, and Learned Society of Wales. He is Trustee and Vice-Chair of Race Council Cymru, and he was made a Commander of the Order of British Empire (CBE) in the 2024 King's Birthday Honours.

Rhys Owens completed his PhD with Swansea University in 2023. His research has explored the relationship between the Welsh and the British Empire in India, focusing on how imperialism interacted with Welsh identity. His wider research examines social interactions across imperial space and seeks to challenge homogenisation of the British metropole. He received the Best Paper Prize at the Britain and the World Conference 2022 and has since published with academic and non-academic publications. His first book will be published in 2025.

Emily Pemberton is currently studying for her Masters degree in International Relations, after gaining a first-class honours degree, and finishing with the highest overall mark in her cohort, in the same subject from Cardiff University. She grew up in Grangetown, Cardiff, and has a keen interest in anti-racism, which she applies to the Welsh context as a reflection of her lived experience. She is a fluent Welsh-speaker and is always seeking to explore the intersection of anti-racism and Welsh language issues as the numbers of Welsh-speakers grow. She recently accepted the BAFTA Cymru award for *Pawb a'i Farn:* Black Lives Matter on behalf of the team, as a researcher and panelist, and she was a contributor on the documentary, *Terfysg yn y Bae*, which explored the history of the 1919 Race Riots in south Wales.

Joseph Radcliffe is an AHRC-funded PhD Candidate in History at Birkbeck College, University of London. He is a social historian whose research focuses on Black British history before the Second World War. His PhD thesis explores the processes and relationships that facilitated the migration and settlement of Caribbean and West African seamen in London, Liverpool and Cardiff between 1851 and 1939.

Alexander Scott is Project Curator of History and Archaeology at the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool. He previously worked as Lecturer in Modern History at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, where he co-organised the 2022 conference 'Wales and the World: Cynefin, Colonialism and Global Connections'. His publications include studies of working-class access to museums and the Victorian animal trade.

Lisa Sheppard is a writer and researcher whose work explores the representation of race, ethnicity, language and gender in Welsh literature. Her book, *Y Gymru 'Ddu' a'r Ddalen 'Wen': Aralledd ac Amlddiwylliannedd mewn Ffuglen Gymreig er 1990* (2018), which analysed the representation of different forms of cultural otherness in contemporary Welsh fiction, was shortlisted for Wales Book of the Year in 2019. Following a period working as a lecturer in Welsh literature at Cardiff University, she has since moved into the field of local government, first as a senior translator and interpreter, and currently as a senior Welsh language policy adviser.

Eleanor Stephenson is a historian and curator working on the histories of art and science in the British Empire. Eleanor holds BA and MA degrees from The Courtauld Institute of Art and is currently a PhD Candidate at the University of Cambridge, researching the Royal Society's connections to slavery in Jamaica from 1660 to 1714. Her research has been supported by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, the Association for Art History and The Lisa Jardine Grant Scheme. She has worked on exhibitions related to the British Empire at the Fitzwilliam Museum (Black Atlantic: Power, People, Resistance), the Dulwich Picture Gallery, and the Science Museum.

Peter Wakelin is an independent curator and writer specialising in the art, architecture and industry of Wales, and a member of the Cadw Board. He was formerly Secretary of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, and Director of Collections and Research at Amgueddfa Cymru-Museum Wales. His books include *Hidden Histories: Discovering the Heritage of Wales* (with R. A. Griffiths), and *Refuge and Renewal: Migration and British Art*. Peter undertook the research and drafting for the Welsh

Government's audit of commemoration and contributed to the guidance that succeeded it.

Charlotte Williams OBE is Emeritus Professor in the School of History, Philosophy and Social Sciences, Bangor University. She holds Honorary appointments at Glyndŵr University, Cardiff Metropolitan University, and the University of South Wales. She is Fellow of the Learned Society of Wales. Charlotte has researched and published extensively on issues of migration, race/ethnicity, and multiculturalism with particular reference to social policy and practice. She is co-editor of the ground-breaking text *A Tolerant Nation? Revisiting Ethnic Diversity in a devolved Wales* (2015). Charlotte has held several public appointments in Wales, and in 2007 was awarded an OBE in the Queen's New Year's Honours List for services to ethnic minorities and equalities in Wales. In 2020, she was appointed by the Minister for Education to Chair the Working Group: *Communities, Contributions and Cynefin: Black Asian Minority Ethnicities in the new curriculum*. With Neil Evans, she is series editor for *Race, Ethnicity, Wales and the World*.

Huw Williams is a Reader in Philosophy and Dean for the Welsh Language at Cardiff University. His main interests are in political philosophy and the history of ideas, and he has published predominantly on discussions of global justice in English, and the intellectual history of Wales in Welsh.

EDITORIAL

Globalising Welsh Studies

Neil Evans and Charlotte Williams

Introduction

Interest in race and ethnicity research in Wales has grown apace in the last decade, opening up wider debates about the nature, focus and content of what collectively is called Welsh studies. Across a range of disciplines, not only are we witnessing a *global turn* serving to place Wales more substantively within a plethora of global interconnections, past and present, but more acutely a *decolonial turn* involving the questioning of disciplinary traditions and knowledge production and highlighting the colonial legacy shaping academic pursuits. We have entered a revisionist era in which there is active questioning of the past, a reconceptualisation of how knowledge is constructed and in which we ask: *what counts? what's missing? who says?* with increased vigour. Terminologies and methodologies are being revisited as part of this broad decolonising project that is engaging disciplines.[1] Turns, shifts in paradigms, changes in metanarratives are inherent in intellectual inquiry and social changes lead to changes in social inquiry.

Whilst it is possible to trace a gradual emergence of this interest in race studies in Wales over some period of time, it is generally accepted that these concerns have been relatively marginal within Welsh studies. The events of 2020 provided an accelerant that amplified and served to cohere attention to both the subject matter of race and racism and to the necessary broader social changes that would constitute the contemporary anti-racist project. Academic decolonisation and the practices of anti-racism should be inseparable concerns and it is the current cross fertilisation between disciplinary theoretical revisionism and applied social action that makes Wales and Welsh studies such an interesting case study.

The murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis in 2020 sparked the global Black Lives Matter movement, which reverberated across the nation and galvanised the Welsh government and core institutions across Wales towards actions aimed at proactively developing an anti-racist trajectory. The stated aim of the Welsh government is to counter the drift and neglect that has characterised previous responses to race equality. Accordingly, the past three years have witnessed a ratcheting up of the public policy agenda on race, informed by a strong evidence base of research and writing. Some of the examples taken up for academic consideration in this text are the Welsh government's lead policy shift as encapsulated within the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan (ARWAP),[2] the 2020 Audit of public monuments, street and building names associated with slavery[3] and a revisiting of the heritage legacies shaping institutions. Major institutions across Wales, including the National Museums, the National Library, the Arts Council, the Books Council, and more are engaging with initiatives aimed at meeting their commitment to an anti-racist Wales by 2030. But much more change is afoot beyond the big institutions that form the architecture of the Welsh state. Mobilisation from below, from within civil society is a notable feature of the contemporary moment as grass roots groups are now more equipped and empowered to engage in the broad participatory democracy of Wales.

These developments are and should be accompanied by a deep reflection on both the past and the present. The historical record and the ways in which history has been considered and recorded has come under scrutiny. Patterns of collective forgetting, silences and omissions are being exposed and new histories are being uncovered and written up. We are witnessing critical developments within Welsh Studies as a whole, which this text seeks to interrogate; developments that are moving in tandem with wider anti-racist initiatives, commentary, and debate. This type of *decolonial reflexivity*, to use Moosavi's term,[4] seeks to ensure some symmetry between the enterprise of interrogating the knowledge base and the actions required to ensure sustained change.

Before we turn more fully to these concerns, we signal a further ambition of this collection of essays. This text inaugurates the University of Wales Press series: *Race, Ethnicity, Wales and the World*. Across a range of disciplines, the focus on race/ethnicity studies is being more urgently defined and there is a notable interest amongst researchers at all levels in a changing Wales, recognising the need to pursue and consolidate Wales-focused work and expand comparative work. In tracing this thematic within Welsh Studies we acknowledge a solid foundation of research stretching back some forty years but at the same time signal that there is much scope to erect new and interesting trajectories of study and in so-doing change our perceptions of Wales itself. The UWP book series, which we will edit, seeks to capture this seam of established work, including work that has not received the attention it should have done, and prompt new and innovative interrogations across the range of disciplines that constitute Welsh Studies.

The ambition is for a suite of texts, straddling and connecting inter-disciplinary concerns, that will connect Wales with more general trends in scholarship in the so-called 'global turn' and embrace a refreshed transnationalism that takes us beyond much of the methodological nationalism that has characterised Welsh Studies in the past. We use global in the sense that the Annales historians have used it; not to mean that we must deal with the whole world at once but that issues are pursued wherever they may lead without reference to national boundaries. As Fernand Braudel put it: 'Globality is not the claim to write a complete history of the world … it is simply the desire, when one confronts a problem, to go systematically beyond its limits.'[5] The series will represent an exploration of the ways in which Wales has been and is being reshaped and reimagined through its racial and ethnic diversity. It will tell us as much about Wales and Welshness as it will about the presence of ethnically diverse groups who have been living in Wales over generations.

Some of the key thematic concerns highlighted in this text, and which we anticipate will be taken up within the Series, include the need to reconsider the archive and to renew the dynamic re-reading of the historical record. We look to research that deepens the understanding of the nature of migrations to and from Wales and illustrates Wales's social and economic connections across the world past and present. Considerations of representations in the nation's imagery, identity, literature, and narrative deserve interrogation, prompting the relaying of the plural nature of Wales in the literature, arts and culture, and heritage of the nation. There are policy initiatives to be captured, detailing the significance of demographic shifts and policy responses to social and racial inequalities. We hope the series will encapsulate both top-down and bottom-up responses to social change and highlight the processes involved in influencing and affecting change. The scope is broad. Welsh studies is ripe for creating interesting intersections across the disciplines and for crafting a coherent approach to race/ethnicity studies.

In this opening text of the series, we have loosely grouped the contributions into three main sections, straddling the disciplines of history, heritage, literature and arts, sociology, and policy to flag the reach of race/ethnicity studies and its cross-disciplinary nature within Welsh Studies. In part one the chapters pivot on their questioning of the past, illustrating the range of Welsh involvement in the colonial legacy and interrogating the historical record. In part two we highlight efforts to decolonise the official record and revisit a heritage that has shaped the narrative of the Welsh nation. In part three we seek to characterise the contemporary scene touching in on social and cultural theory, the arts and literature, social policy, and social change.

Our task in this introductory essay is to outline the emergence and evolution of the race/ethnicity lens in a disciplinary context. To ask, how do we understand the context and the emergence of Welsh Studies and locate race/ethnicity studies within it. We then seek to highlight the ways in which this selection of chapters demonstrate new ways of thinking and approaches that serve to globalise Welsh Studies.

Social studies and the Western Tradition

Disciplines are appropriately characterised by changing frameworks, paradigms, metanarratives and turns. Tracing the post war period in the social sciences evidences the nature of these transitions and the ways in which disciplinary studies respond to social change.

After the Second World War, sociology achieved a new prominence in the academy, politics, sometimes referred to as political science, became more systematically distinctive and many historians became concerned with social history as a history ‘from below’. Crossing these disciplinary boundaries was a common concern with the emergence and development of modern industrial society, with class and class conflict, all of which were viewed through an essentially male lens. Perhaps the greatest novelty was the emergence of the new discipline of cultural studies, which foregrounded an approach rooted in the study of literature but crossed many disciplinary boundaries. Raymond Williams was a key figure in this development. His widely recognised book, *Culture and Society, 1780–1950* (1958) is complex but can be summed up in a sentence: ‘The development idea of culture has, throughout, been a criticism of what has been called the bourgeois idea of society’, offering a rounded critique of Gradgrindism.[6] Williams proposed for examination ‘keywords’, which had emerged and changed in meaning in the period: namely ‘class’, ‘democracy’, ‘industry’, ‘art’ and ‘culture’. Sociology and modern social history largely shared this agenda, whilst political analysis was much concerned with class patterns of voting.

Anthony Giddens defined the central concerns of sociological theory as the work of Marx, Weber and Durkheim and summed it up in the title of his book, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*.[7] Influential thinkers such as C. Wright Mills and E. H. Carr proclaimed the need for sociology and history to move closer together and, indeed, they shared many concerns.[8] In Britain, a group of Marxist historians challenged the orthodoxy across the centuries from the middle ages into the twentieth century, and Edward Thompson and Christopher Hill promoted a highly influential ‘history from below’.

In the US, there was less emphasis on labour history and on conflict, indeed the central concern of the 1950s was with the abiding consensus of American history. When radical historians emerged in the 1960s, they characteristically focused on the ethnic diversity of American society. Race and immigration were emerging as concerns within the disciplines. In the US, the study of ghettoes was a significant interest in sociology and increasingly so in history. Pioneering studies of slavery and of segregation, free of the racist assumptions of much of the earlier work, began to appear in the 1960s. The quality of his scholarship assured a place for a Black historian, John Hope Franklin, as the acknowledged authority and he became President of the American Historical Association in 1979.[9]

Alongside this in the UK, concerns with Commonwealth immigration became appreciable and placed firmly on the social and political agenda. The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, established by Richard Hoggart at the University of Birmingham, very quickly had Stuart Hall as its director and race became a central focus. Commonwealth Literature emerged as a speciality within the discipline of English in the context of decolonisation, with Ned Thomas teaching the first course in Britain at Aberystwyth.

By the late 1970s and 1980s, the integrity of this disciplinary preoccupation was challenged as the post-war settlement of full employment, trade unionism and universal welfare was undermined. In the US, civil rights were largely seen as a process which had been completed, and the Reagan years revived racism in politics in a more coded and 'dog whistle' way. If there had been a post-war consensus in the UK and a New Deal settlement in the US, it now fell apart. Personal responsibility, privatisation and entrepreneurship were in ascendancy and communities of colour were viewed as needing extreme surveillance. Class seemed to lose some, if not all, of its salience.

In the UK, Margaret Thatcher attacked the establishment from the right. The Falklands War, along with the push for devolution from Wales and Scotland in the 1970s and the Northern Ireland 'Troubles', prompted urgent questions about identity and nationhood. Nations and nationalism, which had been somewhat out of fashion since the interwar period, enjoyed a boom as these issues came to be seen as social constructions of the modern era and, to quote Benedict Anderson, as 'imagined communities'. The study of the industrial revolution was dethroned from its central position in the defining of modernity by quantitative historians. The English Revolution, which Christopher Hill had foregrounded, was similarly displaced in favour of a 'war of the three kingdoms' in which the issue was not class and the bourgeois revolution but the difficulties of a single polity divided on lines of religion and identity, exacerbated by the pilot errors of Charles I. More broadly, there was advocacy of a four nations history, something which was fruitful for the medieval and early modern periods, but less so for the modern period which was more resolutely anglocentric. If Edward Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* was a defining text for young historians in the 1960s, Linda Colley's *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* was it for the 1990s. Britain was a new nation created by the Union with Scotland in 1707, with an emergent British identity. That national identity was being forged against two significant 'others', Catholic Europe and Britian's own Empire. Anti-slavery was a key element in that definition, providing moral superiority over the American colonists who had rejected Brtish rule in the 1770s and 1780s. Colley also emphasised women's role in society, recognising a major emerging critique of the male-centred past.

In the US, the change was perhaps even more dramatic. Though class had never been as central as in Britain, major changes came at least partly inspired by the civil rights movement. Studies of slavery and the Black experience burgeoned, as did Black Studies, an outgrowth of the Black Power movement. Marcus Rediker has argued that subtle and sophisticated studies of the enslaved were the greatest achievement of this generation of historians, and they were far-from confined to the US, emerging also in the Caribbean, South America and along the slave routes to Africa. Black Power had spawned a Red Power movement, and studies of the indigenous population were accelerated too. Feminism was also a stronger influence in the US than in the UK. By the mid-1990s, a white American scholar would write a volume on the first century of US history, which seamlessly integrated black, white, red, women and the often immigrant working class into a single narrative.[10] It was a huge step from the white, male, middle-class consensus history of the 1950s.

Sociology at this time was rather eclipsed by a rebirth in psychology, a discipline much more suited to the predominant focus on individualism. Sociology appeared to fragment into specialisms like criminology and cultural studies. Culture, identity, subjectivity and power became the new keywords of the discipline. *Othering* replaced class conflict, as postmodern approaches questioned the perceived scientism of previous approaches and critiqued grand narratives such as those promoted by Marx, Weber and Durkheim, and by the Enlightenment as the basis of western thought.

If Raymond Williams was a seminal figure across the disciplines in the 1960s, by the time he died in 1988 Edward Said had emerged as a rival. Said took inquiries into identity and culture away from the West into territory where Williams had offered insightful cameos but no sustained analysis. He was much influenced by Williams and an admirer of his work. Said's *Orientalism* (1984) showed western identity as being shaped by an imagined 'Other' in colonial and semi-colonial encounters. He extended his purview in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993). Postcolonial studies emerged in both the former colonies and in the West as scholars sought to understand non-Western experiences. If there was some doubt about whether the subaltern could speak, the production of key texts tended to testify to the fact that they could, even if the theorists seemed impenetrable to many.[11]

Bitter intellectual wars took place over these issues in the dying years of the twentieth century. Who was to be included in the canon of literature? Was there a canon? Should there be a new one? But by the early years of this century, there was some sense of the conflicts subsiding. Truces were made if indeed peace treaties were not signed. Some kinds of synthesis emerged. The American historian Joyce Appleby argued for 'the power of history' to retain what was valid in the old, absorb what was fruitful in the new, and to emerge strengthened. In sociology, Julian Go initiated a conversation between postcolonialism and social theory. Gurminder K. Bhambra redefined the idea of modernity, taking it back to the Renaissance era and stressing the extent of European borrowing from other cultures which defined it. Somewhere around 1500 had once been a common dating of the beginning of modern history, but by the 1960s it had become a prologue (early modern), a warm-up act for industrialisation. Bhambra also stressed the need for connected sociologies not confined to national boundaries and embracing the world. [12]

There was intensive study and republication of the works of W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963), a towering scholar admired by some especially for *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) and *Black Reconstruction* (1935). But new work revealed his contribution for what it was, when the racial blinkers were removed: the work of a contemporary of Weber and Durkheim, respected by the former and an influence on him, and really someone who needed to be placed in the canon of the founders of the discipline. He had been the pioneer of empirical community and poverty studies, but ignored by his white contemporaries and written out of the history of the discipline to its grievous loss. He was the inventor of cultural sociology and the idea of *the colour line*, which he globalised from a common term in Reconstruction America, and provided the basis for understanding the modern world from its roots in Renaissance European expansion through to the present.[13] Aldon Morris provides a definition of the colour line as 'a durable structure of white supremacy undergirded by similar economic, political and ideological forces worldwide … [producing] stratification which would shape the social world of the twentieth century'.[14] And beyond, Gurminder K. Bhambra and John Holmwood interrogated modern social theory for its treatment of Empire and race, and added Du Bois and Tocqueville to the canon, but also Hobbes and Locke as the political theorists whose work underpinned settler colonialism, again taking modernity back into the remoter past.[15] This scholarship undercuts the very idea of postmodernity, as it is a history with a living presence in the here and now.

Efforts are now being made to integrate our new understanding of the world. Kris Manjapra has written a remarkable study of *Colonialism in Global Perspective*. He does what his title proclaims, and looks at the impact of settler colonialism, Empire and Imperialism on the development of the world since the fifteenth century. The distinguished Afro-American historian Robin D. G. Kelley gives this work a rounded endorsement:

> If I had to choose on book to explain the development of the modern world this would be it. [It] goes to the heart of the matter, proving that colonialism – with its racist logics and drive for war and wealth – and the struggles against it, are what makes the world go round.

Its central concern is with racial capitalism, race being seen as an integral feature of the global system of exchange and not as an issue for minorities within the metropolis.[16] Beyond this, Richard Overy has reinterpreted the Second World War as being essentially about Empire.[17] This could be linked with the arguments of Du Bois, Aime

Cesaire and Hannah Arendt that fascism and genocide were not twentieth-century European inventions, but represented the importation of the methods of Empire into the global metropolis.

The idea of the colour line as an organising principle has been widely adopted in history and contemporary studies.[18] Kojo Koram has written a challenging and profound reinterpretation of modern British history in an Imperial context.[19] Nancy Fraser, rooting herself in the work of Marx, has sought to integrate it with racial, imperial, gender and environmental concerns. Primitive accumulation, the acquisition of the resources of the less developed by the developed world, is now seen as a constant process and not as something that Marx tended to see as confined to the early stages of capitalism.[20] This was a theme that ran through Du Bois's work, whilst he also gave prominence to the role of Empire in European state-building, looking at the size of the Imperial shadow that could deeply influence the distribution of power.[21] Stuart Hall's aphorism that 'race is the modality through which class is lived' has been variously interpreted but speaks to the same concerns. And so, Empire and Imperialism find a firm foundation across the disciplines.

The Struggle for Welsh Studies

Against this backdrop of twists and turns in disciplinary traditions, we might also take a view of the Welsh scholars and institutions that sought to establish a focus on Wales. Welsh Studies are part of the Western intellectual tradition though they obviously have their own distinctiveness and have had to assert the importance of Wales in a scholarly world in which they are generally seen as marginal or irrelevant.

The story must start with the era in which Wales was conquered in 1282 and incorporated into the English polity in 1536–43, an outcome that most Welsh people ultimately seem to have been comfortable with at least in the longer term. The opportunities opened up for some by the incorporation drew many people to London. There they encountered mockery and disdain for their culture and ultimately mounted a counter-attack. Libraries of the gentry were searched for manuscripts revealing the literature of Wales and its early history;

learned societies were established, the most notable of which was the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, established in 1751 and still flourishing via several regenerations along the way.[22] What was asserted was the ancient and distinguished culture and history, and a claim to the centrality of this to appreciating the history of Britain. 'Cymmrodorion' can be translated as 'aborigine', the original inhabitants of the island.

The ancestors of the Welsh, or Ancient Britons came from Troy and Israel. Their independent history may have ended in 1282 or 1536, and subsequently become indistinguishable from that of England. The ancient roots of the language were sought out. The search for evidence was accompanied by a myth-making and fabrication not unusual in that intellectual world. The Eisteddfod was reborn and transformed, the Gorsedd of Bards invented.[23] What had been created was what we would now call an ethnic identity based on descent and a cultural inheritance.

By the mid-nineteenth century, a divide had opened up over scholarly standards between those who when confronting hallowed stories thought it was better to 'believe too much than too little', and those whose commitment to evidence was more exacting. On to this scene burst Matthew Arnold, an English school inspector, poet and social critic who rhapsodised about the imaginative qualities of Celts and the value of their literature in a series of lectures, *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, given in Oxford in 1866, widely reported and discussed in the press, and published as a book in 1867. He offered oracular judgements possibly not rivalled until Sir Kenneth Clark's television series *Civilisation* (1969). Arnold was undisturbed by his ignorance of any Celtic language or his contempt for them in the modern world. In his view, Britain needed Celts and Saxons in combination, as the Celts were incapable of government while the English imagination was too stodgy. This made him a fierce opponent of Home Rule for Ireland and of education in Welsh. In this Victorian world, there was much discussion of the differences between Celts and Saxons, and for some these were polarised positions. Tom Ellis, the political hope of those with national aspirations in the 1890s, was much given to arguments based on Celticity. Much of English history, by contrast, stressed its Teutonic nature, a racial group that embraced Anglo-Saxons, Vikings and Danes, not to mention Normans, and so smoothed out some rather turbulent history into a unity.[24]

The meaning of 'race' in the period was varied and included biological determinants as well as aspects of ethnicity and nationality. Arnold's view was what we might term 'soft-centred' seeing the ethnic qualities in the soul, as essence, but others were trying to crack the hard nut of the cranium. Skulls from the past were available to measure through archaeology and could clearly be measured in the present as well. The predominant view by the late nineteenth century was that the population of Britain was of mixed origin throughout, yet ideas of race underpinned a good deal of scholarship. Examination of the deep past produced the idea of a hierarchy of peoples and stages of development which was readily transferred to Empire and to justifications and apologetics for it.

The most careful and informed scholars heavily qualified this biological determinism or even rejected it. They found highly mixed populations and clusters of difference but no absolute and pure distinctions. While there were proponents of a stark Teuton /Celtic binary there was a large middle ground which rejected this and saw Teuton as a cultural term based on institutions rather than a biological one. Nations could not be mapped onto racial groups. Yet there was at the same time a reluctance to throw a large quantity of research on physical types into the dustbin, despite the fact that it increasingly seemed to explain little or nothing. The word 'race' covered a multitude of meanings and public discussion was clearly less nuanced than that in the higher echelons of academia.

A survey of racial prejudice in Wales on the cusp of the 1930s did not distinguish between national characteristics and distinctions based on phenotypes. There could within this paradigm be a negro race – but also a French one. Idris Bell, discussing the development of Welsh poetry in 1936, would begin by seeing it as the embodiment of the essence of Welshness; he would raise, but then effectively dismiss, biological explanations, before making confident statements about the nature of the Welsh race.[25] But before we assume our contemporary superiority over scholars of this era, we might reflect that there remain confusions and a reluctance to acknowledge overlaps between modern ideas of race based on essentialism and that of social constructionism. Herbert John Fleure's ideas of racial hierarchy, for example, and the view of the so called ‘primitive’ peoples of his own day, continued to proffer images of what Europeans had once been. Fleure stressed the environment in which peoples developed. He was rejecting what Bhambra and Holmwood see as the besetting sin of social theory in his time, the idea that all societies passed through the same stages of development and that they should aspire to European heights.[26]

Perhaps the most positive outcome of Arnold’s lectures was the creation of a Chair of Celtic in Oxford, something which he advocated and which marked the beginning of a process of professionalisation of Welsh scholarship vital to its development. John Rhŷs (1840–1915), appointed to that Chair, wrote about language and literature and he was later joined by John Morris-Jones (1864–1929) in Bangor, who unravelled Welsh grammar; and John Edward Lloyd (1861–1947), in the same institution, who applied the new critical methods of archaeology and source criticism to Welsh history down to 1282. Lloyd was a firm advocate of the diverse origins of the Welsh. This work made some impact beyond Wales. If the 1888 edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* notoriously advised readers seeking information on Wales to ‘See England’, it was not actually devoid of information on Wales if other entries like ‘Celts’ were searched, and by its 1911 edition it included a substantial entry on ‘Wales’ by Morris-Jones.

By then, systematic work on craniums was beginning in Aberystwyth. H. J. Fleure (1877–1969), who came from Guernsey and had been a student at the university college, was appointed to the staff in 1904 and began the systematic collection of data the following year. He was a polymath whose interests ranged across the biological sciences, geography and archaeology. In 1917, he was appointed to a Chair of geography and anthropology. Fleure was perhaps the leading scholar and populariser on issues of race in Britain. His legacy in Aberystwyth was profound. He established the college as a major centre of geographical study in Britain, and its anthropology increasingly moved from the physical to the social, producing highly influential community studies in rural Wales in the early post-war period. The work of scholars like Emrys Bowen (1900–83) and Alwyn D. Rees (1911–74) offered an all-encompassing view of Wales from the Celts until the recent past. The present was more problematic, as the essential Welshness of Wales was under threat. Race was a significant dimension of this as one of Bowen's interests, for example, was the distribution of blood groups.[27]

The work of professionalisation continued into the interwar years. The Board of Celtic Studies was created in 1919, to link scholars in the university colleges in pursuit of the understanding of Wales and to publish the results of their work. To this end, the University of Wales Press was created in 1922 under its auspices, with a central aim of advancing Welsh and Celtic Studies. A conference organised by Urdd y Deyrnas and the Student Christian Movement, held in Aberystwyth in January 1927, advocated research and publication across a whole range of disciplines and led to the issuing of a series of pamphlets in English and Welsh covering many topics including Welsh politics.[28] While Chairs of Welsh were established in the late Victorian period, the demand now was for Chairs of Welsh history. Lloyd had been a professor of history, but not specifically of Welsh history. Bangor established an independent lectureship in Welsh history, which became a Chair only after the Second World War, while Aberystwyth and Cardiff did establish Chairs, though Cardiff's was quickly absorbed into the Chair of History during the depression. A cost-cutting exercise saw William Rees appointed to the Chair of History as well as Welsh History.

Professional scholarship was most advanced, productive and developed in Welsh literature, reflecting its firmer academic foundations.[29] It was also perhaps more successful than historical scholarship in joining past and present with literary histories coming into the modern period, and proclaiming a renaissance in literary expression. Historians could not produce as much detail in contemporary history, though it could celebrate the advances in Welsh institutions as vindications of its remoter past. But the recent history of industrialisation was inherently problematic as it was based on alien intrusions. Literature ran up against a similar problem with the decline of the numbers of Welsh speakers coinciding with a literary rebirth. Nevertheless, the discipline was asserting strongly the continuity of a culture and that such a culture could flourish within the British state. The historians had more reservations as they were more fixated on the state given the way their subject was defined. Only after the war when they embraced social analysis could they find an equivalent way forward.[30] History was making slow advances beyond its Victorian starting points, only tentatively getting to the Industrial Revolution and post-1850 Wales, of which it knew very little.

The all-embracing nature of geography was demonstrated in Emrys Bowen's lively introductory text *Wales: A Study in Geography and History* (1941), which became a primer for Welsh Studies for a generation or more. Bowen was essentially a geographical determinist, and these ideas underpinned a good deal of historical work as well. Owen M. Edwards (1864–1920), the great populariser of Welsh history and literature, was fond of announcing that 'Wales is a land of mountains',[31] but ethnicity and race were also themes. The land and its products fed into the human anatomy, and the new industrial settlements of Wales were too full of Irish and English people to be comfortably regarded as Welsh.[32] The term 'Anglo-Welsh literature' was just beginning to emerge, at least partly in response to the devastating interwar depression as well as an assault on the Victorian values of nonconformity. In 1939, Saunders Lewis (1893–1985) dismissed the idea as it lacked sufficient coverage of the literary genres, and, unlike its model Anglo-Irish literature, was not rooted in an established ruling class.

After the Second World War, much changed. Discussions of race were understandably muted. The need for a modern history of Wales now seemed pressing, and the social, economic history, political and working-class history exploded from the 1960s to become the leading edge of novelty in Welsh Studies. Much was history from below; it had a clear and inspired affinity with the work of Edward Thompson (1924–93). Sociology, with a concern for urban community, was pioneered in Swansea from the 1950s, but developed more widely from the 1960s onwards very much as a critique of the community studies, emanating from Aberystwyth. Like the historians, the sociologists were mainly concerned with industrial society, class, economic development and relations with the rest of the UK. Geographical work also embraced the urban, engaging with towns that had once been seen as alien to Welsh culture and society. Anglo-Welsh literature acquired a journal, which published both critical and creative works, increasingly challenging the idea of the birth of the subject as recent past, and sought its deeper roots.

Writers tended to stress national identity and reject an exclusive connection with industrial Wales; the latter was weaker as a taught subject, although Coleg Harlech did some pioneering work in the 1950s, and it was widened in the 1960s. Glyn Jones claimed its place in the culture in his review of the subject, *The Dragon has Two Tongues* (1968). Ned Thomas taught Commonwealth literature at Aberystwyth, and his remarkable *The Welsh Extremist* (1971) endeavoured to build a bridge between a transformed Welsh nationalism and language movement and the English-speaking left in Wales and beyond. Thomas's work drew Raymond Williams into an engagement with his Welsh background in his literary and cultural work, something that he had previously done only in his fiction. The trend was not confined to those academically identified as literary scholars: historian Dai Smith played an important role, which has continued to the present, with his editorship of the Library of Wales reprints of classic works now establishing a canon.[33] Overall, the Welshness of the non-Welsh-speaking was asserted, and their culture and history was explored. Michael Hechter, an American with little or no direct experience of Wales, offered a location for Wales within the British Isles as an instance of internal colonialism, and this idea received a good deal of discussion though little approval by either sociologists or historians.[34]

This, then, was the intellectual and academic mindset of the post-war settlement, but much of it fell apart in the 1980s. A new development was the emergence of political science rooted in election studies, which turned on three broad categories of identity within Wales – a framework that has been supercharged since devolution. Sociology increasingly turned to policy issues, and away from theory, as it strove for research funding. Regional analysis, which owed much to politics and new kinds of geography, was asserted – mainly at Cardiff University. A concern for issues of identity and nationality united historians across the centuries with a stress on their socially constructed nature; this was synthesised by Gwyn A. Williams in his highly individualist (and unusually theoretically informed) way in *When Was Wales? A History of the Welsh* (1985). Five years later, John Davies offered us *Hanes Cymru*, taking the story back as far as archaeological evidence will reach and bringing it up to the present. Both of these works were written in the aftermath and shadow of the 1979 referendum, but Davies at least found enough inspiration in the past to be optimistic about the future. Williams thought it would take superhuman effort to achieve the renewal of Wales, the process which he had charted through 1,500 years of history.[35]

Modern social history continued but without some of its previous élan. The miners' strike of 1984–5 raised questions over the stress on industrial militancy and the coalfield. New areas – such as women's history, immigration and minorities – were explored, though the anguish was more political than the theoretical breast-beating going on in England and the US. Bill Jones breathed new life into the old subject of the Welsh in America, and then extended it to Australia and Patagonia, and anywhere else where Welsh people had settled and worked in the nineteenth century came under scrutiny. Aled Jones went in search of Welsh missionaries in nineteenth-century India, and brought a sensitivity to the society and culture of the colonised in his work. Together, they raised questions about the role of Wales in the Empire, something that arose in less articulated form in work on minorities of colour in Wales.

What gradually emerged from this impasse was the newly named Welsh Writing in English, previously Anglo-Welsh Literature.[36] This field of study became the leading edge of innovation and the most vibrant and most connected with emergent scholarly concerns in the wider world. The boundaries between the two tongues were crossed as many of its practitioners were Welsh-speakers. Leading the way was M. Wynn Thomas, with distinguished work on Walt Whitman behind him lending authority to his work on Wales. Postmodern and postcolonial influences were strongly represented in emerging studies, and these themes were expressed by detecting colonial mindsets in the relations between England and Wales rather than in regard to colonialism – but the approach for that encounter was now in place. A similar position underlies Peter Lord's pathbreaking work in the exploitation of artistic traditions. Lord refused the metropolitan definition of the great galleries and art schools of the West in favour of seeking out the indigenous, popular basis of the visual imagination of the country, an approach that now needs to spread more widely and more fully into Welsh Studies.

This overview suggests the nature of the present conjuncture. In the Global North, there is a growing recognition of the need to acknowledge colonialism and build relationships with scholars in the Global South. In Wales, there are similar trends, at least embryonically; the concern for identity and its construction as well as for diversity within its bounds is now a well-maintained approach road. The formation of Wales and its study have been dominated by the relationship with England, something that Alfred Zimmern in 1921 considered to be confining.[37] While no one could deny the salience of this endeavour, rather less regard for it might be liberating. In all aspects of scholarship, there are deep roots that can be grafted. In a world of increasing inequality, class is hardly an irrelevant concern and the history of industrial society can be renewed and re-explored through environmental concerns, as well as through disability and other related studies.[38]

The development of the 'Race/ethnicity' lens within Welsh Studies

Tracing the transitions in disciplinary studies and the emergence and development of Welsh Studies provides a foundation for the examination of the emergence of a race/ethnicity focus within the disciplinary repertoire. Yet the nature of race/ethnicity in Welsh Studies begs questions to better define this lens as a focus of study. While racial analysis was fundamental to much Welsh scholarship before the Second World War, it was increasingly discredited. Anthropology, which had moved from the physical to the social in Aberystwyth, failed to respond, for example, to the work of Kenneth Little in Butetown, Cardiff, who had made a similar transition. His book, *Negroes in Britain: A Study of Race Relations in English Society*, the first study of race relations in Britain, was never taken into the canon of community studies in Wales because Butetown seemed insufficiently 'Welsh', and was not rooted in a school (such as the Aberystwyth or Manchester schools of anthropology). Little's title, to be fair, did its best to conceal its Welshness. So how might we characterise 'race' within Welsh Studies, or delineate 'race' as an axis of study? What is the subject content?

Over the decades, our understanding of race and the terminologies that reference Wales's racialised minorities have shifted and evolved, from those that largely objectified people of colour and other minoritised groups to contemporary references that seek to valorise the perspectives, contributions and presence of those with the lived experience of being a racialised minority. We only have to consider Kirsti Bohata's examination of a national literature that perpetuated grotesque and stereotyped representations of black people in terms of 'apes and cannibals',[39] or the title of Kenneth Little's study *Negroes in Britain* (1948),[40] and then compare it with our own contribution more than fifty years after Little, *A Tolerant Nation? Ethnic minorities in a devolved Wales* (2003, rev. edn 2015), to note how such references change and develop. Indeed, diversity within diversity, or superdiversity and intersectionalities, best describe the current demographic profile, such that the term 'ethnic minorities' itself has become somewhat questionable. Dylan Moore's essay in this collection, which we discuss further below, profiles the dynamic of urban cosmopolitanism of Wales, illustrating well the difficulty of reducing race to any simplistic black/white binary.

Lest we be drawn in too deeply into the debates on terminology, we simply flag that terms in use themselves continue to evolve and are highly contested, telling us more about majority culture and its transformations than about the variety of self-ascribed status. As we look back on the historical record, we can consider (if not change) any current nomenclature. Capturing this status in eras prior to the 1991 census, which inaugurated the ethnic question, relied on a range of novel techniques and assumptions, sometimes spurious descriptors and indicators. Typically, historians exploring the archive used surnames, photographs, newspaper articles, literary references and parish records to establish black presence, perhaps not significantly asking questions about the power of the archive to omit or include, to select and to shape what is and what is not to be known.

An interesting aside on the question of terminology relates to references in the Welsh language to denote racial differences, race and anti-racism. A recent project undertaken by Bangor University[41] has aimed to ensure consistency and the contemporary relevance of anti-racist terminology within the Welsh language. Whilst the focus of the present series and this text is Welsh Writing in English (WWE), it will become apparent, as in Gareth Evans-Jones's essay on John Ystumllyn, for example, that through an examination of the language in use, bilingual scholars can skilfully illuminate racist attitudes within the majority culture, a dimension that has previously been largely obscured.

This, however, is only part of the story. The presence or absence of racialised minorities in any given community speaks to Wales's connections to a wider world via processes of Empire, colonialism and imperialism. Indeed, an understanding of Wales as itself being the subject of primary colonisation[42] largely led to a historiography that obscured Wales's participation in Empire. It is undoubtedly the case that Welsh historical studies and Welsh Studies generally have neglected a focus on race in terms of the social, economic and cultural development of Wales. But this neglect has also served particular purposes in the narrative of nation. Rhys Evans, in the opening chapter of the present text, questions whether this is a deliberately forgotten history servicing myths of nation, which place Wales as the victim of British capitalism and the imperialism inherent within capitalist structures, and as somehow beyond complicity in the colonial enterprise. Evans's examination of Welsh history's writing on Imperialism optimistically identifies an emerging and distinct departure in scholarly work from this traditional focus toward a consideration of Welshness that foregrounds transnational relationships, connects the Welsh experience to a British imperialism, and that 'incorporates "culpability" into these narratives of victimhood'. This interrogative approach to Wales's imperial role, one that embraces the complexities of global connectedness, challenges not only the discipline of Welsh history but also widespread and deeply held popular perceptions of Wales.

These two strands mark out a trail though the corpus of work that constitutes Welsh Studies, i.e. a consideration of lived experience, identities and belonging of those from racialised groups, and an examination of the broader processes of colonialism and imperialism that underpin these experiences.

The specialised study of race/ethnicity in Wales emerged slowly and sporadically from the 1970s onwards, reflecting a range of orientation. The social sciences across Wales were beginning to free themselves from the idea of class, community and industrial development that had dominated disciplinary orientations and look to other forms of stratification. It took until the 1980s, however, for the profile of minority ethnicities to emerge in Wales in historical writing, focusing on Jewish, Irish, Italian and Norwegian settlement, and subsequently Black communities in Wales, among others.[43]

A major development was the work of the Butetown History and Arts Centre (BHAC), established in 1985 by Glenn Jordan, an African-American anthropologist from California. Jordan and colleagues elicited a response from the community for an exciting oral history and document collecting process, as well as mounting innovative photographic and artistic exhibitions. Jordan's own publications probed the hostile images in the press and elsewhere that had shaped perceptions of the Butetown community from its origins in the nineteenth century, and countered them with local self-perceptions.[44] Stereotypes were dissected, racisms and boundary markers were charted, and community dynamics were displayed. Equally significantly, BHAC published a series of books written by members of the community. Neil Sinclair wrote two volumes on the community's history, which grew from his family history and memories, and were further expanded to create vivid depictions of an area that shared much in common with other working class communities of the era as well as being also highly distinctive because of its ethnic mix and the hostility from the rest of the city that had contributed to its formation.[45] Sinclair's work was complemented by two more volumes that took personal experience as a starting point, but like so much working class autobiography they were as much about a community as the self. All of these volumes were well illustrated with photographs or drawings.[46] Interest was also shown in the musical heritage of the area.[47] Multiethnic Cardiff had a particular connection with the Spanish Civil War, and this was explored in another book (though, in this case, it was written by an academic rather than by an author from within the community).[48] The concerns of BHAC were not simply located in a narrow definition of history, they embraced a critical visual element deriving from artistic exhibitions. Jordan edited Bert Hardy's stunning images of the community taken for *Picture Post* in the 1950s, contributing his own introduction and analysis.[49] This was followed by a volume of Jack Sullivan's paintings of the Cardiff docklands.[50] Jordan's own photographic talents were displayed in a volume of images of some of the older and distinguished members of the Somali Community.[51] None of the photographic volumes were simply illustrative or documentary, and the images were interrogated and utilised as historical sources, a feature of Jordan's academic publications as well.[52] The centenary of the 1919 race riots was marked by live Tweeting of the events from historical sources driven by Yasmin Begum, but drawing on the interest in history of the Cardiff community and inspiring much creativity, including the art work of Kyle Legall;[53] a place with a 'palimpsest of histories', where layers were stripped away to reveal what lies beneath.[54]

The work of BHAC marked an important departure in disciplinary methodology as well as subject matter. It represented a clear example of democratising the historical and cultural record. More work followed, diverse and wide ranging, but it had themes – notably that of minorities neglected in the study of modern Wales, and questions posed of Wales's reputation (aspects of which were of its own construction) as a tolerant nation. The latter would be substantively challenged in the years that followed, not least in the multidisciplinary text that we co-edited with Paul O'Leary, *A Tolerant Nation?* (2003).

This inaugural collection of essays had two main aims. Firstly, it seeks to deepen an understanding of the inclusive/exclusive constructions of Welsh national identity vis-à-vis Wales's minority ethnic populations. Secondly, to engage Welsh studies in an analysis of globalisation that has differentiated between the 'archaic globalisation' of medieval Wales, the era of 'proto-globalisation' characterised by European explorations and colonial ventures from the sixteenth century onward, and the onset of 'modern globalisation' that coincided with industrialisation and began to engage with the concerns of the post-colonial era. This framework provides a useful baseline for analysis, but should be augmented with more attention to the different forms of colonialism and pursuing far more rigorously, for example, settler colonialism, post colonialism, and formal and informal processes of Empire.

To place Wales in the world is not intended to displace a concern for exploring the nation and its eastern boundary, but rather to locate it within a field of relations, a network of power which extends beyond the British Isles and to recognise the unevenness and disparities of power within Europe as well as in the wider world. Lucy Taylor summarises this as 'the coloniality of power', a configuration that in some circumstances allows it to be on the receiving end of colonial power, and in others as the beneficiary of it.[55] People flowed in and out of Wales along the trade routes and other connections, and focusing on them helps place Wales in its full context as an imagined cross-roads rather than as a metaphorical island. Digitisation and the internet provide new means of doing research across frontiers and on a scale not conceivable even thirty years ago. This does not mean flattening out our view of places, as the precise combinations of connections will be unique for discrete places. Global Wales is a way to see the past anew, and to transform our understanding. But to be genuinely global, Britain needs to engage critically with its imperial past. Writing global Welsh history will ensure that Britain is seen in its true diversity, and that Wales can no longer hide its own imperial adventures and connections behind the flag of St George.

Overview of the collection

Ned Thomas's phrase, 'Our culture is not a unique *island* but a unique *crossroads* …',[56] acknowledges critical moments of cultural transformation as shaped by global connectedness. Society in Wales today reflects a global connectedness between past, present and future.

This volume starts in the present, offering a micro-study of contemporary Newport to suggest that the present cannot be understood without knowing how we got here, admitting the past at the cusp of transition from proto-globalisation to modern globalisation. We move out, into the world, to consider Welsh involvement in Empire on a journey that inevitably brings us back to Wales to examine the experience of one former slave who came to live in Caernarfonshire, and to a consideration of the impact of colonial fortunes on the Welsh borders. We then move beyond this, into the post-emancipation era of free but discriminated-against black labour, an essential feature of the era of full-scale industrialisation. The past, however, is never dead, nor even past. Historical eras haunt the present, influencing our perceptions of the nature of Wales; the long-neglected and ignored aspects of the past demand representation in the present. So we explore the changing nature of heritage provision and representation, and the ways in which literature and film and indeed the politics of devolved Wales, both formal and informal, illustrate social change.

Clearly, the essays brought together here cannot be comprehensive, but they offer a bird's eye view of the terrain and take brief stopovers. Many monographs and edited collections will be needed to chart the terrain fully. There follows a sketch map of this volume's journey, indicating how the contributors foreground new trajectories in race/ethnicity studies in Wales.

Dylan Moore opens the collection, using Michael Cronin's concept of *microcosmopolitanism* to explore street level diversity as a feature of modern globalisation. The imagery, enterprise, café society, food, hair, linguistic twists and hubbub of cosmopolitan practices are brought to life through his walk and talk methodology, offering a qualitative feel to the contemporary exchanges and interactions of everyday life in the city. Here we find the plurality of Wales at close quarters, and understand the ways in which belonging and identities are embodied in the built environment. The specific postcode is Commercial Road in Newport, but this is a recognised place-based microcosm of contemporary citiness, in which Moore implicates himself and asserts how 'tomorrow's Welsh history is being written today'. The link with the past is evident. Complex and diverse migrations have made Wales what it is today, and they suggest how it will evolve in the future. Much journalistic comment on City Road in Cardiff suggests a similar townscape, and one that would benefit from an eye as penetrating as Moore's.[57] The reach of social change is not confined to the cityscape nor to the once oldest multicultural settlement in Europe: Butetown in Cardiff. Today, small towns, rural villages and the countryside are increasingly multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-linguistic, and in looking back to the past we can see the antecedents of this social change.

In the four essays that follow, comprising Part One of this collection, we revisit a historiography that takes us from the slave era through to an era of labour migration, casting light on overlooked/missed perspectives in their questioning of the historical record. Following on from Rhys Owen's strident consideration of how a national historiography can serve to mask Welsh people's roles as Empire builders and shape particular myths of nation, discussed above, the neglect of attention to Welsh participation in the slave economy which was until more recently almost wholly overlooked is of note. Wales itself had no slave ports, and not enough surplus capital to finance slave voyages. But it was in the hinterland of the two greatest British slave ports, and few aspects of its economy were untouched by the traffic in human flesh. The historiography of the 1960s largely dismissed the impact of slavery and Empire as marginal or even 'peripheral'; growth was seen as endogenous, and the pathbreaking work of Eric Williams in *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944) received little more than a dismissive footnote. Chris Evans, in company with scholars elsewhere, has taken up previously neglected aspect of Williams's work, which demonstrates how deeply the slave economy was imbricated into the domestic one. Products of the woollen industry, copper production and iron manufacture all had markets in the Caribbean or the slaving ports of Africa. The vast profits of the plantation economy, at least at some periods, fed into estate development and agriculture, and into some industries. But this impact did not end with the abolition of slavery in the British Empire in the 1830s, both because of the compensation awarded to slaveowners (which was often invested in estates and industry) and connections with areas of the world where slavery had not been abolished.[58]

In this volume, Gareth Evans-Jones's beautifully crafted essay on the biography of John Ystumllyn by Alltud Eifion re-examines this popular story through a new lens – the original story is one instance of what Hazel Carby calls *Imperial Intimacies*.[59] The essence of the tale is a captured negro boy (likely a slave), who grew up and married a local woman, and became ostensibly well integrated into the language and culture of rural north Wales. The chronicled account of his life, however, as Evans-Jones demonstrates, is clearly an instrument of propaganda pitched to convey a positive and nostalgic image of Welshness and inclusion in Welsh community life, whilst at the same time revealing the parallel racist world view and imagery of its time. In his examination of the racist trope that underpins the story, Evans-Jones skilfully utilises interdisciplinary textual criticism to focus on majority culture and explore the racist aspects of the content and phrasing of the pamphlet hitherto unexplored. As historical research advances, parish records will undoubtedly reveal the presence of black individuals right across Wales. The instructive approach by Evans-Jones places and contextualises this presence within a deepening understanding of Welsh imperialism, rather than depicting these individuals as interesting but isolated storylines with no real interrogation of Wales itself. It remains to be seen what other insights into this issue will be provided by scholars of Welsh history.

The wealth and entitlements of elite families and the visible spectre of the Welsh country house across the landscape offers a further viewing of Wales colonial connections and wealth accumulation. Eleanor Stephenson's essay explores the network of patronage and privilege that characterised the *nabob* families within what has been called the Welsh East India network. Her analysis takes us beyond ownership of these prestigious homes to a consideration of the bonds, breadth and impact of colonial connections within the network, and the benefits accrued to families from the transatlantic slave trade as well as from fortunes amassed from exploitation of Indian land and peoples. Stephenson's argument, that the history of Wales 'from politics to architecture, landscape design and art' attests to these colonial exploitations, is illustrated by her analysis of a painting of Maeslough House, depicting the estate and surrounding Wye valley. This visual representation of accumulated wealth, showcasing the acreage of the estate and its maintenance as well as the nostalgic reproduction of the Welsh countryside, belies the complex patterning of relationships, connections and bonds that allowed not only the accumulation of colonial wealth but also ensured its sustainability from generation to generation. These examples of the contemporary historical writing of the slave era demonstrate ways of expanding the critical lens to new directions in historiography, from Evans-Jones cross disciplinary explorations with textual criticism to Stephenson's deployment and critical viewing of visual artefact to expand her analysis. Both demonstrate the possibilities and reach of inter-disciplinary incursions in pursuing dimensions of colonial exploitation.

By the late nineteenth century, slavery was effectively dead in the Atlantic world. Cuba had ended it in 1886, and Brazil in 1888. But the West's need for labour from the periphery did not end. In the West Indies and other parts of the British Empire, 'coolie' labour from the Indian subcontinent and East Asia was recruited for plantations and other hard manual work. Many formerly enslaved people eked out a precarious existence, and the urbanisation of the population of colour was a global force. In Wales, the global reach of Cardiff's coal trade led to the recruitment of sailors from the Caribbean, the Middle East and West Africa. Racist assumptions about physical capacities meant that they were seen as perfect for stokehold work in steamships, 'human salamanders' born out of fire. Many of these sailors began to settle in Cardiff's sailortown, which in the Edwardian years acquired the designation by some of 'nigger town'.

Joseph Radcliffe's chapter settles on this moment, illustrating the nature and dynamic of early black settlement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. His essay makes a number of important observations about this form of labour migration, identifying the critical role of seamen's boarding houses in sponsoring such migrations and in fostering the growth of a community. This zone of development, uniquely in the heart of the imperial city and not (as more usually) on its fringes, evolves from a small number of such boarding houses on and around Loudoun Square in Butetown. Radcliffe describes how these institutions provided much more than bed and board, acting as a hub for organised collective activity, where the interests of a range of ethnic groups could cohere, and providing a social and welfare support system. Radcliffe's study utilises newly available census data to map the growth of the seamen's boarding houses, illuminating rises and declines in tenancies as related to the precarity of the trade. But the analysis also offers much more, probing the living conditions of the seafarers, the social relations within this ethnically diverse community, the role of women within the support structure, and the relationships between black seamen and the white community, particularly white women. What this work shows significantly is the established and coherent settlement of this black community, which long pre-dates the post-war 'Windrush' migrations. Within Wales's black communities, others are using such sources to explore family and community history, continuing and extending the work of BHAC. For example, the Historic Dock Project centered in Newport and the new oral histories collected in Race Council Cymru's Windrush Elders project, which have been used in the film Windrush Cymru @75.[60]

The advent of devolved government with a stress on inclusion and participation generated a body of work in the field of social policy, aimed at capturing the constitutional commitment to equalities by the National Assembly for Wales. The devolutionary moment represented a decentring of the race politics of the UK, with questions being asked at sub-national level about the participation, recognition and rights of ethnic minorities within the context of reframed civic nationalism. What this meant in disciplinary terms for social policy was a deepening of the axis of comparative study within and beyond the home nations, and the call for fine-tuned data and evidence to underpin policy. A new focus of study for Wales asked, for instance, what policy divergence would appear across the UK in respect of race equality. Would there be an increased sense of belonging and inclusion expressed by minority communities? Would there be distinctive attitudinal changes? A body of work in the social sciences tracked the new governance engagement with the minority populations of Wales, the experience of refugees and asylum seekers, rural dwellers from minority backgrounds and dimensions of racial disparities. A strong evidence base attesting to racial inequalities was established, and these injustices noted as intransigent.[61]

Welsh political divergence has proceeded and sharpened over twenty years of devolved government. Sub-national constitutions are seen as a critical site of divergence, with explicit and distinctive social justice aspirations. The implications of this are profound for the discipline of social policy as these nations constitute sites of analysis, represent a change in the language (terminology) of social policy, reconstruct the production of knowledge, and reconfigure policy communities within the UK.

The launch of the government's Anti-racist Wales Action Plan in 2022 signals a new era for race equality in Wales. The plan, broad in scope, covers most areas of public policy that fall within the remit of devolved government. It forms a major driver for change in the institutional life of Wales, and a range of initiatives have flowed from this directive both in terms of academic decolonisation and active anti-racist practice.

Part Two of this collection has selected three studies that deal with action addressing the contemporary agenda, focusing on decolonising the archive and reimagining the nature of heritage work. Peter Wakelin outlines the government-initiated audit of public commemorations and street names connected with the slave trade and the British Empire, considering the public debates on whether to remove or rebrand contentious monuments such as those of Thomas Picton and H. M. Stanley. Wakelin, however, takes the discussion much further, drawing attention to the role and nature of public commemoration and the power relations that underpin such memorialisation.

Alex Scott's discussion of the action taken by St David's College in Lampeter to address the commemoration of the University of Wales's founder, Thomas Phillips, who held extensive connections to slavery and empire, provides an extended example. Scott illustrates the complexities of revisiting the biographic detail of an individual whose public and philanthropic works undoubtedly led to considerable benefaction, but whose involvement in the inhumanities of slavery is at best downplayed and at worst ignored in the public record. Scott's research approach exemplifies a decolonising methodology – seeking out transatlantic engagement in St Vincent, the source of much of Phillips's exploitative capital, to ensure the voices of Vincentians are heard in the process of rethinking histories of slavery and empire.

Marian Gwyn also considers how constructions of history serve not only to mask and protect the reputations of individuals past and present, but also frame and sustain particular visions of nation and nationhood. What is selected for display, and how it is displayed in the nation's museums? Who it is for, and who is involved? These are questions that have the potential to invoke decolonial reflexivity, and Gwyn's viewing of the museum sector's response to two discrete directives responding to Wales's involvement in the slave trade – the 2007 bicentenary, and the current ARWAP – highlights the challenges of staff training, skill development, resourcing and skills in public engagement required to ensure sustainable change. The stark fact that 76% of the black and minority ethnic populace of Wales do not engage with mainstream heritage activities indicates the extent of the efforts that will be required of the sector to ensure Welsh museums are not only more inclusive, but also engaged in transforming current representations of Welsh history and identity for society as a whole. These three examples illustrate the nature of the decolonial reflexivity that is under way in Wales, exploring some of the limitations and accelerants of progressive and proactive action and the impact these transitions proffer to the academic task.

In the final section, Part Three of this volume, we consider broader social and cultural change in Wales, and conclude with what this implies for research and scholarship in Welsh Studies as we look to the future. Wales has long demonstrated its ability to adapt, accommodate and shift in the face of wider social change, and yet retain its essential values. It has always been and always will be a diverse and multi-ethnic society – indeed, diversity is one element of historical continuity. The demographic patterning of Welsh diversity is constantly changing, not least in terms of how people identify and express those identifications and sense of belonging. Some 6.2% of the population identified under the high level minority ethnicity categories offered in the 2021 census; 16,000 of that number said 'yes' to fluency in Welsh. The impact and nature of this change can be seen on any day in our major cities. Examples include the imaging of Wales in different ways and the adoption of iconic images that speak to Welsh multiculturalism – such as the 'My Cymru My Shirt' mural, the Betty Campbell monument, the Code Breakers monument, and more. Dylan Moore's opener provides a rich description that well illustrates the vibrancy of this change in contemporary Wales.

This is the reality to which social institutions are responding. The literature, arts and culture of the nation is being reshaped in response to these everyday realities. The government sponsored boost has seen a clear stepping up of attention to the ethnic diversity of Wales, with arts and culture organisations rising to a mandate of change. In 2018, Gary Raymond's polemic, 'Is everyone really serious about "Diversity"?',[62] pointed directly at the 'white patriarchal framework' of Wales's arts organisations, suggesting that their practices, policies and priorities might not be attuned to a future diverse nation. But events in 2020 created a mood for change and a positive shift in attention to this deficit. Organisations such as the Welsh Arts Council, the Books Council for Wales, Literature Wales, the National Theatre of Wales, and Amgueddfa Cymru–Museum Wales have all initiated projects aimed at promoting greater representation and culture change, addressing the forthright agenda set out in the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan.

It is hardly surprising then that the Welsh literary scene has, in recent years, witnessed a tangible shift in terms of the representation of writers of colour. In 2016, an article in *Wales Arts Review* could summon just six writers of colour who had made literary contributions to Welsh Writing in English (WWE).[63] The notion of black Welsh writing has been slow to emerge. The early 1990s saw the development of a genre of life writing – notably work emerging from BHAC in

Cardiff, a Swansea project focused on refugee writing, and more that challenged from below the given that Wales is a welcoming, tolerant and inclusive nation. This creative non-fiction and somewhat sparse fictional texts, such as Leonora Brito's *Dat's Love* (1995) or the autobiographical reflection of Charlotte Williams's *Sugar and Slate* (2002), were beginning to transform the imaginative landscape of Wales. But this emergent writing, largely unsupported, was subsumed by a postcolonial genre within WWE that focused on Wales relationship with England and Englishness. Global connections and racial tropes would appear within the national literature, but the discipline largely failed to scrutinise the national literature in these terms.

Grahame Davies's book, *The Dragon and the Crescent: Wales and Islam*,[64] explores the Welsh literary relationship with Islam, finding little to convince on any sound engagement. Lisa Sheppard's doctoral thesis of multicultural communities in Welsh fiction since the 1990s argued that some contemporary authors in Wales attempted to locate ethnic/racial/religious minority experiences within (rather than apart from) Wales's wider linguistic, social, geographic and political landscape – citing John Williams and Angharad Price as examples, but also acknowledging that much more could be done in Wales as a whole to use literature and other cultural forms to raise the nation's awareness of the realities of its own diverse population.

In this volume, Sheppard takes the long view and contrasts those early contributions by writers of colour – such as *Sugar and Slate* (2002) and Lalwani's *Gifted* (2007) – with work emerging in contemporary Wales. Sheppard is interested in how these texts negotiate Welsh identities within broadly stereotypical representations of Welsh identity, and how they serve to fracture the Welsh/English binary categories of much postcolonial writing. The work of more recent writers, such as the National poet Hannan Issa, Sheppard suggests, takes this trajectory forward with 'unapologetic confidence' in asserting, claiming and synthesising dual and multiple heritages. This shift in the national literature's engagement with the diversity of Wales is not confined to the work of writers of colour alone. Sheppard notes examples of a shift to greater engagement with ethnic diversity within Welsh fictional writing and poetry as a whole. Post-BLM Wales has seen a strong cadre of work by writers of colour emerging and being supported and promoted, not least Nafida Mohamed's *Fortune Men* (2021), which was shortlisted for the Booker Prize.

As policy opportunities open up, the arts and culture sector has responded more broadly in media, film, popular culture, social media and more, as well as within the art community. During the coronavirus pandemic, writer and film critic Yvonne Connike offered an online workshop for Artes Mundi to discuss and debate the contributions of black film makers to 1980s activism, raising stimulating questions about the black Welsh film scene. This prompted research, reflected in this volume. Connike's chapter draws on case study interviews with two young black artists, where she pursues an understanding of the artistic processes developed by them to navigate formal institutional infrastructures that support or hinder their work. Connike discusses the concept of 'Black Welsh cinema', a term she inaugurated back in the 1980s, and illustrates how this space has become creatively populated. Connike also offers an illustration of the currency this space represents for a form of Afro-Futures, the aesthetic that combines history with science fiction to imagine brighter futures for people of African descent, but here achieved through bottom-up initiatives. She concludes these forms of cultural democracy are vital to ensuring an authentic representation for the contemporary multiethnic Welsh community, and signals caution that without sustained sponsorship and secure funding such initiatives easily fall into attrition.

Cultural transformations are in evidence. Highlighting issues of identity and belonging, and valorising the subjective experiences of being black and Welsh, has far outstripped addressing what are deep and sustained inequalities. Recognition has trumped substantive rights, and any systematic response to racial inequality has been patchy and contradictory. Post-devolution race equality strategies were largely focused on demonstrating racial inequalities and responding to protective statutory duties; they lacked bite and durability, and there was clearly little evidence of proactive engagement for change.

Emmanuel Ogbonna's chapter analyses the significance of the current advance in addressing race equality. The terminologies, methodologies and assumptions of the Welsh Government's Anti-racist Wales Action Plan signal not simply a reiteration of past commitments, but a totally reinvigorated response to this dimension of inequality. ARWAP is novelly the result of deep and ongoing co-production between policy makers and grassroots level policy shapers within a process of deep decolonial reflexivity. Ogbonna acutely analyses the drivers and obstacles to progressing this ambitious agenda, arguing that significant cultural change is needed within organisations and institutions across Wales if the radical outcomes detailed in ARWAP are to be realised.

The Education elements of ARWAP set a forthright agenda in terms of the decolonising of disciplines at all tiers of the sector. Higher education institutions have adopted the Race Equality Charter, and are working on broad level commitments to change, as are colleges of further education across Wales. Perhaps most startling is the government's commitment to the compulsory embedding of black history in the school curriculum. The requirements of the new curriculum, in terms of both Welsh history and Black history, carve out a pioneering citizenship agenda for schools with the stated aim to enable all children and young people to become 'ethical and informed citizens of Wales and the world'. The generative arc of the concept 'Wales and the world' speaks to a globalising agenda suffusing the policy ambition of ARWAP.

It would be wrong, however, to account for the distinctiveness of this Welsh moment of racialised time as being entirely government-led. The chapter by Neil Evans, Emily Pemberton and Huw Williams, drawing on Pemberton's participant observation of BLM in Cardiff, traces a long history of opposition to racism from within the black community, one that inevitably had a global perspective. Much of it has been forgotten, and much more remains to be excavated by patient historical research, so it is difficult to see just how much it affected the emergence of BLM in Cardiff. However, it was far from unprecedented, and as an example of a new style of social movement in Wales it may have drawn some inspiration from the publicity given to the resistance of the 1919 racial attacks, highlighted in Kyle Legall's artwork. The authors signal a potential danger in Wales of such grassroots organisations being incorporated by a highly sympathetic government, which may foreclose avenues of protest.

Such resources of hope within civic society and their relative autonomy hold the potential to ensure change on race equality. This activism, research, policy and cultural output has great significance to the general understanding of *Stori Cymru*; how Wales sees itself, and how it relates to the wider world. Inevitably the spectre of political backlash and resistance appears on the horizon from relatively mild comment such as the *Daily Telegraph* dubbing Wales as 'the wokest nation in Europe', to the more sinister activities of the Far Right. Generally, there are problems with narratives of action on race as simple progress, and we will be better prepared for setbacks if we bear this in mind.[65]

The issues facing Wales in reconciling nationality with a globalising world are not unique to this country, nor are they unprecedented. Populist politics everywhere is forging narratives of boundary and border controls, of protecting spurious histories, speaking to nations as homogenous and hermetically sealed units. There is keen and growing interest in deconstructing and refuting such understanding; an important contribution to this task will be research and analysis of the nature contained in this book. Revisiting and developing our understanding of the past and our explorations of the present in a number of disciplinary fields provides a basis for thinking about the Welsh nation in new ways. The task of decolonising is necessarily difficult and contested – it is about citizenship, who we believe we are, the values we hold dear and ensuring rights, as much as it is about scholarship. The policy moment provides a strong framework for action, and we should have confidence in the evidence and resources available to guide the interrogative task.

A considerable body of work has been amassed that details the place and reception of migrants and minorities in Welsh society. This research could simply be seen as revealing that the country is less monochrome than it was once perceived, more multicultural. To rely on this approach would be to chart the development of a new specialism – which is significant, but could be seen as merely adding decoration to the existing structure of Welsh Studies. The strong underpinning rationale for this text and for the forthcoming series by the University of Wales Press is to ground scholarly work on the ways in which Wales is being reshaped and reimagined through its diversity.

Notes

1 Robbie Shilliam, *Decolonizing Politics: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity, 2021); Ali Meghji, *Decolonizing Sociology: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity, 2021); Sarah A. Radcliffe, *Decolonizing Geography: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity, 2023). The Royal Historical Society published its *Race, Ethnicity and Equality Report* on 18 October 2018, which stressed the need for greater diversity among students, teachers and researchers in the discipline; *https://royalhistsoc.org/racereport/* (accessed 13 October 2023).

2 See *https://www.gov.wales/anti-racist-wales-action-plan* (accessed 18 November 2023).

3 See https://www.gov.wales/over-200-welsh-statues-streets-and-buildings-connected-slave-trade-listed-nationwide-audit (accessed 18 November 2023).

4 L. Moosavi, 'Turning the decolonial gaze towards ourselves: Decolonising the curriculum and "decolonial reflexivity" in sociology and social theory', *Sociology*, 57/1 (2023), pp. 137–56.

5 Peter Burke, *The French Historical Revolution: The* Annales *School, 1929–2014*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Polity, 2015), p. 144.

6 Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780–1950* (London: Pelican, 1963 (1958)), p. 314. 'Complex' was one of Williams's own keywords.

7 Anthony Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971).

8 See C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (London: Pelican, 1970 (1959)); E. H. Carr, *What is History?* (London: Pelican, 1964 (1961)); the similarities, concerns and research are charted in Philip Abrams, *Historical Sociology* (Shepton Mallet: Open Books, 1982). The essential scholar across these divides was Charles Tilly (1929–2008), whose mother was Welsh.

9 There were, of course, many distinguished black scholars across the disciplines and also white ones who wrote about racial uses. Franklin wrote the dominant central text on black history, as well as the volume on Reconstruction in the widely read *Chicago History of American Civilisation*.

10 Edward Countryman, *Americans: A Collision of Histories* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996).

11 Edward Thompson was a significant influence on the subaltern studies group in India. For later developments in postcolonial theory clearly, explained, see Kirsti Bohata, *Postcolonialism Reconsidered* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004); Jane Aaron and Chris Williams (eds), *Postcolonial Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005) considers this approach across a range of disciplines.

12 Joyce Appleby, 'The Power of History', *American Historical Review*, 103/1, 1–14; Julian Go, *Postcolonial Thought and Social Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Gurminder K. Bhambra, *Rethinking Modernity: Postcolonial Thought and the Sociological* Imagination (London: Palgrave, 2007), and *Connected Sociologies* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

13 Aldon Morris, *The Scholar Denied: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Birth of Modern Sociology* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2015); Earl Wright II, *The First American School of Sociology: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory* (London: Routledge, 2018); José Itzigsohn and Karida L. Brown, *The Sociology of W. E. B. Du Bois: Racialized Modernity and the Global Color Line* (New York: New York University Press, 2020).

14 Aldon Morris, 'Du Bois and the Center: From Science, Civil Rights Movement to Black Rights Matter', *British Journal of Sociology*, 68/1 (2017). 3.16 at 8.

15 Gurminder K. Bhambra and John Holmwood, *Colonialism and Modern Social Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2021).

16 Cambridge University Press, 2020. See pp. 5–11 for a statement of its standpoint. The term 'racial capitalism' is most closely associated the Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, which was originally published in 1983 by Zed Books in London, and had a limited sale. In 2020, a third edition was published, and it was reissued by Penguin in 2021.

17 Richard Overy*, Blood and Ruins: The Great Imperial War, 1931–1945* (London: Allen Lane, 2021).

18 Marylin Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Kojo Koram (ed.), *The War on Drugs and the Global Colour Line* (London: Pluto Press, 2019).

19 Kojo Koram, *Uncommonwealth: Britain and the Aftermath of Empire* (London: John Murray, 2022).

20 Nancy Fraser, *Cannibal Capitalism: How Our System is Devouring Democracy, Care and the Planet – and What We can Do About It* (London: Verso, 2022).

21 Adom Getachew and Jennifer Pitts (eds), *W. E. B. Du Bois: International Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

22 Prys Morgan, *The Eighteenth-Century Renaissance* (Swansea: Christopher Davies, 1981).

23 Neil Evans, 'Remaking Nations and their Histories: The Social, Political and Intellectual World of the Early Powysland Club', *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 109 (2021), 45–86.

24 Evans, 'Remaking Nations'; Neil Evans and Huw Pryce, 'Writing a Small Nation's Past: States, Race and Historical Culture', in Neil Evans and Huw Pryce (eds), *Writing a Small Nation's Past: Wales in Comparative Perspective, 1850–1950* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).

25 Chris Manias, '"Our Iberian Forefathers": The Deep Past and Racial Stratification of British Civilisation, 1850–1914', *Journal of British Studies*, 51/4 (2012), 910–35; Tony Kushner, 'H. J. Fleure: A Paradigm of Inter-War Race Thinking in Britain', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 42/2 (2008), 151–66; Amanda Rees, 'Doing "Deep Big History": Race Landscape and the Humanity of

H. J. Fleure (1877–1969)’, *History of the Human Sciences*, 31/1 (2019), 99, 120. H. J. Fleure, *The Races of England and Wales: A Survey of Recent Research* (London: Benn, 1923); H. I. Bell, *The Development of Welsh Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936), pp. 1, 12, 150; Sidney Herbert and George H. Green, ‘Racial Prejudices of Welsh School Children’, *The Welsh Outlook*, 17/3–6 (1930).

26 Wendy D. Roth, Elena G. Via Ste and Alejandra Regla-Vargas, ‘Conceptualizations of Race: Essentialism and Constructivism’, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 49 (2023); Fleure, *The Races of England and Wales*, pp. 21–3; Bhambra and Holmwood, *Colonialism and Modern Social Theory*.

27 E. G. Bowen, ‘Race and Culture’, in E. G. Bowen (ed.), *Wales: A Physical, Historical and Regional Geography* (London: Methuen, 1957). The late date of this publication is extraordinary.

28 H. J. Fleure, *Wales and her People* (Wrexham: Hughes and Son, 1926), inside front cover. The pamphlets began to appear before the conference was held.

29 John Davies, *A History of Wales* (London: Penguin, 2007 (revised and expanded edn)), p. 635.

30 T. Robin Chapman, *Writing in Welsh, 1740–2010: A Troubled Heritage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 1–4; Davies, *A History of Wales*, pp. 482–3.

31 Neil Evans, ‘When Men and Mountains Meet: Historians’ Interpretations of the History of Wales, 1870–1970’, *Welsh History Review* (2004), pp. 222–51.

32 Neil Evans, ‘“Time Past and Time Present”: Narrating Nation and Society in Welsh Historical Studies, 1970–2010’ in Rebecca Thomas, Sadie Jarrett, Katharine Olson (eds), *Memory and Nation: Writing the History of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2025 forthcoming).

33 See particularly Dai Smith, *Wales! Wales?* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1985). Smith is far too mercurial, important and original a figure to be confined by disciplinary boundaries.

34 Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536–1966* (London: Routledge, 1975).

35 Evans’s ‘Time Past …’ probes both of these works and their setting.

36 The journal *Welsh Writing in English* started publication in 1995 and changed its title to *The International Journal of Welsh Writing* in English in 2013; https://www.awwe.org/journal.html (accessed 9 July 2024).

37 Alfred Zimmern, *My Impressions of Wales* (London: Mills and Boon, 1921).

38 Neil Evans, ‘Labouring Men, Protesting People: The Past, Present and Future of Labour History in Wales’, *Scottish Labour History*, 55 (2020), 247–58.

39 See Charlotte Williams, Neil Evans and Paul O’Leary, *A Tolerant Nation? Revisiting Ethnic Diversity in a Devolved Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2015).

40 Kenneth Little, *Negroes in Britain: A Study of Race Relations in English Society* (London: Routledge, 1972 (1948)), with introduction by Leonard Bloom.

41 See *https://www.bangor.ac.uk/canolfanbedwyr/news/research-seminar-27-october-2022-race-and-ethnicity-terminology--17862*.

42 Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*; Philippa Levine, *The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset*, 3rd rev. edn (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020); her analysis starts with Wales.

43 Neil Evans. 'How White Was My Valley? Immigrants and Minorities in Modern Wales', *Llafur* (2019–20).

44 Glenn Jordan, 'Images of Tiger Bay: Did Howard Spring Tell the Truth?', *Llafur*, 5/1 (1988), 53–9; 'On Ethnography in an Intertextual Situation: Reading Narratives or Deconstructing Discourse?', in Faye V. Harrison (ed.), *Decolonizing Anthropology: Moving Further Toward an Anthropology for Liberation* (Arlington VA: American Anthropological Association, 2010 (1991)), pp. 42–67; Glenn Jordan and Chris Weedon, 'When the Subaltern Speaks What Do They Say? Radical Cultural Politics in Cardiff Docklands', in Paul Gilroy, Lawrence Grossberg and Angela McRobbie (eds), *Without Guarantees: In Honour of Stuart Hall* (London: Verso, 2000), pp. 165–80; 'Voices from Below: People's History in Cardiff Docklands', in Stefan Berger, Heiko Feldner and Kevin Passmore (eds), *Writing History: Theory and Practice* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003), pp. 299–320; '"We Never Really Noticed you were Coloured": Postcolonialist Reflections on Immigrants and Minorities in Wales', in Aaron and Williams (eds), *Postcolonial Wales*, pp. 55–81; Glenn Jordan and Chris Weedon, 'The Construction and Negotiation of Racialized Borders in Cardiff Docklands', in Jane Aaron, Henrice Altink and Chris Weedon (eds), *Gendering Border Studies* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010), pp. 222–40; Glenn Jordan and Chris Weedon, 'Changing the Archive: History and Memory as Cultural Politics in Multi-Ethnic Wales', in Charlotte Williams, Neil Evans and Paul O'Leary (eds), *A Tolerant Nation? Revisiting Ethnic Diversity in a Devolved Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2015), pp. 175–205.

45 Neil M. C. Sinclair, *The Tiger Bay Story* (Cardiff: BHAC, 1993); Neil M. C. Sinclair, *Endangered Tiger: A Community under Threat* (Cardiff: BHAC, 2003).

46 Harry 'Shipmate' Cooke, *How I Saw it: A Stroll through Old Cardiff Bay* (Cardiff: BHAC, 1993); Phyllis Grogan Chappell, *A Tiger Bay Childhood: Growing up the 1930s* (Cardiff: BHAC, 1994).

47 Mike Johnson, *Old Cardiff Winds: Songs from Tiger Bay and Far Beyond* (Cardiff: BHAC, 1993).

48 Rob Stradling, *Cardiff and the Spanish Civil War* (Cardiff: BHAC, 1996).

49 Glenn Jordan (ed.), *'Down the Bay': Picture Post, Humanist Photography and Images of 1950s Cardiff* (Cardiff: BHAC, 2001).

50 Glenn Jordan (ed.), *Tramp Steamers, Seamen & Sailor Town: Jack Sullivan's Paintings of Old Cardiff Docklands* (Cardiff: BHAC, 2002).

51 Glenn Jordan, *Somali Elders: Portraits from Wales* (Cardiff: BHAC, 2005).

52 See Jordan, '"We Never Really Noticed"', 56–8.

53 See *https://nation.cymru/culture/how-live-tweeting-cardiffs-1919-race-riots-helped-us-uncover-a-forgotten-part-of-welsh-history/* (accessed 25 July 2020). For assessments of the significance of this work, see Huw Thomas, 'Identity Building and Cultural Projects in Butetown, Cardiff', *City*, 8/2 (2004), 274–8; Charlotte Williams, 'The Reticent Ethnographer: A Portrait of Glenn Jordan', *Planet*, 176 (April/May 2006), 41–53.

54 Olivette Otele, *Black Europeans: An Untold History* (London: Basic Books, 2020), p. 215.

55 Pierre Bourdieu and Loic Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Oxford: Polity, 1992), pp. 96–101; Lucy Taylor, *The Global Politics of Welsh Patagonia* (forthcoming); Neil Evans, '"A World Empire Sea Girt", The British Empire, State and Nations, 1780–1914', in Stefan Berger and Alexie Miller (eds), *Nationalising Empires* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2015), pp. 31–97, p. 64.

56 Ned Thomas, 'S4C and Europe' *Planet*, 64 (1987–8), 6.

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(White Man) In Asmara Cafe: Scenes From Microcosmopolitan Wales

Dylan Moore

> *Human societies are complex and diverse, and shaped by human actions and beliefs. An appreciation of identity, heritage and cynefin, including the history of Wales and the World, can influence learners emotionally and spiritually, and help build their sense of self and of belonging*
> – **Statements of What Matters, Curriculum for Wales**

> *We are more interested in symbolic gestures around multiculturalism than a history that reflects our communities in Wales*
> – **Yasmin Begum, 'A brief history of Noor el Islam Mosque'**

At nine in the morning of Eid al-Fitr, I sit on a bench in Wood Street, Cardiff, where the bus station used to be. Cold wind whips across the river Taff and between the angular voids of Central Square's brave new towers of concrete, glass and steel. It seems the obvious place to begin this journey: to think about how Wales thinks about itself – after devolution; after Brexit and the pandemic; after Black Lives Matter and Black and ethnic minority histories made mandatory in schools; after the Welsh government published an action plan to achieve an Anti-racist Wales by the end of the decade. And as I fold open my notebook, I catch a voice on the breeze. In an English accent, it says with some confidence: 'Betty Campbell'.

A smartly dressed man with silver hair is pulling a suitcase-on-wheels, answering a work colleague's question. The younger woman strides purposefully past the Welsh capital's newest public monument, glances briefly at the sculpture. The fierce visage of Wales's first Black headteacher stares out at the new headquarters of BBC Cymru Wales and the train station beyond, where the Great Western Railway links the city to London, the old imperial centre of the world.

'I've heard of her,' she says without stopping, and the pair disappear inside the giant edifice of Tŷ William Morgan, the UK Government building that has blocked our view of the rugby stadium.

Down in Cardiff Bay, the sail-shaped Senedd suggests dialogue with distant shores, its Siambr rounded in cooperation – or cosy consensus, depending on your point of view. Here in Central Square, a vision for the nation is staked out by these high-rise tent pegs, each pulling in different directions amid the bustle of buses and taxis. Here the wind whistles more uncertainty than change, and Cymru/Wales becomes a dualism, a duel, a confrontation of symbols.

There had been plans for a union flag, eight storeys high, to be wrapped around the corner of Tŷ Morgan – 20,000 people signed a petition in protest, and the UK Government settled for a large royal coat of arms above the entrance, where it says Llywodraeth DU as well as UK Government. The Lion and the Unicorn of England and Scotland stand dexter and sinister around a quartered shield with its three passant guardant lions of England, the rampant lion and double tressure flory-counterflory of Scotland, the harp of Ireland, and finally, the English lions again. Just like the red, white and blue of the union flag, the arms of dominion of the British monarch is a reminder to Wales of its historic subsumption into England. The naming of this civil service outpost after William Morgan – the first translator of the whole Bible into Welsh in 1588, just half a century after Henry VIII's Act of Union – points at the complexity of Welsh and British identities, inextricably bound together but increasingly narrativised in opposition to each other.

But as I sit in the shadow of the British Broadcasting Corporation, Cymru Wales headquarters, scribbling notes about Central Square's absence of dragons, life in Wood Street continues with the fierce urgency of now. Middle Eastern music drifts from the window of a passing car. At the next bench a passionate conversation ensues in an Eastern European language; one young Roma woman is sobbing, another sucking on a vape. Then my attention is drawn back to Betty Campbell by the voices of a father and son speaking French and taking photographs.

Before its unveiling in 2021, there was not a single statue of a real woman in the whole of Wales. A public vote selected the former teacher, local councillor and pioneer of Black history education as the most worthy first recipient of the honour before George Floyd was murdered by an American policeman and the Black Lives Matter movement went global. And so when the purple cloth was pulled away to reveal Eve Shepherd’s startling sculpture, Betty Campbell immediately became a symbol of a new kind of Wales: ‘We were a good example to the rest of the world,’ says the inscription at the back of the sculpture, a quotation from the woman herself, ‘how you can live together regardless of where you came from or the colour of your skin.’

Beneath the shade of the giant bust, shaped to form the sheltering, nurturing canopy of a tree, a boy wearing a turban and the uniform of Mount Stuart Primary School in Butetown, where Betty Campbell taught, holds hands with a wartime evacuee, representing the fact the teacher herself had been evacuated from Cardiff to Aberdare as a child. Around them other children play with coal trucks, paper boats and models of Cardiff landmarks including the Coal Exchange, where the world’s first million pound cheque was signed in the heyday of the Rhondda coal boom. Another girl, taller, hijabbed, slim and serious, holds open a book with the lyrics to Labi Siffre’s ‘Something Inside So Strong’, Campbell’s favourite song that became a kind of anthem at Mount Stuart. Beside her, an atlas lies open atop a pile of books that attest to the teacher’s role in the development of Black history education: Martin Luther King Jr, Rosa Parks, Nelson Mandela, Olaudah Equiano, Maya Angelou and Pauli Murray.

‘Microcosmopolitanism’ is a term borrowed by M. Wynn Thomas in the introduction to his volume of collected essays *All That is Wales*, from the Irish scholar Michael Cronin. The concept, he writes, seeks to deliver ‘intellectuals from [small, ‘marginal’] nations such as Ireland, Scotland and Wales from the facile dualism of macro perspectives’ and also ‘to diversify or complexify the smaller unit’. The microcosmopolitan movement ‘situat[es] difference and exchange at the micro-levels of society, rather than at the "macro" level customarily supposed to be the exclusive location of such progressive cosmopolitan practices'. It is easy to see, from a Welsh perspective, why Thomas titled his series of English-language studies of the Welsh cultural scene *Internal Difference*. It is only from the outside – from a metropolitan perspective – that Wales might look anything like monocultural.

Resistance against such depictions of Wales is the activating dynamic of the new wave of literary anthologies that collect perspectives from contributors of various backgrounds and identities, and across the gamut of Welsh geographies within and beyond the borders of the nation itself. Such variegation is exemplified most explicitly in *Welsh (Plural)*, edited by Darren Chetty, Hanan Issa, Iestyn Tyne and Grug Muse, and is also at work in the increasingly fractious relationship between the London-based and indigenous Welsh media, with outlets like *Nation.Cymru* determined to call out the regular stereotypes, broad brushstrokes and inaccuracies in relation to Wales that regularly appear across the UK media, particularly in the right-wing English press. 'That's devolved!' has become a rallying cry.

In Wales, with our poorly connected roads and dearth of railways and everywhere a mountain to separate us from each other, we know instinctively that allegiances and identities are bound up in complexity. Welshness breaks down into myriad regional and local variations. We are Cymry Cymraeg; *hwntws* and *gogs*; English-speakers; *dysgwrs*. We are Welsh and British or Welsh only. Many citizens of Wales identify only as British, or as something else entirely. We come from *Y Fro Gymraeg*, 'Welsh Wales', or regions more connected to places in England than to anywhere else in our own country, places where the borders in our hearts and minds are as tangled as a thorny hedgerow between Monmouthshire and Herefordshire. And in inner-urban Wales, this microcosmopolitanism finds its greatest density.

Of course, street-level diversity is a common feature of globalisation, where mass migration and the transnational flow of capital, goods and ideas have birthed a multicultural society. Where once Britain's port cities became permanent stopping places for the men who often quite literally manned the boiler-rooms of Empire, creating incubator-hubs for a new type of society in the docklands of Cardiff and Liverpool, now there are Welsh people with roots in places right around the globe. And while Betty Campbell’s beloved Butetown has become something of a meme for the microcosmopolitanism of Wales, I want to explore instead the place whose iconic Transporter Bridge stood in for Cardiff’s docklands in the opening credits to *Tiger Bay* (1959) starring Hayley Mills.

Pillgwenlly in Newport shares the longevity of its multiethnic, multilingual community with docks towns across Britain, and census data confirms the district as among Wales’s most diverse. While just five per cent of the population of the nation as a whole is from a Black, Asian or ethnic minority background, this rises to twelve per cent in Newport (the highest figure in the country outside of Cardiff). In Pillgwenlly, the percentage split between white and non-white communities is almost exactly fifty-fifty, and the pie chart for religion is also pretty evenly split – into thirds. The 2021 census shows 2,785 Christians and 2,700 Muslims in the area, with just over 2,000 reporting ‘no religion’. The remainder are a few small communities, some potentially small enough to denote families: 87 Hindus, 26 Sikhs, 22 Buddhists and just two Jews.

But even these specific figures that begin to give a snapshot of the area disguise the microcosmopolitanism of Pillgwenlly. Exactly two thirds of Pill residents were born in the UK, but this certainly cannot be mapped onto what we know about race or ethnicity in an area that is home to some of Wales’s most significant non-white communities. According to the 2021 census, there were 4,073 White people in Pill. We know that 911 people in Pill were born in member states of the European Union, and a further 43 in ‘Europe (Other)’, but the micro-level data detailing these communities is missing. Likewise the 2,341 ‘Asian’, 570 ‘Black’ and 459 ‘Arab’ people in the area. Such broad categories are useless for a ‘microcosmopolitan’ study. I am left looking at the flags on the mural in Temple Street and advertisements on the shutters of shops like Clare Foods – which promises goods for South Indian, Caribbean and Polish people, a breadth of produce that suggests other goods will almost certainly be available too. Street-level diversity in Wales cannot be understood through census data, nor the symbolic gestures of murals and statues. In order to be understood, microcosmopolitan Wales must be lived, as well as studied and performed. And so with Betty Campbell staring at my back, I walk toward the Great Western Railway.

On Platform 2 at Cardiff Central, the crowds are as mixed and multicultural as anywhere in Britain. Perhaps because it's the 10:18 to London Paddington, the demographic is skewed toward a younger, more middle-class crowd – but a quick, necessarily inaccurate visual survey of race and ethnicity ticks most of the boxes on the census.

On the train, I spot a man in a grey 'Yes Cymru' hoodie sitting at a table among a Muslim family spread across the aisle, and for the fifteen minutes it takes to arrive in Newport their conversation is eavesdropping gold. Like many of the best incidental conversations, it begins with a mishearing. The balding husband – who is, it transpires, from Saudi Arabia – tries to tell the Welsh independence supporter that he and his family are going to London to celebrate Eid. Until the poor man spells it out, his interlocutor keeps hearing 'eat', having been under a lifelong misunderstanding of the practice of fasting during Ramadan. Between ensuing exchanges about the health benefits of fasting and a plant-based diet – the Saudi's wife is a PhD student researching cardiovascular disease – we also learn that 'Yes Cymru' is 'half Irish, quarter Czechoslovakian and a quarter English, but born in Wales'. She has never heard of Pembrokeshire, where he is from, but recognises the man's accent as 'not very Welsh', a charge to which he is happy to plead guilty.

Hardly anyone alights at Newport, and I stop in the silver tunnel that snakes passengers across the tracks, making a couple of notes, already feeling the wind in my sails for what I am beginning to think of as a microcosmopolitan odyssey. In the overpass, large lettering states *This is Wales* and *Gwlad! Gwlad!* in the Cymru Wales Serif typeface commissioned by the Welsh Government to authenticate its public communications. The font draws on Wales's typographical heritage in texts as ancient as the thirteenth century *Red Book of Hergest* and the *Black Book of Carmarthen*, thought to be the earliest surviving manuscripts written entirely in Welsh. The branding exercise at Newport station was put in place ahead of the hosting of golf's Ryder Cup in the autumn of 2010, but like so much else in Wales's perennially neglected third city, it already looks faded.

Opposite Newport station the brand new clarity of Cardiff's Central Square is replaced by the confusion of The Cotton Club, a grand Victorian building displaying a three-storey advertisement for 'Mojo's Retro Bar'. *Viva la vida!* runs the Cuban-themed plug.

2-for-1 cocktails! Musica! Shisha! The microcosmopolitanism of Newport city centre seems, like its architecture, to be thrown together, uncertain; the fragile local economy keeps the place in a permanent state of insecurity. Everything is always closing down, or opening up. The Market has been redeveloped with a £6 million investment, but it's less than ten years since the £90 million shopping centre at Friar's Walk opened to great fanfare a hundred metres down the road. There, the flagship Debenhams store has closed and the place already seems to have expired its potential.

The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated the decline of the high street, which had already been decimated by the rise first of the out-of-town retail park, and then by online shopping. The phenomenon is particularly acute in post-industrial towns, but Newport suffers the ignominy of having the most vacant retail units of any city centre in the UK. According to the Cities Outlook economic assessment in 2022, a third of Newport's shops are empty. Such a bleak economic situation only compounds the irony of the way the city's most beloved piece of public art was destroyed to make way for the new shops. The Chartist mural, comprised of 200,000 pieces of tile and glass was a mosaic designed by Kenneth Budd and created in 1978 to commemorate the Newport Rising of 4 November 1839, the only date on which Newport has ever flirted with the centre-stage of British history; scene of the last armed insurrection on mainland Britain. Pro-democracy campaigners from the industrial valleys surrounding the town poured into Newport that morning with the intention of freeing their fellow Chartists being held prisoner at the Westgate Hotel.

I walk quickly down Commercial Street, past the chain stores and the boarded shops into what I have begun to think of as the real microcosmopolitan Wales. I pass Sunbim Foods, an African and Caribbean food store and the Jamia Masjid Mosque, built in 1829, where a plain black banner flies from a flagpole shaped as the Hand of Fatima. I pass Amam Sushi and Golden Peri-Peri and a Yemeni restaurant advertising dishes I have never heard of, much less tried: chicken mendi, mekhbaza fish and haneeth meat. I arrive finally at Mariner's Green, where a man in an orange jacket is jet-washing the monument to Merchant Seamen that stands in the last place in Newport to have had an injection of regeneration cash.

I want to visit 155 Commercial Road, a three storey building in the heart of Pillgwenlly. Here, at Polska Zywnosc (a small convenience store specialising in food from Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Slovakia) we have all the ingredients for a story about this infamous thoroughfare, this denigrated district, and the experience of ethnic minority communities in Wales.

Like many of the buildings on this street, its crumbling parapet and dentilled cornices, decorative entablature and facade of ionic columns serves as a reminder of a bygone age, when this really was a commercial road. The street was built in 1810 to connect the town centre with the docks, and for more than a century its range of shops reflected the full range of human activity. Johns's Street Directory of 1897 lists 198 different trading establishments on Commercial Road, from tobacconists and temperance bars to watchmakers and wine merchants, from hatters and hosiers to fishmongers and funeral furnishers, from pawnbrokers and ships chandlers to refreshment houses and fancy drapers. Now the range has been reduced to kebab and fried chicken takeaways, international minimarts and barbershops, surrounded by the informal economies of drug dealing and prostitution, while the queue at the coin-operated launderette hints at a level of poverty here that places the ward consistently in the top ten most deprived Lower Layer Super Output Areas in Wales.

At number 155, half of the facade between the second and third floors is blanked out, with the only visible inscription 'Branch No.1', a remnant of the building's long time use as an outlet of the Co-operative Stores. The premises made the news in 2022, while trading as the generically named 'Food Store', one of four local shops closed down for three months as part of a trading standards crackdown on illegal tobacco, which accounts for an estimated 15 per cent of all tobacco sales in Wales – with a much higher prevalence in deprived communities like Pillgwenlly. And like the multiplicity of signage on the shopfront, where new names are simply placed over the old, reports about the raid peeled back layers of history, evoking memories for many of summer evenings half a century ago when 155 Commercial Road was the regular subject of police raids.

In the early 1970s, this was the Silver Sands, a place where music lovers from all backgrounds came to gather, to dance, to discover. For some, pressed together in the sweaty basement club below the dining room, this was a place to taste the exotic tang of a culture far removed from the grimy streets of post-industrial south Wales. For others, it was a home far from home. Named after a beach in Barbados, the Silver Sands was the first Caribbean eating house to open in Newport.

Set up by James and Eulah White, who had their living quarters on the top floor, the restaurant became a hub for families who had come to Wales to work during the post-war period now routinely referred to as 'the Windrush', the name of that iconic ship lending connotations of the hurtling dash to cash in the false promises of the Mother Country and the fresh breeze resuscitating an expiring culture. Mr White worked in the power station at the mouth of the river Usk, and Mrs White at the Llanwern steelworks to the east of the town. On returning from the works canteen, she continued to cook, piling the plates of her customers (rice and peas with saltfish, chicken or curried mutton). Her cow foot soup was renowned. And as the evenings wore on, patrons migrated to the basement where entry was just 50p, and, by all accounts, ganja came ready rolled in joints for a pound. Cans of Red Stripe and shots of Mount Gay flowed freely. Newportonians of a certain vintage still become misty-eyed when they recall an atmosphere filled with the aromas and sounds of islands on the opposite side of the Atlantic. This is where locals came to discover calypso, blue beat and rumba. Most famously of all, the Silver Sands is known as the place Joe Strummer discovered reggae.

As frontman of The Clash, Strummer (in his Newport days still known as John 'Woody' Mellor) was to become a driving force in the Rock Against Racism movement that placed music at the heart of the cultural integration that forged and shaped the culture of modern, multicultural Britain in the foundry of the bad old days of the 1970s. Strummer's band's unique blending of Jamaican reggae with angry English punk set a template for many genre-fusions that followed, bringing together young black and white audiences – and it all started at the Silver Sands.

But another part of the venue's legend is based on how short-lived it was. Police raids were a regular feature, and Eulah White's brother, Fred Isaacs – who had arrived in Newport aged thirteen, the day after the Windrush docked at Tilbury – believed the constant harassment was racially motivated. Frequent use of Alsatians to create alarm among patrons and staff support this claim. Isaacs urged his brother-in-law to take the story to the *Daily Mirror*, but in the climate of racial aggravation that pervaded Britain in the early 1970s, James White thought drawing attention to the actions of the police would make things worse. As Joe Strummer was later to sing on '(White Man) In Hammersmith Palais', '*The British Army is waiting out there / And it weighs fifteen hundred tons … White youth, black youth / Better find another solution.*' The Silver Sands finally closed after Mr White received a fine of £40 for selling alcohol after hours, an allegation Fred Isaacs maintained was untrue.

The friendly face of Isaacs now stares out from beneath a wide-brimmed hat in a mural painted in tribute to the Windrush Generation on the gable wall of number 152, across a patch of waste ground from Polska Zywnosc and the site of the Silver Sands. The Windrush has become shorthand for stories of immigration to Britain: a simple story of a boat unloading colonial subjects, turning up in the Mother Country to find life harder than they imagined. Hands folded over the curve of a walking stick, white beard belying youthful eyes, Fred Isaacs, who died in 2020, is depicted above the slogan 'Britain called, we answered', the word 'Windrush', and the date '22nd June 1948'.

Another mural by the same artist, Andy O'Rourke, was unveiled ahead of the revived Pill Carnival in August 2022. Depicting the 'United Cultures of Pillgwenlly', it features fifteen year old local girl Alexis Cuthbert, the Carnival Queen who led that year's parade, alongside the Black policeman Val Bryan, who had served the area as part of Gwent Police for nearly thirty years. The image also includes a carnival costume featuring a rainbow bedecked by the flags of all the countries represented at the local primary school. Such celebrations tend toward similar tropes: images of black femininity poised between beauty and power; splashes of colour that evoke the street art modes and styles of the majority world, and a falling back on flags. In constellation, flags sing of laudable notions: equality and harmony between the nations of the world. What they miss are the lived realities, and the complexities of identity fragmentation both here and elsewhere. They hide, like the official statistics, individual lives and experiences; 8,117 souls reside in Pillgwenlly, and they are not all policemen or carnival queens, and by no means did they all step off the Windrush.

Commercial Road barbershops do not only offer haircuts and beard trims; they offer a place for diasporic communities to recollect themselves, to gather, to make a life once again in a new place. Often open well into the hours of darkness, their windows reveal – like well-lit Edward Hopper paintings – intimate scenes of migrant life in Wales. But today is Eid, and so most are closed.

Of the two that are open, one is called, appropriately enough, All Nations Barbers. To get to it today I have to walk around two men, the word *Halal* emblazoned in white across grubby red polo shirts, as they unload a lorry full of carcasses, two whole animals at a time slung over broad shoulders. As I push at the door an African grandmother with close-cropped hair moves quickly to prevent the toddler in her charge from running out into the road. We both smile as I hold the door a moment to prevent the pink-hooded girl from escaping out onto the pavement. Another woman, with a bright red wig, looks up briefly from her phone, laughs, says something I don't quite catch in a strong Nigerian accent.

I take a seat in the waiting area, observing the unspoken protocol of the barbers by surveying the other customers surreptitiously to discern my place in the queue. Of course, we all know that the next time someone says 'Who's next please?' we will all feign indifference and a lack of attention before settling – apparently by accident – on the precise order by which we entered the premises.

I survey the barbers too. The youngest, hardly more than a teenager, I guess is Kurdish; his customer, who meets my gaze shyly via the mirror to pass an unspoken hello, almost certainly Ethiopian, like the detritus of a coffee ceremony left on the side table next to me: a traditional *jebena* coffee-pot stuffed with its horsehair filter and six used cups. Next to that a couple of big bags of Mokhtar's Milky Cow luxury halal fudge spill out across the table and onto the wood-effect laminate floor.

In Ethiopia and Eritrea, the coffee ceremony is a thrice-daily ritual that lies at the heart of notions around womanhood, family and hospitality. In Eritrea and the northern regions of Ethiopia, the spout of the *jebena* is set at a 45-degree angle while further south it has a spout more like a teapot. In *The Comforts of Coffee: The Role of the Coffee Ceremony in Ethiopians' Efforts to Cope with Social Upheaval during the Derg Regime (1974–1991)*, Dahay Daniel writes: 'Arguably the most important feature of the ceremony is the *jebena*, the coffee pot … made from clay [it] has a round bottom with a narrow spout and a handle on the side. Its shape and design are reflective of the ethnic identity of the host, whether it has a large bottom or an additional spout to pour out the coffee. While certain elements of the coffee ceremony can be tweaked, modernised or all together left out, the *jebena* has remained the centrepiece throughout Ethiopia and abroad.'

There are three cafes and restaurants catering to the Ethiopian and Eritrean diaspora on Commercial Road. The first of these, the Habesha Restaurant – 'Habesha' being derived from the Arabic word for Abyssinia – is where I spent some Friday and Saturday nights drinking cold St George beer and sharing *injera* with friends, learning the difference between *tibs* (spicy stir-fried beef) and *doro wot* (spicy chicken stew) and listening to stories of escape from Eritrea, a country ranked above only North Korea by Reporters Without Borders, and the intricacies of the Oromo liberation struggle in Ethiopia, a country which – far from its fame as the only African nation never to have been colonised by Europeans – has its own long history of subjugating many of the more than eighty ethnic groups which comprise its rapidly expanding population of 120 million. Down the road at Bana, there is a now a much larger dining room, an expanded menu featuring a variety of rice-based dishes as well as *injera*, and a bar-room at the back where people – mainly men – from many nationalities gather to drink and play pool. And across the road, just a few doors down from where the Silver Sands once played host to cultural fusion over food and music, the Asmara Cafe – named after the capital city of Eritrea – performs the same role that countless other shops and cafes and restaurants have done, and continue to do, for communities who have come to Newport from all over the world, providing a little piece of home from home.

This attention to what we might call *internal difference* or microcosmopolitan detail is vital when we consider that not always but often migrants belong to minority communities in their countries of origin. What might look to the casual customer of the All Nations Barbers like a tray of dirty dishes that needs clearing away can be a signifier – like a teapot in Patagonia – of home and roots, a symbol that one belongs to somewhere. When people seeking asylum arrive elsewhere and are asked by nation states to state their nationality, the hegemony of macrocosmic worldviews often places them beneath flags under which they feel no allegiance. In many cases they symbolise the regimes that persecuted them and forced them to flee in the first place. And in Wales, we have direct means to understand this: a Welsh person undergoing immigration processes in any other country would be forced to write 'United Kingdom' beneath country of origin; there would be no opportunity to write 'Wales', much less 'Cymru'. Our passports have morphed from mauve to midnight blue as a result of Brexit, but for those of us whose heart-allegiance is to Wales, such documents continue to be felt as impositions of the state within whose borders we just happened to have been born.

And just as we understand that the mix of cultures represented on Commercial Road is one unique microscale part of the patchwork that comprises modern Wales, we must also resist monocultural depictions of the Other. This is the experience of many people living on and around Commercial Road: Alevis from Turkey, Hawramis from Iraq and Ahwazis from Iran; Oromos and Tigrayans from Ethiopia; Tamils from Sri Lanka; Roma from Slovakia. As my thoughts drift from the *jebena* to wondering where the Kurdish boy might fit on the language continuum of that vast geo-cultural region spanning the four nation states of Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran, Yousaf walks in.

I know I know him from somewhere, and each of us takes a minute or so to place the other. He used to cut my hair in a different shop, in a different area of the city, where the predominant ethnic minority groups are Bengali and Turkish-Kurdish and Kurds from Northern Iraq.

'How are you?' he says. 'How is your family?' These are the things that bring us together, across the barbed-wire borders of background and life experience. His kids are eleven and nine; mine are seven, four and one. It takes a while to give an update. Then I remember to wish him *Eid Mubarak*.

This is the way in which we intersect and interact in microcosmopolitan Wales, the way migrations from the so-called arc of instability – across the Sahel through the Horn of Africa and into the Fertile Crescent – have created a new type of community, an All Nations Barbers of the mind.

'It's all gone crazy again, back home?' I prompt gently, knowing Yousaf is from Khartoum, and that once again there is a power struggle between the generals for control, and that yet another generation of refugees from the country has already been created.

'Very crazy,' he says, and immediately ups the ante. 'I think World War III is coming.' Yousaf buzzes the clippers behind my ears and says something about the International Criminal Court. 'Boko Haram are in our country now.' There is a television somewhere in the corner, set to a music channel. I miss the nuances of his political analysis amid the lazy Bajan drawl of Rihanna. *Nuh body touch me, you nuh righteous / Nuh badda text me in a crisis*. 'Look at China and Taiwan, look at Russia and Ukraine,' he says. Then the clippers stop and he takes a call. 'Okay brother, I'm with a customer. I call you back in two minutes, please.'

Such interruptions are completely normal in places like All Nations. The next comes when another Sudanese brother bursts into the shop and the two men exchange fist bumps and quick words in what I assume is Central Sudanese Arabic, one of the country's many dialects that sounds to my untrained ear almost nothing like the Arabic spoken across the Middle East and Maghreb. Afterwards Yousaf picks up the scissors and explains that the man is 'very, very lucky'. He was supposed to have returned to Sudan to spend Eid with his family, but decided to stopover to see Paris. Whilst in France, the airport was blown up in Khartoum. 'Many people went home to see their families for Eid. Now they are stuck in Sudan.'

'And many of them were refugees in the first place?' I ask, knowing the answer.

'Yes,' says Yousaf, vigorously chopping at my fringe.

I leave the shop thinking about the fact that 1,330 people in Pill – 16 per cent of the district's inhabitants – were born in Africa. Not second generation immigrants like the toddler in the doorway, born in the Royal Gwent Hospital. Some are born in countries that are former British colonies, offering a coherent if complex narrative as to how they have ended up in Wales. But hundreds are from countries with no strong historical ties to Britain.

It's a thought immediately made concrete as I step onto the littered pavement and receive a text message from a friend. With a string of answered prayer emojis, his words appear out of the ether as I use my phone to check the time: 'Finally I received my BRP!' This is the breakthrough every asylum seeker is waiting for – the arrival of a biometric residence permit, a credit card sized piece of plastic that says you can stay. I text back to tell him that I am in Newport and free if he wants to meet to celebrate: 'I'm outside Asmara.' A message comes back that he's on his way, and so I enter the 'Cafe and Restaurant' beneath the bright green livery of its signage.

After the longevity of places like the Co-operative Branch No.1, I wonder how many exiles and expatriates, how many dissidents and different diasporic communities have passed through this short row of shops, each new wave of immigrants changing and repainting the signs above the doors. Once the Silver Sands hosted the Caribbean community that arrived after the Windrush. Now the New Seasons Pentecostal Church a little further up the road is the last remnant of that generation. We nearly sourced the catering for our wedding in the church basement where a weekly luncheon club for Caribbean elders is still hosted ('We do a lot of funeral!' said Sister Radway when we asked if the church ladies had catered for many weddings before). Subsequent generations have moved on, married locals – or people like me, incomers to Wales from Liverpudlian Irish stock – and moved out to the council estates and the suburbs, or to other cities. Pill has become a place where people live for a lifetime or move onwards and upwards as soon as they can.

Gameda arrives and shows me his precious piece of plastic, a photograph and bare identity factfile disguising the complexity of his personal history and the tribal and national sagas that sit behind it. As we sip the strong, sweet Yirgacheffe coffee fresh from the *jebena* he tells me that his grandfather had owned a coffee plantation in the west of Ethiopia. Through the wide window we watch the flow of human traffic: passing a dreadlocked man in a red *Big Issue* tabard and a wizened white man collecting cigarette butts from the gutter are families making their way to Eid celebrations, a Nigerian man in a *kufi* hat and *boubou* robe and a Bengali family in *shalwar kameez*, an English word combination with etymological origins in borrowings from Urdu during the period of the British Raj. Meanwhile, across the road a woman who I imagine might be one of the more than six hundred people in Pillgwenlly who ticked 'Mixed/multiple' or 'Other ethnic group' on the census holds her phone to her ear with a single hunched shoulder and issues forth an endless diatribe in the local accent.

Gameda tells me his father had been Muslim, a fact that surprises me given I only know about his own devout Christian faith, expressed exuberantly through worship at a warehouse in the shadow of the Transporter Bridge, where Sunday services last for hours and are accompanied by laser lights, full band and a film crew. 'My mother wept when she found out,' he says. Gameda's father had managed to keep his religion a secret until after the wedding ceremony, and now she found out: 'Her new husband and his whole family were Muslim! In those days conversions were common: people didn't have the Bible or the Qu'ran, so they didn't understand their faith. It was just a culture, rules and rituals,' he explains. His plantation-owning grandfather soon made sure that a swift conversion followed. Later, after being introduced to the Bible by the heirs of Lutheran missionaries, both his parents swapped ancient Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity for contemporary Pentecostalism.

Sitting in Asmara Cafe and thinking about the Ummah and the Kingdom of God and how the histories of elsewhere have ended up in Wales, it strikes me that life ensues in the cracks between ideologies and institutions and identities. In our fast-paced media always looking for a cheap and nasty headline, Pillgwenlly is just poverty and prostitution. Stories about the individuals who live here are few, and rarely is relevant context and nuance provided to allow readers understanding of the complex issues that lead to people being on the move, migrating between nations and belief systems and identities. Multiplicity is everywhere. And we who understand phrases like *Cymry Cymraeg* and Welsh Wales; the difference between *llaeth* and *llefrith*; between the Lion and the Unicorn and *y ddraig goch* – should be among the first to recognise the microcosmoplitanism inherent in those who have come here from the confluence of the Nile or the Zagros Mountains or the Great Rift Valley.

Early evening, arriving back in the capital, the driver's tannoy apology is issued not in Welsh but in imperfect English: *apologies for being late for Cardiff for quite a bit of minutes*. As I pass her statue again on my way to the bus, I think about books piled beneath Betty Campbell: a short canon of the global Black diaspora, set in bronze in Cardiff's Central Square. Black History is more than *I Have A Dream*, the Montgomery bus boycott and the end of apartheid. Black History is Welsh history – with long and complex roots – but the exploration of its richness has hardly begun.

One day there might be a mural featuring the All Nations Barbers, nostalgic articles recalling the days of the Asmara Cafe, even a statue of Yousaf. Tomorrow’s Welsh history is being written today in places like Pillgwenlly.

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Part One

Re-examining History and Heritage

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CHAPTER 1

A Deliberately Forgotten History? Wales and Imperialism in Modern History Writing

Rhys Owens

Introduction

There has never been a more intellectually invigorating time to study Welsh history. A new generation of Welsh historians unshackled from the cliches of twentieth-century Welsh history writing, with its laser focus on economics, class relations, and industrial politics, have broken out of this insularity to globalise the Welsh experience across borders and disciplines. The history of Wales is no longer one of a small, colonised semi-nation shaped by the forces of English and global capitalism and industrialisation, proceeding a massive gap that pops up to catch its breath at the Acts of Union before resurfacing in a 'glorious' medieval past of hero kings and revolutionaries. Over the past few decades Welsh history writing has moved beyond its traditional focus and not only seeks to capture the hitherto disdained cultural and social aspects of Wales's past, but also to define its place in a transnational story that has too often been ignored through an anxious inward gaze.

For a country that has for most of its modern existence defined itself through its place within the United Kingdom, this inevitably forces it to stare its imperial past dead in the face. Global and transnational British history is not purely defined through its empire- international relations, non-imperial migration and the history of ideas all provide fertile grounds for study outside the immediate context of empire, though the means of dragging these topics back into the imperial sphere is obvious. However, one would be hard-pressed to ignore imperialism's tendril reach throughout the history of a United Kingdom which as recently as two and a half decades ago was handing back a far-flung corner of its empire to an emerging superpower of the twenty-first century. Empire also influences beyond its formal unit, with the British Empire achieving 'globality' much more through its informal economic and cultural dominance rather than simply its territorial extent. Modern confident Wales, for so long insular in its history and keen to forge a progressive future for itself either within or without the United Kingdom, has not often been keen to meet this imperial past's steely gaze. It sits uncomfortably with the rhetoric of grievance, of loss, of oppression which the modern Welsh, in varying degrees of seriousness, tend to characterise their relationship with England. It has also not sat comfortably with the traditional focus on Welsh historians. However, Wales was not only an integral part of this imperial metropole, but its people, for the most part, identified with and celebrated it, incorporating it as a crucial part of their national identity.[1] It is this aspect of Wales's imperial story which modern Welsh history writing is beginning to capture, challenging not only an academic status quo, but formulations of what it means to be Welsh which are tightly cherished and run deep.

In 2011, as part of Huw Bowen's subject-defining volume on *Wales and the British Overseas Empire*, Neil Evans wrote a wonderfully thorough review of Welsh history writing on the empire that traced its development. Within the context of its 'fragmented' and 'rhetorical' nature, Evans traced it from a late nineteenth/early twentieth century appraisal of Welsh contributions to the imperial project (Owen M. Edwards, Llewellyn Williams), through to mid/late century economics of 'Imperial South Wales' (Gwyn A. Williams), and finishing with the beginning of trends to globalise Welsh history and bring the empire back into a broader transnational perspective (Aled Jones, Bill Jones).[2] Evans's overview still stands strongly as a gateway into the field, and it is not the intention here to rehash what has already been done. Instead, we will focus on how Wales and imperialism as a historical subject has developed in recent years, evaluate some of the standout examples, and explore how modern scholarship is challenging some of the more ingrained attitudes towards Wales's place in the United Kingdom and its role in a global, long-lasting and oppressive British Empire.

Global and Imperial History

The globalisation of Welsh history writing has been encouraged by favourable developments in general imperial history. Evans also discussed these developments in his article, tracing changes from the first generation of Liberal constitutional historians from the 1890s into the economic/political, metropole/periphery theories of Robinson and Gallagher and D. K. Fieldhouse after the Second World War, into the prominence of area studies near the end of the century.[3] The most significant development in imperial history over the course of the twentieth century was this move away from grand holistic theories which sought to assign the cause of imperial expansion to either periphery (Robinson/Gallagher) or metropole (Cain/Hopkins),[4] towards a more fragmented, though certainly more detailed, thematic or geographically specific focus. These developments were inspired by the New Imperial History of the 1980s and 1990s, driven by scholars such as Catherine Hall, who stopped theorising empire in terms of dichotomies – metropole/periphery, colonised/colonizer – which presented empire in a manner which assigned and removed agency, and began thinking about imperial relationships in terms of a dynamic spatial network in which Britain and its colonies were co-constitutive and interconnected.[5] These works drew upon the earlier 'orientalist' theories of Edward Said, but moved beyond Said's focus on how the West conceptualised and perceived the East and drew out how the two were mutually influenced by their relationship.[6] More traditional grander narrative histories were, and are, still being produced. Cain and Hopkins's pronouncements on imperial expansion being driven by 'gentlemanly capitalists' working primarily in finance in the Southeast of England seeking external avenues for their investments appeared from the end of the 1980s and through the 1990s,[7] and John Darwin's definitive work on imperial expansion as the culmination of 'bridgeheads', the influence of powerful and often contradictory pressure groups with specific imperial interests upon the government of the day, appeared in 1997 and several subsequent works into the twenty-first century.[8]

However, for the most part, imperial history has splintered into thematic studies across time and space. Prominent examples of this turn are Ronald Hyam's work on sexuality and empire from 1991,[9] Jane Samson's characterisation of imperialism in primarily racial terms from 2005,[10] and the greater appreciation of the importance of gender across imperial themes as highlighted by Rosalind O'Hanlon and Claire Midgley in the late 1990s.[11] The debates around imperial popular culture between John M. MacKenzie and Bernard Porter from the 1980s are well-known, the former arguing for the central importance of imperialism in British popular culture as varied as music, literature, art and consumer culture,[12] with the latter insisting that the British working class did not engage with and cared little for empire.[13] More recently, these developments in empire as an interconnected spatial network has combined with postcolonial theory which seeks to analyse the continuing structural legacies of colonial systems in society, culture, politics and the law, among other areas. Ironically, though academically invigoratingly, this has led to a reemergence of grander holistic works grounded within spatial interconnectedness and postcoloniality, inspired by contemporary social movements such as Black Lives Matter and LGBTQ+ liberation campaigns. Works such as Akala's *Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire*, Priyamvada Gopal's *Insurgent Empire: Anticolonial Resistance and British Dissent* and Sathnam Sanghera's *Empireland: How Imperialism has Shaped Modern Britain*, have all sought to highlight the continuing influence of imperialism and imperial mindsets in the world around us rooted in a powerful understanding of the multifaceted nature of empires.[14] The last twenty years have seen a much greater alignment between the previously underdeveloped method and the professional discipline.

A New Welsh History

What has all this meant for Welsh imperial history? The impact of spatial connectedness and postcolonialism has been slower to take hold here. Right up to the end of the twentieth century Welsh history remained largely uninterested in the wider world, let alone the British Empire. Kenneth O. Morgan's magisterial history of Wales between 1880–1980 covering the 'rebirth' of Welsh nationhood barely mentioned the empire except in the context of political debates during the Liberal Ascendency and to highlight Welsh jingoist support for the South African War (1899–1902).[15] John Davies's much more far-reaching history of Wales from prehistoric times to the age of devolution has even less to say about imperialism, merely alluding to some of the intellectual discussions which lingered on Welsh contributions to the empire during the nineteenth century. Mentioning Matthew Arnold's analysis of 'Celtic imagination', Davies primarily highlights these to dismiss them as banal.[16] Imperial history likewise has paid next to zero attention to Wales. David Gilmour's recent work on the British in India takes a few lines to mention that Welsh missionaries existed,[17] and the *Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire* contains a small table on Welsh migration estimates.[18] These are typical approaches to Wales which form little more than passing references where they exist at all. However, the twenty-first century did herald the first signs of a history that sought to capture the contours of a 'Welsh world'.

The first major attempt to do this was Aled Jones and Bill Jones's exploratory essay of 2003, which sought to examine how the Welsh imperial diaspora understood and interpreted the colonial environment. Drawing upon Aled Jones's work on Welsh missionaries in India and Bill Jones's work on Welsh migrants on the Australian goldfields, the essay argued that Welsh colonial actors transplanted their Welsh language and nonconformist faith into their new environment in order to control and tame it. Both examples utilised the spatial connectedness of empire to highlight how domestic and colonial experiences interacted and influenced each other, in terms of constructed meanings of Welshness. In India, Welsh missionaries preserved their essential Welshness to separate themselves from the 'heathen', 'primitive' other and pursue cultural imperialism in the form of Christianisation. In Australia, Welsh communities maintained the trappings of their Welsh identity through chapels, eisteddfodau, Welsh choirs and a rampant Welsh-language press, among other things, within an integrationist attitude that over time created Australians. The main value of this work was to demonstrate that Welshness had a global dimension, could be transplanted into other spaces, and could form a spatial network through which Welsh and colonial spaces could interact. Jones and Jones were the first to attempt to marshal Welsh imperial history in an overall framework, and though much of their work was speculative and based upon only two case studies, they provided an effective means through which future historians could assess the global Welsh.[19]

Jones and Jones were piecing together threads of scholarship which had developed out of the late twentieth century fad for area studies. While Welsh imperial history in a holistic sense only started to get going after Jones and Jones's intervention in 2003, most studies had looked at the Welsh within certain geographic areas. Bill Jones was not the only scholar to track the history of the Welsh in Australia. In 2006, Robert Llewellyn Tyler explored the link between Welsh cultural identity and occupational mobility in Ballarat, the centre of Welsh migration on the Victorian goldfields. Tyler found that as the Welsh moved away from traditional mining industries and into more diverse white-collar professions after the initial generation of migration, they tended to become more distant from their cultural heritage and less reliant on a close-knit, Welsh-speaking, nonconformist industrial community.[20] Though more accurately described as within the anglosphere than being part of the British Empire, Tyler draws similar conclusions from the history of the Welsh in steel producing regions of Pennsylvania, such as Scranton, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Through generational social mobility, the Welsh of Scranton moved out of heavy industry which nurtured Welsh cultural identity and into white-collar professions which nurtured integration and created Americans of Welsh heritage, rather than Welsh Americans.[21] This chimes with the conclusions of Gethin Matthews, whose own study of the wider Welsh in America argued that Welsh culture was maintained only in remote parts of the American countryside,[22] and Ronald Lewis, whose work focused on the assimilation of Welsh American coalmining communities.[23]

Heather Hughes has examined the Welsh experience in South Africa and highlighted an inescapable feature of the Welsh colonial story – race. According to Hughes, the Welsh transplanted their cultural norms to the South African environment in a similar way to the Australian, establishing chapels, Cambrian societies based in major cities such as Cape Town and Durban, and festivals such as the Gymanfa Ganu and eisteddfodau, the latter being appropriated into a national festival which still exists today, celebrating the diversity of South African culture. However, Hughes argued that the Welsh in South Africa, due to the divisive nature of the white demographic landscape, tended to highlight their British identity, especially during the South African War. Post-hostilities, and while South Africa was being developed into a union under Afrikaner and white minority control, Welsh identity melded into racial politics to emphasise the importance of a white South Africa, buoyed further by the white supremacy of the trade union movement and the South African Labour Party, in which the Welsh were active. South Africa provides another example of Welsh cultural distinctiveness fading into a new integrationist colonial identity, the interplay of spatiality, and evidence that the Welsh were not free from the racial politics of the empire.[24]

Stepping once again outside the formal territories of the British Empire, though remaining very much within the realms of Welsh coloniality, scholarship on Y Wladfa, the Welsh colony in Chubut, Patagonia, has provided another space in which Wales's relationship with imperialism can be assessed. Y Wladfa is unique in that it provides the only direct example of Welsh colonisation of an overseas territory (separate from the participation of Welsh people in British colonisation) and has sometimes been portrayed as something different to imperialism due to its focus on cultural maintenance (an assessment that begs the question what proponents believed early migrants to other settler colonies, such as America and Canada, were doing). Patagonia was not the first attempt at establishing a 'Welsh colony'. As far back as the early 1600s, Welsh settlers attempted to form such a colony in Newfoundland, with similar failed attempts with Beulah, Pennsylvania, under the auspices of Morgan John Rhys, and Samuel Roberts in Tennessee. As well as envisioned utopias for Welsh dissenters, such endeavours were inspired by the legend of Prince Madoc, an almost certainly mythical twelfth-century prince who supposedly discovered America and established a Welsh-speaking 'tribe'. The legend inspired many adventurers to attempt to find these Welsh-speaking descendants,[25] as well as providing a helpful 'historical' claim to British designs on the continent.[26]

Early works on Welsh Patagonia, such as that by R. Bryn Williams in 1962, took a celebratory approach to the Welsh presence.[27] However, the recent work of Lucy Taylor has been critical in understanding the concept of 'colonised colonisers', groups who themselves experience some of the trappings of colonisation and external dominance themselves going out into the world to colonise others, a concept also useful when looking at Welsh missionaries in India. Taylor argues that the Welsh self-consciously asserted themselves as colonisers over the indigenous population and possessed a settler-colonial mentality.[28] The work of Trevor Harris has countered the characterisation of Y Wladfa as a straightforward rejection of the British Empire or the idea of a Welsh-British identity. Harris has argued that over the course of the late nineteenth century and up to the First World War, British imperial identity in Y Wladfa was bolstered by the increasing encroachment and assertiveness of the centralising Argentine state, which sought to create Argentinians rather than tolerating autonomous groups in its remote reaches. By the 1910s, Welsh Patagonians were increasingly likely to view their future and cultural identity as better secured within the British Empire, in places like Canada, Australia, or indeed back in Wales, rather than at the mercy of the Argentine state, and expressed their broader British identity through jingoistic support for the war effort from 1914.[29]

Studies of Y Wladfa go beyond mere area studies and begin to break down a sense of Welsh coloniality, or indeed a sophisticated idea of Welsh imperialism. In many ways it provided the link into the twenty-first century which sought to go beyond the idea of the Welsh as a people who went here and there and indeed break down their specific relationship with the British Empire, as colonisers, agents, rulers and people to whom the empire formed a critical part of their identity. Some good scholarship in the latter area can be seen in the work of Huw Pryce and Paul O'Leary, both of whom have shown how a desire to rebuild the Welsh reputation in the wake of the Blue Books controversy led to a commitment to and identification with British imperial power as an essential aspect of Welshness.[30] However, following Jones and Jones's initial exploration in 2003, the next major attempt to situation the Welsh and Welshness in the colonial environment came with Huw Bowen's edited volume on *Wales and the British Overseas Empire: Interactions and Influences, 1650–1830.*

This volume, though naturally fragmented, sought to bring together Welsh imperial scholarship primarily of the eighteenth century and was instrumental in demonstrating a sense of Welshness amongst those who served in the empire. Bowen's contributions, for example, analyse Welsh participation in the East India Company and argues that the Welsh were present throughout the ranks of the organisation, though in significantly smaller numbers to other British nationalities and with a hazy dividing line between English and Welsh identities.[31] Andrew MacKillop's article builds upon this, arguing that the Welsh did possess a distinct sense of themselves, evidenced through Welsh patronage networks both at home, which helped secure Company employment, but also in Asia where Welsh networks served functional and bureaucratic purposes.[32] Martyn J. Powell's contribution tends towards the same themes as the work of Pryce and O'Leary, arguing that the Welsh in Wales possessed a strong imperial mentality which expressed itself through loyalty to the centre and, at times, a distinctly anti-Irish attitude.[33]

There has, therefore, been a significant trend towards the global in Welsh history writing that not only captures the empire as a major aspect of the Welsh domestic experience between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries, but also seeks to examine the interconnectedness of Wales and the empire and their mutual impacts. Reflective of a turn in imperial history writing that establishes the fluidity of imperial relations and the importance of integrating metropolitan and peripheral histories, as well as breaking free of other dichotomous definitions and disciplines, Welsh history is beginning to understand not only global impacts upon Wales, but Wales's impact on the global, especially within the realms of an imperial history which too often has been dismissed as 'English'. The recent work of Louise Miskell and Chris Evans on the global history of the Swansea copper industry is just one recent example.[34] The remainder of this article will explore a case study which demonstrates many of these principles and incorporates Wales as an integral part of the historical reality of the British Empire. The Welsh were present in India throughout its existence as a British colony and engaged enthusiastically in its rule. Through this example, we can see the spatial connectedness of Wales and India and the importance of the empire within Welsh history.

Wales and India: A Study in Welsh Imperialism

The traditional lack of interest in the imperial dimensions of Welsh history over time entered into the Welsh psyche and initiated a somewhat deliberate forgetfulness. To many in modern Wales empire was an English adventure carried out by English imperialists, with the epithet of 'British' simply an example of how many use the term interchangeably with the former. If anything, Wales was a victim of this imperialism, England's first colony, with its relevance to Wales only going so far as a perception that England 'suppressed' Welsh culture and language. Not only is this conception ahistorical, but it completely misunderstands the nature of Welsh identity, especially from the middle of the nineteenth century and through into the twentieth. The association of the empire with Welsh identity has a long history, was intimately tied up with Wales's integrationist relationship with England, and by the nineteenth century had developed into a theory of Wales which saw the Acts of Union as the beginning of a long and complementary relationship which brought Wales into the heart of a powerful and beneficial state.[35] This process was given added impetus by what has become known as the Treachery of the Blue Books, a report into the state of education in Wales which, among many other pronouncements, declared the Welsh to be primitive and immoral, held back by their backward language and permissive nonconformist faith. Over the following decades there was a concerted effort to make the Welsh 'respectable', not by becoming more English, but by asserting the moral rectitude of Welshness which included as its central tenets nonconformist Christianity and the Welsh language. Alongside this was a claim to Britishness, to the modernity that represented, and to a stake in its global prestige. The greatest expression of that prestige was the empire, and the Welsh, in laying claim to their overall Britishness and hence respectability, developed an imperialism which not only declared deep loyalty to that empire and the monarchs who sat as its head, but a peculiar Welsh usefulness which sought to present the Welsh as important contributors to its maintenance.[36] With India we can assess a clear example of these developments.

The Welsh connection with India is as old as the association of the East India Company. Huw Bowen has shown how the Welsh occupied roles at all levels of the Company,[37] including the American-Welsh administrator Elihu Yale who served as President of the Company at Madras between 1687–92. Into the period of Crown Rule from 1858, Welsh people continued to occupy senior positions in the administration, from Sir Bartle Frere who served as Governor of Bombay in the 1860s to Sir Evan Meredith Jenkins who was the last British governor of the Punjab between 1946–7. It is this later period of colonial rule, from 1858–1947, that we can see most clearly how British imperialism in India impacted on the identity of the Welsh and developed a unique perception of their imperial role.

The Welsh press maintained a keen focus on imperial matters, both in the Welsh and English language, though there was a greater output from the latter. Much of this focus was local interest- local newspapers following individuals from their locale who were making their careers and lives in India. These ranged from an understandable interest in the activities of Welsh missionaries, especially in the northeast of India where the Welsh mission was prevalent and successful, to the movements of industrial workers and merchants, right through to the appointment of Welsh people to lofty positions within the civil service. In 1918, the Welsh-language paper *Y Drych* carried an article which followed the medical missionary Dr Harriet Davies who was working among Welsh soldiers in Kirkee, Poona.[38] In 1923, the *Western Mail* reported on Welsh metal-workers being employed in Golmuri, Bengal to set up a tin-plate factory.[39] There were several senior members of the Indian administration which the press also followed with interest. Among these were Finance Member of the Executive Council Sir Archibald Rowlands, a Welsh-speaker and prominent member of the Delhi Welsh Society, the Calcutta barrister and member of the Viceroy's Council Sir Griffith Evans, another Welsh-speaker from Aberystwyth, and the Cardigan-born Sir Lawrence Jenkins who served as respectively as the Chief Justice of the Bombay and Calcutta High Courts. The Welsh press followed their careers with more than a little pride at this evidence of Welsh imperial involvement.[40]

But this interest went beyond tracing the careers of Welsh imperialists and expressing pride at their presence. The Welsh press, seeking to connect Welshness to this powerful expression of global Britishness, constructed a specifically Welsh brand of British imperialism that sought to emphasise the value Welsh people brought to empire-building. This value was based on two central facets crucial to Welsh identity in the wake of the Blue Books – the Welsh language and nonconformism- as well as a number of more vague characteristics such as imagination, creativity and adventurism.

In 1901, *The Weekly News and Visitors' Chronicle* stated:

> The English people, instead of looking at the large number of people who already spoke English, were inclined to be like Ahab looking upon Naboth's little vineyard. They made themselves unhappy in looking at the people who insisted upon speaking a language other than English, such as the numerous nations within the Empire … and the Welsh in Wales. The way to make the people loyal was not to force the English language upon them. That was United Wales's lesson to the Empire.[41]

Similarly, the *Western Mail* from 1899, reporting on the comments of the Calcutta barrister Sir Griffith Evans at the Calcutta St David's Day dinner, quoted:

> There was in Wales right down to the labouring man, the particle of divine breath … not to be found in places like Berkshire, where they got the pure, unadulterated Saxon … whereas among the working men of Wales they were full of ideas of another life, could fling hundreds of texts of scripture at one, and discuss predestination and other theological problems, the Berkshire peasants, as a rule, had no idea whatever beyond the next meal. No doubt, the Saxons were a powerful people … but he ventured to think that the Welsh gave the spiritual side.[42]

Taken together, these articles deal with a number of important themes in regard to the Welsh relationship with imperialism. In the first instance, there was a specific, if sometimes vague, Welsh contribution to the empire that was critical to its expansion and maintenance. Secondly, that the Welsh had a greater understanding of colonial peoples through certain shared experiences, namely the struggle for recognition of language rights. By this reckoning, Wales, due to its experience of the encroachment of the English language, could sympathise with other people who felt culturally threatened by the British Empire. Lastly, the Welsh were a deeply religious and spiritual people, bolstered by their commitment to nonconformism, which provided a moral approach to empire which was lacking among the English – a race supposedly notable for their strength and power.

The Welsh press throughout this period promoted the idea of a distinctly Welsh approach to imperialism based upon faith and language which amounted to a greater understanding of colonial people and a more compassionate approach to their governance. As early as 1866, *Seren Cymru* was publishing a letter from Calcutta Baptist missionary Thomas Evans who argued that Welsh missionaries were better than English ones as they could learn languages the latter found impossible.[43] These ideas were still being expounded sixty years later when, in 1926, the journalist and Welsh revivalist Sir Vincent Evans explicitly linked Welsh language ability with success in India, listing prominent Welsh-speaking officials such as the aforementioned Sir Lawrence Jenkins.[44] Looking at faith, Welsh association with imperialism in India was intimately connected with the missionary movement as the most prominent example of Welsh participation in the empire. It is clear to see, therefore, how Welsh imperialism could become associated with the idea of a moral force within the empire, not so much conquering indigenous populations but saving them from heathenism. In 1903, *The Montgomeryshire Express* reported the comments of the missionary and temperance campaigner A. E. Goodwin at the Calcutta St David's Day dinner:

> Mr A. E. Goodwin … said that not long ago a charge had been made that the attitude of English ladies in India was one of cynical indifference to the people around them. That was not true of Welsh ladies in India. Anyone visiting the Women's Friendly Society's headquarters must be struck by the amount of work done there, and it was well known that that society owed its position largely to the energy and organising ability of Mrs Pugh (of the Evans-Pugh family).[45]

This captures not only the supposed greater moral rectitude of the Welsh in their dealings with indigenous peoples, but also directly takes on one of the greatest stings of the Blue Books – its suggestion that Welsh women were immoral and promiscuous. To Goodwin, and *The Montgomeryshire Express*, Welsh women were morally superior to their English counterparts and were thus important in promoting the welfare of Indians.

The obvious question proceeding from this press analysis is whether these ideas bore any reality to the situation on the ground in India. Was Welsh imperialism a living, breathing concept or was it journalistic rhetoric aimed primarily at a Welsh audience? The evidence suggests that there were some individual examples of adherence to the principle, but that ultimately the ideological story of the Welsh in India was commitment to the norms and values of socially hierarchical and racially segregated British Indian society.

British India was a heavily racialised society, based upon the racial superiority of its white European masters, and by and large the Welsh integrated into this society as self-conscious members of the ruling race. Despite the press rhetoric of a Welsh imperialism more understanding of indigenous peoples, individuals like Sir Griffith Evans demonstrate the shallowness of this conception. Despite his insistence in 1899 that the Welsh 'gave the spiritual side', Evans maintained racist stereotypes of Indians which held them as dangerous, indolent and violently charged by religious sentiment. In 1883, in the aftermath of the publication of the Ilbert Bill which sought to allow Indian judges to try Europeans in some cases, Evans led the vehement opposition of the Bengali planter community, writing in a letter to the senior administrator Sir Auckland Colvin that Indian judges would pursue 'vendettas' against the planters and that Europeans would never accept the changes.[46] In 1899, near the end of his life and the same year he delivered his comments about Welsh spirituality to the Calcutta Welsh, Evans addressed the students of the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, telling them that India's 'tribes' lacked the means to self-govern and that India would be turned over to 'warlike' and 'idolatrous' rulers without the British.[47] Another example can be seen in the civil servant Leonard Owen, who served in the United Provinces between the First and Second World War. Owen was a Welsh-speaking nonconformist Liberal from Bangor, and often criticised the class pretensions of British Indian society. However, he took a dim view of Indian aspirations, broke up protestors brutally with physical force, and boasted about driving 'troublemakers' many miles in the back of a van and dumping them on the roadside.[48] Both Evans and Owen demonstrate the ultimate integration of the Welsh into the racialised world of British India.

Other individuals suggest, however, that these ideas did have a limited impact. The High Court judge Sir Lawrence Jenkins believed the role of the Welsh in India to be that of a mediator between rulers and ruled, arguing this at a Calcutta St David's Day dinner in 1914.[49] Unlike Evans, Jenkins brought these ideas into his work life, advocating for the promotion of Indian judges over British and arguing that the judicial service would vastly improve under Indianisation. In a series of letters to the Secretary of State for India John Morley between 1909–10, Jenkins bemoans the racism of British Indian society, complains about the unequal administration of justice between British and Indian, and suggests that he had become very unpopular among the European community in Calcutta for acquitting Indians in a number of conspiracy cases for which he did not believe sufficient evidence existed.[50] Indeed, in 1918, after Jenkins's retirement, the judge Sidney Gordon Roberts was forced to apologise for describing him as a 'race traitor' in court.[51] Jenkins was not only out of kilter with general British society in India, but his views clearly originated from his belief that the Welsh could act as mediators between Indians and English, and despite difficulties he attempted to put these beliefs into practice within the judiciary.

Other limited, less prominent examples also exist. The Peshawar school teacher W. R. Owain-Jones, who was born in Manchester to Welsh-speaking parents from Anglesey, and who served in various roles in India from the 1920s until independence, believed his Welsh-language ability helped him to learn Indian languages and thus brought him closer to Indians. Owain-Jones criticised the racial distance of British Indian society, believing this created tensions which ultimately led to the loss of India, though he held little sympathy for Indian nationalism.[52] In a paper he wrote for the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion in 1970, based upon his memoir *An Exile Have I Been*, he wrote:

> The Welshmen I encountered in my oriental wanderings were invariably successful in maintaining excellent personal relations with the people among whom they lived and

> worked … In the case of Welsh-speaking Welshmen, it may have been the ease with which they acquired fluency in oriental languages, a sure way to the hearts of the people.[53]

So, we see in both Owain-Jones and Sir Lawrence Jenkins examples of this Welsh imperialism put into a degree of practice. However, they remained outside the general norms of their society, evidenced by the reaction against Jenkins, with Welsh people such as Sir Griffith Evans and Leonard Owen better representing their integration into general British Indian imperialist views. The Welsh press, keen to demonstrate respectability and contribution, fashioned an idea of Welsh imperialism that sought to present it as fundamental to the empire's continued maintenance and success. On the ground in India, however, it is difficult to find much to distinguish the Welsh from their fellow Britons.

Conclusion: The Future of Welsh Global History

This chapter has sought to sketch out the development of Welsh history writing on imperialism as it has interacted with wider trends in broader imperial history, as well as provide a case study to elucidate these trends. The move away from dichotomous definitions of metropole/periphery and the recognition of the unhelpfulness of national boundaries when considering global phenomena has created a space in which Welsh history writing can break out of its traditional inward glare and consider Welshness as a transnational relationship. This has provided a wealth of stimulating content breaking the mould of Welsh history, but, as with any global history of Britons, its most obvious success has been connecting the Welsh experience to that of British imperialism, a process that challenges popular perceptions of Wales as well as the traditional focuses of Welsh history. Scholars like Aled Jones, Bill Jones, Heather Hughes and Lucy Taylor have begun to capture Welsh aspects of a history of imperialism which are often resisted by a perception that views the majority of Welsh people not only as victims of British capitalism (a view that would ironically unite the Welsh industrial experience with that of industrial parts of England) but of a British imperialism that operated through capitalist structures. Cries of English theft of Welsh resources, such as coal and water, have become common parlance, as well as essentially political claims to Wales as England's first and last colony, as has been forwarded by Plaid Cymru's former leader Adam Price.[54] While these are viewpoints with their merits, Welsh imperial history, by placing the Welsh as key components of a global British imperialism, incorporates 'culpability' into these narratives of 'victimhood'. In truth, balance sheets of empire are rarely useful exercises. History's drive to understand the past can be held back by too strong a focus on the values of the present. But the continued development of Welsh imperial history, with its ability to disrupt stereotyped perceptions of Welsh people of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, provides much scope for continued learning about ourselves. As the Welsh in India demonstrate, empire was critical to modern Welsh history, and understanding that further can only ever be a net positive.

The Welsh experience in India was not unique. There were Welsh in all corners of the empire, to varying extent, and the similarities and connections teased out above between different colonies points to a future direction for Welsh imperial history that brings these case studies together into a more holistic study of the Welsh overseas. Welsh identity and approaches to imperialism form natural starting points, but there is also space to expand on Lucy Taylor's work on relationships with indigenous peoples to other regions, fully moving beyond the dichotomies that the New Imperial History sought to break down. Even within the traditional markers of Welsh history – industry, labour, religion – taking an imperial approach allows an understanding of the mutual impacts of Wales within the British world. Welsh historians embracing the global will require a closer reading of Wales's imperial role, for which the groundwork is being firmly laid.

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CHAPTER 2

The ‘descendant of Ham’: a critical analysis of the biography of John Ystumllyn by Alltud Eifion

Gareth Evans-Jones

Introduction

> Nid John Ystumllyn oedd yr unig siaradwr Cymraeg du yng nghefn gwlad Cymru’r ddeunawfed ganrif. Ef sydd fwyaf adnabyddus, a hynny’n bennaf am i Alltud Eifion gyhoeddi pamffledyn bychan yn ei gylch.[1]
>
> John Ystumllyn was not the only black Welsh speaker in the countryside of Wales in the eighteenth century. He is the most famous, primarily due to Alltud Eifion having published a small pamphlet about him.

These are the words of Simon Brooks in his pioneering *Hanes Cymry: Lleiafrifoedd Ethnig a’r Gwareiddiad Cymraeg*, and as Brooks suggests, the small chronicle published by Alltud Eifion, the ‘*pamffledyn bychan*’, has been highly significant in establishing John Ystumllyn as the most well-known Welsh-speaking black person in eighteenth century north-west Wales.

The pamphlet in question, *John Ystumllyn neu 'Jack Black,' hanes ei fywyd, a thraddodiadau am dano, o'r amser y dygwyd ef yn wyllt o Affrica, hyd adeg ei farwolaeth; ei hiliogaeth, &c. &c, ynghyda darlun o hono yn y flwyddyn 1754*, was written by Robert Isaac Jones (1813–1905), or 'Alltud Eifion' to use his bardic name, who was a pharmacist, an author, and a printer from Tyddyn Iolyn, Pentrefelin near Porthmadog. Alltud Eifion had an ostensibly added advantage with his piece of writing for he lived amid the local stories of John Ystumllyn that were passed via generations' worth of oral tradition.

However, it should be noted that the work was published in 1888, exactly 102 years after the death of John Ystumllyn, therefore, important questions arise regarding the accuracy of its facts and the tone of its writing. As such, a regular contextualisation of the pamphlet, historically, socially, religiously, and linguistically, will be offered throughout this chapter, and, when appropriate, comparative references will be made to the English version of the pamphlet, which was translated and published by D. Trevor Roberts of Cricieth, sometime in the 1970s: *John Ystumllyn or Jack Black: The Story of his Life and Tales about him from the time he was brought uncivilised from Africa until his death: his descendants, etc. And a picture of him in 1754.* By critically scrutinising the pamphlet, we will gain a greater understanding of how the people of north-west Wales responded to John Ystumllyn, and will discern whether a racist attitude permeates the words of the chronicle. Thus, the method of discussion that follows will be rooted in an analysis of the entire pamphlet section by section, with an application of interdisciplinary textual criticisms.

Rhagymadrodd

The pamphlet opens with a foreword by Alltud Eifion which explains his reasons for creating such a biography of John Ystumllyn, namely, due to John Ystumllyn being such a unique individual at the time in rural north Wales. Indeed, it is stated that in the eighteenth century, there was '*yr un dyn dû*' ('not one black man') in this part of Wales, and due to the remarkable story of John Ystumllyn, and his '*nodweddiadau neillduol*' ('particular characteristics'), this pamphlet needed to be created.[2] In this initial paragraph, Alltud Eifion also comments that John Ystumllyn experienced a '*dygiad*' to Wales.[3] Instantly, the term '*dygiad*' conveys the trepidation of John Ystumllyn's background. '*Dygiad*' is a version of '*dwyn*', which literally means 'to steal', however, the verb can be used in phrases as variable as '*dwyn i gof*', 'calling to mind', and '*dwyn ymaith*', 'to steal away'. The English version of the pamphlet translates this verb as 'brought' – that John Ystumllyn was 'brought to this country'.[4] The ambiguity or suggestiveness, or a play-on-words by Alltud Eifion, could have been intentional, and demonstrates at the outset that John Ystumllyn was, indeed, '[stolen and] brought to this country', as is explained further on in the pamphlet.

Another striking feature of the phrasing of the first paragraph is that John Ystumllyn is described as being 'one of the descendants of Ham'.[5] This identification is Biblical and refers to the concept that was prevalent in Western society up until about the late nineteenth century, whereby the entire human race was descended from the three sons of Noah: Ham, Shem and Japhet – as is demonstrated in Genesis 10. It is also this conceptual ideology which formed the belief that the descendants of Ham were African people, and, as such, were to always be considered in the context of slavery.

It is the Great Flood and the construction of the Ark as a vessel of life in the 'new' world which are associated with the story of Noah. However, it is the events *after* the Flood which are of most relevance to the phrase used by Alltud Eifion. Following the cleansing of the globe, we see Noah and his family restarting life on Earth, and as part of that, Noah plants the first vineyard. With time, the patriarch wanders through the vineyard and starts consuming the grapes, which have become very ripe. Noah then returns to his tent and falls asleep in a drunken state, completely unclothed. Ham, one of Noah's sons, comes across his father, sees his nakedness, and decides to leave him (an act which has been interpreted as disrespect towards a parent in their weakness) and tell his brothers about their father.[6] Shem and Japhet respond in a markedly different manner, by taking a mantle, walking backwards into the tent so as not to see the nakedness of their father, and cover his body (Gen. 9:23); an act that signified respect and honour toward a vulnerable parent. After Noah wakes and gains knowledge of what his 'youngest son had done to him' (Gen. 9:24), he places a curse, not on Ham, but on Canaan, the son of Ham, to be the 'servant of servants to his brothers' (Gen. 9: 25). The expression *'ebed ebadaim* (עבד עבדים) strengthens the blow of the curse by conveying that it is a servant of the lowest rank that is doomed by Noah, i.e., a slave. Following the curse, Shem and Japhet are blessed due to both having demonstrated true respect toward their father, which was expected in the Hebrew tradition.

As the story is so brief, ambiguous, and inconsistent, a number of questions arise that have caused considerable discussion among scholars and Biblical exegetes for centuries, and continue to do so, such as what was the exact nature of the iniquity committed against Noah: was it seeing a naked father intoxicated or something more sinister?[7] If it was Ham who transgressed, why is Canaan being punished?[8] Should it be assumed that Ham and Canaan are the same person? Who exactly is doomed to a state of humiliation? These inconsistencies and ambiguities have given rise to all kinds of erroneous interpretations over the centuries.

By scrutinizing the Hebrew text and certain translations of the Bible, the simplest reading is that Ham 'sinned' by bringing shame on his father when he informed his brothers of Noah's drunkenness. The 'crime' committed is disrespecting a parent, and it could be suggested that this is a story aimed at reminding children of their duty towards their parents, a message promoted in other parts of the Pentateuch, such as Deuteronomy 27:16.[9] This was an expected duty in societies across the Ancient Near East, as seen in various related texts, due to the family unit being the essence of the wider world. Canaan was punished for the sin of his father, Ham, because he disrespected his own father, Noah.[10]

Despite this, as the text is full of inconsistencies, an interpretive tradition developed which had far-reaching effects, especially on the African people. Indeed, with the formation and popularisation of the misnomer, 'Curse of Ham', the connection between African people, racial inferiority, and an allocation of a state of servitude, especially during the centuries preceding and during the Atlantic Slave Trade, was forged.

The history of various interpretations of this text has been discussed in several key studies, as such, we shall only note the main elements of the interpretative tradition which had a damning effect on black people. As it has been argued by scholars including Thomas

Virgil Peterson, Stephen R. Haynes, David M. Goldenberg and David M. Whitford, among others, that it was this particular concept which became the staple argument to justify the enslavement of a significant amount of African people.[11]

There was an early fascination with the differences between nations and skin colour among followers of the Abrahamic faiths; so much so that early rabbinic exegesis[12] and Church Father writings, including those of Origen and Augustine,[13] drew connections between Ham and black skin, with the emphasis being on Ham as *the* perpetrator and, as such, a son of wickedness and pestilence, a 'son of darkness'. Indeed, during subsequent centuries, certain etymological studies were produced which stated that the name 'Ham' was synonymous with black and, therefore, signified African people. מח 'Ham' was ostensibly linked to the root מומח, which meant 'warm', or מוח, 'black', 'dark'.[14] This fed into a nuanced justification for enslaving African people during the rise and thrive of the Atlantic Slave Trade.

Indeed, the stating by such exegetes that it was Ham who was cursed and not Canaan is also significant when we look at Genesis 10 and the Table of Nations. In Genesis 10:1–6, we see the descendants of the sons of Noah, and Mitsrayim (Egypt), Kush (Ethiopia), Phut and Canaan are named as the descendants of Ham, i.e., people who 'stem' from the continent of Africa. Since this was the case, it was surmised that it was the natives of Africa who were affected by the curse of slavery, which was hereditary and would continue for eternity. This was *the* justification for enslavement, the justification to treat African people in a different manner, and this fed a racialist perspective which, in turn, fuelled white supremacist ideologies.[15] Indeed, as the slave trade wandered through Europe to the Americas, so did the Curse and, as the notable Connecticut-born abolitionist, Theodore Dwight Weld, commented in 1837, 'The prophecy of Noah is the *vade mecum* of slaveholders, and they never venture abroad without it; it is a pocket-piece for sudden occasion.'[16]

The so-called Curse of Ham argument was highly influential in condoning the activities of colonizers, slave-traders, and slave-owners, conquering people and subduing them to slavery.[17] Indeed, the turn of phrase that Alltud Eifion implements is very significant, especially when we read the narratives of John Ystumllyn having been kidnapped from Africa and taken to Wales, probably as a slave, later in the chronicle. According to Simon Brooks, John Ystumllyn being enslaved and transported in captivity is the most oft-reiterated narrative as it suggested a Welsh connection with the most awful crime of slavery: depriving people of their freedom.[18]

Hanes John Ystumllyn, neu 'Jack Black'

However, before we hear of the different stories of how John Ystumllyn came to Wales and his possible background, we are provided with the background of the Wynne family of Ystumllyn, the estate John came to be associated with. It is interesting that Alltud Eifion decided to structure his discussion in this manner, by depicting the gentry lineage before considering that of the central figure of the pamphlet. On the one hand, this could be deemed a mode of sound contextualisation through opening the work by explaining who the Ystumllyn family and ancestors were, because it was this family who took John in their midst, be it through enslavement, adoption, or fostering. However, it could be argued that it reflects an inherent unconscious bias, if not a *conscious* bias, that Alltud Eifion saw more significance in presenting and, indeed, praising these aristocrats of north Wales and their wealth, before considering the lot of the 'Black Boy'. Indeed, in line with the tradition of *canu mawl*, praise-poetry in Wales, usually aimed towards the Welsh Princes and Gentry, we see an elaborated prose vaunt of this esteemed family, who are descended from such great figures as Hywel ab Einion ab Gruffydd, who became *Syr Hywel y Fwyell* (Sir Hywel of the Axe) for his valency in the Battle of Poitiers.[19] Also, Alltud Eifion refers, in a very Noahic-lineage-approach, to the fact that the Wynne family of Ystumllyn were 'direct' descendants of Collwyn ab Tangno, who was a member of one of the Fifteen Tribes of Gwynedd, as is testified to by the fifteen genealogical lists of the noblemen of Wales that was collated by Welsh bards in the fifteenth-century.[20]

It is interesting to note that as part of this overview, there is mention of one of the family members, Gruffydd ab John ab Goronwy from the Gwynfryn, taking his '[g]*was*' to fish at Ystumllyn Lake, and that afterwards, the fish that were caught by the '*gwas*' were taken off him and that he suffered a beating on the orders of Hywel ab Rhys of Bronyfoel, the owner of the lake.[21] As such, Gruffydd ab John ab Goronwy reacted and a blazing conflict occurred between Gruffydd and Hywel, however, it was Hywel who was victorious and saw the death of Gruffydd. Hywel was later found not guilty in a hearing at Caernarfon Castle. The significant point to note here is that the '*gwas*', noted as 'manservant' in the translated pamphlet,[22] suggests that the Wynne family's ancestors demonstrated kindness to such a person as a 'servant', and could perhaps also suggest that they were compassionate people.[23] We do not know who the '*gwas*' was, whether he was a servant or a slave, whether he was from Wales or elsewhere, or which language he spoke, but perhaps Alltud Eifion attempted to establish a precedent here with the Ystumllyn noble family and the 'unfortunate' people who they engaged with. This could well be fact or his attempt to offer a positive light in the context of the Wynne family before the retelling of the various origin stories of John Ystumllyn that appear to be linked with the negative practice of enslavement (which was outlawed in Britain by the time of Alltud Eifion's publication).

Y Bachgen Du yn Dyfod i'r Ystumllyn

Alltud Eifion turns his attention to three varying stories which depict the arrival of 'the black boy at Ystumllyn', stating that 'there is no certainty which one of the family' brought John to Wales.[24] The first story Alltud Eifion heard, that being from his mother who was brought up at Ystumllyn and who was born around the same time as the death of John, was that a member of the Wynne family 'caught the boy in an African jungle', and brought him 'home to Ystumllyn'.[25] It was thought that he was about 8 years old at the time, and was later baptised in either Cricieth or Ynyscynhaearn Church. In this account, we see what could be interpreted as an example of a young African child being stolen from his motherland and displaced against his will, in accordance with the activities and the prevalent *Zeitgeist* of the Atlantic Slave Trade. What is worse, one could argue, is the fact that the boy was christened John, having to adopt a new and completely different identity to the one he had in Africa. However, Alltud Eifion makes no comment as to this colonial enforcement. Also, it could be said that the pamphlet depicts the ignorance of this north Walian community regarding the African culture, as the general opinion was that when the boy arrived '*nid oedd ganddo yr un iaith, dim ond rhyw beth tebyg i udiad, neu 'sgrechiadau*', '[he] spoke no proper language; he could only utter doglike howls and screams'.[26] It is probable that the boy spoke one of the many African languages of the time, but as this group of Welsh people did not know of, and possibly, made no effort to learn about the varied linguistic breadth of Africa in the eighteenth century, as is inadvertently suggested by Alltud Eifion, it was declared that John Ystumllyn was a primitive person. Indeed, later in the section, it is said that there was uncertainty as to his exact age because he could not express it clearly through language due to only being able to make '*swn fel udiad ci*', 'a sound like the wailing of a dog'.[27]

This is also very interesting when considering the concept of linguistic imperialism and the related linguistic racism.[28] Many studies comment on how English was used as the language of the oppressor in the Early Modern Period onwards.[29] Indeed, the Welsh language has been impacted by the influence and dominance of English.[30] However, we see here, possibly, Welsh, which is today a minority language, being applied by this community in a linguistic racist manner. Since the boy did not apparently speak a single language, he had no means to communicate verbally. Thus, he had to learn Welsh and English from the outset.

Whilst there could be another way of interpreting this rather critical comment. Perhaps the wording is rather condemning of John's 'inability', it may well have been a way of stating that John needed to be able to converse in the *lingua franca* of the area to survive, namely Welsh, and English also. In this sense, therefore, teaching him the Welsh language could have been seen as a way of enabling John's assimilation to this very rural north-west Walian community, whereby a great deal of the population were monolingual during the century: in essence, embracing John and adopting him as a new 'Welshman'; not in the sense of him being from Wales, but with respect to him becoming a member of the linguistic community. This theory of language being the central feature of one's identity, especially with reference to Welsh, has been discussed recently in a fascinating manner by Simon Brooks.[31] Being able to converse through the medium of

Welsh was a way of becoming Welsh – that being a linguistic embodiment rather than an association with a geographical location or genealogical decent. One rather clear feature of John being 'Cymrycised' may be seen with an aspect of his death. The headstone of his grave includes a piece of Welsh-language poetry in a distinct Welsh form called an *englyn*. This poetic form comprises of a distinct metred structure, including no more than four lines, and makes use of a certain number of syllables, consonantal interaction, and rhyme, which is known as *cynghanedd*.[32] *Englynion* have been chiselled on many gravestones for centuries, and continue to do so, creating a distinctly Welsh poetic tradition associated with the deceased: the *englynion beddi* (gravestone *englynion*).

In the second story, John Ystumllyn is discussed in terms of him being a thing rather than a person. It is said that he landed in London with 'a number of black boys', and that Ellis Wynne of Ystumllyn's sister, Mary, who resided in London at the time, sent the boy '*yn anrheg i'w brawd*', 'as a gift' to her brother.[33] One could argue that John was considered significant in this light, as he was *gifted* to Mary's family, however, there is no denying that being called a 'gift' does suggest a state of being perceived as a thing, a chattel, an object to be gained and given. Another negative aspect relating to this is a point that is not mentioned in the pamphlet, that being Mary had married a William Hollier, possibly the same William Hollier who was a secretary of the African Company of Merchants, an active and significant British chartered company during the Atlantic Slave Trade's activities in the eighteenth-century, especially along the Gold Coast.[34]

It is stated that the third version of the early life of John Ystumllyn is an account of his own telling, that he was caught by 'white men' when he was trying to catch a moor hen beside a small stream in a forest. With this version, John remembers clearly how his mother ran after the men as he was taken aboard a ship, and how his mother uttered the 'most horrible cries', '*gan wneyd oernadau dychrynllyd*'.[35]

Alltud Eifion, however, favours the first of the three accounts, that being the story he heard from his own mother, but, in actuality, all three could be deemed equally important as they all convey a significant truth, that an African boy was taken from his homeland and planted into eighteenth-century Wales, with no family and not even his name. Also, it could be suggested that there is a level of uncertainty as to John Ystumllyn's exact origin, as it is stated in the opening line of the *englyn* by Dafydd Siôn Siâms on John's headstone, '*Yn India gynna'm ganwyd*', 'In India I was born'.[36] The reference here could suggest John having come from the West Indies rather than Africa, but there is no way of telling for certain.

The subsequent comments by Alltud Eifion regarding how the new arrival was treated are both striking and rather unsettling:

> Bu arnynt gryn drafferth i'w ddofi [John Ystumllyn] am amser hir, ac nis goddefid iddo fyned allan; ond wedi tipyn o drafferth gan y boneddigesau, dysgodd y ddwy iaith, a dysgodd ysgrifennu; yna rhoddwyd ef yn yr ardd i ddysgu garddwriaeth, yr hyn a wnaeth yn dra pherffaith, gan ei fod yn hynod gywrain.[37]
>
> It took them a long time to civilize him [John Ystumllyn] and during this time he was not allowed out; but after much effort by the ladies, he learnt two languages and learnt to write. Then he was taught gardening – a trade at which he became very proficient, being a meticulous and skilful worker.[38]

We see here John being considered similar to an animal who needs to be domesticated and accustomed to his new surroundings. Indeed, this reflects the racialistic viewpoints of the time – which was not confined to this Welsh community alone – and which ironically escalated following the Enlightenment; that a black person was inherently ignorant and uncivilised, and needed to be subjugated – to be made civilised. This is concisely conveyed by David Theo Goldberg, as he comments, 'Subjugation perhaps properly defines the order of the Enlightenment: subjugation of nature by human intellect, colonial control through physical and cultural domination, and economic superiority through mastery of the laws of the market.'[39]

Indeed, what could be evidenced here is a form of ethnolinguistic racism. For centuries, beliefs circulated various linguistic communities that their language was 'the best of all living languages, if not the perfect language'.[40] It was via an ethnolinguistic nationalism that John Ystumllyn became accepted by the community, through his linguistic amalgamation, becoming fluent in English, the dominant language of Britain, and also, in Welsh, the dominant vernacular of the vicinity of Cricieth.

Such an emphasis is both expected and striking. On the one hand, during the Enlightenment period, ethnolinguistic ideology developed considerably. For example, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz was among the first to single out the Germanic languages as being ones applicable to all, and, in fact, of being a more ancient lineage than even Latin. He states: 'Italy received its oldest inhabitants from the German and Celtic peoples, via the Alps, it thus follows that the Latin language owes a lot to the primeval Germans'.[41] The striking feature is how the teaching of Welsh to John Ystumllyn could, on the one hand, be deemed a form of linguistic imperialism, of forcing a language on a person who had been taken to a new location not out of their accord. In the minds of the locals of the time, accepting John as part of the community signalled a need for him to be able to speak Welsh, and English.

Another interesting feature to note is that he became fluent in both Welsh and English at a time when bilingualism was not overly common. Indeed, there was a high number of the community who were monoglot Welsh-speakers, thus, John Ystumllyn gained an added advantage to that of many around him. The reason for him having been educated in English also could be understood by the fact that he was a member, of ambiguous status, of the Ystumllyn household, a stately home comprising of gentry, and the language most favoured by a high majority of the gentry of Wales at the time was English, as expressed by Geraint H. Jenkins, Richard Suggett and Eryn M. Whyte: 'In their eyes, English was the language of polite speech, elegance and breeding, whereas Welsh, spoken in the main by penurious and ignorant mountain dwellers, was not in any way a suitable vehicle for political discourse, administrative matters, high culture or polite social life.'[42]

In this linguistic vein also, it may well be worth considering the socio-historical context of when Alltud Eifion's pamphlet was published: 1888. This emphasis on both English and Welsh being John's languages and, indeed, the fact that the only quotations which we see by John in the pamphlet are written in Welsh, reflecting his mode of articulation (as will be discussed below), could suggest Alltud Eifion felt a sense of pride – by demonstrating both languages to be on parr and as significant as each other. This may be driven by the effects of the damning report of 1847, which was a governmentally driven attack on the people, language, culture, and religion of Wales, and spurred on a crisis of identity of existential proportions. The report which explored the nature of education in Wales was undertaken by three non-Welsh speaking commissioners, who stated that the people of Wales were shamefully behind where they should be as an educated nation.[43] They contended that the reasons for such a fault in the people of Wales were their adherence to Nonconformity, the practice of certain social customs, and most significantly, speaking the Welsh language. This report and its implications came to be known as *Brad y Llyfrau Gleision*, the Treachery of the Blue Books, and created an identity complex among the Welsh. Perhaps this is reflected in Alltud Eifion's work, with him inadvertently attempting to argue against the findings of the Blue Books (referring to the colour of the report covers) which were becoming more and more engrained in the socio-political psyche. This attempt reflected a wider effort among the Welsh people. An example of which may be seen in the fact that anti-slavery sentiments, and indeed, abolitionism, became such a strong feature of the Welsh-speaking people of Wales and the United States relatively early on, from the second half of the eighteenth-century. This stance was very prominent by the time of the legal abolition of slavery in Britain in 1833 and in the United States in 1865.[44]

John Ystumllyn wedi myned yn Llangc

It could well be argued that the presentation of these 'achievements' of John Ystumllyn, his language acquisition and employment, could be seen as having a patronising tone and, indeed, as reflecting the approach many took towards him. It is said that he learnt Welsh and English, that he became a masterful gardener and a skilled handyman, and that he was employed by the Ystumllyn estate. John also became a topic of curiosity to many in the area: '*er ei fod o liw dû, byddai gwrryfon yr ardal yn* dottio *arno, ac yn ymryson am gael John yn gariad!*', 'even though his skin was black, the local maidens used to dote on him and would compete for him to be a lover!',[45] a comment which could be seen as both demeaning and objectifying of John. In spite of his unfamiliar aesthetical appearance to the maids of the area, they were still besotted by John – by his 'exoticness', Alltud Eifion states with an air of astonishment. However, the verb 'to dote' could grate on the modern reader and could, in fact, be carrying with it racialistic undertones. This is particularly true when one compares such comments as Alltud Eifion's with a piece of writing such as the pamphlet produced by Edward Long in 1772, in particular his assessment of how the 'lower-class' women of England were drawn to black people:

> The lower clafs of women in *England*, are remarkably fond of the blacks, for reafons too brutal to mention; they would connect themfelves with horfes and affes, if the laws permitted them. By thefe ladies they generally have a numerous brood. Thus, in the courfe of a few generations more, the Englifh blood will become fo contaminated with this mixture, and from the chances, the ups and downs of life, this alloy may fpread fo extenfively, as even to reach the middle, and then the higher orders of the people, till the whole nation refembles the *Portuguefe* and *Morifcos* in complexion of fkin and bafenefs of mind.[46]

Granted, *Candid reflections upon the judgement lately awarded by the Court of King's Bench, in Westminster-Hall, on what is commonly called the Negroe-cause, by a Planter*, was published over a century before the words of Alltud Eifion, and Long's discourse is more explicitly derogatory and critical. However, one could ask whether we see remnants of this attitude in Alltud Eifion's brief comment?

Ultimately, it was one Margaret Gruffydd who won John's heart and with this, the chronicle discusses their love story. Margaret was initially a maid at the stately home, Ystumllyn, and had to take beer and bread and cheese to John daily, but she was terrified of the '*dyn dû*', 'black man', and she would leave the food nearby and run away from him as soon as she could.[47] With time, however, Margaret became John's wife, to which Alltud Eifion demonstrates a surprise that many possibly felt, especially when one considers her early behaviour. Following a brief discussion, he further comments on this with a statement that clearly features racialistic (and, indeed, misogynistic) undertones:

> Ac fel nad oes gyfrif i'w roddi am chwaeth *(fancy)* yr ystlen dêg at eu gwrthryw, nis gellir dyfalu paham yr ydoedd merched yr ardal yn ymryson am 'John Ystumllyn.'[48]
>
> And in the same way that one cannot explain the fancy fair sex has for the other sex, one cannot fathom why the women of the area would have contested for 'John Ystumllyn.'[49]

It should be acknowledged that the critical element of this sentence in the translated pamphlet does not name John Ystumllyn, even with quotation marks, but refers to him simply as 'this dark boy'; conveying the disbelief how the fair, white, maids of north-west Wales could have ever been attracted to 'this dark boy'.

John Ystumllyn yn Diangc i Briodi

The racialistic aspect which permeates the early part of John Ystumllyn and Margaret Gruffydd's love story according to Alltud Eifion's depiction continues when he refers to the time John visited Margaret in Cricieth, where she was a maid, one night, and how the 'master of house' reacted when he saw John:

> to his surprise [the master of the house] saw something black in the form of a man. He had such a fright that he rushed away and convinced his wife that he'd seen the black *C-th-l* in the kitchen.[50]

On the one hand, this could be seen as a light-hearted story of courting and its trials, but there is a more pressing element to this retelling. We see a derogatory attitude that some harboured towards 'Jack Black', especially with reference to him being 'the black *C-th-l*'. The translated pamphlet does not convey this exactly, and states that the man of the house was in fear due to seeing 'a black devil'.[51] It is probable that '*C-th-l*' stands for '*Cythraul*', which can be translated as both 'devil' and 'demon', but also as 'scoundrel'. Considering the nuance of the story, it would be fair to say that the more light-hearted 'scoundrel' is not what is meant here, but the evil and wicked devil or demon. If so, this conveys the characteristic attitude of many at the time, who feared and were suspicious of black people because of their apparent 'demonic' appearance; whilst others were of the predominant opinion that black people needed to be subdued as they were, indeed, 'black devil[s]'. This is reminiscent of the connection drawn between 'Ham' and blackness, as well as Ham supposedly being the recipient of the curse for a wicked, devilish action. The consequence of such evil was for Ham and his progeny to be enslaved. Another key point to note is the use of the definite article. John Ystumllyn was not simply considered to be 'a' 'black *C-th-l*', but '*the* black *C-th-l*'. Also, that '*C-th-l*' was noted with a capital letter, suggestive of him not being thought of as 'the black demon' but 'the black Demon' or, more severely, 'the black Devil'. Again, this could be seen as conveying the fear and negativity harboured by many white people, fuelled by ignorance, especially within a religious context. It goes without saying that darkness and blackness have been implemented within the Christian faith to depict evil, and the antithesis of the love and light of Jesus.[52] It could be said that the combination of 'evil' and black skin was drawn succinctly in the form of the Curse of Ham, and since John Ystumllyn was 'one of the descendants of Ham', it made sense that he harboured a devilish nature, in the eyes of Alltud Eifion and others.

Margaret subsequently moved to work in Dolgellau for the wife of a minister who was also her aunt, and John ran away from the Ystumllyn estate to marry Margaret. This raises many significant questions regarding John's status. Since he had to *run away*, there is a suggestion that his stature at Ystumllyn was rather complex. Perhaps this referred to the possibility that he was contractually obligated to stay as Ystumllyn's groundskeeper. Or due to him being brought to Ystumllyn, or 'gifted', he was bound to the estate in some manner; perhaps as a bonded servant or a slave with a level of liberty. However, due to this, John lost his job but gained the hand of Margaret around 1768. They went on to have seven children, but two died in their infancy. The other children succeeded in leading meaningful lives even though, it could be theorised, they probably experienced a level of racist views or comments due to the colour of their skin. However, this is not noted in the pamphlet. Rather, we learn of the success of one of the children, Richard, who was fond of hunting and how 'he became a huntsman to the Honourable Lord Newborough, Glynllifon, where he served for 58 years.'[53] Again, we see great respect for the gentry in the words of Alltud Eifion and boasting the prestige of being employed by the 'Honourable Lord Newborough'.

It is interesting to note how Alltud Eifion discusses the other children and their lives, quite briefly; in particular, the daughter, Lowri. It is said that Lowri married a butler from Madryn, Pen Llŷn, called Robert Jones, who was the son of a shopkeeper and had connections to the prestigious Sir Joseph Huddart of Bryncir. However, Lowri remarried and the only piece of information that we are given regarding John 'McNamare', her second husband, apart from his name, is the description, '*foreigner*'.[54] This one-worded-description could be considered as having xenophobic sentiments, and reflective of the prejudice that existed during the time from Welsh people towards the Irish, if we are to interpret 'McNamare' as being a version of the Irish 'MacNamara', derived from 'Mac Conmara'. Despite both being 'Celtic' countries, a rivalry or animosity developed, whereby to marry an Irishman if one was Welsh could be seen as an anathema, this being due in part to the Christian distinctions between both nations, with the high majority of the Welsh of the time being Protestant, and the Irish being Catholic. Also, hostility became apparent during the course of the century and afterwards, due to more Irish people immigrating to Wales and a particular ill-feeling developed as the Irish were considered to be taking jobs under the noses of Welsh people. Thus, riots and anti-Irish activities occurred rather often. It is probable that what we read in this section is a culmination of such hostile sentiments, and thus, designating the Irishman a 'foreigner'.[55]

John appears to have been re-employed by the Ystumllyn family and towards the end of his life, he and Margaret went to live in a place called 'Y Nhyra Isa', which 'had a great garden', one that would have undoubtedly pleased John.[56] It is interesting that Y Nhyra Isa was given to John and Margaret by the Wynne family of their own accord, suggesting that there existed a good relationship between them until the end, regardless of John's running away. Could this also suggest the nature of John's 'employment'? Was he perhaps a laboured tenant, or a contractual servant, or a paid gamekeeper? Indeed, the chronicle states that the house was gifted to John in acknowledgement of his labour. Was he actually 'enslaved' if the family decided to allocate him a house? Regardless of such questions regarding the status of John, it is fair to say that this suggests that there existed a more favourable relationship between the Wynne family and John Ystumllyn than otherwise.

John passed away 'from jaundice when he was 46', in 1786 – jaundice most probably being a symptom of a particular disease. However, Alltud Eifion does acknowledge that John's headstone reads 'July 1791'. Margaret later passed away in 1828, when she was 81 years old.[57]

Ychydig Sylwadau Nodweddiadol am John Ystumllyn, &c.

In the final pages of the pamphlet, we read miscellaneous stories which depict further the character and nature of John Ystumllyn, and his interaction with others. In these pages, we see the most significant changes in the English translated version of the Welsh pamphlet, including the title of this section. '*Nodweddiadol*' is the adjective in the Welsh, which means 'noteworthy' or 'characteristic', whilst the comments that are offered in the English version are, in fact, of 'amusing incidents'.[58]

The section begins with how the people of the time held 'very peculiar notions about coloured people', due to how uncommon they were among the white North Walians of the eighteenth century.[59] With this, Alltud Eifion tells a story of a discussion between two 'maidens' who shared theories of John Ystumllyn's blood, questioning whether it would be the same colour as the blood of a white person. However, instantly after the question was asked, John Ystumllyn replied, '*yn ei ddull ei hun*' ('in his own style'), with the following:

> 'Hen ffwl gwirion, na di ladd iar ddu, a iar wen, na ti weled fod gwaed y ddau yn goch.'[60]

> 'You silly fool, if you kill a black hen and a white hen, you'll see that both have red blood.'[61]

This is striking for several reasons. Firstly, questioning the colour of a person's blood due to the colour of their skin was reflective of the societal ignorance of the time and of racialistic discourses that abounded, which stated that black people did not have the same colour of blood as white people, or indeed, that the working class had the same colour as the blue-blooded aristocracy.[62] It is with regards to this type of ideology that anti-slavery advocates and abolitionists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries would refer time and again to Biblical passages, such as Acts 17:26: 'And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth' (King James Version). An example of a creative piece produced with the essence of this passage from Acts to counter the referred to misconception can be seen in '*Cân y Negro Bach*' ('Song of the Little Negro'), by Benjamin Price (*Cymro Bach* / Little Welshman), a Baptist minister from Monmouthshire; in particular the following:

> Ai gwir a glywodd Negro tlawd
> Fod plentyn Cymro iddo'n frawd,
> 'R un gwaed a chnawd ein dau?[63]
>
> Is it true what a poor Negro heard
> That a Welsh child was his brother,
> Both of the same blood and flesh?

The stanza questions in a skilfully rhetorical style whether a poor black person has misheard the fact that the Welsh child is his brother, that they both share the same blood and flesh. The reference to 'blood and flesh' is also significant in drawing the salvific sacrifice of Jesus to mind, and how Christ sacrificed himself on the cross for all of humanity.

The second striking aspect of this 'blood questioning' is John Ystumllyn's response, whereby he states that two different coloured animals, in this case, hens, would bleed the same colour. However, whilst the English translation is clearly written, the Welsh version is very much rougher. A closer translation of the Welsh account would read, 'You silly fool, you go kill a black hen, and white hen, you see that the blood of both is red.' This was Alltud Eifion's attempt at reflecting John Ystumllyn's voice in the piece, but it is very interesting to see that the English translation did not convey the reply in the same manner.

In this regard, David Willis's analysis of the Welsh translations of the significant abolitionist novel written by Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), comes to mind.[64] There were numerous Welsh translations and adaptions of the novel, which includes dialogue from characters who are slaves. What is striking is that some translators made a conscious effort to directly translate the 'unpolished' English speech of the slaves into Welsh, thus, reflecting the limited amount of education the slaves had received and to draw a contrast between their status and those of the likes of the slave-masters. In Willis' view, this can be seen as reflecting the linguistic fluency of people who are learning Welsh, and their stumbling at times. By creating such a phrasing in the original novel, comments Donald Winford, the translators attempted to convey the type of speech that was to be heard among African slaves who had learnt English in America as a second language. If not, indeed, a third or fourth. This being a type of creole English.[65]

In D. R. Trevor's translation, we see the opposite of what many translations of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* attempted to do, by reverting John Ystumllyn's reply to being a more slick and clear statement. Does this perhaps suggest that John was more eloquent when speaking English? Or can it be suggested that in the original pamphlet, we see an example of an element of Welsh creole being presented? Whereby the grammar is not fully complete and not every word is conveyed in the conventional manner, such as referring to the hens as '*dau*' (the masculine form of 'two') rather than '*dwy*' (the feminine form of 'two'). Or even, perhaps, there may be an element of linguistic racism, which goes beyond racism based on skin colour, ethnicity, heritage, and religion, and focuses on language use, dialect, accent, etc in this quotation.[66] By presenting John Ystumllyn's words in an uneven manner, perhaps we see an element of mockery, which may well have been the case if we remember the comment made by Alltud Eifion before John's response – that John replied '*yn ei ddull ei hun*' ('in his own way').[67] He may be depicted, to use Courtney A. Kurinex and Charles A. Weaver, III's phrase, as stereotypically 'sounding black'.[68] Although the aim of the pamphlet is to mark the story of this unique man in north Wales, perhaps the depiction is not entirely unbiased, and we see the possible racialistic view of the chronicler at work.

Another possibility is that D. Trevor Roberts did not consider translating the response of John Ystumllyn in the same 'voice', but rather, his aim was to make the English version of the pamphlet as clear to read and understand as possible.

Alltud Eifion then notes how 'local children were terrified' of John Ystumllyn, again because of the colour of his skin, but he does state that they had no reason to fear John as he was, 'extremely honest, truthful and without malice and was respected by all classes of people.'[69] It is further noted that he was a 'very moral man' too.[70] It is possible that this is a joyous statement of the 'success' of the local people in taming and domesticating the wild boy that was John Ystumllyn. And as part of this process, of this amalgamation, we see John having adopted the Christian Nonconformist guilt which was such a noticeable psychological feature of many people of Wales during this century, by saying that his greatest regret was playing the fiddle every Sabbath whilst he was at Ystumllyn and Maesneuadd.

The following comments are also interesting as they state how people were very much aware of John, a black man, having such a rapport with the 'main noblemen of the area', and the following story could, again, be interpreted in two ways.[71] Alltud Eifion tells of how a pig wandered into the garden at Ystumllyn and created a mess. Upon discovering the pig, John attempted to chase it out of the garden, during which, however, he broke one of the pig's legs. We see him experiencing a sense of regret, to an extent, but when his employers asked him how the pig broke its leg, he replied: 'I did it and I'll do the same again to any pig which makes a mess of my garden.'[72] This could be seen as a racial stereotype being emphasised, of the 'unruly' nature of John Ystumllyn's character, that he, being a black man, would attack an animal in such a manner as to make it suffer and not venture on his plot again. However, there may be a second and very different interpretation available. We see here John Ystumllyn, the gardener, with pride in his lot of land, instilling a punishment on the animal that dared wander into his patch and caused havoc. This may exemplify the further amalgamation of John Ystumllyn to the community, and the gentry mindset especially, of being the 'owner' of land and animals being of secondary import. This being the anthropocentric worldview that developed over the centuries in Western societies, which viewed land as the ownership of certain people, and humans being at the apex of creation (the peak which also constitutes a hierarchy of humans).[73]

Furthermore, the next two stories explored carry with them a paradoxical significance. On the one hand, we see compassion and welcome of the finest, whilst on the other, an extremely racist and ignorant worldview.

John Ystumllyn would occasionally be sent to fetch butter and cheese from Cwmbach Farm in Tremadog, where Edward Jones and Betty Parry resided as tenants. Betty Parry was Margaret's aunt, and she would act towards John in a very different manner to most people she came across. A noted '*hen wreigan gynnil iawn*' ('a very thrifty old woman'), she would always welcome '*Jack Black*' with great feeling and would prepare a feast for him every time.[74] She also called him '*Mr. Thiack*', which probably was Alltud Eifion's depiction of a speech impediment rather than a type of mockery on Betty Parry's part. However, during that time, a rather shifty character lived in the area who was aware of the welcome John would experience at y Cwm, and he decided to '[p]*arddûo*', 'blacken' his face, '*gan ymdebygu oreu gallai i* Jack', 'so as to appear as similar to Jack as possible', and duped Betty Parry into preparing him a feast and giving the usual produce that would be sent to Ystumllyn.[75]

This could be seen as an early example of blackfacing, which is so often associated with nineteenth and twentieth century minstrelsy across Britain and the United States, with it being 'a highly popular [form of] entertainment, especially in industrial south Wales', as Jen Wilson comments.[76] At the heart of minstrelsy was the racist colouring of a white person's skin and, later, of applying red colour to exaggerate the tone of one's lips and eyes, and of performing musical, dance and theatrical pieces. It was a type of 'entertainment' that appeared to be enjoyed by people from all social standings and sexes. However, according to Michael Pickering, it was not entirely a 'negative' concept as the application of the black face could be seen as 'a ritualistic device for confronting and assimilating a black low-Other while also rendering that figure safe and harmless, and so enjoyable as an object of comic or sentimental regard.'[77] This is an interesting proposal but one which is also questionable. On the one hand, it could well have been a way of developing a trend of becoming more 'familiar' with 'seeing' black people, but on the other, it was precisely that, a case of 'seeing', perceiving 'different' people, in the context of ridicule and humour. Nevertheless, as Daniel G. Williams comments, the socio-political and ideological significance of minstrelsy performances have been discussed at length, with various interpretations being produced, ranging from them being purely derogatory to black people, to being a device to raise social awareness of diversity.[78]

What we see in this story is an early form of blackfacing, of appearing as a black man in order to trick a widow. It is fair to say that this is a negative reflection of the 'rascal' who impersonated John, but also a significant light shone on the cultural ignorance of Betty Parry. What the 'rascal' used to paint his face (soot, according to the translated pamphlet), would not have been a true reflection of the colour and tone of John Ystumllyn's skin. However, to Betty Parry's eyes, the man was dark (was 'black'), therefore had to be John Ystumllyn. This echoes the type of rhetoric that permeated some circles at the time, that every black person looked alike, and it would not be possible to tell them apart. Indeed, this demonstrates the ingrained racist view of Betty Parry and, probably, the wider community, but it also sheds light on the fact that they were very unfamiliar with people of different skin colours and, since their worlds were 'white', there was often a level of suspicion or fear of 'black' people due to a severe level of ignorance. Unfortunately, this was not the only time John was impersonated, as on another occasion, a person ordered some garden seeds in his name.

The chronicle draws to a close with a story recited by one Ellis Owen of Cefnmeusydd about Margaret, the wife of John Ystumllyn, in the Mayday Penmorfa Fair, when Richard, her son, was about two years of age:

> When the child [(Richard)] recognised his father in the crowd, he called him by name. his mother boasted to her friends how bright the boy was to recognise his father amongst so many people, not realising how conspicuous his coloured father was amongst white people, as the old Welsh proverb goes 'Gwyn y gwel y fran ei chyw' translated means 'The Crow sees its young as white.'[79]

On the one hand, this is an account of a son and his father's bond, but on the other, it offers a keen commentary on the racial ideas of the time. Richard could recognise his father because of the colour of his skin. In the middle of the sea of white faces, John's face would have been obvious. But the use of the proverb, 'the crow sees its young as white' at the end of the piece, and as the closing sentence of the entire pamphlet, does carry with it a suggestion of a racist tone; that 'white' is the correct colour. The crow does not see its young as black, but as white – perfect, clean, pure. Of course, 'white' is a clear symbolic colour in the Christian tradition, as previously mentioned, and so, an integral part of the mind of the believers of the time. But one cannot help but feel that there is an idealising of the colour and a partial suggestion that John Ystumllyn, or Jack Black, who became a Welsh-speaking Welshman, was nearly as 'white' in character and nature as the local white Welsh population of the time, despite the colour of his skin.

Conclusion

This chronicle is, without doubt, a significant piece of writing. Alltud Eifion provides the reader with information on the life of John Ystumllyn and how he integrated into the north Walian society of the eighteenth century. However, the chronicle is abundant with inconsistencies, with three stories depicting the arrival of John to Wales, and includes, at times, very racist tones, when discussing the integration of a black man into Welsh society: that he had to be tamed initially, that children and adults alike feared him, and that he was unfamiliarly exotic to the women of the area.

Having said this, Alltud Eifion does demonstrate how John Ystumllyn came to be seen as a respected Welsh-speaking African in north Wales by some, and how his children married and succeeded in leading prosperous careers.

The chronicle is a very important and interesting account of an individual who has come to be thought of as one of the earliest-known Welsh speaking Africans of north Wales. We see that by the fact that it is this source that is most consulted by scholarly discussions, ranging from Peter Fryer to Alan Llwyd,[80] for biographical information about John Ystumllyn. However, the possible racist aspects of the content and the phrasing has not, thus far, been explored at great length. The aim with this chapter, therefore, was to offer an in-depth exploration of Alltud Eifion's chronicle so as to appreciate its significance in maintaining the story of John Ystumllyn, but also to demonstrate the racist worldview that was harboured by many during the lifetime of 'the descendant of Ham'. A racist worldview which was also harboured to an extent, one could argue, by Alltud Eifion.

Notes

1 Simon Brooks, *Hanes Cymry: Lleiafrifoedd Ethnig a'r Gwareiddiad Cymraeg* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 2021), p. 232.

2 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn neu 'Jack Black,' Hanes ei fywyd, a thraddodiadau am dano, o'r amser y dygwyd ef yn wyllt o Affrica, hyd adeg ei farwolaeth; ei hiliogaeth, &c., &c., ynghyd darlun o hono yn y flwyddyn 1754* (Tremadoc: R. Isaac Jones, 1888), p.3; Alltud Eifion (trans. D. Trevor Roberts), *John Ystumllyn or Jack Black The Story of his Life and Tales about him from the time he was brought uncivilised from Africa until his death: his descendants, etc. And a picture of him in 1754* (Criccieth: D. Trevor Roberts, Printer, 197–): no page numbers are given in this pamphlet.

3 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 3.

4 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn or Jack Black*.

5 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 3.

6 Cain Hope Felder, 'Race, Racism, and the Biblical Narratives', in Cain Hope Felder (ed.), *Stony the Road we trod: African American Biblical Interpretation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991), p. 131.

7 Some of the early rabbis suggested that Ham/Canaan had castrated Noah. See Jack P. Lewis, *A Study of Interpretation of Noah and the Flood in Jewish and Christian Literature* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978), p. 40; Some consider 'seeing a naked body' to be synonymous with sexual activity (cf. Lev. 20:17). Some suggested that Ham/Canaan had maltreated Noah sexually. In three early translations of the Old Testament to Greek (Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion), the word είδεν, 'see' (Gen. 9:22) is displaced by a word Paul uses to denote homosexual sexual activity (e.g. Rom. 1:27), ἀσχημοσύνη, 'shameful behaviour'. See James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as it was at the start of the Common Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 222; Albert I. Baumgarten, 'Myth and Midrash: Genesis 9:20-29', in Jacob Neusner (ed.), *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults: Part 3, Judaism Before 70* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), pp. 65–6.

8 Frederick W. Bassett, ‘Noah’s Nakedness and the Curse of Canaan, a Case of Incest?’, *Vetus Testamentum*, 21/2 (April 1972), 232–7, explains this by saying that the Hebrew for ‘son’, בן, can also be used to mean ‘grandson’. Noah was the father, and all of his sons and grandsons were to be seen as his בן (plural: בנים) – that they were all part of the same group, ‘Noah’s sons’. See also David M. Goldenberg, ‘What did Ham do to Noah?’, in Mauro Perani (ed.), *The Words of a wise man’s mouth are gracious (Qoh. 10, 12)* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), p. 258.

9 Felder, ‘Race, Racism, and the Biblical Narratives’, p. 131; H. Hirsch Cohen, *The Drunkenness of Noah* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1974), pp. 14–16; Allen P. Ross, ‘Studies in the Book of Genesis Part 1: “The Curse of Canaan”’, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 137 (1980), 223–40; Gordon P. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 1–15* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), pp. 198–201; Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis* (trans. Israel Abrahams; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1964), vol. 2, pp. 149–54; Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, pp. 484–8.

10 The concept of punishing children for the sins of their fathers is to be seen in other places in the Pentateuch, such as Ex. 23:6–7, Num. 14:18 and Deut. 5:9.

11 Thomas Virgil Peterson, *Ham and Japheth: The Mythic World of Whites in the Antebellum South* (Metuchen, NJ and London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. and The American Theological Library Association, 1978); Stephen R. Haynes, *Noah’s Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); David M. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); David M. Whitford, *The Curse of Ham in the Early Modern Era: The Bible and the Justification for Slavery* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009).

12 See, for example, David H. Aaron, ‘Early Rabbinic Exegesis on Noah’s Son Ham and the So-Called “Hamitic Myth”’, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 63/4 (Winter 1995), 721–59. ‘Our Rabbis taught: “Three copulated in the ark, and they were all punished – the dog, the raven, and Ham. The dog was doomed to be tied, the raven expectorates [his seed into his mate’s mouth], and Ham was smitten in his skin.”’ I. Epstein (ed.) *Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud* (trans. Jacob Schachter and H. Freedman; London: The Soncino Press, 1969), *Sanhedrin* 108b.

13 See Haynes, *Noah’s Curse*, pp. 24–30 for a further discussion.

14 Whitford, *The Curse of Ham in the Early Modern Era*, p. 98.

15 See, for example, Yaba Amgborale Blay, ‘Skin Bleaching and Global White Supremacy: By Way of Introduction’, *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 4/4 (June 2011), 10; L. Richard Bradley, ‘The Curse of Canaan and the American Negro’, *Concordia Theological Monthly*, vol. 42 (1971), 100–10; David M. Goldenberg, *Black and Slave: The Origins and History of the Curse of Ham* (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2017).

16 Theodore D. Weld, *The Bible Against Slavery. An Inquiry into the Patriarchal and Mosaic Systems on the subject of Human Rights* (New York: The American Anti-Slavery Society, 1838; 4th edn), p. 66.

17 Whitford, *The Curse of Ham in the Early Modern Era*, pp. 115–16, 175–6.

18 Brooks, *Hanes Cymry*, p. 231.

19 For a further explanation on *canu mawl*, see, for example, Dafydd Johnston, *Llên yr Uchelwyr: Hanes Beirniadol Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg 1300–1525* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 2014); Gwyn Thomas, *Y Traddodiad Barddol* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1976).

20 For further information on the Fifteen Tribes of Gwynedd (*Pymtheg Llwyth Gwynedd)*, see Michael Powell Siddons, *The Development of Welsh Heraldry. Vol. 1* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1991); Lewys Dwnn, *Heraldic Visitations of Wales and Part of the Marches: Between the Years 1586 and 1613, Under the Authority of Clarencieux and Norroy, Two Kings at Arms, Volume 2* (Llandovery: William Rees, 1846), p. 83. See also, John Wynn, *History of the Gwydir Family* (Oswestry: Woodall and Venables, 1878).

21 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 6.

22 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn or Jack Black*.

23 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn or Jack Black*.

24 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 7.

25 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn or Jack Black*; Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 7.

26 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 7.

27 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 8.

28 Linguistic imperialism has received significant attention, however, among the most significant studies are the works of Robert Phillipson, *Linguistic imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) and *Linguistic Imperialism Continued* (New York: Routledge, 2009). For fascinating discussions which offer an overview of the seriousness of the matter of racial linguistics, see Arthur Kean Spears (ed.) *Race and Ideology: Language, Symbolism, and Popular Culture* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1999); Jane H. Hill, *The Everyday Language of White Racism* (Singapore: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009); Arnetha F. Ball, H. Samy Alim, John R. Rickford (eds), *Raciolinguistics: How Language Shapes Our Ideas about Race* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

29 See further, Pauline Bunce and Vaughan Rapatahana (eds), *English Language as Hydra: Its Impacts on Non-English Language Cultures* (Bristol: Channel View Publications, 2012).

30 Maryon McDonald, 'A Deadly Linguistics? Tales from the Celtic Fringe', in Tim Allen and John Eade (eds), *Divided Europeans: Understanding Ethnicities in Conflict* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1999), p. 330; Lisa Lewis, *Performing Wales: People, Memory and Place* (Cardiff: University of Wlaes Press, 2018), p. xii.

31 Simon Brooks, *Hanes Cymry*, pp. 153–67.

32 For further information on the form of the *englyn*, see: Jenny Rowland, *Early Welsh Saga Poetry: A Study and Edition of the* Englynion (Cambridge: Brewer, 1990). And for more information on the *cynghanedd*, see: Mererid Hopwood, *Singing in Chains: Listening to Welsh Verse* (Llandysul: Gomer, 2004); Alan Llwyd, *Anghenion y Gynghanedd* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1973).

33 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 7.

34 For further information regarding the African Company of Merchants, see Julie M. Svalastog, *Mastering the Worst of Trades England's Early Africa Companies and Their Traders, 1618–1672* (Leiden: Brill, 2021); William A. Pettigrew, *Freedom's Debt The Royal African Company and the Politics of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1672-–1752* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

35 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 8.

36 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 12.

37 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 8.

38 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn or Jack Black*; Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 8.

39 David Theo Goldberg, *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 2002), p. 29.

40 Thomas Paul Bonfiglio, 'Language, Racism, and Ethnicity' in Marlis Hellinger and Anne Pauwels (eds), *Handbook of Language Communication: Diversity and Change* (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2007), p. 627.

41 Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, quoted in Thomas Paul Bonfiglio, *Mother Tongues and Nations: The Invention of the Native Speaker* (Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 2010).

42 Geraint H. Jenkins, Richard Suggett and Eryn M. Whyte, 'The Welsh Language in Early Modern Wales', in Geraint H. Jenkins (ed.), *The Welsh Language before the Industrial Revolution* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), p. 81. A similar comment is made by Janet Davies, *The Welsh Language: A History* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2014, 2nd edn), pp. 46–53, 56–8.

43 Gwyneth Tyson Roberts, *The Language of the Blue Books: Wales and Colonial Prejudice* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011); Daniel G. Williams, *Black Skin, Blue Books: African Americans and Wales 1845–1945* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012), p. 241.

44 For further information regarding this, see Williams, *Black Skin, Blue Books*, 20–74; for a discussion of Welsh abolitionism and the interaction between the Welsh people and the American Civil War, see Jerry Hunter, *I Ddeffro Ysbryd y Wlad: Robert Everett a'r ymgyrch yn erbyn caethwasanaeth Americanaidd* (Llanrwst: Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, 2007), and *Sons of Arthur, Children of Lincoln: Welsh Writing from the Civil War* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007); and for a discussion on the role of the Bible in condemning slavery among the Welsh in America, with comparisons drawn to the Welsh of the homeland, see Gareth Evans-Jones, *'Mae'r Beibl o'n*

tu': ymatebion crefyddol y Cymry yn America i gaethwasiaeth (1838–1868) (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 2022).

45 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 8.

46 Edward Long, *Candid reflections upon the judgement lately awarded by the Court of King's Bench, in Westminster-Hall, on what is commonly called the Negroe-cause, by a Planter* (London: T. Lowndes, 1772), pp. 48–9.

47 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, pp. 8–9; Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn or Jack Black*.

48 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 9.

49 My translation of Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 9.

50 My translation of Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 9.

51 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn or Jack Black*.

52 Roger Bastide, 'Color, Racism, and Christianity', *Daedalus*, 96/2 (Spring 1967), 314; Gay L. Byron, *Symbolic Blackness and Ethnic Difference in Early Christian Literature – Blackened by their Sins: Early Christian Ethno-Political Rhetorics about Egyptians, Ethiopians, Blacks and Blackness* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).

53 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn or Jack Black*; Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 10.

54 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 10.

55 Paul O'Leary, *Immigration and Integration: The Irish in Wales, 1798–1922* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), pp. 36–42, 99. For further contextualisation, see Paul O'Leary (ed.), *Irish Migrants in Modern Wales* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2004).

56 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, pp. 11–12.

57 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 13.

58 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 13.

59 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn or Jack Black*.

60 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 12.

61 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn or Jack Black*.

62 See further, for example, S. J. Smith, *The Politics of 'Race' and Residence: Citizenship, Segregation, and White Supremacy* (Oxford, Polity, 1989), p. 5.

63 'Cân y Negro Bach' was also published in many journals in the nineteenth century, at a time of great developments in anti-slavery activity, such as: *Greal y Bedyddwyr* (December 1830), *Seren Gomer* (December 1830), 369–70, *Y Cyfaill o'r Hen Wlad* (November 1839), p. 336 and *Y Cenhadwr Americanaidd* (December 1861), p. 462. The version of the poem published in American journals varied slightly from that published in Britain so as to reflect the geographical difference.

64 David Willis, 'Cyfieithu Iaith y Caethweision yn *Uncle Tom's Cabin* a Darluniadau o Siaradwyr Ail Iaith mewn Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg', *Llên Cymru*, 39 (2016), 56–72.

65 Donald Winford, 'On the Origins of African American Vernacular English – A Creolist Perspective', Part II: The Features', *Diachronica*, 15 (1998), 99.

66 H. S. Alim, J. R. Rickford and A. F. Ball (eds), *Raciolinguistics: How Language Shapes Our Ideas About Race* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

67 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, pp. 13–14.

68 Courtney A. Kurinec and Charles A. Weaver, III, '"Sounding Black": Speech Stereotypicality Activates Racial Stereotypes and Expectations about Appearance', *Frontiers in Psychology* (December 2021): *https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8740186/*.

69 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn or Jack Black*; Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 14.

70 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn or Jack Black*; Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 14.

71 My translation of Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 14.

72 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn or Jack Black*.

73 See, for example: Hilary Marlow, *Biblical Prophets and Contemporary Environmental Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 53–4; Rob Boddice, Anthropocentrism: Humans, Animals, Environments (Leiden: Boston, 2011).

74 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 15.

75 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 15.

76 Jen Wilson, *Freedom Music: Wales, Emancipation & Jazz 1850–1950* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2019), p. 52.

77 Michael Pickering, *Blackface Minstrelsy in Britain* (London and New York: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), p. 110.

78 Williams, *Black Skin, Blue Books*, pp. 21–4.

79 Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn or Jack Black*; Alltud Eifion, *John Ystumllyn*, p. 16.

80 Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London and Sydney: Pluto Press, 1984), pp. 235–6; Alan Llwyd, *Cymru Ddu: Hanes Pobl Dduon Cymru* [/] *Black Wales: A History of Black Welsh People* (Caerdydd: Hughes a'i Fab, 2005), pp. 26–31.

CHAPTER 3

The East India Company and Country Houses in the Welsh Marches

Eleanor Stephenson

Introduction

Between 1760 and 1830, six families, connected through their roles in the East India Company, purchased numerous estates in the English-Welsh border counties of Shropshire, Montgomeryshire, Monmouthshire, Radnorshire, and Brecknockshire, known collectively as the Welsh Marches. These families, Clive, Walsh, Wilkins, Fowke, Jones and Lloyd, used wealth accrued through generations of Company service in the Indian subcontinent, supplemented by various independent trades, to purchase at least 30 important estates, which secured 24 political positions and titles ranging from county sheriff to earl. These estates are annotated on the map of the Welsh Marches (fig. 1), which illustrates the geographic clustering of properties along the border of Wales and England – a line of partition that loosely follows Offa's Dyke. This research was made possible by a field trip in 2021, covering Cheshire to Monmouthshire, visiting every country house, public monument, and infrastructure connected to employees of the East India Company, to confirm, first-hand, the history of each site, interview local historians, and view visual and material sources. As Stephanie Barczewski, Kate Smith, and Margot Finn expected, this research revealed that hundreds of properties in Wales have connections to colonial fortunes.[1] The field trip also emphasised the dilapidation of country houses, which Thomas Lloyd has shown began on a large scale during the twentieth century, and as stressed by Mark Baker, verified the need for further work on country houses in Wales.[2] The intersection of the East India Company and country houses in the Welsh Marches, presents, therefore, an under-studied area of Welsh history. The estates presented in this chapter are a selection from the research database, connected to the 'Welsh East India network' – a term dubbed by Huw Bowen, and discussed by Ken Jones and Lowri Ann Rees– to describe the six families who had shared careers in India and material interests in Britain, especially local and national politics, financial bonds, kinship care and marriage, and country houses in the Welsh Marches.[3]

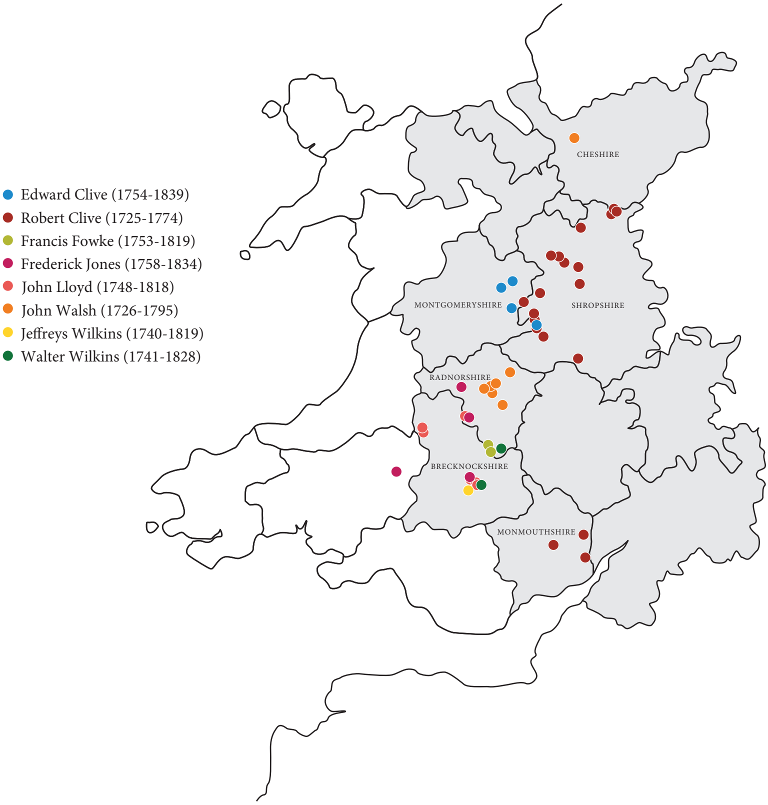
● Edward Clive (1754-1839)
● Robert Clive (1725-1774)
● Francis Fowke (1753-1819)
● Frederick Jones (1758-1834)
● John Lloyd (1748-1818)
● John Walsh (1726-1795)
● Jeffreys Wilkins (1740-1819)
● Walter Wilkins (1741-1828)
CHESHIRE
MONTGOMERYSHIRE
SHROPSHIRE
RADNORSHIRE
BRECKNOCKSHIRE
MONMOUTHSHIRE

Figure 1. Annotated map showing landed estates purchased by the 'Welsh East India Network' in the Welsh Marches between 1760 and 1830.

Although some figures in this group are well known, such as Robert Clive (1725–74) or 'Clive of India', many are not, despite them returning to Britain as some of the wealthiest men in the country. This chapter presents the first comprehensive study of the properties and associated political positions this network gained. The final part of this chapter will look at some of the cultural and industrial impacts that colonial wealth had in the Marches by visually analysing an estate portrait. To consolidate social and political positions, these families commissioned leading British architects, landscape designers, and artists, to fashion country houses to reflect their new wealth, which included paintings of themselves on their estates. The opulence and splendour of the interior and exterior of the country house, the surrounding landscape, and even the owners are illustrated or indicated in the estate portrait. Therefore, these paintings are the ultimate visual source for unravelling how the East India Company's employees shaped the politics, economy, and culture of the Welsh Marches, the legacies of which continue to shape such landscapes today.

The East India Company and Country Houses

The English East India Company received its first royal charter from Queen Elizabeth in 1600 to exploit trade with East, South East and South Asia. From its beginnings as a monopolistic trading body, the Company came to act as the agent for British imperialism in India in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This transformation, as shown by Philip J. Stern and Bowen, began in 1757 and culminated with the birth of the British Raj in 1858.[4] Through the trade of tea, spices, opium, diamonds, and other commodities, the Company came to establish colonial rule over large areas of India, exercising military control with its army to enforce heavy taxation and carry out officially sanctioned looting. Despite its proceeds, the Company offered its employees nominal salaries, allowing them instead to trade on their own accounts in India and 'beyond the seas' so long as they did not infringe on the Company's trade monopoly.[5] This Company policy led to an abuse of power, corruption, and extortion, making numerous employees, or nabobs (a corruption of the Hindu word for ruler, *nawab*), extremely rich, and those that survived their tenures in the East Indies were able to return to Britain with a substantial fortune.[6] These colonial fortunes were often used to purchase landed properties in Britain.[7] The driving motivation behind buying country houses in the relative backwaters of the Welsh Marches was to gain local and national political influence, and thus politics connected the landscape of the borders to the colonial metropole, London, and from there with the Indian subcontinent.

As a visual signifier of wealth, the landed estate and country house offer an entry point to examine the presence of colonial wealth in the Welsh Marches. Until the early nineteenth century, agriculture, and therefore arable land, was viewed as the mainspring of the economy in Britain, a paramount creator of wealth, which justified the political and social hegemony of the landowner. Social and economic historians, Michael Bush, G. E. Mingay and James Rosenheim, have analysed the dependence that the English aristocracy had on their estates as 'not simply a source of income but also an expression of lordship, a means of local influence and a mark of social position'.[8] As Kari Boyd McBride points out, by the end of the seventeenth century, 'land was to become, increasingly and exclusively, the sign of legitimacy', regardless of whether or not the estate turned a profit.[9] Among the newly rich nabobs, there was, therefore, a strong incentive to convert their wealth into land, irrespective of financial benefits. In her study of country houses with connections to the British Empire, Barczewski argues that nabobs were drawn to the concept that landed properties could provide economic 'independence' via agricultural rents, thus linking financial stability with the permanence and immovable nature of land.[10] The aristocratic identity that country seats carried, in addition to the political licence and widespread deference enjoyed by their owners, made landed property the ultimate investment for those looking to join the echelons of eighteenth-century British society, which the employees of the East India Company, usually the second son of rural gentry families, were desperately trying to do.

In addition to the social imperative, country houses in the Marches presented nabobs with an unprecedented opportunity to gain local and national political power. Bowen, Peter Thomas, and Philip Jenkins note that electoral influence appertained to the landed property rather than individuals in eighteenth-century Britain, and therefore, the political interest would survive if a significant estate passed intact to a new owner.[11] As a result, the Commons witnessed a sharp rise in merchant members after 1760, increasing from one-ninth to one-quarter by the early nineteenth century – a period correlated with peak imperial plunder in India and subsequent property purchases in Britain.[12] Landed estates in the Welsh Marches were strategic purchases: constituencies with few wealthy resident families allowed newcomers with adequate capital and contacts to gain unchallenged seats in Parliament.[13] The estates of the Welsh Marches, therefore, are spaces with complex histories, which when treated (with care) as artefacts can be used to expand, indeed, globalise the history of Wales.

Robert Clive and Country Houses in the Welsh Marches

Robert Clive was chief among the nabobs to take advantage of the political situation in the Marches. Clive was born into a minor landed gentry family from Styche Hall, Shropshire. In 1744, his father, Richard Clive (*c.*1693–1771), acquired a 'factor' or writer position for Robert in the Company's civil service in Madras.[14] During the first of three stints in India, from 1744 to 1753, Clive made his way up through the Company, from writer to captain of the Company's army. In 1753, Clive married Margaret Maskelyne (1735–1817), the sister of his fellow officer Edmund Maskelyne (1728–75), at St Mary's Church in Madras, and subsequently returned to England. Following an unsuccessful political career in Britain, Clive returned to India in 1755, as deputy governor of Fort St David, Cuddalore and then lieutenant colonel of the British army.[15] Under Clive's leadership, the Company won the Battle of Plassey in 1757 against the Nawab of Bengal and his French allies, the French East India Company, which led to the seizure of Bengal and the division of £638,575 of 'Plassey Plunder' among the army officials, with Clive pocketing an estimated £211,500.[16] In 1760, Clive returned to Britain with a fortune of at least £401,102, which consisted of £230,000 in Dutch bills, £43,000 in Company bills and £30,000 in diamonds.[17] In addition, Clive had negotiated an annual *jaghire* (land grant) of £27,000 from Mir Jafar (*c.*1691–1765), the first dependent *nawab* of Bengal for the

Company.[18] During his third and final trip to India, from 1765 to 1767, Clive returned as governor of Fort William in Calcutta, reforming and overseeing the administration of the Company.[19] This included the Treaty of Allahabad in 1765, which marked the political and constitutional beginnings of British Imperial involvement in India. This included the *Diwani* rights, in which the Mughal emperor Shah Alam II (1728–1806) granted the company the right to collect taxes from the thirty million people of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, yielding a revenue of £4,000,000 annually.[20] Throughout his lucrative career in India, Clive remitted and used the fortunes he amassed to purchase landed properties in Britain, particularly in the Welsh Marches.

Country Houses in Shropshire

Clive began making strategic purchases in Shropshire, with the aim of placing his family and friends in Parliament, in 1761. He was aided by John Walsh (1726–95), a close friend, relative, and from 1767, private secretary. Walsh came from a family of merchants based in Madras, and through his father, Joseph Walsh (1694–1731), the governor of Fort St George, he had secured a position as a writer in 1742 and later worked alongside Clive.[21] In 1761, Clive purchased the Montfort Estate, near Shrewsbury, from Thomas, second Lord Montfort (1733–99), for £70,000.[22] He enlarged the estate with further purchases, including Alderton Hall and soon after built Ensdon House.[23] These properties secured his political influence in Shrewsbury. That same year, Clive returned to Parliament as a second member for Shrewsbury, holding the seat until he died in 1774, and in 1762 he gained the position of mayor of Shrewsbury.[24] As MP and mayor, and later as Recorder for Shrewsbury and Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire (1772–4), Clive needed an ‘accommodation address’ in Shrewsbury town centre. In 1762, Clive began renting No. 3 College Hill, subsequently known as Clive House, although it is not known if he ever lived there.

In 1763 and 1764, Clive made further purchases in Shropshire, in Bishop’s Castle, a market town near the border of Wales and England. Until the Reform Act of 1832, Bishop’s Castle was considered a ‘rotten borough’, with a tiny electorate – a maximum of 150 voters – and the right to send two elected burgesses as MPs to the Commons, and thus could be used by a patron to gain unrepresentative influence.[25] Landlords' political sway over the electorate tenanting on the estate, frequently coerced with alcoholic or cash bribes, meant land in rotten boroughs was an attractive investment for those aspiring to gain political positions. Following the death of Francis Child, MP for Bishop's Castle from 1761 to 1763, Clive began purchasing Bishop's Castle and other Walcot estates.[26] This included the castle site on which James Brydges, First Duke of Chandos (1674–1744), had built the manor and Castle Inn in 1718. After endeavours to salvage the South Sea Company and Royal African Company – Britain's chief slave trade companies – failed in the 1720s, Chandos was forced to sell his estates to his nephew, John Walcot (1697–1765), for £7000.[27] Further bankruptcy forced Walcot in turn to sell his estates in Bishop's Castle, including the Elizabethan mansion, Walcot Hall, to Clive for £91,800 in 1764. Clive quickly set about rebuilding the property, appointing the architect William Chambers (1723–96) from 1764 to 1767, and in 1774 the landscape gardener William Emes (*c.*1729–1803).[28] Along with nearby Oakly Park, which Clive purchased from Lord Powis in 1771 for £98,690, and also immediately remodelled, these properties were the most significant acquisitions in the Marches, collectively costing an estimated £26,735,670 in 2023.[29]

These properties also had significant political value and, as Clive had intended, eventually 'secure[d] … the Borough of Bishop's Castle'.[30] Although the purchase of Walcot Hall was not completed until 14 May 1764, interest was paid in September 1763, which allowed Clive to place his cousin and political aid, George Clive (1720–79), as a candidate against Walter Waring of Owlbury Hall.[31] George Clive won the election on 24 November 1763, securing eighty votes against Waring's fifty-three, and held the seat until 1779. The election bankrupted Waring, and in 1767 he was forced to sell his Shropshire properties to Clive, which included Owlbury Hall, Camlad Valley, Churchstoke and Hyssington, for £30,500, of which £30,000 was paid directly to the Bank of England to clear his debts. Purchasing Waring's properties allowed Clive to place another relative in Parliament, installing his younger brother, William Clive (1745–1825), as the second MP for Bishop's Castle in 1768, and after 1779, as first member until 1819. It also allowed Clive to place his private secretary and close friend Henry Strachey (1736–1810), as second member for Bishop's Castle from 1774 to 1778, and again from 1780 to 1802. Furthermore, Oakly Park secured political influence in Ludlow, and from 1774 to 1794 Edward Clive (1754–1839), Clive's first son, returned as second MP. These seats solidified the Whig political alliance in the Marches, which had begun under the First Earl of Powis, Henry Arthur Herbert (1703–72), who supervised matters for government in north Wales and Shropshire on behalf of the Prime Minister, Thomas Pelham-Holles (1693–1768), Duke of Newcastle.[32] In 1759, while Clive was still in India, his father Richard received the Montgomery borough seat from Lord Powis, which he held until his death.[33] This favour began the cross-border political alliance of the Clive and Herbert families, which was central to Whig influence in the Marches.

Country Houses in Montgomeryshire

In 1770, Clive began pursuing estates with parliamentary importance in Montgomeryshire, beginning with the Rockley and neighbouring Heightley estates from indebted owners.[34] These acquisitions consolidated his earlier purchases in Shropshire and his alliance with Lord Powis.[35] After buying Oakly Park, Clive began discussing with Powis the prospect of uniting their families through marriage. In 1784, after Clive's death, Powis's daughter Henrietta Herbert (1758–1830) married Edward Clive and, after he had served as governor of Madras from 1798 to 1803, the couple returned to England and settled at Powis Castle.[36] In 1804, Edward was elevated to the Earldom of Powis (of the second creation) and became Lord Lieutenant of Montgomeryshire. Edward continued to invest in the built environment of Montgomeryshire, commissioning a local office in Welshpool in 1800, named Clive House, and appeasing constituents by restoring St Nicholas Church in Montgomery in 1816, paying £1,700 for the buttressed tower, and restoring the upper floor of the Town Hall on Broad Street in 1828.[37] The connection between the estate and surrounding public spaces warrants further study, as it reveals how nabobs used patronage of public architecture to further their political power and influence in the local area.

Country Houses in Monmouthshire

From 1767 to 1772, Clive continued to work with George Clive, Henry Strachey, John Walsh, and numerous agents, especially Richard Price, to secure properties with political interests in Wales, particularly in Monmouthshire and Radnorshire. Beginning with Monmouthshire, a county divided by Tory and Whig interests until the election of 1771, Clive instructed his surveyor, 'Mr. Crowe', to locate properties that would topple the young Duke of Beaufort's attempts to reassert his family's electoral influence.[38] The surveyor identified the estates of Valentine Morris, former governor of Saint Vincent and owner of enslaved Africans and plantations in Antigua, as landed properties that would 'command … at least one member of parliament'. Following relentless negotiations, in 1768, Clive purchased the Piercefield and Usk estates for £43,000.[39] During 1768 and 1769, to strengthen his new Monmouthshire interests, Clive made at least seven smaller purchases, totalling £5,400 in the same areas of Usk and Trellech.[40] However, in 1771, Clive had changed his electoral strategy, turning his focus to Shropshire and Montgomeryshire. In 1772, he sold all his Monmouthshire estates to the Duke of Beaufort for £57,500.[41] Clive made similar decisions in Radnorshire, directed by Walsh and Price.

Country Houses in Radnorshire

In February 1768, Walsh ordered his agent, Price, to purchase 'all estates in Radnorshire and that neighbourhood that would yield 3.5 per cent', and soon afterwards increased this yield to 4 per cent.[42] Despite complaints from his solicitor in London that 'the files of these Welsh Estates' were an 'embarrassment', and that he should be dissuaded 'from having anything to do with [such] small purchases', Walsh remained optimistic about profiting from properties in Wales, for himself, and Clive.[43] As Walsh's heir reflected, he had 'bought [the Radnorshire estates] with a view to some electioneering interest in unison with Lord Clive', as the size of the county gave 'him the prospect of acquiring parliamentary influence'.[44] Like Clive, Walsh had also gained a fortune from the 'Plassey Plunder', receiving £56,250 worth of loot after the fall of Sirajud-Daula (1733–57), the last independent nawab of Bengal.[45] By 1760, Walsh had remitted £140,000 from India, spending £72,000 on land alone between 1765 and 1775.[46] These properties, and a recommendation from Clive, secured Walsh the seat at Worcester from 1761 to 1780. In 1761, Walsh began by purchasing Hockenhull Hall in Cheshire for £7,500, from the Wishaw family.[47] However, by 1771, Walsh had sold the estate to Thomas Brock, signifying his shift in focus to houses in Wales.[48] In March 1768, Walsh purchased the Hartstonge estates, also known as Hartstongue, in Radnorshire from Sir Henry Hartstonge (*c.*1725–97) for £13,450.[49] This included the Hartstonge family seat at Trewern, a Tudor mansion, and the nearby Busmore manor.[50] In 1768, Walsh also purchased several farms and land in Cefnllys and Trewern and the Manor of Cefnllys, which Sir Standish Hartstonge (1627–99) had bought from the Kent family for £1,450 in 1697.[51] In the spring of 1768, Walsh purchased the manor of Coed Swydd and properties in Llanfihangel Rhydithon, Cefnllys and Llandegley, comprising 2,067 acres, at a cost of £12,908, from Goddard Haagen, a bankrupt London merchant.[52] Walsh also acquired properties in Cefnllys and Llangynllo, for £2,600 from the bankrupt Duke of Chandos.[53] Writing to Price in April 1769, Walsh declared that 'the election influence of these purchases will not be of much weight with me'.[54] Walsh sought to profit economically rather than politically from purchases in Wales, but on Clive's behalf, Walsh continued to seek information on the political influence of properties, namely the Maeslough estate in Radnorshire.

Clive also purchased properties with Walsh from Hartstonge in 1768, and from 1768 to 1773, owned the Maeslough estate. In February 1767, George Clive advised that if he purchased the estate from Sir Humphrey Howarth (*c.*1684–1755), Clive 'might command the County'.[55] Howarth had served as Whig MP for Radnorshire from 1722 to 1755, but this had bankrupted him, and in 1755 he left the Maeslough estate encumbered with a mortgage of £26,000.[56] The survey of the estate produced by Mr Crowe under Clive, known as the Clive Survey, illustrated the size of the estate, covering 1,545 acres and 12 perches in Radnorshire, and 673 acres 3 roods and 27 perches in Breconshire.[57] The seat, known as Maeslough House, had remained derelict for over a decade. After a visit in October 1767, Walsh reported to Clive that '[t]he Country is beautiful but the house mean & in the worst repair: in short it is only fit to be converted into a Farm'. Regardless, Walsh continued to recommend the property, as it promised political influence and an opportunity to place another ally in Parliament, 'Chase [Price] must be the man', the brother of Clive's agent.[58] After negotiating with the Duke of Portland, who in December 1767 had already advanced £34,100 for the estate, the purchase was finally completed in March 1768 by George Clive paying off Howarth's debts.[59] Chase Price (1731–77) was returned unopposed as MP for Radnorshire in the 1768 general election, which he publicly declared was in the interest of Clive.[60]

By early 1770, however, Clive had decided that the repairs outweighed the political influence and annual yield and chose to sell the estate. After viewing the house in April, Sir Thomas Claye, a client of Lord Barrington (1717–93), did not 'choice to live in it' due to the disrepair.[61] In August 1770, Clive finally received an offer for the Radnorshire estate from John Wilkins (1713–84) on behalf of his son Walter Wilkins (1741–1828), then working as the first Governor of the Chittagong province. From 1758, Wilkins had steadily risen through the ranks in Bengal, from writer to member of the Governor's Council.[62] Although the offer was reasonable, and included the 'Survey & Law' charges, it did entail a long wait as there were issues remitting Wilkins's money from Bengal.[63] George Clive reported to Robert Clive in September 1770, that, after making a down-payment of £10,000 at Lady Day 1771, Wilkins was 'to have bills for the remainder by the first ships from Bengal and will endeavour to get them discounted as soon as they are accepted, which will conclude the purchase by midsummer'.[64] This strategy failed, however, and Wilkins claimed in a letter to George Clive that he had borrowed £20,000 from a 'friend' in Bristol in order to complete the transaction.[65] The bond, dated 15 March 1771, shows that Wilkins borrowed £40,000 from his 'friend' Henry Swymmer (d.1774), one of Bristol's leading sugar merchants and in 1764, mayor of Bristol, demonstrating that the issue of remitting money from India was harder than Wilkins let on.[66] This bond also points to the breadth and impact of colonial connections during the period, as Wilkins sought aid from a merchant profiting from the Atlantic slavery system.

On 31 March 1772, Wilkins requested permission to resign his service for the Company to attend 'private affairs [that] required his presence in Europe'.[67] By early 1773, the purchase was complete, costing the Wilkins family a total of £34,000, with the prospect of £1,300 annual yield.[68] Despite its downfall, the property retained its electoral influence, as Wilkins was chosen as sheriff of Radnorshire from 1774 to 1775, succeeded by his brother Thomas in 1818, and elected as MP for Radnorshire from 1796 to 1828, except for one year from 1800. Wilkins used his position as MP to petition on regional agricultural issues, but in 1824 and 1826, engaged with the British Abolitionist movement by presenting four anti-slavery petitions to Parliament, which contributed to the 1833 act abolishing slavery throughout the British colonies, excluding 'the Territories in the Possession of the East India Company, or to the Island of Ceylon, or to the Island of Saint Helena'.[69] Although John Wilkins had relied on a merchant to purchase the estate, towards the end of his life, Wilkins used the political sway of landownership to support emancipation.

In addition to purchasing property and engaging with politics, Walter Wilkins used his fortune to help other Company servants acquire estates in Wales. In 1815, Wilkins lent money to Francis Fowke (1753–1819) to buy the estate neighbouring Maeslough, known as Boughrood.[70] The Fowke family, like the Walsh's, had worked in Madras for several generations. His grandfather, Randall Fowke (1673–1745), was a senior councillor of the Madras Council, and his father, Joseph Fowke (1716–1800), rose to mayor of Madras in 1745, before marrying Elizabeth Walsh, sister of John Walsh, in 1750 and returning to England.[71] A year later, their first son, Francis, was born and was baptised at St George's, Hanover Square, London. Following Elizabeth's death in 1760, Francis and his brother were raised by John Walsh, living between Chesterfield Street and Warfield Park, and his younger sister, Margaret, was cared for by the Clive family, living between Berkeley Square, Walcot, and Oakly.[72] In 1773, Walsh arranged for Francis to join the Company as a writer. By 1775, Fowke was appointed resident at Benares, to implement the provisions of the Treaty of Fyzabad. In 1786, Fowke returned to England with a fortune of at least £70,000, founded on trade in diamonds, opium, and government contracts. During negotiations to purchase Boughrood, Fowke tenanted part of the neighbouring mansion of Y Dderw.[73] His property purchases also had political consequences: in 1795, Fowke was chosen as sheriff of Radnorshire, succeeded by his son-in-law, John Benn (later Benn-Walsh, 1759–1825), in 1798. After his death, the Fowke family's mounting debts led his son, also Francis, to sell the Radnorshire estates, including Boughrood and Llanstephan, to the Wilkins family for £22,540 and further family land in Cefnllys to Walsh family for £32,353.[74] Through kinship care and patronage, this network of East India Company employees transformed their colonial wealth into significant landholdings and property throughout the Welsh Marches.

When John Walsh died in 1795, he had no direct heir, and left his estates to his ward, Margaret Fowke (1758–1836), on the condition that her husband John Benn and their son adopt the name Walsh. John Benn, like Walsh, was an East India Company man, rising from a writer to assistant to the Benares resident, who was then Francis Fowke his future brother-in-law. When Benn and Margaret married in 1787, the dowry of £10,000 came from opium contracts for the Company's China trade, partly paid for by Walsh, with £3,000 from Margaret herself.[75] When the couple returned to Britain, Benn had accumulated £80,000 through bribes and opium contracts which he invested in Welsh land.[76] In addition to the estates inherited from Walsh, by 1821 Benn-Walsh had acquired fifty-nine parcels of land in Radnorshire.[77] When John Benn-Walsh (1798–1881) came of age, he inherited the estates and made further property purchases in Cumberland, gaining the title, Baron Ormathwaite. In sources recounting the sale of the Ormathwaite estates in 1945, land in Radnorshire alone totalled 11,977 acres, 4 per cent of the entire county, and an additional 28,000 acres across the Welsh Marches.[78] These deeply entwined families shared an ambition to profit from colonial exploitation in the Indian subcontinent and invest in property in Welsh Marches. By collectively owning large portions of the Welsh countryside, this network controlled and shaped the rural landscape and country houses of the Marches.

The East India Company and the Country House Portrait

The wealth these men accrued through the Company's exploitation of Indian land and people, and the private trades and bribes that supplemented Company salaries, was used to gain social and political power by owning vast landscapes in the Welsh Marches. To solidify all they had achieved, nabobs commissioned leading architects, and interior and landscape designers, to design and decorate their homes, and commissioned painters to record all this splendour. The estate portrait, John Bonehill has shown, emerged in the late seventeenth century with the growing importance of land and its ownership to expressions of social status and political power. By the 1760s, this artistic tradition had widespread reach, offering the patron a potent visual expression of their societal position.[79] The rise in estate portraiture coincides with the height of colonial plunder permeating British country houses, and therefore, as a visual source, these paintings illustrate the cultural consequences of colonial wealth on British landscapes. Indeed, the estate portrait is evidence of the material realities of empire at home. By looking closely at estate portraits of country houses in Wales, it is possible to see how colonialism shaped the landscape of the Welsh Marches.

In the summer of 1776, before departing on his Grand Tour of Italy, the landscape painter Thomas Jones (1742–1803) returned to his family home, Pencerrig, in Radnorshire, and in his own words, 'kept close to Painting with few intervals, and finished the Task I had imposed upon my self'. The artist completed several paintings of his local landscape that summer, including a painting of Maeslough estate for Walter Wilkins, for which the artist received 30 guineas.[80] 'A View of Maesclough in Radnorshire, near the Hay', was exhibited at the Society of Artists in London the following year, among four other landscape paintings of South Wales, and has since been shown at the National Museum Cardiff and Manchester Art Gallery.[81] Although Ann Sumner and Greg Smith have identified the figures in the foreground as Walter Wilkins and his wife, Catherine Hayward (*c.*1754–90), there is no mention of persons in Jones's memoir, nor in the description of the painting in the exhibition catalogue. It is possible that the English painter John Hamilton Mortimer (1740–79),

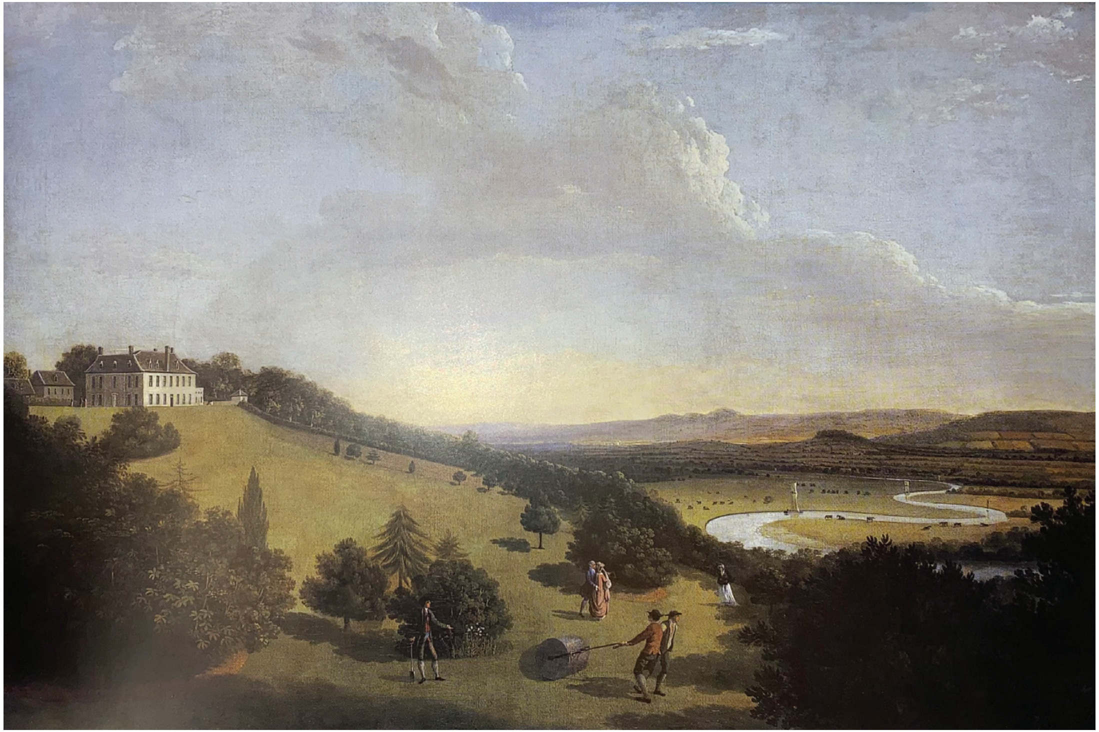

Figure 2. Thomas Jones, *Maeslough House* (1776), oil on canvas, 74 × 110 cm, priv. coll.

who frequently 'introduced' figures in Jones's landscapes, added the figures after Wilkins had acquired the work.[82] But Jones's landscape alone portrays Wilkins, particularly his ambitions for the local landscape and industry.

The composition of Jones's landscape, with the house to the left, emphasises both the boundless acreage of the estate and the picturesque views thereof. Maeslough is depicted as a dazzlingly white country house, with seven-by-five bays and a roof walk, sitting on a ridge at Glasbury overlooking the Wye Valley. The Clive Survey, which was included in the estate purchase, is prefaced by a watercolour illustration of the property, which shows a neoclassical balustraded balcony used to enjoy the vistas offered by its position.[83] In the year Jones painted Maeslough, the estate covered 2,500 acres of land, including 1,400 acres in the Painscastle district, 150 acres in Colwyn and 670 acres in Breconshire. In early 1777, Wilkins married Catherine Hayward, heiress of Wallsworth Hall in Gloucestershire, thus extending the Wilkins family holdings. Indeed, the marriage settlement stipulated that Wilkins had to continue purchasing land in Radnorshire and Breconshire, with a rental of £100 or more, thereby binding the union to land ownership.[84] The family's interest in land continued; Wilkins's son significantly enlarged the estate by making 166 land deals amounting to an additional 3,000 acres.[85] In addition to the economic and political rewards, landownership offered the Wilkins family social prestige. The ostentatious vistas seen in the painting stress the social dimension of landownership: wherever the eye is drawn, from the house to the horizon, the landscape is under their control and, therefore, the painting conveys power and permanence within the area.

This display of landownership is indicative of the development of European landscape painting. As enclosure accelerated and the English landowning class consolidated its holdings, a national landscape genre developed, inspired by the French and Italian landscape artists that the Grand Touring aristocracy was familiar with, Claude Lorrain, Nicolas Poussin and his brother-in-law Gaspard Dughet, and Salvator Rosa.[86] These landscape paintings, Martin Warnke has shown, were used 'to provide evidence of ownership, like an entry in a land register'.[87] The estate portrait was a means of surveying one's holdings, a visual language employed to legitimise ownership and solidify one's place in society. The painting of Maeslough not only deals with landownership in this way but also alludes to Wilkins's work on improving the estate.

The three gardeners seen in the foreground of the painting, mark another important change in the development of landscape painting, and in particular, landscape design. In the 1750s, the English garden gave way to the landscape park, which encroached up to the walls of the house, as seen in Jones's painting. Under the influence of 'Capability' Brown, all traces of formality and symmetry, remnants of the Baroque Garden or *jardin à la française,* were removed and replaced by wild and natural trees, serpentine lakes, rolling hills and architectural features, such as classical temples and Gothic ruins.[88] Nature, wrote Roy Strong, called for some 'rearranging'.[89] By comparing Jones's painting and the Clive Survey, it is evident that Wilkins made considerable changes to the landscape design. Though there was already a small lake, surrounded by trees in the non-arable field named *Weglodd y Pwll* in front of the house, all other Brownian features were installed by Wilkins. He replaced the formal garden and canal aligning the front of the house with open fields sloping down to the Wye, and installed a ha-ha behind the house, which still survives.

The River Wye, seen to the right of the composition, meandering in the painting, from its source in the Cambrian Mountains to its mouth in the Severn estuary, became an instrumental site and sight of the 'Picturesque' movement in Wales, spearheaded by local *literati* William Gilpin, Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight.[90] In the 1790s, Jones was commissioned by the writer James Baker to produce five aquatints to illustrate a guidebook that was part of the plethora of highly romanticising literature popularising the Wye.[91] The literary and visual popularity of the Wye encouraged a tourist industry in South Wales that flourished symbiotically with the development of public transportation. Indeed, industry in the Marches was closely connected to both the work of local artists and writers and to wealthy nabobs, such as Wilkins.

On the River Wye depicted in Jones's painting, are three white whisps of paint, which portray traditional 'up-river trows' barges, an experiment in the navigation of the Wye which Wilkins had financed. The typical square main and topsail rig that these vessels would have carried is accurately portrayed by Jones.[92] Although these barges ultimately failed, this feature of the painting points to the diverse investments made by newly rich Company servants, particularly in local industry. In December 1767, whilst in Bengal, Wilkins applied for a bill of exchange equal to £1,000 sterling, which was partly used to finance his family's interests in local ironworks.[93] In 1757, Wilkins's sister, Anne, married John Maybery, a Breconshire ironmaster with a recent lease for mineral rights over a large area at Hirwaun, and the families formed an ironworks partnership.[94] Following the recession in the iron trade in the mid-1770s the partnership was in debt.[95] But Walter Wilkins's and his brother, Jeffreys, another Company servant, worked together to pay off this debt.[96] Through kinship patronage, Walter and Jeffreys Wilkins's East Indies fortune shaped the industrialisation of the Welsh landscape.

In 1778, Walter and Jeffreys founded the Brecon Bank and became partners in Wilkins, Lloyd, Powell & Co. with John Lloyd (1748–1818). Lloyd was another Company servant from the Marches, whose successful career as captain of the *Manship* allowed him to rent and purchase properties in his home county of Breconshire, including the Old Oak House, Brecon, and the 3,800-acre Abercynrig estate, which bordered Jeffreys estate, Maesderwen.[97] After attempts to develop the Dinas lead mine in 1794, Lloyd followed Jeffreys in becoming one of the four shareholders of the Brecknock Boat and Canal Company, which monopolised trade on the local canal and owned a colliery at Clydach. Both men also invested in the Watton 'railway', the local tramway.[98] This network of Company servants, and their accumulated capital and investments in local infrastructure, especially public transportation, supported Wales's burgeoning tourism industry – visitors searching for 'Picturesque' scenes along the Wye – which continued to grow in the next century.

The landscape and figures represent the coloniality of the landscape, house, and the cultural and industrial consequence of East Indies wealth in Wales, but the painting also prompted a series of colonial connections. After graduating from Jesus College, Oxford in 1761, Thomas Jones's family suggested that he join the East India Company's navy, but he rejected this idea, reflecting in his memoir: 'No – thought I – these [cousins] shall never … degrade me into a Cabin-boy'.[99] Instead, Jones trained as an artist, first at Shipley's Drawing School in 1761 and then in 1763, he joined his fellow Welshman Richard Wilson

(1714–82) as a paying pupil for two years. But Frederick Jones (1758–1834), Thomas's younger brother, joined the Company as a cadet in 1777. The entrance fee to join the Company, or *douceur*, which for an army cadet was 500 guineas, was paid for by Walter Wilkins shortly after Jones's painting of Maeslough was finished.[100] This painting, therefore, introduced another young Welsh esquire to the Company.

Returning from India in 1788, Frederick Jones travelled extensively in Wales, residing at his family's estates, especially Pencerrig and Penybont Hall, the latter owned by his brother, Middleton Jones.[101] In his diary accounts from 1790 to 1804, Frederick Jones mentions the Wilkins's numerous times, from visits to Maeslough to receiving gifts: in October 1793, for example, one entry reads, 'Wilkin's eccentricities – sending to me violin, etc.'[102] Jones also lent money to members of the Wilkins family: for example, in May 1796, he loaned £1,000 and in 1804, another £100 was advanced to Walter Wilkins's son.[103] The exact amount of wealth Frederick Jones accumulated in India is unknown. But the estates he purchased, including Llwynbarried and land in Lanrafon, and a large property in the Struet, Brecon, indicate that Jones retired from the Company as an affluent and, therefore, influential man in Wales.

E. C. B. Oliver interprets Frederick Jones's loan to Wilkins as a sign of his political support during the general election of 1796, in which Wilkins was returned as Whig MP for Radnorshire. Despite turning down becoming sheriff of Radnorshire in 1807, Jones's diaries reveal a keen political interest as he joined canvassing tours with Wilkins, Morgan Evans, and Richard Price (1773–1861) – the son of Robert Clive's land agent, in 1800 and 1801.[104] The continued alliance of Wilkins and Jones points to the connections of Company servants across Breconshire and Radnorshire, and the Powys counties more broadly. In addition to acting as patron for Jones and placing his brother, Jeffreys, in Patna, Wilkins sponsored Jones's nephew, Humphrey Humphreys, to join the Company as a 'Cadet on ye Bombay Establishment' in 1798. Jones had worked in tandem with Wilkins in supporting Humphreys, first by clearing his debts and then writing 'letters of introduction to a variety of people' in Bombay, now Mumbai.[105] Jones's painting was the catalyst in a series of colonial connections, introductions which contributed to a growing number of Welsh men and women in eighteenth-century India.

The cultural impacts of colonial wealth on Wales, and Britain, are so hidden from view that it requires a detailed investigation of sources to illuminate such tangled histories. After some careful unpicking, this estate portrait, therefore, offers a viewfinder into the late-eighteenth-century Welsh East India network, and the impacts that these families had on the built environment, art, and landscapes of the Welsh Marches.

Conclusion

In the space of seventy years, six families, connected over several generations by places in Wales and Indian subcontinent, power, politics, money, and marriage, purchased more than thirty significant estates in the Welsh Marches and thus gained twenty-four political positions and titles ranging from county sheriff to earl. This chapter has shown that politics and social status, (in other words, power rather than just profitability), drove the demand for country houses in the relative backwaters of the Welsh Marches. Even though Maeslough House had remained derelict for over a decade, and John Walsh reported on the terrible state of the house, Robert Clive pushed for the sale as it promised political influence. When John Wilkins chose the house for his son two years later, then still in India, he too would have seen the state of the property, but once again the political and social importance of the estate outweighed its economic burdens. This history, therefore, is tied to the structures and systems of British politics and society. Another trend shown in this study is the extent to which these nabobs spent their fortunes on the Welsh landscape. As discussed, by 1760 John Walsh had remitted £140,000 from India, which included his portion of the 'Plassey Plunder', of which he spent £72,000 on land alone. In other words, Walsh spent more than half of his East Indies fortune on properties in the Marches. Therefore, the houses, landscapes and paintings of these estates are products and physical reminders of colonialism. The projection of tranquillity and untarnished beauty at these country seats directly opposed the arduous, messy, and at times, bloody means by which these spaces were born and survived.

The fortunes made by Company servants permeated all aspects of the British economy, politics, society, and culture. This chapter has discussed a few areas in which these connections are evident in Wales: the development of the agriculture, mining and tourism industries, and landscape design and painting. The modern history of Wales, its local industries and cultural output, therefore, have ties to the history of South Asia. The picturesque scenes of the river Wye, produced by artists such as Thomas Jones, became a blueprint for the colonial picturesque, which in Jeffrey Auerbach's words, homogenised colonised spaces to convey uniformity and control, which was often unfounded.[106] By presenting the work of the Welsh painter Thomas Jones, this chapter has shown that the picturesque in Britain was tangled with colonialism in the East Indies. When compared with the rise of the colonial picturesque in the nineteenth century, landscape painting and prints of Wales are further complicated by British Imperialism across the globe.

The six families central to the Welsh East India network were also connected by their shared experiences of living in Wales and India, and at times, interests in the cultures of these places. Although the relationship between these Company men, and their families, with the Indian subcontinent was principally commercial, some of them were deeply engaged with local culture and history. During his residency at Benares, Francis Fowke and his younger sister Margaret, collected and transcribed Indian music. Indeed, Francis worked closely with one kalāwant bīn-player, Jivan Shah, comparing the Indian string instrument and the European harpsichord. The findings were presented in Fowke's tract 'On the Vina or Indian Lyre' (1784) and published in the first issue of the *Journal of the Asiatic Society*.[107] Soon after, Henrietta Herbert, Edward Clive's wife, travelled 1,100 miles in a seven-month journey around southern India with her two daughters and an entourage of some 750 people and 14 elephants, to study Persian verbs, collect botanical and mineral specimens, and meet the family of the recently defeated Tipu Sultan, in Seringapatam. Many of the plants, birds, insects, and minerals she collected were sent to Wales, and what remains, is at Powis Castle and the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff.[108] Further research could establish how South Asian culture shaped the lives of Welsh men and women connected to the Company, and how in turn, their shared interests in Indian culture shaped art, architecture, music, and collections in Wales and the Marches.

By focusing on a brief historical period, a small network, and a region of Britain, this study shows how deeply entwined a mere slice of British society was to colonial exploits in India. The forensic look at the Welsh East India Network, their source of wealth, properties, political and cultural interests, offers an example for other historians to study the connections between regions of Britain and the East India Company. Furthermore, a close reading reveals the interconnected realities of the imperial centre and the periphery. Indeed, this study hopes to contribute to the disruption of the historiographical boundaries built by the British Empire, toward a globalised reading of Welsh history. By presenting the connections between the East India Company and country houses in the Welsh Marches, this chapter has shown that Wales was shaped by colonial exploitation in the Indian Subcontinent and offers opportunities for further research.

Notes

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106 Jeffrey Auerbach, ‘The picturesque and the homogenisation of empire’, *The British Art Journal*, 5/1 (2004); Sean P. Smith, ‘Aestheticizing Empire: the colonial picturesque as a modality of travel’, *Studies in Travel Writing*, 23/3 (2019), 280–97; Ian McLean, ‘The Expanded Field of the Picturesque: Contested Identities and Empire in Sydney-Cove 1794’, in T. Barringer, G. Quilley and D. Fordham (eds), *Art and the British Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp. 23–37; Elizabeth Mjelde, ‘The Imperial Wye’, *Romanticism*, 19/2 (2013), 153.

107 Bob Fowke, *Music, Diamonds and Conspiracy: Fowkes and Friends in India, 1701–1788* (Oxford and Shrewsbury, 2021); Katherine Butler Schofield, *Music and Musicians in Late Mughal India: Histories of the Ephemeral, 1748–1858* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023).

108 In the journal Henrietta kept during her journey, she refers to herself as being Welsh multiple times and compares Indian landscapes with those in Wales: ‘Since that I have descended the Guzelhutty Pass which is something like a Scotch or Welsh mountain, a very great compliment to it I assure you’, and ‘[i]t is really a pass and as wild as anything in Scotland or Wales’, Henrietta Clive, *Birds of Passage: Henrietta Clive’s Travels in South India 1798–1801*, ed. Nancy K. Shields (London: Eland, 2009), pp. 61, 117, 120, 250, 489.

CHAPTER 4

Caribbean and West African Seamen in a Welsh Port, 1871–1939: The Seamen's Boarding House and the growth and development of Settlement in Cardiff

Joseph Radcliffe

> Without people of colour there would be neither Cardiff nor an Empire.[1]

Introduction

This chapter will explore the crucial role the seamen's boarding house played in the migration of seamen from the Caribbean and West Africa to Cardiff in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and how it helped establish and support one of the oldest areas of black settlement in Europe. The seamen's boarding house was a contact zone: a cross-cultural, colonial melting pot of interaction and encounter, unique within the heart of the Imperial metropole where typically, these zones existed on its fringes. The boarding house went beyond a simple lodging for black seamen. It acted as both a social and compatriot network, a hub for organised activity and a support system for seamen who found themselves unemployed or struggling to secure regular work. The dynamics between

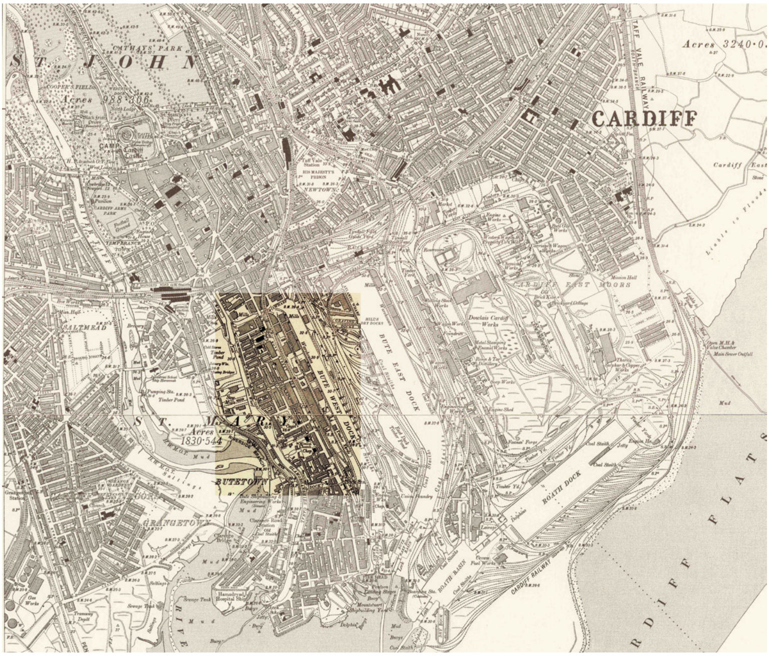
ST. JOHN
CATHAYS PARK
Acres 988·806
TAFF VALE RAILWAY
Acres 3240·0
CARDIFF
NEWTOWN
CARDIFF EAST MOORS
Dowlais Cardiff Works
SALTMEAD
BUTE WEST DOCK
BUTE EAST DOCK
ST. MARY
Acres 1830·544
BUTETOWN
GRANGETOWN
ROATH DOCK
ROATH BASIN
CARDIFF RAILWAY
CARDIFF FLATS

Figure 1. Map of Cardiff, including Butetown with Loudoun Square area highlighted.

keeper and seaman were complex, characterised by a relationship of power and dependence as well as benevolence. By placing the seamen's boarding house at the centre of the narrative this chapter will expand our understanding of race and ethnicity in Wales by adding clarity to the historical timeline as to how and when formal areas of black settlement developed in Cardiff. While the city's docklands, Butetown, was a diverse, multiethnic space typical of maritime quarters across Britain, its Caribbean and West African population settled in a small, concentrated area in the streets surrounding Loudoun Square. An exploration of the seamen's boarding house can not only help explain why they chose to settle where they did but also broaden our understanding of the migration process and the growth and development of settlement over time. It can also provide valuable insight into the social lives of some of Wales's earliest black residents and their neighbourhoods.

The Seamen's Boarding House

The growth and development of black settlement in Cardiff from the late nineteenth century was directly linked to the labour demands of the British merchant navy, with seamen from the Caribbean and West Africa prominent working on British ships since at least the eighteenth century.[2] The first task for the newly arrived West African or Caribbean seaman at the docks in Cardiff was to find suitable lodgings for the duration of his time on land. Cut off from the city, the docklands of Butetown gained a reputation as a dark, dangerous and mysterious place. It became known both locally and internationally as 'Tiger Bay', a nickname that would ultimately come to define the area and those who lived and worked there. The option most commonly available to the seaman was one of the many seamen's boarding houses on and around the main thoroughfare of Bute Street. The seamen's boarding house was an integral part of the economic and social life of port cities throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Commonly they occupied the formerly grand houses built to accommodate merchants and their families. The increasingly industrial and polluted environment of the port had seen these wealthier occupants move out of the dock area and their homes repurposed for the port economy.[3] Loudoun Square and its surrounding streets, built for Cardiff's merchant class, provided ideal properties for the boarding house.

A seaman could expect little privacy in his boarding house; with each room providing multiple beds, personal space was at a premium. In some larger, more commercial businesses, this could see as many as fifteen men to a room; however, it was most common to find three men sharing a single room with a single shared bathroom for all occupants of the house including the keeper and their family. Unlike other landlords, seamen's boarding house keepers tended to live on their premises and were heavily involved in the day-to-day running of the business.[4] Family members also helped out. Edith Pervoe, a woman of mixed-heritage born in Cardiff in 1891, in her recollections of her time growing up in her father's boarding house in Butetown in the early twentieth century, recalls how her father, John Joseph Pervoe born in Nova Scotia of Afro-Caribbean heritage, was responsible for all the cooking for the men in the house while Edith helped with the washing up and general cleaning. Meals would be one of the few times that Edith came into contact with seamen, as the children were not allowed in the area of the house where seamen slept.[5] The dynamics of the Pervoe boarding house highlight that although families were often actively engaged in the running of the business, there was a desire to create and maintain definite boundaries as to where and how the private sphere of the family home overlapped with the professional sphere of the boarding house.

Historically, the seamen's boarding house, and more specifically, its keeper, was at the centre of the seaman's time on land, facilitating his access to the myriad of activities, both legal and illegal, that sailortown had to offer.[6] The seamen's boarding house helped support the transient seaman between voyages and a symbiotic financial relationship based on credit sustained it. The boarding house was also a vital conduit through which they gained access to work, with the keeper acting as an informal employment agent facilitating and effectively controlling the seaman's entry into the labour market. While it was widely acknowledged that the boarding house provided this important service to the shipping industry, the control they exerted had historically caused both the authorities and shipping companies to view them with scepticism and distrust.[7] The services of the boarding house operated in an atmosphere of semi-illegality, which left it open to abuse from less scrupulous members of the trade who manipulated both employment practices and the seamen in their care in their pursuit of profit.

Census data from 1891–1921 identifies that the occupation of seamen's boarding house keeper was predominantly a migrant profession. Large numbers of boarding house keepers migrated to Britain from countries all around the world, with a significant amount of internal migration from within Britain itself. For example, in the 1891 census, not a single seamen's boarding house keeper had been born in Cardiff, though four had migrated from the surrounding area of South Wales. This movement was part of a broader trend of inward urban migration from rural areas throughout the nineteenth century towards industrial and commercial centres.[8] Sources highlight that immediately before the First World War, all but 30 of the estimated 180 seamen's boarding houses in Cardiff were run by a keeper born outside Britain.[9] The diverse demographics within the trade reflected the cosmopolitan character of the seamen that they lodged, as well as the wider melting-pot of sailortown. While predominantly a male occupation, running a boarding house was one of the few professions that offered employment opportunities to women in the male-dominated port environment; and a significant number of women worked in the trade both assisting their husbands and independently.

Migrant keepers were often ex-seamen themselves and established their boarding houses along national, cultural and ethnic lines allowing the seamen's boarding houses to provide a safe and familiar space for seamen in a foreign land. Who could be better placed to understand the needs of the transient seamen than an ex-seafarer? Some historians point out that this arrangement also allowed boarding house keepers to leverage their compatriots for profit.[10] Butetown was one of the most diverse spaces in Britain during this period, and within its relatively small area, there were seamen's boarding houses that catered to Yemeni Arab, Scandinavian, Somali, Maltese, Greek, Spanish, Japanese, Chilean, Italian and Chinese seamen, among many others, in addition to those from the Caribbean and West Africa. Opening a seamen's boarding house was an important method that facilitated the seaman's transition from a transient to a settled migrant as roots were established in Wales. However, setting up in business was only possible for some, as a certain amount of capital was required. If the seamen could find the necessary funds to open a seaman's boarding house this also acted as an important vehicle for social mobility within the port economy as the working-class seaman transitioned to business owner.

Early Growth and Development of Black Settlement in Butetown

Contemporary and modern sources have long recognised Loudoun Square as the centre of the historic black community in Butetown.[11]

In 1933, social investigator Nancie Sharpe conducted a report on the area on behalf of the Methodist Society.[12] Her report produced the maps below, highlighting the distribution of black family homes in Cardiff. Sharpe's maps highlight a dense concentration of black settlement focused in the area around Loudoun Square. According to Sharpe's estimates Cardiff's non-white population stood at around 3,000 by this period, over 2,000 of whom she believed to be of African descent from the Caribbean and West Africa.[13] The foundation of this settlement and its development had its roots in the multifaceted role provided by the seamen's boarding house.

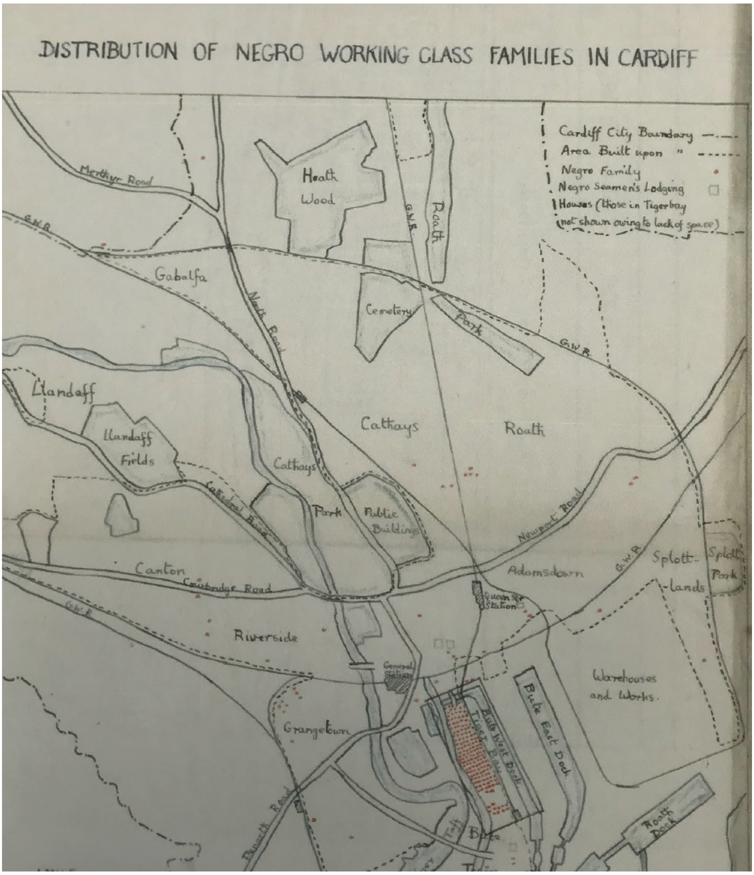
DISTRIBUTION OF NEGRO WORKING CLASS FAMILIES IN CARDIFF
Cardiff City Boundary
Area Built upon "
Negro Family
Negro Seamen's Lodging Houses (those in Tigerbay not shown owing to lack of space)
Merthyr Road
G.W.R.
Heath Wood
G.W.R.
Roath
Gabalfa
North Road
Cemetery
Park
G.W.R.
Llandaff
Llandaff Fields
Cathays
Roath
Cathays
Cathedral Road
Park
Public Buildings
Newport Road
Canton
Cowbridge Road
Adamsdown
G.W.R.
Splott-lands
Splott Park
G.W.R.
Queen St Station
Riverside
General Station
Bute East Dock
Bute West Dock
Tiger Bay
Warehouses and Works.
Grangetown
Penarth Road
Bute
Roath Dock

Figure 2a and 2b. (*Continued*)

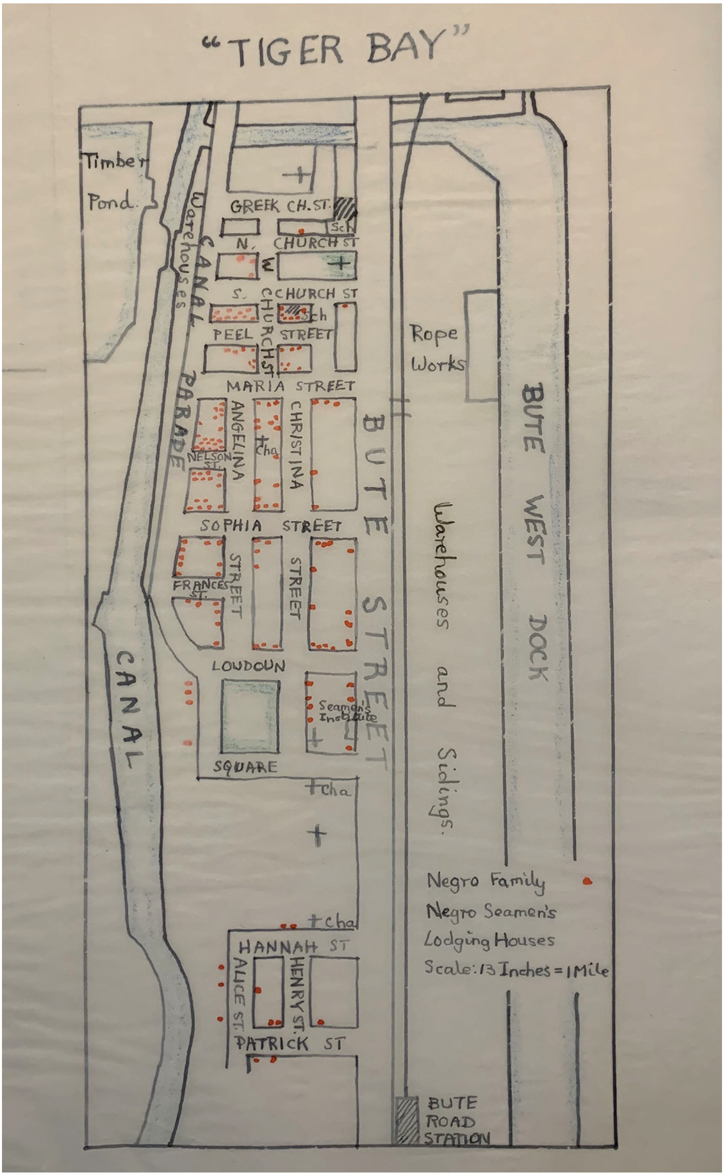
"TIGER BAY"
Timber Pond.
Warehouses
CANAL
CANAL PARADE
GREEK CH. ST.
Sch
N. CHURCH ST
W CHURCH ST
S. CHURCH ST
Sch
PEEL STREET
MARIA STREET
ANGELINA
NELSON ST.
Cha
CHRISTINA
SOPHIA STREET
FRANCES ST.
STREET
STREET
LOUDOUN
SQUARE
Seamen's Institute
Cha
Cha
HANNAH ST
ALICE ST.
HENRY ST.
PATRICK ST
BUTE STREET
Rope Works
Warehouses and Sidings.
BUTE WEST DOCK
Negro Family ●
Negro Seamen's Lodging Houses
Scale: 13 Inches = 1 Mile
BUTE ROAD STATION

Figure 2a and 2b. Maps showing the distribution of black working class families in Cardiff and Butetown (Tiger Bay); Cardiff Cathays Heritage Centre, LC84:301.185 SHA, Nancie Sharpe, *Report on the Negro Population in London and Cardiff* (London: The Methodist Church, 1933) pp. 157–8).

The earliest black seamen's boarding houses uncovered in the Loudoun Square area dates from 1871, lying in the streets just north of the square at 12 South Church Street. This boarding house provided accommodation principally for seamen from the Caribbean with some lodgers from the United States. The keeper, Emmanuel Phenis, came from Cape Verde, part of Portuguese West Africa. Butetown was home to a substantial Portuguese West African presence, and several prominent black boarding house keepers hailed from the islands over the years. The Phenis family formed something of a boarding house dynasty. After Emmanuel passed away in 1900 his second wife Sarah, born in Newport, took over the running of 12 South Church Street before finally passing the business on to their son Isaac in 1923. Isaac continued to run the boarding house into the 1950s, finally being forced to give up his licence in 1951 at the age of 78 due to ill health.[14] This longevity was particularly impressive as running a seamen's boarding house was notoriously precarious, with many keepers cutting their losses and abandoning the trade after only a few years. A further black seamen's boarding house was operating at 21 Charlotte Street, outside of the Loudoun Square area and was run by Charles Armstrong from the Caribbean. This street and the adjacent Whitmore Lane were infamous in Cardiff for their roughness with one contemporary source describing the streets as a place where 'drunkenness and immorality were open and unabashed …'.[15]

Despite the precarity associated with the trade, utilising census data to map the growth of seamen's boarding houses in Cardiff has proven fruitful. 1881 saw a small increase in black seamen's boarding houses in Cardiff, with the census highlighting five now operating in the area. These houses continued to cater to predominantly Caribbean seamen, with very few West African seamen visible in the port. However, while it initially appears that the latter half of the nineteenth century was beginning to present a steady growth in the black presence in Cardiff, boarding house data indicates the opposite. Between 1881 and 1891, there was a significant decline in the number of black seamen's boarding houses that saw the number drop again to only two. This decrease would suggest that there was a noticeable decline in the number of black seamen visiting the port in a ten-year period. The early 1880s appear to be a particularly hard time for black seamen in Britain with many struggling to obtain work on ships due to an economic downturn and a colour bar.[16] A report commissioned by the Board of Trade admitted that in Cardiff, 'the men who suffer first in hard times are the coloured seamen'.[17]

The two surviving black boarding houses present in the Loudoun Square area in 1891 were the Phenis boarding house at 12 South Church Street and the boarding house of John Joseph Pervoe at 36 Peel Street in the streets just north of the square. Pervoe and his boarding houses, like that of the Phenis family, would remain central to black settlement in Cardiff as it grew and developed. Pervoe took on a prominent role in the social life of the area acting as a figurehead for other black residents. A local resident remembers him as:

> The man who always took the lead in every black funeral procession in Tiger Bay … Pervoe would be immaculate in black topper and morning coat, white gloves, spats and looking quite splendid, as he headed a retinue of similarly dressed black men walking in front of the hearse.[18]

Pervoe also cut a distinctive figure within the area due to the fact that he was missing his right arm, the result of an accident before arriving in Wales. However, this handicap did not stop him from doing all the cooking in his boarding house and even making fresh pastry for his boarders.[19] These two houses catered primarily to seamen from the Caribbean, with only a single West African seaman found to be lodging with his Caribbean peers at 12 South Church Street.

The year 1901 saw only a modest increase in the number of black seamen's boarding houses in Cardiff, with the number rising to five. While these houses continued to provide lodgings for predominantly Caribbean seamen their clientele was becoming more mixed and included seamen from the USA as well as an increasing number from West Africa. These early boarding houses began to reflect the diversity and fluidity that would characterise Cardiff's black population. It also indicates that from this early period, black seamen's boarding houses were not always run solely by a compatriot of the same nationality or ethnicity. While Phenis' boarding house was mixed, his peer from Cape Verde, Peter Silver, operated an exclusively Caribbean boarding house at 28 Sophia Street. Examples of West Africans running Caribbean boarding houses and vice versa in Cardiff and other port cities would continue to be a feature of black settlements as they continued to grow and develop in the first decades of the twentieth century.

Throughout these earlier decades, Britain's black presence remained predominantly transient. Except for men settling and opening boarding houses, there was little permanent settlement.

However, 1911 presents a watershed moment for black settlement in Cardiff and a step change in its development. From 1911, black settlement in Cardiff began to be characterised by a significant increase in size and a greater sense of permanency exhibiting characteristics in its demographic makeup that have usually been attributed to post-First World War settlements. 1911 saw a substantial increase in the number of black boarding houses in Cardiff, with the number

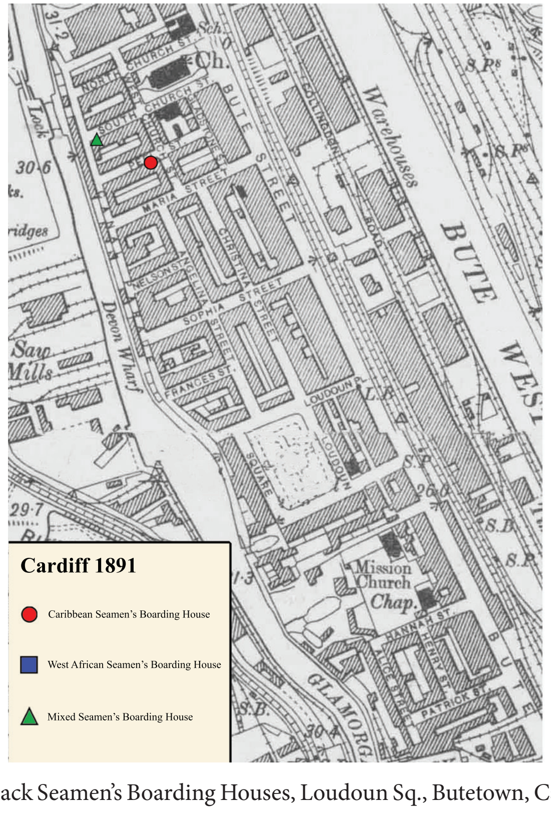
Cardiff 1891
Caribbean Seamen's Boarding House
West African Seamen's Boarding House
Mixed Seamen's Boarding House
North Church St.
South Church St.
Bute Street
Maria Street
Nelson St.
Angelina St.
Christina Street
Sophia Street
Frances St.
Loudoun Pl.
Loudoun Square
Collingdon Road
Warehouses
Bute West
Devon Wharf
Saw Mills
Mission Church
Chap.
Hannah St.
Henry St.
Alice Street
Patrick St.
Glamorg
Lock

Figure 3. Black Seamen's Boarding Houses, Loudoun Sq., Butetown, Cardiff 1891.

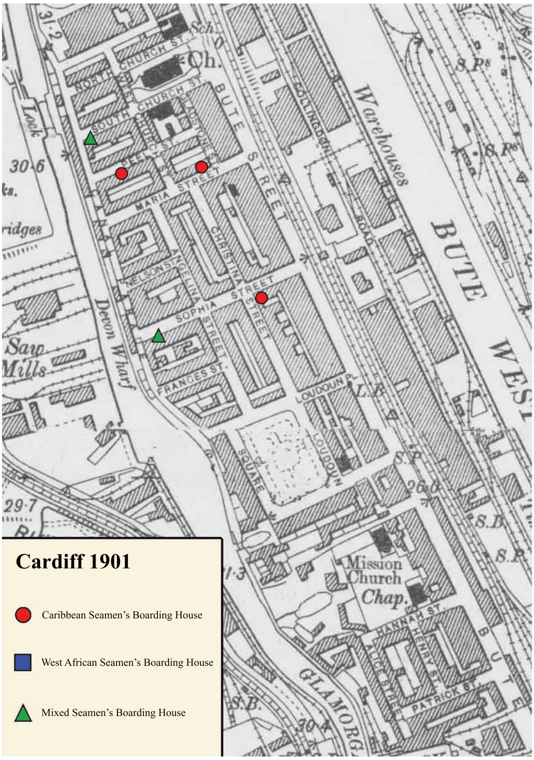
Cardiff 1901
● Caribbean Seamen's Boarding House
■ West African Seamen's Boarding House
▲ Mixed Seamen's Boarding House
NORTH CHURCH ST.
SOUTH CHURCH ST.
BUTE STREET
MARIA STREET
NELSON ST.
SOPHIA STREET
CHRISTINA STREET
FRANCES ST.
LOUDOUN PL.
LOUDOUN SQUARE
Devon Wharf
Warehouses
BUTE WEST
Mission Church
Chap.
HANNAH ST.
HENRY ST.
ALICE STREET
PATRICK ST.
GLAMORG
Saw Mills
Lock

Figure 4. Black Seamen's Boarding Houses, Loudoun Sq., Butetown, Cardiff, 1901.

increasing to 17; 7 for Caribbean seamen, 2 for West African and 8 mixed boarding houses. The port city of Liverpool exhibited a similar sharp growth in black seamen's boarding houses in 1911, suggesting that the first decade of the twentieth century saw a significant increase in the use of black labour on British merchant ships working routes to and from Britain. A contributing factor for an increased need for accommodation may also have resulted from black seamen exercising their rights as British subjects and basing themselves in Cardiff as they looked to take advantage of the better wages available in metropolitan ports as opposed to those offered in colonial ports in the Caribbean and West Africa.

That nearly half of all seamen's boarding houses in Cardiff were mixed presents new insights regarding the dynamics within the area of early black settlement in the city.[20] The number of mixed seamen's boarding houses could simply indicate that demand was already beginning to outstrip supply, obliging these two groups to lodge together. Cardiff was one of the centres of the tramp shipping industry. Tramps were ships with no fixed route or cargo and hired crews on an ad hoc basis. By the early twentieth century, tramps made up 60 per cent of all tonnage. Working on these ships often provided the best opportunities for black seamen and a greater degree of freedom than ships owned by steam liner companies.[21] Cardiff also offered some of the best wages within the shipping industry, which attracted black migration both globally and internally from other ports within Britain.[22] However, with this freedom came consequences. Maritime historians have described seamen who served on tramp ships as the flotsam and jetsam of the shipping industry. Particularly isolated and rootless due to this more precarious employment these seamen were prone to unemployment and longer periods on shore.[23] This precarity not only significantly increased their reliance on the professional employment services of the seamen's boarding house but also increased the level of pastoral care and credit that the keeper provided.

Historians and contemporary sources have suggested that a certain amount of animosity existed between Caribbean seamen and their West African peers.[24] Indeed one Barbadian seaman speaking to the local Cardiff press in the wake of the 1919 anti-black riots was quoted as saying they are as different as 'chalk and cheese'.[25] The prevalence of mixed West African and Caribbean boarding houses however, suggests that some sources may have overstated this animosity. As noted above, the living conditions within the boarding house were intimate, with very little personal space available, and there is no evidence to suggest these houses were particularly fractious. Quite the opposite, evidence suggests that mixed seamen's boarding houses, as well as West Africans such as Emmanuel Phenis operating boarding houses for predominantly Caribbean seamen, serve as examples that relationships between black seamen from West Africa and the Caribbean in Cardiff were based more on cooperation rather than conflict during this early period. The shared experience of being black in a racialised majority white society may have helped seamen from the Caribbean and West Africa transcend their cultural differences and organise along ethnic lines as they sought to create their own black spaces. A parallel can be drawn with Muslim Somali and Arab seamen whose religious considerations outweighed their cultural differences that saw Somali seamen lodge in Arab boarding houses when no space was available in existing Somali houses.[26] This evidence suggests a certain level of social cohesion within this area of black settlement was already becoming evident from this early stage of its development.

Importantly, from 1911, a modest but clear indication of a more settled presence began to appear in the Loudoun Square area close to established seamen's boarding houses. A particular concentration of family homes of Caribbean and West African seamen and local women can be found on Maria Street, Angelina Street and Nelson Street. Evidence also emerges of more informal relationships, with unmarried local women sharing properties with black seamen. While examples of single women running boarding houses exist, they are rare, and this evidence would suggest cohabitation. Through founding a household, the transient seamen established domicile in Britain.[27] This process was not only a significant step in the migration experience as they moved from transient to settled migrants, but there were also important practical implications. A disparity in pay remained if those black seamen signing on in Britain were not domiciled.[28]

Local women were pivotal to the success and growth of early black settlements in Cardiff, both personally and professionally, throughout this period. The gendered nature of seafaring meant that early black migration to Britain's port cities was almost exclusively male. As a result, relationships and marriages between black seamen and local white women were most common. Indeed, black men would continue to outnumber black and mixed-heritage women in areas of early black settlement in Britain well into the twentieth century.[29] The relationships between black seamen and white women frequently faced hostility and resistance, especially in the press. Newspapers even went as far as to blame mixed relationships for any conflict or animosity between black and white residents in Britain's port cities, a theory much adhered to in the wake of the 1919 riots.[30] In reality, rather than creating conflict, Laura Tabili argues that women played a vital role in promoting cohesion in the multiethnic space of Britain's sailortowns where black settlement grew and were a source of order and stability, bridging the racial boundaries between white and black residents.[31] Professionally, many local white women also ran seamen's boarding houses for Caribbean and West African seamen either in partnership with their husbands who still worked at sea or, in many cases, as independent entrepreneurs. This role placed them in a prominent position within both the social life and economy of Butetown. This dual role meant women's position within sailortown, both as wives and business owners, was so powerful that some have argued it effectively made them gatekeepers for migrants into British society.[32]

Through marriage between black seamen and local white women, the area of black settlement around Loudoun square, and Butetown more widely, would become home to a prominent and significant demographic of Welsh born children of mixed-heritage. By the first decade of the twentieth century many of these children

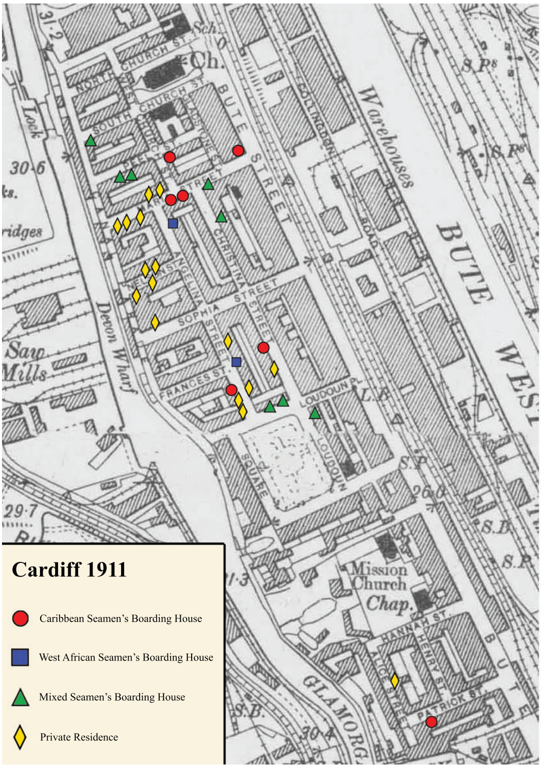
Cardiff 1911
● Caribbean Seamen's Boarding House
■ West African Seamen's Boarding House
▲ Mixed Seamen's Boarding House
◆ Private Residence
NORTH CHURCH ST.
SOUTH CHURCH ST.
Ch.
Sch.
BUTE STREET
COLLINGDON ROAD
Warehouses
BUTE WEST
CHRISTINA STREET
ANGELINA ST.
SOPHIA STREET
FRANCES ST.
LOUDOUN PL.
LOUDOUN SQUARE
Devon Wharf
Saw Mills
Lock
Mission Church
Chap.
HANNAH ST.
HENRY ST.
ALICE STREET
PATRICK ST.
GLAMORG
30·6
29·7
31·2
26·0
30·4

Figure 5. Black Seamen's Boarding Houses & Private Residences, Loudoun Sq., Butetown, Cardiff, 1911.

of mixed-heritage, the sons and daughters of some of the earliest Caribbean and West African migrants and their Welsh wives, began to reach adulthood and become increasingly more visible and active. For example in 1901, Emmanuel and Sarah Phenis' 27-year-old son, Isaac, was working as a deal carrier for the ports merchants. As the twentieth century progressed, men and women of mixed-heritage born in Cardiff would face a high level of stigmatisation and their importance to early black neighbourhoods is often overlooked as many of their voices have been lost. Cardiff-born women of mixed-heritage as they came of age like their mothers also formed relationships with, and married, black seamen. In 1908, John Joseph Pervoe's daughter Edith married a Barbadian seamen, James Newton Grant, whom she had met as a boarder in her father's seamen's boarding house. Edith followed her husband to the Rhondda Valley where James found work as a coal miner before they returned to Butetown in 1912.[33]

Wartime Population Boom, The Seamen's Boarding House and the Evolution of Settlement

The First World War was a boom time for both black seamen and the seamen's boarding house. After decades of poor wages and tenuous employment, the demand for seamen and the dangers of operating on a merchant ship in wartime saw wages skyrocket. The monthly rate for seamen on foreign trade rose from £5.10 in 1914 to £9 in 1916 and peaked in 1918 at £14.10s. The increase in wage meant that a seaman paid off after six months service could have a substantial sum in his pocket.[34] The seamen's boarding house likewise profited from this boom. Not only were their houses full, their seamen boarders were in a financial position to settle their bills fully before departing. Business was so good for some boarding house keepers they were able to expand their business. Jamaican boarding house keeper Uriah Erskine who ran his large boarding house for Caribbean seamen at 36/37 Maria Street, was one of these. In 1915 he invested in a second property at 54 Loudoun square purchasing the lease for £230.[35] By 1921 this second property was let to Adenese boarding house keeper, Nagi Nasser, and lodged a mixture of Arab seamen and those from West Africa. There were two further examples of mixed black and Arab boarding houses in Cardiff. These houses are noteworthy as a degree of animosity had historically existed between these two groups. Tensions had boiled over during the war and clashes between black and Arab seamen had taken place in Butetown.[36] That these seamen were also found to be lodging together only highlights the complexity of the social relationships in the multiethnic space of Butetown in which black settlement was evolving.

Importantly, through the study of seamen's boarding houses in Cardiff, supported by the recently released 1921 census, new detail can be added to a pivotal period of settlement growth. Britain's black population had grown significantly by the end of the First World War. Historians acknowledge that the war was a significant stimulus of growth for Britain's early black presence, as black seamen were called on to fill labour shortages in British shipping, many of whom chose to remain in Britain when the conflict ended.[37] It has been notoriously difficult to gain an accurate figure of the size of the post-war black presence in any port city, due to the transient nature of seafaring work.[38] However, data extracted from the 1921 census and black seamen's boarding houses allow for a clearer picture of this explosion in population growth to be produced. The census reveals that by 1921, the area around Loudoun Square was now home to 42 black seamen's boarding houses; 13 Caribbean, 5 West African and 24 mixed. 6 of these boarding houses occupied the North East corner of Loudoun Square at Nos. 52–9. There were also a further 10 properties in the area listed as having one boarder, a significant increase from a decade earlier.

Furthermore, analysing this data allows for insight into aspects of the lived experience of Cardiff's post-war black population, such as their employment situation. It paints a very bleak picture. Of the 310 black seamen lodgers identified from these boarding houses, at least 237, or 76%, were unemployed. With unemployment, it often fell to the boarding house keeper to provide support for these men, at great personal expense to themselves and often for many months. The largest black boarding house in the area, the mixed boarding house at 52 Loudoun Square, provided lodgings for forty seamen all of whom are listed as unemployed. The keeper, Joseph William Tucker, originally from Sierra Leone, whilst providing food and essentials

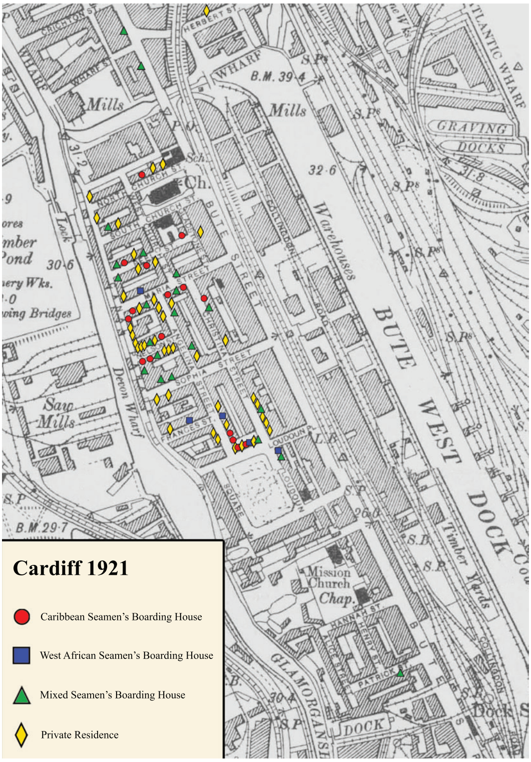
Cardiff 1921
Caribbean Seamen's Boarding House
West African Seamen's Boarding House
Mixed Seamen's Boarding House
Private Residence
Mills
Herbert St.
Wharf
Atlantic Wharf
Graving Docks
Warehouses
Bute West Dock
Bute Street
Church St.
Sophia Street
Frances St.
Loudoun Pl.
Loudoun Square
Lock
Devon Wharf
Saw Mills
Mission Church Chap.
Hannah St.
Patrick St.
Timber Yards
Collingdon Road
Glamorgansh
Dock

Figure 6. Black Seamen's Boarding Houses & Private Residences, Loudoun Sq., Butetown, Cardiff, 1921.

for these men, also had his Cardiff-born wife Annie to support as well as their two young children. This responsibility would have placed a severe strain on their finances. By 1921, the situation had reached breaking point, with a seamen's charity reporting that many black seamen's boarding houses in Cardiff were facing bankruptcy without immediate assistance. If allowed to happen, this would threaten to destroy a vital support network for both migratory and settled black seamen.[39] Ultimately, some of these keepers could not recoup their debts and their businesses folded. In need of income, these circumstances forced many keepers to return to maritime work adding to the already saturated labour market. Unemployment among black seamen in the city remained high throughout the interwar period due to a combination of depression in British shipping, a competitive labour market and discriminatory hiring practices. Despite their own financial pressures, surviving seamen's boarding houses continued to support black residents in Loudoun Square well into the 1930s.

As with the boarding house, 1921 saw significant growth in the settled black population of Cardiff. This research has identified 47 properties as family homes belonging to seamen originally from the Caribbean and West Africa in the streets surrounding Loudoun Square. While some of these men had moved into shore-based professions, nearly 80% still relied on maritime work to make a living. All these men would have passed through the conduit of the seamen's boarding house, and the fact that they settled close by is significant. The seamen's boarding house itself continued to act as a key social space in black neighbourhoods. Many operated as refreshment shops where men could meet and buy a cup of tea or something to eat and socialise. Both the Phenis boarding house at 12 South Church Street and John Joseph Pervoe's, now at 6 North Church Street, provided these services that supported the needs of a wider community rather than only to the lodgers in their direct care. The seamen's boarding house could also be the centre of more illicit social activities. In 1914, Pervoe was arrested and fined £50 for running an illegal betting operation from his boarding house.[40] Boarding house keepers remained influential figures in these early settlements. Through their business, they would have key insight into the local social and economic climate with an intimate knowledge of the workings of the local state and the ebb and flow of the shipping industry. Once settled, the cultural and ethnic ties that had drawn black seamen to their respective boarding houses could also explain the desire to remain close. At the same time, the constant flow of seamen in and out of the nearby boarding houses would also be a vital source of news and information, keeping settled migrants connected with their homeland.

From 1921, though still concentrated around Loudoun Square, evidence of Cardiff's black population expanding outside the boundary of Butetown began to emerge. With the transcending of these traditional boundaries, some of Cardiff's black population began to challenge social and political boundaries. One of those was Barbados-born Horatio Straker, a union official for the National Union of Seamen. Straker's position as a black union official during this period is noteworthy. To have gained such a position within the NUS, notorious for its ambivalence and often outright antagonism towards its black members, should not be underestimated.[41] Straker was not afraid to challenge institutional structures. His outspoken position led him to fall foul of his union, which took disciplinary action against him for going against a white colleague in support of black seamen during a labour dispute.[42] Similarly, due to the success of his business ventures, Uriah Erskine had been able to transcend both the physical and social barriers of the early black settlement around Loudoun Square and move himself and his family out of Butetown entirely and out towards the suburbs to a home near Victoria Park in the Canton area of the city. It had long been the practice of successful middle-class merchants to mark their status by moving out of dockside or industrial areas and into the suburbs.[43] Uriah Erskine followed this tradition marking a transformation from working-class migrant to flirting with the metropolitan middle-classes. This feat was particularly impressive when social mobility for working-class black men in Britain during this period was severely limited. Erskine and Straker highlight that some black men and their families were able to challenge the low spatial and social mobility that had come to characterise early black migrants and kept them restricted to those initial areas of settlement around Loudoun Square.

For those who remained in Butetown, the seamen's boarding house, though their numbers had been in decline, continued to play a crucial role throughout the interwar years. As unemployment remained endemic into the 1930s, many seamen who had settled were forced back into the boarding house. The credit that the keeper was able to extend provided a valuable social service for black seamen as did their ability to facilitate help in finding employment. The seamen's boarding house also provided a vital source of employment itself. In the 1930s, women of mixed-heritage in Butetown suffered particular discrimination in the job market. Often the only employment option available to them was to open or work in a seamen's boarding house.[44] While its power and influence had begun to wane by the eve of the Second World War, its continued presence at the centre of the Loudoun Square area highlights just how vital the seamen's boarding house remained to the maintenance and survival of Cardiff's black and mixed-heritage community.

Conclusion

As this chapter has explored, the origins of Cardiff's Caribbean and West African presence can be found in a handful of seamen's boarding houses around Loudoun Square established in the late nineteenth century. Over time this presence grew to become a diverse and dynamic settlement within the multiethnic space of Butetown. The seamen's boarding house sat at the heart of black seamen's migration network, facilitating access to the labour market whilst simultaneously creating a space from which they could navigate the social space of Butetown. As Caribbean and West African men began to settle permanently they chose to remain close to this important institution. For these men the seamen's boarding house acted as a social space that helped maintain cultural and ethnic ties and saw their keepers, such as John Joseph Pervoe, take the role of proto-community leaders that anchored settlement and supported its growth. The seamen's boarding house has been shown to be a transitional space that not only aided migration and settlement as it facilitated the transition from transient to settled migrant but it also provided an element of social mobility that allowed some of Cardiff's early black residents to transcend the restrictive boundaries of both class and space.

Historians have tended to focus on black residents of Cardiff post-First World War and viewed this period as when a formal and coherent settlement was thought to have coalesced. This was in part due to the dramatic increase in population size and events such as the 1919 anti-black riots that brought them to prominence. As a counterpoint, what this chapter has shown is that by 1911 the area of black settlement around Loudoun Square, facilitated by the seamen's boarding house, was well-established and already exhibited the characteristics often associated with this later postwar period. The violence of 1919's anti-black riots has commonly been cited as an impetus for bringing Caribbean and West African seamen together both in Cardiff as well as other port cities throughout Britain.[45] However, the prevalence of mixed-boarding houses from the earliest moments of black settlement as well as later settled Caribbean and West African seamen living in close proximity as neighbours highlight a level of social cohesion hitherto not considered. Through the shared experience of migration and the shared space of the seaman's boarding house, Caribbean and West African seamen were able to transcend their cultural differences and began to exhibit the characteristics of a community.

Notes

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3 Graeme Milne, *People, Place and Power on the Nineteenth-Century Waterfront: Sailortown* / (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) p. 15; Sarah Palmer, 'Ports', *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain: Volume 3: 1840–1950*, ed. Martin Daunton, The Cambridge Urban History of Britain (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 139.

4 'Darker Cardiff', *South Wales Daily News*, 22 November 1893.

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22 Marika Sherwood, 'Racism and Resistance: Cardiff in the 1930s and 1940s', *Llafur*, 5 (1991), 51.
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28 Diane Frost, *Work and Community Among West African Migrant Workers Since the Nineteenth Century* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), p. 61.
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Part Two

Decolonising the Archive

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CHAPTER 5

Remember or remove? Race, ethnicity and public commemoration

Peter Wakelin

Introduction

When the statue of the slave trader Edward Colston was thrown into Bristol harbour in 2020, it brought commemoration in public places to the forefront of debates about culture and racism. Opinions among press and politicians about the attack on the statue by a crowd of demonstrators ranged from outrage that a memorial should be destroyed through ambivalence to satisfaction that justice had been served. On the Welsh side of the border the First Minister, Mark Drakeford, was quick to initiate a governmental response to the issues the event had raised. Within five months, the Welsh Government published *The Slave Trade and the British Empire: An Audit of Commemoration in Wales*. In 2022, it followed this by consulting on guidance for communities seeking to examine commemorations, whether past or future. This article evaluates the approaches taken to these projects and their potential to advance Wales on its path to becoming anti-racist.

The background and the need for action

Commemorations of individuals in public places can be contentious for a multitude of reasons. Views may differ about the merit of the people, their meaning for diverse strands in the community or the cost and quality of public art. However, commemorations of historical figures can be specially contentious for their perceived endorsement of racist practices and policies in the past and thereby the continuance of racism in the present. Albeit that commemorations may have historical, environmental or artistic interest, current gen-

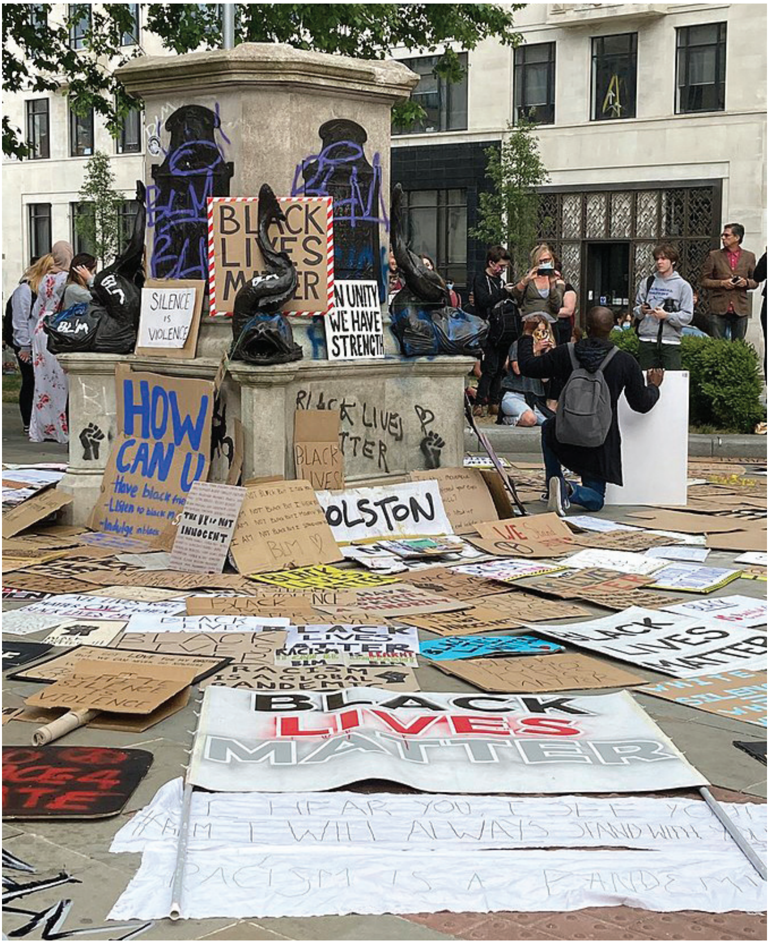
BLACK LIVES MATTER
SILENCE IS VIOLENCE
IN UNITY WE HAVE STRENGTH
HOW CAN U
-Have black frie
-Listen to black m
-Indulge in black
THE UK IS NOT INNOCENT
OLSTON
BLACK LIVES MATTER
RACISM IS A GLOBAL PANDEMIC
BLACK LIVES MATTER
I HEAR YOU, I SEE YOU
#BLM I WILL ALWAYS STAND WITH YOU
RACISM IS A PANDEMIC

Figure 1. The pedestal of the statue of Edward Colston in Bristol, the day after the statue was toppled, 2020.
Photo: Caitlin Hobbs, Creative Commons, Wikimedia.

erations may sense the prominent celebration of figures associated with brutal aspects of colonial history as an attack on minorities or fundamentally in conflict with the values of the present.

Colston's statue was torn from its plinth on 7 June 2020. The protesters' action followed many years of debate about whether it was justified to commemorate so prominently a figure who had been a slave trader, notwithstanding his benefactions to charitable causes in Bristol. Arguments in favour of the relocation of the statue or the addition of an explanatory plaque to acknowledge Colston's slave trading had not led to any action; the plinth still bore the description of Colston as 'one of the most virtuous and wise sons of their city'. Debates of a similar nature had become fraught in Oxford University with regard to a statue at Oriel College of the imperialist Cecil Rhodes. The interpretive text eventually placed below it was regarded by some as amplifying rather than reducing his commemoration. However, the global reaction to the murder of George Floyd by a police officer in Minneapolis on 25 May 2020 energised the Black Lives Matter movement as an international phenomenon. It created almost overnight a new climate of impatience for actual and symbolic action against racism, of which the jettisoning of Colston into Bristol harbour thirteen days later was one of the most visible.

The Bristol events were seen by many in Britain as a wake-up call for change. However, questions of public commemoration of figures closely associated with the enslavement of Black populations or other racist policies were raised much earlier in many countries. For example, the Rhodes Must Fall movement had run its course in South Africa in 2015, statues of polarising figures associated with the pro-slavery Confederate cause in the American Civil War had been contested in several US cities and debates were well advanced in Belgium about commemorations of King Leopold II, who was responsible for atrocities in the Congo. In Wales, no more than a handful of commemorations had been identified as divisive, however serious concerns had been raised about statues and monuments to the one-time military governor of Trinidad, Thomas Picton, and the explorer H. M. Stanley. By June 2020, other cases were being added to these, particularly through the website 'Topple The Racists'. Before the end of the month the First Minister commissioned the Task and Finish

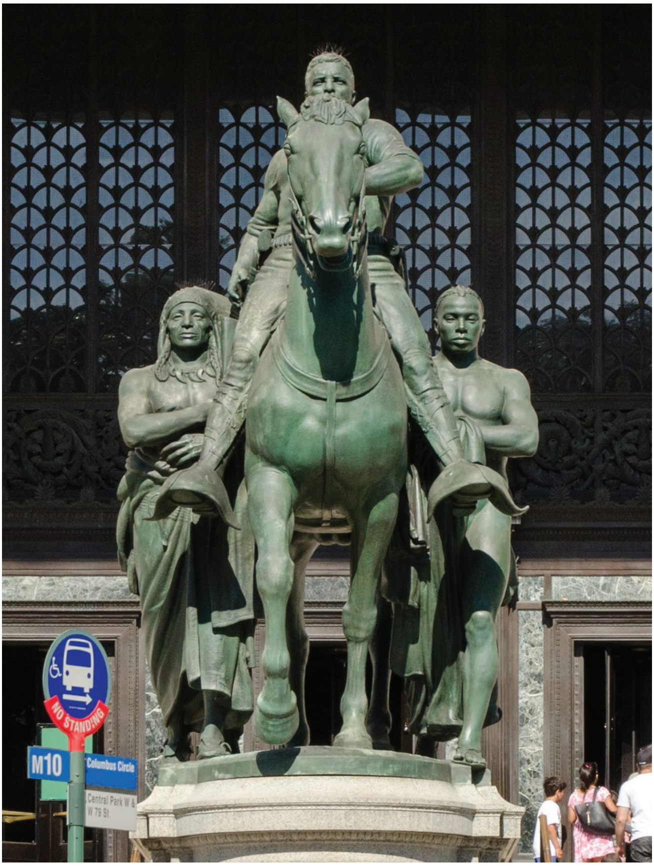

Figure 2. The 1939 statue of Theodore Roosevelt in New York was a case study in the Guidance. It was removed in 2022, not because of Roosevelt's record as President or the intentions of the sculptor James Earle Fraser, but because Roosevelt's depiction on horseback flanked by Native American and African figures and its position on the steps of the American Museum of Natural History was felt to evoke white supremacy and so-called 'scientific racism'.
Photo: slgckgc, Creative Commons/ Flickr.

Group to assess contentious commemorations across Wales, to be led by Gaynor Legall.[1]

The proactive step of a fact-based audit to assess the nature and extent of contested commemorations in Wales was in contrast to the Governmental reaction in England, which was expressed as a policy of 'retain and explain' regardless of the nature of commemorations

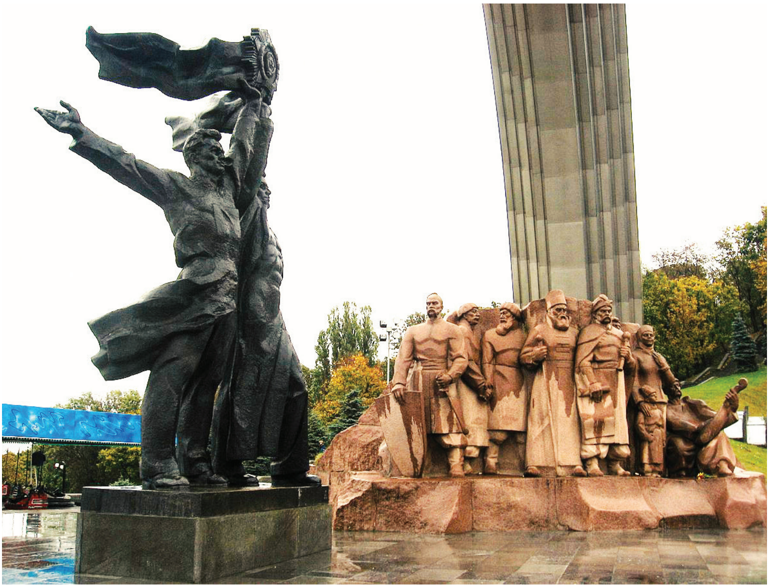

Figure 3. The People's Friendship statue in Kyiv, Ukraine, is one of many Soviet-era monuments pulled down by local authorities following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022.
Photo: Jennifer Boyer, 2011, Creative Commons, Flickr.

or the issues they raised. If approaches are expressed by the polarities of 'remove' at one end and 'remember' at the other, the Conservative United Kingdom Government came down at the latter end, firmly against removal in all cases. The then Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Oliver Dowden, wrote on the subject to English arm's-length bodies, including national museums, archives and heritage organisations such as the Royal Parks and Churches Conservation Trust. He stated: 'the Government does not support the removal of statues or other similar objects' and effectively compelled the organisations to adopt the policy by adding: 'I would expect Arm's Length Bodies' approach to issues of contested heritage to be consistent with the Government's position … This is especially important as we enter a challenging Comprehensive Spending Review, in which all government spending will rightly be scrutinised.'[2]

Reconciling conflicting views of the issues raised by contentious commemorations is inherently challenging. The affront caused to one person by the continued existence of a statue may be hard to comprehend for another who sees only a familiar feature in the townscape; the echo of a slave-trader in a street name may be deafening for one group yet unheard by residents who might be compelled to change their addresses. While there may be a general understanding that the enslavement of populations is a crime against humanity, shades of personal opinion about the British Empire range between extremes, from universal evil to general good. The consequence of such varied perceptions is that, while the Black Lives Matter and Topple the Racists movements were raising their voices to attack the reputations of figures from British history, some other groups and sections of the press cried outrage and betrayal.

For all these reasons, the Legall Audit (hereafter the Audit) was explicitly conceived as an objective exercise in gathering evidence, not a policy directive. In an atmosphere of conflict, the Welsh Government judged that a sound foundation of shared information – however difficult it might be to build a consensus – was a prerequisite for any future decisions about commemorations, whether those might be in due course to do nothing, reinterpret them or remove them.

The establishment of the Audit Group

The Task and Finish Group to prepare the audit was convened by Gaynor Legall in July 2020. The group comprised seven people with experience and specialist knowledge relevant to the study, including Dr Marian Gwyn, Professor Olivette Otele and Professor Chris Evans. It was supported on behalf of the Welsh Government by officials in Cadw and a project officer. [3] The Audit had an ambitious timetable of just four months. This was challenging given its novelty, the unknown scale of the material and the limitations of Covid-19 lockdowns. The Group considered approaches drawn up by the Cadw officials and the project officer. Members provided a critical overview and advice throughout the exercise and subsequently shaped a commentary on the results. Data management specialists at Cadw extracted information from large data sets and the project officer undertook detailed research and drafting. The audit was published, to schedule, in November 2020.[4]

The scope of the Audit encompassed public monuments and street and building names and focused principally on commemorations of people associated with slavery and the British Empire. The Group in due course refined this to: 'public monuments, statues and plaques, public portraits and the naming of public buildings, places and streets'. It excluded war memorials and private commemorations such as graves, church memorials and names of residences. It was recognised that there was great public interest in country houses, industrial sites and other elements of the built heritage that were linked historically to the profits of slavery and Empire, but these were not considered in the Audit; significant work on them was already being undertaken by the National Trust and others and the Group felt they presented a different set of issues given that the purpose of such buildings was not to honour or commemorate individuals in the public realm.

The Audit findings

The research methods developed for the Audit are set out in the published report. Briefly, the research began by collating information about all known monuments in Wales and about individuals connected with slavery or empire who might have been subjects for commemoration. The combination of monumental with biographical approaches sought to capture as many instances of commemoration as possible by means of data trawls through multiple sources as well as use of conventional scholarly and bibliographic materials. All public monuments, statues and plaques that could be identified from records of Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments and registers of public sculpture or other sources were considered to establish who was commemorated.

Persons of interest were collated who took part in the African slave trade, benefitted from the enslaved, opposed abolition, had been at any time accused of crimes against Black populations or had been highlighted by campaigners. They were identified from secondary historical resources, of which the most productive were Chris Evans's book *Slave Wales* (2010) and the online databases 'Legacies of British Slave Ownership', 'Slave Voyages' and 'Topple the Racists'. The 'History of Parliament Online', the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and the *Dictionary of Welsh Biography* were also used intensively.[5] Biographical notes were compiled for each person to identify their roles in slavery or empire and geographical spheres of influence that might indicate likely places of commemoration.

Parallel research identified a range of historically significant people of Black heritage, amounting finally to 42, who might either be found to have been commemorated or might be considered for commemoration in future. These included people associated with Wales and international figures who might prove to have been commemorated here. Living people were excluded.

Surname searches in Ordnance Survey data suggested possible concordances with street and building names. Whereas statues, plaques and monuments are normally identified clearly with an individual, for street and building names, circumstantial evidence was often all that was available for assessing the probability of an association, whether arising from chronology, geography or patterns of adjacent street names.

The published Audit ran to 135 pages and some 50,000 words. After sections of introduction and explanation the findings were summarised and followed by a discussion. The detailed listings and biographies were set out in tabulated appendices. After minor amendments made in the revised edition of 2021, the Audit listed 203 persons of interest, of whom less than a quarter had any supposed commemoration. While thousands more people than these must have been involved in the slave trade or crimes against humanity, their names and biographical details are largely lost to history and it is unlikely they were commemorated publicly. The commemorations identified comprised 57 monuments and (to a reasonable degree of probability) 93 public buildings or places and 442 street names.[6]

Of those who were commemorated, the most represented were nationally or internationally significant historical figures. Some minor politicians and locally recognised beneficiaries of slavery and colonialism also appeared.

Table showing numbers of persons and commemorations in the Audit, by category

Category of interest	**Persons evaluated**	**Persons commemorated**	**Number of commemorations**
Took part in the African slave trade	50	10	13
Benefitted from the enslaved	126	11	55
Opposed abolition of slave trade/slavery	13	9	119
Accused of crimes against Black people	3	3	20
Others highlighted by campaigners	11	11	74
TOTAL	203	44	281

In the first category – those involved in the slave trade – the sources permitted relatively few people to be related directly to Wales. Though Welsh surnames appear in the records of slave voyages from the ports of Bristol and Liverpool, little is known about most of the individuals. The figures commemorated were national ones in the main, for example Francis Drake and King James II.

The sources were exceptional for people who owned or directly benefitted from plantations or mines worked by the enslaved at the time of emancipation, thanks to the bureaucracy of compensation. They were weaker for those involved in the slave economies in earlier periods. By far the most commemorated person in this category, with 4 monuments, 5 buildings or places and 30 streets to his name, was Thomas Picton, who was not only an owner of the enslaved but a colonial governor with a record of torture and execution of people of colour. Picton was also, however, a war hero for whom there was a rush to commemoration after his death at the Battle of Waterloo. The next most commemorated slave owner was far behind him, the geologist Henry De la Beche, who inherited and managed plantations: 3 streets and a building were named after him.

The greatest number of commemorations were for those who opposed the abolition of the slave trade or slavery. Although the persons identified were fewer, many of them were national figures, including Wellington, Nelson and King William IV, Duke of Clarence, each of whom was commemorated multiply. Wellington had 2 monuments and 13 building or places and up to 32 streets named after him – more than anyone else in the Audit owing to his standing as commander of the victorious forces against Napoleon and subsequently as Prime Minister. However, the extent or significance of the opposition by these figures was sometimes in question. As the Audit noted: ‘While Nelson may have condoned the slave trade privately and Wellington

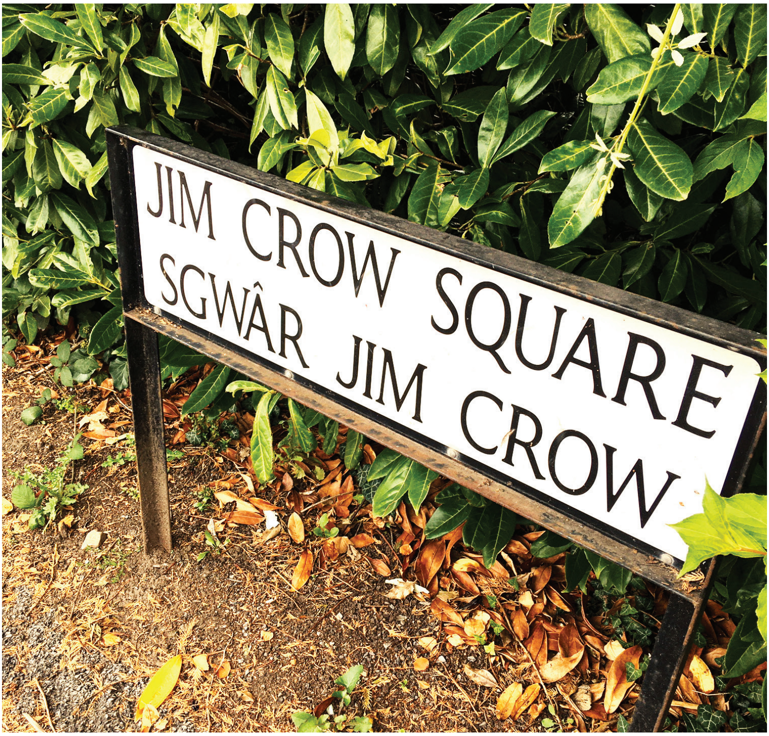

Figure 4. Jim Crow Square in Cwmbran takes its name from the nearby Jim Crow’s Cottage. Local hearsay is that the cottage was named for a friend of the owner not the racist nineteenth-century black-face act.
Photo: Peter Wakelin.

may have supported West India interests, it is not clear whether either of them had any responsibility for the perpetuation of slavery.'[7]

Only three people not already included in the earlier categories were known to be accused of crimes against Black people after the abolition of slavery: General Herbert Kitchener, Cecil Rhodes and H. M. Stanley. Each was commemorated in Wales, but Stanley, owing to his Welsh background, was recognised most strongly, with 3 monuments and 11 streets apparently named after him.

A further 11 persons of interest were those who did not fit the other categories but had been raised by campaigners, principally through the 'Topple the Racists' website. The most commemorated of these were prime ministers W. E. Gladstone, with 34 commemorations, and Winston Churchill, with 15. The biographical accounts offered in the Audit sought to describe the issues that had made these figures controversial and summarise the evidence but did not seek to reach judgements about their culpability or otherwise.

Unsurprisingly, the number of commemorations for significant figures of Black heritage was far fewer: of 42 people only 7 were commemorated (the single person with two commemoration was American singer and activist Paul Robeson).

The reception of the Audit

On first distribution in draft to stakeholders, the Audit's reception was largely calm and complimentary. Several correspondents who responded to the request for comments said they regarded it as a breakthrough in developing a clear framework and providing a large amount of information in a digestible form.

After publication, the most fully articulated response was that by the Welsh Parliament Culture, Welsh Language and Communication Committee, which began an investigation of the subject in June 2020 and published its own report in March 2021 titled *Set in Stone? A Report on Who Gets Remembered in Public Places*.[8] The report noted that, 'Many of the witnesses who gave evidence to the Committee agreed that the Legall audit was an important and valuable piece of work'. It concluded that the Audit was, 'an important first step in enhancing our understanding of how Wales's past shapes the present.

It will also undoubtedly guide us as we look to shape the future.' It recommended that the report should be publicised through a programme of community engagement.

The wider reception after publication was more mixed. The Welsh Government welcomed comments on the Audit and around 40 were received. Several were positive while offering comments on particular aspects, such as one that began: 'Stanley Road is missing from the excellent audit published today'.[9] Some led to refinements of the information in the second edition. The Wellington public house in Maesteg, which had been thought to be named for the Duke of Wellington, was re-evaluated after correspondents pointed out that it was named after him only indirectly, in so far as it was formerly a Royal Air Force Association club with the Wellington bomber as an emblem (it has since taken the abbreviated name 'The Welly'). Other evidential contributions included new information about the plantation-derived wealth of Edward Protheroe MP, who owned mines in south Wales, and suggestions about streets that might have been named after the plantation owner Nathaniel Wells of Piercefield.

The Nelson Society sought to argue that a private letter by Horatio Nelson expressing opposition to the abolition of the slave trade was amended by anti-abolitionists after his death; as a result the evidence was cited more fully. Nelson was the figure who caught the attention of the national press, and the Nelson Society's views were reported on the letters page of *The Telegraph*. A major figure whose biography was reconsidered was the social reformer and cotton manufacturer Robert Owen, commemorated in several locations. The Audit cited a recent paper by Michael Morris that drew attention to Owen's arguments in 1829 for the continuation of slavery in Jamaica, but Christopher Williams contributed counter-arguments made by Owen elsewhere as well as evidence of his support for a racially integrated community in Tennessee.[10] Owen's biographical note in the Audit was adjusted to balance the account.

Other correspondents were concerned about costs. A Freedom of Information request asked how much had been spent on the Audit. In reply, the cost was stated to be £17,000.[11] No further enquiries followed.

The information set out was nuanced, as befitted the subject matter and the range of arguments that might be developed about historical figures. Generally, this was understood, but it was received by some

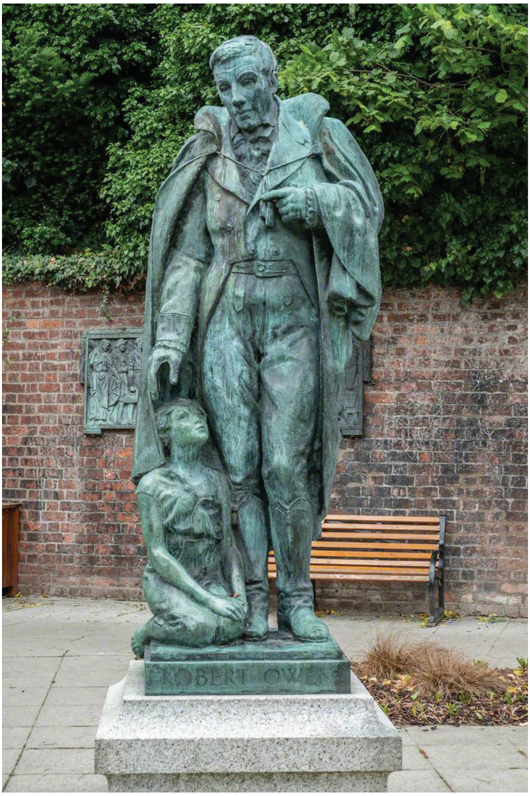

Figure 5. The statue of Robert Owen in his home town, Newtown, Powys, by Gilbert Bayes and W. E. King, 1953, depicts him as a social reformer with a working child sheltered at his feet.
Photo: Tony Bennett / Art UK, Creative Commons.

readers and commentators less subtly. Many wrongly assumed that the intended outcome of the project was that statues would be destroyed. For a few who positioned themselves as ‘anti-woke’, it appeared to exemplify a tide of cultural change they wished to turn back. Many of these correspondents wrote by email without giving a name or address, but the majority appeared to be outside Wales and responding to reports in the national press. A trope was that immigrants were seeking to remove cherished features of the country they had come to, referencing not only statues but, in one email, ‘our beloved golliwog’ and ‘the outstanding and popular Black and White Minstrel Show’.

While it would be easy to dismiss such respondents as bigoted and ignorant of the purposes of the Audit, they highlighted an anxiety about change in some sections of society. Many were written in furious terms. One message read simply: 'Leave them alone you won't change history you'll just alienate all but a small wokeish minority. Leave them alone they are not yours!'[12] Another asked: 'Why do you see the need to inflict that ridiculous, divisive and Marxist agenda on us here in Wales?' and concluded: 'I sincerely hope that any decisions affecting historic statues or traditional street names in Wales will be rejected and not complied with.'[13] Some users dipped in to find material without appreciating the context; a result was the widespread assumption that all historical figures in the list had been condemned, even though the biographical discussions might suggest other interpretations of the evidence. Some such misrepresentations were prompted by reports that dripped from the national press over many months, for example articles in *The Telegraph* and *The Times* on 10 and 11 October 2021 suggesting the Audit had raised a 'problem' for 'an entire Welsh village', Nelson near Caerphilly.

Comments on the audit reflected violently polarised opinions about individuals, none more than in the case of H. M. Stanley, who was commemorated by a statue in Denbigh and a sculptural monument in St Asaph, both of which were actively contested. Some considered Stanley responsible for the crimes against humanity that followed his explorations in the Congo while others considered him a heroic explorer innocent of abuses.

Guidance on commemorations

The Welsh Government envisaged when commissioning the Audit that it would be followed by further action. Similarly, the Culture, Welsh Language and Communication Committee found that the Government should provide leadership and guidance to local authorities and communities on action regarding contentious statues, monuments or commemorations. Such a need was reinforced by the Welsh Government's own *Anti-racist Wales Action Plan* of June 2022, which charged public bodies with 'setting the right historic narrative, promoting and delivering a balanced, authentic and decolonised account of the past – one that recognises both historical injustices and the positive impact of ethnic minority communities.'[14] This stated a need to 'review and appropriately address the way in which people and events with known historical associations to slavery and colonialism are commemorated in our public spaces and collections, acknowledging the harm done by their actions and reframing the presentation of their legacy to fully recognise this.'

The outcome was the preparation during 2022 of draft guidance on issues of public commemoration, past and future. A public consultation was issued on 29 November 2022 on a document titled *Public Commemoration in Wales: Guidance for Public Bodies* (hereafter the Guidance).[15] The document was drafted within the Welsh Government and developed through workshops facilitated by Marian Gwyn with stakeholders from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, LGBTQ+ groups and representatives from education, local government, the armed forces, faith groups and heritage bodies.[16] The expressed purpose of the Guidance was:

> to help local authorities, town and community councils, and other public bodies reach well-informed decisions about existing and future public commemorations. This will help them play their part in making Wales an anti-racist nation, and celebrate individuals from all parts of our society who have made an outstanding contribution to Welsh life.

Although it was aimed at public bodies who might make decisions on existing or new commemorations, the Guidance was designed to be accessible to a wide readership who might want to raise concerns or campaign for change. It drew on case studies from around the world to illustrate problems and potential actions and emphasised understanding issues and inclusive decision making.

While race and ethnicity were key themes in the Guidance, it embraced the wider concept of who and what communities want to commemorate and why. It sought to explore the role of commemoration in making communities stronger and the range of actions that might be taken in response to public commemorations that no longer echo public values. One of the influences on this approach was the work done in Northern Ireland by the Community Relations Council in preparation for the decade of centenaries. This offered simple principles for marking anniversaries in public places: starting with historical facts, recognising consequences of events, understanding different perceptions of them and exploring how commemoration can deepen knowledge and contribute to an inclusive and accepting society.[17]

The consultation was launched in an oral statement on 29 November 2022 by Dawn Bowden, Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport and Chief Whip. She said:

> This guidance is intended to help public bodies make good decisions that manage the risks of controversy, that take opportunities to create a more informed relationship with our history, and that genuinely celebrate the diversity of our communities.[18]

The first part of the Guidance introduced public commemoration and its impact, drawing a wide historical and cultural context that emphasised the impermanence of many past monuments and the changing attitudes to them over time. It put as much emphasis on opportunities to redress imbalances as on the problems of existing commemorations. Among issues discussed were the impact of purposefully divisive commemorations (utilising a case study of Confederate statues in the southern United States), the significance of types and styles, from heroic statues to simple plaques and street names, and the resonance of prominent public spaces. Another issue was how hindsight and new evidence can change the understanding of particular individuals, whether historical figures such as Colston or recent personalities such as Jimmy Savile.

The second part set out four steps that public bodies should take in order to address conflicts and realise the contribution of public commemoration to an anti-racist Wales.

1. Put in place a framework for inclusive decision-making that hears and acts upon the experience of diverse communities.
2. Set clear objectives for what public bodies want to achieve.
3. Agree criteria to inform decisions.

4. Take action to ensure public commemoration is fit for present and future generations.

In developing inclusive decision making, the value was emphasised of early engagement, knowing the community, building relationships and reaching the community through proactive consultation.

Nearly all the case studies to illustrate the arguments were chosen from outside Wales, partly to learn from examples that had reached a resolution and partly to avoid reigniting conflicts in the course of the discussion. Among them were the Rhodes Must Fall movement at the University of Cape Town, the Stolpersteine that commemorate the addresses of tens of thousands of people killed in the Holocaust, the erection of a statue in London to the Black Crimean War nurse Mary Seacole and the interpretive art project to re-dress statues in

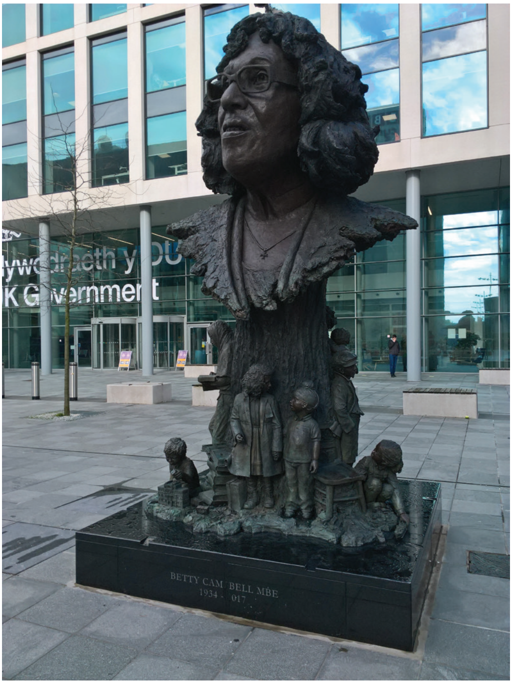

Figure 6. The sculpture of Betty Campbell in central Cardiff by Eve Shepherd, 2021.
Photo: Peter Wakelin.

Liverpool. A case study of Sculpture Parks to which Soviet monuments had been moved in former Eastern Bloc countries offered a potent counter-argument to observing the 'retain and explain' approach in all circumstances, underlined at the time of publication by the actions of Ukrainian communities who could no longer be expected to tolerate Russian monuments in their midst. Among examples from Wales were the creation of the statute in Cardiff of Betty Campbell and discussions about the reinterpretation of the obelisk to Thomas Picton in Carmarthen.

The document was seasoned with quotations gathered from contributors to the consultative workshops, for example: 'I think it's really important that we have the representation for future generations to actually feel a sense of belonging …', and 'I think leaving things as they are clearly isn't an option'.

Reception of the Guidance

Comments on the Guidance at the Deputy Minister's statement to launch the consultation were constructive and largely supportive of the approach. The opposition Culture spokespersons who spoke in the Senedd, Tom Giffard on behalf of the Conservatives and Heledd Fychan on behalf of Plaid Cymru, both welcomed the publication.[19]

The consultation received 176 responses, the great majority from private individuals. Around 80 per cent of respondents felt the guidance would be useful (56 per cent) or partly useful (24 per cent) to public bodies with responsibility for commemorations; 70 per cent thought it would contribute towards the goals of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan. Some expressed concern that the guidance was attempting to re-write history in the light of contemporary values, in response to which the Welsh Government undertook to make it clearer that it was a framework for community-based decision-making that made no recommendations about the decisions themselves.[20]

The wider public response was muted. The publication attracted considerably less press interest than the prior Audit. One of the few reports was in *The Daily Telegraph*, which began: 'Statues of "old white men" such as the Duke of Wellington and Admiral Lord Nelson could be hidden or destroyed, according to Welsh government guidance …', putting in quotation marks a phrase that appeared nowhere in the Guidance.[21] The writer obtained a contribution from the Welsh Conservatives leader in the Senedd, Andrew R. T. Davies:

> Whether it is their erroneous misguidance for public bodies or their so-called 'Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan', Labour are intent on rewriting our history here in Wales … Rest assured, I will be pushing hard against these Orwellian moves with Welsh Conservative colleagues, that are unfortunately becoming more and more common from the socialists in Cardiff Bay.

Near-identical wording was used in headlines in the *Daily Mail* and on the website of LBC. The articles were published shortly after the consultation period had ended. None of them examined the contents of the Guidance. The *Mail* instead looked back to the detail of the Audit. It explored several aspects of the debate reasonably fairly despite the distortion of its headline, and rather than quoting Andrew R. T. Davies it included statements by Mark Drakeford and Dawn Bowden.[22]

The commemoration agenda and an anti-racist Wales

How might these projects contribute to an anti-racist Wales and a more cohesive Wales? The horizon for real change is likely to be not months but years or decades. Nevertheless, some movement can be detected in parallel with the projects, if not in yet in consequence of them.

A striking aspect of the passage of the two projects has been the way in which, with vocal exceptions, they have been embraced with equanimity and appreciation. This has suggested that in some sense they have been able to capture a contemporary consensus about the need for changes in attitudes towards race and about the significance within those changes of commemoration. The negative press has come solely from London newspapers that identify themselves with campaigns against what they characterise as 'woke' attitudes. While these articles have generated some angry emails from people who have not examined the Audit or Guidance, more detailed responses by individuals have been either generally supportive or have critiqued particular cases rather than the approach.

In terms of physical changes to public commemorations, it is already apparent that there is far more appetite in Wales for new recognition of people from ethnic minorities in public commemoration than for action against existing commemorations. While new commemorations so far completed were in train before 2020, they were given a higher profile and possibly additional momentum as a result of the work undertaken to raise the broader issues. Most prominent among them is the sculptural statue of Betty Campbell, the first Black head teacher in Wales, unveiled in September 2021 in a key location in the capital, near Cardiff Central Station and the new BBC headquarters.[23] The sculpture was embraced enthusiastically and has already become a popular landmark. In March 2023, a Purple Plaque was put at the Wales Millennium Centre to the jazz singer Patty Flynn, who had been listed in the Audit as a figure for potential commemoration. Flynn had herself campaigned for a plaque at the National War Memorial in Cardiff to colonial and ethnic-minority servicemen who had died in both world wars.[24]

In July 2023, a statue of three sportsmen was unveiled on a plinth in Cardiff Bay. Two of the figures were Black but all three represented a quite different kind of prejudice – that against 'codebreakers' who defected from rugby union to rugby league. Clive Sullivan had been highlighted in the Audit as a historically significant figure of Black heritage but Billy Boston, as a living person, had been omitted. The impetus for the commemoration had come from the community in 2020, but Cardiff City Council supported it and noted in 2023 that it was the first monument in Wales to depict real Black men rather than archetypes. The plinth incorporated plaques for 10 other players from the immediate area, including Colin Dixon and Roy Francis, who had been cited in the Audit.[25] A few months later, in October 2023, a 2.5-metre stainless steel monument to Roy Francis was unveiled in Brynmawr, the town where he grew up and played rugby until he moved to Wigan in 1937.[26]

The Audit had found fewer egregious commemorations of racist figures than in, say, the southern United States. The worst case was that of Thomas Picton, a man so brutal in his treatment of the

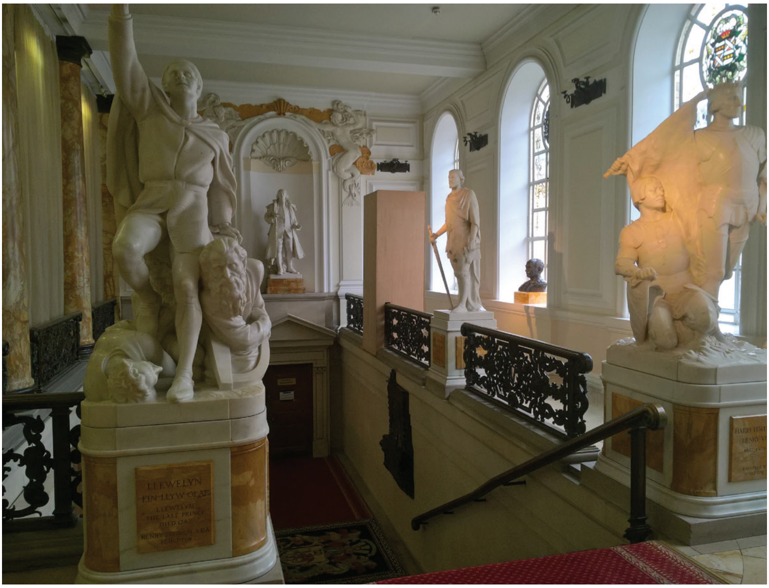

Figure 7. The Hall of Heroes at City Hall in Cardiff with, at the far end, the statue of Thomas Picton concealed in a plywood box.
Photo: Peter Wakelin.

Black population of Trinidad that even the courts of Georgian London found him guilty of abuses before he was retried on a technicality and became a military hero. While the Audit was in progress Cardiff City Council opted to enclose Picton's statue in the 'hall of heroes' at City Hall in a plywood box. It applied for consent to remove the statue from the Grade I Listed building, which was granted subject to a satisfactory method for removal. In Swansea, the owners of the Picton Arcade took down the name signs, preferring it to be anonymous.

The community of Carmarthen was more divided in considering its Picton obelisk, which was regarded by many people as a significant landmark and a memorial to named battles of the Napoleonic Wars as well as a commemoration of the man. In 2020, an online petition proposing that it should be taken down was signed by 20,000 people from around the UK and internationally. Carmarthenshire County Council established a cross-party group and began a consultation that drew 1,613 responses in favour of retention and 744 for removal. The Council opted to install panels interpreting Picton's life and crimes.

Another consultation was carried out over the treatment of the H. M. Stanley sculpture in St Asaph. In 2020, a petition for removal had garnered 1,100 signatures and councillors responded by voting for its retention with additional explanation. In October 2021, a public vote was held in Denbigh Town Hall about the recently erected statue of Stanley in the town after a petition for removal had gained 7,000 signatures. The vote attracted nearly 9 per cent of Denbigh residents, of whom 80 per cent voted for retention and 20 per cent for removal. The Town Council consequently decided the statute should stay.[27] Neither of these cases was informed by any research or negotiated consensus about how Stanley's actions in the Congo should be understood, and neither addressed hard-to-reach groups or evaluated the impact that the commemorations might have on minorities. The Guidance offers more mature models of communication and engagement for consultation exercises in future.

The Audit has been consulted as a source of information to raise awareness and understanding about Welsh connections with slavery and empire. An illustrated article about the issue was included in the magazine *Heritage in Wales*.[28] In 2023, the Audit was listed in the curriculum toolkit produced by GEM (the Group for Education in Museums) to share Black, Asian and ethnic minority stories.[29] It has already been cited in academic studies[30] and has appeared as a comparator in explorations of the issues by other jurisdictions, for example the city of Toronto.[31]

Cadw has used the Audit to adjust the statutory descriptions for around a dozen Listed or Scheduled memorials to persons of interest, for example to explain the role of Major-General Sir William Nott in the East India Company (for a statue in Carmarthen), to cite the connection between William Gladstone and slavery through the plantations of his father (for a statue at Hawarden) and to refer to the sailor John Morris's time on a slaving ship (for the Morris Brothers Memorial, Anglesey).[32]

While the Audit provides information about how race and racism are reflected in public commemoration, the Guidance gives a best-practice model for undertaking consultations that involve all sectors of the community and seek to ensure that all opinions and responses can be understood. It also provides diverse models for dealing with existing commemorations – from removal to reinterpretation to forgetting – and for considering future commemorations that create a more balanced reflection of society.

These documents together provide a toolkit that can help communities to take decisions more proactively, more cooperatively and more effectively. Their existence does not guarantee change, but as a widely shared statement of intent they have contributed already to the shifting of the culture.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Neil Evans, Gaynor Legall, Charlotte Williams and colleagues at Cadw including Judith Alfrey, Gwilym Hughes, Gareth Phillips, Christopher Thomas, Michael Weatherhead and Suzanne Whiting.

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Notes

1 Written statement by the First Minister initiating the audit, 6 July 2020: *https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-audit-public-monuments-street-and-building-names-associated-history-black*.

2 22 December 2020, *https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-from-culture-secretary-on-hm-government-position-on-contested-heritage*.

3 The Task and Finish Group members were Gaynor Legall, Dr Roiyah Saltus, Professor Robert Moore, David Anderson, Dr Marian Gwyn, Naomi Alleyne, Professor Olivette Otele and Professor Chris Evans. Cadw staff supporting the project were led by Gwilym Hughes and Judith Alfrey and included Philip Hobson, Gareth Phillips, Dr Christopher Thomas, Michael Weatherhead and Suzanne Whiting. The project officer was Dr Peter Wakelin.

4 Welsh Government, 2020. *The Slave Trade and the British Empire: An Audit of Commemoration in Wales*. A revised edition with minor amendments was published in December 2021, *https://www.gov.wales/slave-trade-and-british-empire-audit-commemoration-wales*.

5 *https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/; https://www.slavevoyages.org/*; Chris Evans, *Slave Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010); *https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/*. For full details of sources consulted, see Welsh Government (2020), *The Slave Trade and the British Empire: An Audit of Commemoration in Wales*, section 16 and notes within the tabulated findings.

6 With respect to street and building names, it was not always possible to infer that a person of interest was commemorated rather than a family, person or place of the same name.

7 Welsh Government (2021), *The Slave Trade and the British Empire: An Audit of Commemoration in Wales*, p. 14.

8 *https://senedd.wales/media/3jbnhs2d/cr-ld14301-e.pdf*.

9 Email from Stephen Turner, 26 November 2020.

10 Michael Morris, 'The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Improvement: David Dale, Robert Owen and New Lanark Cotton', in Alex Benchimol and Gerard Lee McKeever (eds), *Cultures of Improvement in Scottish Romanticism, 1707–1840* (London: Routledge, 2018); Christopher Williams, correspondence in response to consultation.

11 A reply on the costs of the Audit was published in October 2021: *https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-10/atisn15592.pdf*.

12 Email 22 June 2021.

13 Anonymous email 8 July 2020.

14 *https://www.gov.wales/anti-racist-wales-action-plan*.

15 *https://www.gov.wales/public-commemoration-wales-guidance-public-bodies*.

16 The Welsh Government staff responsible were Judith Alfrey, Philip Hobson, Gwilym Hughes, Michael Krawec, Christopher Thomas and Mike Weatherhead, and they were supported in drafting by Peter Wakelin.

17 *https://www.community-relations.org.uk/decade-centenaries*.

18 *https://record.senedd.wales/Plenary/13049#C466091*.

19 *https://record.senedd.wales/Plenary/13049#C466091*.

20 Welsh Government Consultation 46145, Summary of Responses, published 27 September 2023, *https://www.gov.wales/public-commemoration-wales-guidance-public-bodies*.

21 Craig Simpson, 11 March 2023, *https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/03/11/statues-old-white-men-may-need-destroyed-welsh-government-advises/*.

22 Elizabeth Haigh, 12 March 2023, *https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11850137/Statues-old-white-men-like-Duke-Wellington-destroyed-Welsh-government-advises.html*.

23 *https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-58721710*.

24 *https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-65039113*.

25 *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Statue_of_Billy_Boston,_Clive_Sullivan_and_Gus_Risman*.

26 *https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-67181749*; *https://www.brynmawrmuseum.org.uk/events?lang=en*.

27 *https://nation.cymru/news/denbigh-votes-to-keep-controversial-h-m-stanley-statue-after-7000-signature-petition-to-remove-it/*.

28 Gaynor Legall and Peter Wakelin, 'Saints or Sinners?', *Heritage in Wales*, 71 (2020), 11–15.

29 *https://gem.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/GEM-toolkit.pdf*.

30 Olivette Otele, Luisa Gandolfo, Yoav Galai (eds), *Post-Conflict Memorialization: Missing Memorials, Absent Bodies* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021); Martin Blatt (ed.), *Violence and Public Memory* (London: Routledge, 2023); Huw Pryce, *Writing Welsh History*: *From the Early Middle Ages to the Twenty-first Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

31 *https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/913f-Recognition-Review-Experiences-from-Other-Jurisdictions.pdf*.

32 Nott Statue, Carmarthen, *https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=9505*; Glastone Monument, Hawarden, *https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=15026*; Morris Brothers Memorial, XXX, *https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=80866*.

CHAPTER 6

Museums in Wales: Identities, Empire and Slavery

Marian Gwyn

Challenging narratives: Rethinking identity and representation

On 22 November 2022, Dawn Bowden MS, Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport for the Welsh Government announced that grants amounting to £4.5m had been allocated to deliver the goals and actions of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan (ARWAP). The purpose of the funding, to be delivered over three years, was to eradicate institutional and systemic racism by collectively and collaboratively working together to bring about change. Wales's heritage and cultural sectors were highlighted specifically as arenas for transformation. 'Our national and local museums, galleries, libraries, theatres and sporting venues need to be inclusive of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people and places. Our culture, heritage and sports services must be culturally competent and reflective of the history and contribution made by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people to Welsh society'.[1]

The ARWAP itself is even more direct, charging the heritage sector in Wales to 'review and decolonise [its] public space and collections by appropriately addressing the way in which people and events with known historical associations to slavery and colonialism are commemorated, acknowledging the harm done by their actions and reframing the presentation of their legacy to fully recognise this.'[2] Bowden's funding programme was much oversubscribed, as large publicly sponsored bodies vied with local authorities, independent sites, and small groups across Wales to deliver innovative projects that incorporated co-production with ethnic minorities, with the expectation that they would place lived experience at the centre of policy and delivery.

Wales was not always so receptive to acknowledging its imperial past or its ethnic minority communities, as Alan Llwyd starkly acknowledges in *Cymru Ddu Black Wales*: 'Some black Welsh people feel that they have been ignored by their country, and that their history has never been told. That their history is not a part of 'official' Welsh history. It is a concealed history, a history kept under lock and key, and the participants of that history are obscure and invisible'.[3]

Just two years after *Cymru Ddu* was published, Wales was to be challenged publicly on this elision, when in 2007 Britain commemorated the bicentenary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. While hundreds of events took place across the UK, the vast majority were in England. Wales's response was tentative, with little attempt afterwards to embed any gains into working practices.[4] It preferred, on the whole, to join with Scotland and Northern Ireland in considering this an English concern, aligning itself with Scottish cries of 'it wisnae us'.[5]

This chapter considers two distinct moments of challenge for the museum sector in Wales in the process of acknowledging Welsh participation in empire and the country's diverse communities. The first is the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade in 2007, in which Wales's role formed part of a large body of research on the commemoration conducted by the author. Secondly, the chapter explores the work in museums generated by the ARWAP programme announced in 2022, along with other aligned initiatives, that are encouraging institutional change. The chapter discusses how the sector has committed itself to transformation; it considers how an inherited concept of white industrial and rural Welshness has the potential within it to evoke new layers of understanding, creating a more honest and inclusive identity.

A contested commemoration

The bicentenary in 2007 provoked a complex set of debates, not least about the relationship between the UK's heritage sites and the public, between those who considered themselves to be the guardians of the nation's identity and those who felt their stories were excluded from cultural representations. Many museum staff were challenged for the first time to consider how their collections, donors, buildings and localities were connected to colonial enslavement, and to engage in meaningful conversations with ethnic minority communities on how these stories should be told.

Throughout the bicentennial year, thousands of people participated in events across the UK. The commemoration attracted significant media attention, generating television and radio programmes, newspaper and magazine articles, films, books, internet content, and academic interest.[6] The Labour government actively promoted the year, and, through the then-named Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), provided over £15 million to support activity.[7] The Minister for Culture announced that '2007 offers a vital opportunity to reflect on the past and look to the future. We look forward to the role Government will play in helping the community, faith and cultural sectors to achieve this'.[8]

The bicentenary was, however, much contested. Few could challenge the abolition in 1807 of the wrong that was the trading in human beings, but some, especially those of African or African-Caribbean heritage, felt that the commemoration did not go far enough in acknowledging Britain's leading role in enslavement in the first place, nor did they consider that enough recognition was given to Black agency in the process of abolition. A point much raised was that while the British slave *trade*, the shipping of captured Africans across the Atlantic, was brought to an end, at least in the eyes of the law, in 1807, slavery, the use of un-free labour, was not abolished in most British colonies until the 1830s.[9]

Black activist Toyin Agbetu spoke for many when he declared he would not be participating, 'just as an abuse victim should not be expected to commemorate the day their abuser decided to abstain from their depraved actions'.[10] Letters to national newspapers and membership magazines revealed equal antipathy to the commemoration among the white community, with one National Trust member complaining emphatically that Britain did 'NOT need reminding of the slave trade', a position echoed recently when the National Trust published its interim report on empire, slavery and historic houses.[11] Others used the name of the parliamentary voice of abolition William

Wilberforce, to accuse participating organisations of indulging in a 'Wilberfest', or even 'Wilberfarce'.[12]

The commemoration was also contested by those working in the heritage sector, the very people the government was keen to mobilise. Debate revolved around how, where and indeed whether the bicentenary should be commemorated. Themes emerging strongly were their unpreparedness to deal with the complexity of the issues that were evoked by it and their concerns about their own abilities to deal with it. A senior museum manager recognised within the profession a lack of serious commitment to the commemoration fed by a cynicism as to what would come out of it, noting that 'institutions won't commit where there's an element of risk … and in terms of legacy for any of this work, it has not been thought through'.[13] Elsewhere, museum staff keen to participate felt daunted by their limited knowledge of the slave trade, their inexperience in engaging with ethnic minority communities, and the paucity of examples of best practice they could turn to for inspiration. Though Wilberforce House in Hull, the former home of the abolitionist, had opened its doors as a museum as early as 1905, and the Merseyside Maritime Museum in Liverpool established its slavery gallery in 1994, Atlantic slavery had remained mostly unexplored in Britain's museums, with no explicit presentations in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Indeed, Wales was considered peripheral to the commemoration. In 2006, in a debate on the bicentenary at the National Portrait Gallery, National Museum Wales was criticised for seemingly taking advantage of grant funding for the commemoration when the country was, as the panel suggested, only tenuously linked to slavery.[14] This was a position within Wales that few wished to challenge, as Charlotte Williams observed. 'Black Welsh wasn't really lodged in the cultural consciousness or in the cultural memory, conveniently dissociating the Welsh from any implication in the facts of black history'.[15] The evidence is, however, clear and irrefutable. The slave trade had always been far more than the buying and selling of human beings. It was a complicated network incorporating industry, manufacturing, shipping, insurance, investment, trading and legislation and Welsh people were involved in them all.[16] The ports of Liverpool, London and Bristol are well-known for their connections to slavery, but while they attracted international merchants and traders, they were also entrepôts that served the country's industrial and rural export markets. No slaving ships are known to have left any port in Wales, but many of Wales's export goods were taken by land or sea to these and other international trading centres in England, and many of its young people followed the same routes for employment.

Wales and slavery – a complex legacy

Wales supplied the slave trade with its natural and human resources. Copper mined on Anglesey and smelted in Holywell and Swansea sheathed the hulls of slaving ships and the Royal Navy ships that protected them, formed the enormous cauldrons in which sugar was crystallised, and was turned into manillas (bracelet-like items much used as currency in West Africa at that time), millions of which were made in Wales and exchanged in Africa for human beings. Iron from Wrexham and Merthyr Tydfil provided ordnance to keep the slave trade functioning, cannon, pistols and swords, as well as the essentials of Atlantic slavery, shackles, neck braces, machetes and cane crushers.[17] Lead from Cardiganshire provided shot for pistols, paint for shipping and ballast. Woollen textiles from Merionethshire served both as barter goods in West Africa and for clothing the enslaved in the Americas.[18] Amlwch, Dolgellau and Merthyr swelled and declined, as did other settlements, in tune with the demands of the trade and the need for labour. Their shops filled with commodities grown or produced by the enslaved in the Americas – tobacco, sugar, rum, cotton and coffee. Wales provided sailors, sea captains, plantation workers, slave-owners, traders, investors and more.[19]

The Atlantic slave trade lasted around three hundred and fifty years, crossing centuries and continents, and shipped twelve and a half million Africans across the Atlantic to a life of enslavement. In Wales, while rapid industrialisation brought with it the displacement of traditional ways of life, money from the trade filtered across the country, into towns, villages and landed estates. Along with the scars of industry, the landscape remains dotted with alms houses, schools, hospitals, churches, bought and paid for with slaving money by those considered to be dignitaries and philanthropists 'pillars of society and of the church, holding numerous civic roles such as aldermen, mayors and deacons'.[20]

Concepts of Welshness

Wales's involvement in slavery and empire is an enormous historical issue for the country. Modern Wales is shaped by its colonial past, not only in the way that the country developed economically but in the diverse people that walk its streets. This however is not reflected in the particular way in which Welshness is presented in Wales's museums. Welshness, as Daniel Williams observed 'became associated with a moral struggle for the hearts and minds of the people and was based on a curious combination of belief in social equality and an intolerance of anyone who embraced a different religion and embraced a different culture'.[21]

Wales's cultural institutions were established much later than those in England. English museums, often supported by elite patronage, evolved from the latter years of the eighteenth century and conveyed the country's position as an imperial power, implied or assumed, while rarely examining critically the provenance of their collections.[22] Museums in Wales emerged at least a century later, at a time when Britain was becoming more democratic, and Wales was defining itself as a country and a people different to their larger neighbour.[23] This is reflected in how Welsh identity came to be framed so specifically in museums, where museum collecting policies frequently restricted acquisitions to a specific type and from a specific period, and directives stipulated a distinct national identity.[24] While Welsh museums displayed china teacups, sugar bowls, tobacco tins, ivory fans, coral buttons and hairpins, cotton and silk garments, and armed services memorabilia, there was little incentive to explore these items too closely.

This was the position in which museums in Wales found themselves leading up to the bicentenary and it would have most likely remained a relatively small affair without a very late but committed push from the Westminster government. Stimulus came from deputy prime minister John Prescott, who wrote directly to Rhodri Morgan, First Minister of the Welsh Assembly Government, demanding action. Morgan brought together National Museum Wales (NMW), National Library of Wales and CyMAL, the advisory body in Wales for museums, archives and libraries, to form a response.[25] CyMAL took overarching responsibility for what became the *Everywhere in*

Chains project. Of note is that each of these public agencies were already intending some form of commemoration but acknowledged they would not have considered the large, national project that emerged without the intervention of Prescott and Morgan.[26]

Government influence was also evident in the provision of grant-funding through the HLF. Again, a direct approach incentivised participation. The Gateway Gardens Trust, a charity providing access for disadvantaged groups to historic parks and gardens in Wales, was one of several organisations to which the HLF made personal overtures. Gateway's *Bittersweet* project emerged from this, exploring slavery and empire through the plants of Wales's historic gardens. Bettina Harden, Gateway's Chair, acknowledged that she most likely would not have participated without this personal contact.[27]

The National Trust was also approached, when its chairperson and committed advocate of the bicentenary Fiona Reynolds was told by the HLF that 'we expect you to put applications in on this topic; we want to see something from you'.[28] Despite this top-level support and the offer of funding, the Trust's main response was resistance. In Wales, as elsewhere in the organisation, the events that took place were the initiatives of staff at individual properties who were already engaged with the issues exposed by the bicentenary. As Britain's largest owner of (over 200) elite country houses, the bicentenary proved too raw a subject for a charity that had generally chosen to ignore this aspect of its properties' histories. *Sugar and Slavery – The Penrhyn Connection* at Penrhyn Castle, Bangor, a project led by the author, was one of the few exceptions throughout the organisation.

Delivering a contested commemoration

Though highly skilled, most museum staff in Wales lacked the expertise and knowledge to deliver a commemoration of the slave trade. Once committed, they strove to learn about the trade, the broader histories of their collections, and ways of engaging with new audiences. A few attended workshops that had been organised by large heritage institutions in England that were already committed to the bicentenary. The Royal Navy Museum at Plymouth Dock, the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich, the Victoria and Albert

Museum in London, and GEM (Group for Education in Museums) all provided training for sector staff. Sue James of Swansea's National Waterfront Museum, a satellite of NMW and a contributor to the *Everywhere in Chains* project, considered object handling and engaging with ethnic minorities of most use, inspiring her to set up what she termed 'reinterpretation days' or 'skill-sharing days', where she worked with ethnic minority groups around the museum, exploring objects through multiple perspectives.[29]

Everywhere in Chains was intended to be multi-faceted and collaborative. Where it stumbled was in partnership-working with minority ethnic communities. Initial stakeholder meetings in Cardiff between senior sector staff and representatives of ethnic minority and faith communities proved challenging, with the group soon disbanding. Few partners were familiar with the history of the slave trade, even fewer had considered how their own cultural identities related to the challenges it raised, and time pressures prevented wider discussion around how a complex story could be told. The project moved forward with a smaller team that included only the original Welsh Government-sponsored institutions.[30] This team had learned that they needed to engage with a wider network of communities, who held varying views and sources of identity, but that this would need to be a long-term commitment beyond the scope of this project.[31]

The narrowing of the *Everywhere in Chains* management team led its members to reframe the project's objectives. The primary focus was now to educate 'the [white] Welsh public'. Project lead Lesley-Anne Kerr affirmed that 'we wanted to get those people who were thinking that the slave trade had nothing to do with them or the Welsh economy. We needed to get that message out to say that a big part of why Wales is the country it is today is because of the slave trade'.[32] She felt frustrated when several smaller museums especially in rural Wales declined to participate, the very areas suggested by Williams where 'exclusive constructions of national identity' were rooted.[33]

Staff delivering public engagement activities at grassroots level faced a steep learning curve. While many had considerable experience in working with traditional visitors, few had attempted to attract wider audiences. Sue James brought ten years of outreach experience with her to the *Everywhere in Chains* project, yet while she was able to attract several minority ethnic communities to work with, others refused. Gateway project staff experienced similar issues. Many of the groups they approached did not want to discuss the slave trade, some considering it irrelevant to their history, while others did not want to be associated with concepts of enslavement or victimhood. This surprised museum staff 'as the people you thought would seize it the most were the most reluctant'.[34]

The concept of a single Black identity proved to be of little practical relevance to self-perception, and, learning from this, James and Harden emphasised the importance of understanding what a 'community' was, as each group brought with them their own expectations, identities, experiences. This proved demanding for staff who had otherwise focused on collections management, exhibition installation or school engagement, and were now challenged to consider their sites as places of social justice, where high emotion was brought into the curatorial mix.[35] Understanding why a group was reluctant to participate was critical to encouraging participation, as Harden noted. 'We had to find out from them what they wanted to get out of it. The groups we were most successful with were the ones we let go first, lead the way for us'. But pressures of time meant that few had opportunities to build mutually beneficial projects that would have led to long-term partnerships beyond the commemoration.

Several museum staff considered that the speed with which the commemoration had been put together hindered future work with minority ethnic communities, noting that some of them saw projects as short-term and tokenistic. Others considered that what was being offered to them was far below the standard they wanted and what they could expect from a museum.[36] This is supported by evaluation of the bicentenary by the HLF, which notes that some attempts at co-producing commemorative events had impacted negatively on what could have been achieved due to limited knowledge of the subject, hesitancy in the consultation process and lack of time to understand each other's priorities.[37]

Confronting challenges in museums

Wales has around one hundred museums; seven managed by NMW, the rest by local authorities, universities, and independent trusts and charities. They are staffed by a mix of full-time, part-time, paid and voluntary workers in roles that include curation of collections and objects, public engagement, marketing, and exhibitions management. A significant feature of the commemoration is that it exposed divisions between staff, which influenced how the bicentenary was perceived in museums. The work of front of house staff, delivering community and educational activities, is all too frequently considered as being of lesser importance than collections management. These engagement roles are typically carried out by staff who are often employed on seasonal, part-time or short-term contracts or volunteers. Training is limited and there are no recognised qualifications or professional standards to meet.[38] Additionally, engagement work is expensive to run, time-consuming and usually targeted at those who comprise a museum's smallest visitor profile, who are commonly those with the smallest disposable income, and who therefore cannot contribute much to support the site financially.[39] Yet these staff members are the public face of their organisations and are expected to represent the broader positive vision of their institutions and funders through their work.[40]

More experienced engagement staff considered the commemoration to be an opportunity to say, 'we've been doing this for a while'. Frustration set in, however, when feedback proved negative or unacknowledged due to the lack of prominence given their work by their institutions. A Black community activist from Cardiff, who had been dismissive of the *Everywhere in Chains* project, labelling it as 'nothing but a small exhibition', expressed surprise when learning of the engagement activity carried out by James and her team.[41] Their work was subsequently recognised by the Black History Foundation in Birmingham for its 'outstanding contribution to black heritage in Wales'.[42]

Despite emerging evidence connecting several National Trust properties to Atlantic slavery, the author's project at Penrhyn Castle provided the organisation's only contribution to the commemoration in Wales. Internal divisions elsewhere discouraged further involvement. Erddig chose to lend its portrait of a Black coach boy to Wrexham museum in 2007 rather than interpret the painting on site, nor did it discuss the property's wealth generated from the slave economy through the leasing of its mineral rights to Bersham, an ironworks directly connected to the slave trade.[43] Perhaps the Trust's greatest lost opportunity was when Chirk Castle chose not to participate. Until recently, the story of the castle, which had been acquired by Sir Thomas Myddelton in 1595, had mostly been told through the prism of the Civil War, but Myddelton had bought the property on the back of a fortune he had made as one of London's largest sugar merchants. He became an investor in imperial voyages of exploration and founding member of the East India Company.[44] Chirk is one of the earliest examples of money accrued from the Atlantic economy being invested directly into landed interests in Wales and in the broader imperial world.

Researchers at York University identified what they termed the curatorial complex in museum staff who had participated in the commemoration.[45] Staff, many working alone with limited institutional support, had felt pressed to deliver events and activities with considerable speed on a subject which was not only much contested but little known to them. They felt pride in what they had done but frustrated by limited opportunity to expand on their achievements and considered that their work had not been used to advantage within their institutions. These museum workers were the ones who delivered the bulk of bicentennial output but were not those who had the brief or power to influence the broader activities of their museums. Staff not engaged with the bicentenary, including senior management and curatorial personnel, as well as governing bodies such as local authorities and trustees, did not gain from witnessing the advantages it brought, and there were no incentives to encourage them to do so. Projects worked best where all staff groups, as well as relevant external communities, had been fully involved in the process.

Missed opportunities

Despite the challenges, commemorative events and activities took place across Wales. Though small in number and in scale (apart from those already mentioned in this chapter), how many exactly is unknown. No formal evaluation took place at the time. Reasons given include workload and lack of commitment to the commemoration as being anything other than a temporary event. Indeed, staff found themselves having to move onto the next project before the commemoration had even finished. A senior member of the *Everywhere in Chains* team explained, 'To be honest, we didn't get our act together, because … of the usual thing. It all happened quite quickly in the end … It was one project among many. It was very sad, and that's one of the great failings of what we did, because it was so good and we haven't captured that'.[46]

Lack of effective evaluation of bicentennial activity meant that senior managers had little evidence on which to build a business case for continuing the work. Where this took place, increased visitor numbers and on-site spend in retail and catering outlets were recorded. Visitor figures at Penrhyn Castle went up sixteen percent in 2007 from 2006. Outside of Wales, the Equiano project in Birmingham witnessed a doubling of visitors from minority ethnic backgrounds to 32 per cent, those to English Heritage's Kenwood House, which hosted the organisation's bicentennial exhibition, increased from 17 to 26 per cent, and general visitors to the exhibition increased from 11 to 35 per cent. It is frustrating that similar data have not been collected elsewhere, as museums can too often underestimate the capacity of their visitors to respond to change, yet these figures are unequivocal.

The HLF commissioned a report on its own role in the bicentenary, produced by crossbench peer Baroness Lola Young. Findings include that HLF staff were insufficiently trained to understand the complexity of the commemoration or to advise applicants accordingly, and that its evaluation process had not been robust enough to capture a full picture of what happened.[47] Additionally, the HLF did not manage to attract Black communities to seek funding for commemorative events. Between 1994 and 2009, 98 per cent of their grants were directed to public bodies, with only 0.1 per cent going to African and Caribbean community groups.[48] The funder has been working towards rebalancing its spending allocations in recent years.[49]

Legacy and loss

Despite early fears, the name of William Wilberforce did not appear in many 2007 events and was mostly invisible in those in Wales. Here, events were not celebrations of abolition, but instead staff focused on what was relevant to their sites, and despite the shortness of time, they considered carefully what could be told, often for the first time. For some, priorities were to get to the heart of local connections to slavery, for others it was following where the money went, for Gateway it was how to make sure the stories they were telling were relevant to each of the eighty-four community groups they worked with.

Criticisms of bicentennial events struck deep in those who had produced them. Steph Mastoris of the National Waterfront Museum defended the commemoration stating that most critics 'missed the point … everyone involved in public understanding of history knows that the knowledge level was so low before that the only way was up'. He considered that their achievements must be seen in comparison to where museums were before the bicentenary, adding that for the first time he could remember 'you have something that's coming in almost left field and becomes embedded in so many different aspects of cultural life within the country that year.[50] Mastoris and Sue James went on to become key members of a team who were beginning to transform the interpretation at St Fagan's, NMW's National History Museum, a site long critiqued for presenting an image of Welshness that was white, Welsh-speaking, rural or working-class industrial.[51]

Elsewhere, much of the commemorative physical and digital production disappeared, print material was discarded and websites closed as grant-funding ended. In 2014, seven years after the commemoration, the University of Nottingham was successful in securing resources to record extant evidence of bicentennial events. Of three hundred and forty listed in its Remembering 1807 database, only six are in Wales.[52]

This loss was compounded by the massive cuts that hit the sector following the change of Westminster government in 2010 with the introduction of austerity. These cuts affected front-of-house staff more than any other roles in museums, and a disproportionate number of them were made redundant, wiping out their knowledge and experience from their places of work.[53] *Museum Journal* columnist Felicity Heywood considered the broader implications of this for diversity in museums, writing that 'African and other cultural backgrounds will suffer. Hard to reach audiences will once again be left to fend for themselves'. She also recognised another serious consequence of hitting education and community workers the most, as this was the one area in museums where employment of those from minority groups had had a noticeable impact.[54]

While Black people were consulted, there is little evidence that many were interested in engaging with the bicentenary. This raises questions about the ways in which these communities see their own heritage and the extent to which the museum sector had made any effort to understand their priorities. Few staff had the experience or training to manage conflicting stakeholder agendas. The bicentenary in Wales was most successful in raising awareness of the slave trade in the white population.

Stylish permanent displays, installed by design specialists, proved too inflexible and too expensive to consider changing or replacing to incorporate new material learned from the bicentenary, leaving museum spaces unchanged. Governmental influence, so vital in instigating participation, was also time-limited and did not extend beyond the commemoration. The consequence of these elements is that the bicentenary did not change the way that people in the heritage sector worked and museums in Wales did not in the main adapt in the light of emerging knowledge and expertise gained from the commemoration.

Driving sustainable change

Public knowledge of Wales's involvement in empire and slavery is very different now to what it was in 2007. Though still generally low, awareness is growing due to increased research and accessibility of information. Chris Evans's *Slave Wales* was published in 2010, providing an overview of Wales's industrial connections to the slave trade, shocking many by highlighting the involvement of the weavers of mid Wales. In the same year UCL launched its pivotal *Legacies of British Slave-ownership* website, which identified the recipients of compensation money paid to the former owners of enslaved people on abolition.[55] Seventy names in Wales were listed, exploding the belief of many that only the country's Anglicised landed elites, such as the Pennants of Penrhyn Castle, benefited from the ownership of enslaved people. Country lawyers, family doctors and women, people who had never set foot in the Caribbean, were among many who received compensation for their human property.

The National Trust continues to support artistic interventions on slavery at Penrhyn Castle and is expanding its research on the subject at other properties.[56] Race Council Cymru, an umbrella organisation representing ethnic minority communities, delivers Black History Wales initiatives and anti-racism training across Wales. The former HLF, now the National Lottery Heritage Fund, is attracting more ethnic minority groups to apply for funding, and more of these communities are increasingly calling for and achieving increased representation and participation in public spaces and cultural institutions.

While these are important, the fundamental change in Wales came following the very public death in the US of George Floyd in May 2020, followed by the pulling down of the statue of slave-trader Edward Colston in Bristol less than a month later. Black Lives Matter groups formed across Wales and were among the many demanding greater representation in and wider acknowledgement of the contributions of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people to the country.[57] The Welsh Government responded with speed, commissioning the Audit of Commemoration, the report on embedding minority ethnic histories into the new curriculum and the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan, which are addressed elsewhere in this volume.[58]

Attention inevitably turned to the museum sector, the principal public representative of national and local identity. Begun in 2021, *Reframing Picton* is a community-led project between NMW and the Sub-Sahara Advisory Panel's Youth Leadership Network. It reappraises how the story of Sir Thomas Picton was told to fully acknowledge his brutal treatment of the people of Trinidad during his time as governor of the island at the turn of the nineteenth century.[59] Head of Museums and Collections for the Welsh Government Victoria Rogers is overseeing a broad series of interventions, activities and training to support museums contribute meaningfully to the vision for an anti-racist Wales. Leading from this, in 2021–2 the Welsh Government funded the Diversifying Museums in Wales initiative, a training and support programme for the local museum sector. Led by the author, the programme involved online workshops, specialist speakers, exploration of best practice and lived experiences of racism, collections analyses and on-site training. Rogers confirmed that the project has increased confidence in staff, providing them with knowledge and skills to reassess their collections and engage in co-creating projects with new community partners.[60] While understanding Wales's role in Atlantic slavery and empire remains an imperative to understanding museum collections, museums are listening to ethnic minority groups and are increasingly working with these communities to celebrate their presence in Wales.[61]

The grants announced by Dawn Bowden discussed at the beginning of this chapter are funding twenty-two initiatives that will support the delivery of the ARWAP. These include projects such as Museums, Collections and Cynefin, a continuation of the above local museum support programme, a mentoring scheme for cultural venues led by Race Council Cymru, and GEM (Group for Education in Museum) which is supporting museums to embed the connections between their collections and empire into their educational provision.[62]

The small but manifest increase in ethnic minority museum staff suggests that the sector is becoming a viable career option for a wider workforce. However, most of these roles are new, fixed term and are for project or subject specific positions such as diversity officer, not general museum roles. We are yet to see if these become permanent. *Front of House in Museums*, co-founded by Will Tregaskes, Wales's former representative to the Museums Association (the professional body representing museum staff), identifies that fifty-nine percent of those in public engagement roles consider themselves to be undervalued by their employers compared to twenty-five percent of those in other roles.[63] The Museums Association, with Tregaskes, has developed its 'Front of House Charter for Change', an initiative that suggests that the issues faced by these staff in 2007 are ongoing and further confirms the need for a whole-site approach to implement and embed change in the sector effectively.[64] Increasing hostility faced by individuals delivering this work, especially from social media, raises further questions on institutional duty of care towards exposed staff.[65]

Training and development programmes funded by the Welsh Government are providing museums with the knowledge, access to knowledge, time and training to ensure that staff are better informed about Wales's imperial past and diverse communities. Initiatives such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund's 'Dynamic Collections' campaign are encouraging wider public engagement by making museum collections more meaningful to more people.[66] Nevertheless, the question remains whether minority ethnic communities wish to engage with the museum sector as it is or establish their own cultural centres, defining their heritage in their own terms.[67] The ARWAP reveals that seventy-six percent of people with a minority ethnic background in Wales do not engage in mainstream heritage activities.[68]

Some within the museum sector and their governing bodies are yet to be convinced of the need for change, but the majority of staff are now asking how rather than whether this work should be done. The rest of the UK is watching with interest, because while excellent practice in decolonising the cultural sector can be found across Britain, Wales is unique in that this work is led and funded not by individual institutions but by its government.[69] Delivering anti-racist practice is embedded across all areas of devolved responsibilities through its Programme for Government, which directs activity and spend for the duration of the administration.[70] The political landscape in Wales, however, is evolving. Bowden's ARWAP grants end in March 2025, and Senedd elections take place in 2026. Vaughan Gething, briefly Wales's First Minister during the spring of 2024, made history as Europe's first Black national leader. His resignation introduces a degree of uncertainty regarding the future trajectory of the ARWAP, and it remains to be seen how the new First Minister Eluned Morgan will prioritise and engage with the ARWAP's goals.

Beyond the action plan

This chapter emphasises the importance of governmental influence on stimulating movement in the museum sector; without it, at best only isolated and scattered initiatives would take place.

Despite the difficulties and limited long-term gains, the commemoration of the abolition of the slave trade in 2007 showed that the museum sector had the capacity for change. ARWAP-funded projects have demonstrated to museum staff that it is possible to engage honestly and enjoyably with their collections and with the modern identities that those collections have helped shape. Minority ethnic communities are being encouraged to participate in this work in ways that resonate with their experiences. The Minister's challenge to the heritage sector to become culturally competent and inclusive has been partially met but is not consolidated. For those of us whose calling is to deliver the programmes that help the museum sector to support a more equitable society, the inevitability of change reminds us of the need to embed this work while funding continues, and to tackle the further challenges that remain. This can only be assured in the long term by museums becoming institutionally responsive and relevant to the communities whose identities they represent.

Notes

1 *https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-delivering-culture-heritage-and-sport-goals-and-actions-anti-racist-wales-action?fbclid=IwAR3E2UdiHzJa7cfykEuQdOTTGi1Yal43BpwVOml8r_vtOi_sbWz0yYAKPhY*.

2 *https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-06/anti-racist-wales-action-plan_0.pdf*.

3 Alan Llwyd. *Cymru Ddu Black Wales: A History* (Caerdydd: Hughes a'i Fab, 2005), p 177.

4 Marian Gwyn, 'The Heritage Industry and the Slave Trade' (unpublished PhD thesis, Bangor University, Bangor, 2014), p. 283.

5 *https://it.wisnae.us/#:~:text=Scotland's%20role%20in%20the%20slave,noble%20and%20heroic%20Scottish%20past*. Scottish academic Tom Devine now acknowledges how he omitted references to slavery in his past work. Graeme Murry, 'A Nation's Shame: Leading Historian says Sorry for Failing to Confront Scots' Role in Slave Trade', *Herald Scotland* (21 March 2010), *http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/education/a-nation-s-shame-*.

6 See for example Alan Rice, *Creating Memorials, Building Identities: The Politics of Memory in the Black Atlantic* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), p. 56; and Geoffrey Cubitt, 'Museums and Slavery in Britain: The Bicentenary of 1807', in Ana Lucia Araujo (ed.), *Politics of Memory: Making Slavery visible in Public Spaces* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 159–77.

7 James Walvin, 'The Slave Trade, Abolition and Public Memory', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6/19 (2009), 145. The HLF has since reformed as the National Lottery Heritage Fund, *https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/*.

8 Department for Culture, Media and Sport, *Reflecting on the past and looking to the future: The 2007 Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade in the British Empire* (2006), p. 14.

9 The act of parliament that abolished slavery in most British colonies was passed in 1833, though it did not come into effect until 1 August 1834. An unworkable period of 'apprenticeship' tied the newly manumitted workers

to their former owners was brought to an end in 1838. For more information, see, amongst others, David Eltis and James Walvin (eds), *The Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Origins and Effects in Europe, Africa and the Americas* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981).

10 Ligali, 'Declaration of Protest to the 2007 Commemoration of the Bicentenary of the Parliamentary Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade', *http://www.africanholocaust.net/articles/Declaration%20of%20protest%20to%20the%202007%20Abolition%20*.

11 Anon., *National Trust Members Magazine* (summer 2007), p. 12. For opposition to the publication of the National Trust's interim report, see, for example, *https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/national-trust-slave-trade-colonialism-links-cancel-membership-twitter-a9685026.html*.

12 Ligali, 'What Happened to the Wilberfarce Offensive?' (Ligali Organisation, 19 July 2007), *http://www.ligali.org/forums/index.php?showtopic=3396*.

13 Bernadette Lynch, 'As the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade draws to its end, what has been achieved in terms of new working practices?', *Museum Journal*, 107/12, *http://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/comment/15293*.

14 Culture Wars, *Slaves to the Past*, Institute of Ideas debate for Museums and Galleries Month, National Portrait Gallery (London, 21 May 2007), *http://www.culturewars.org.uk/2007-06/slaves.htm*.

15 Charlotte Williams. *Sugar and Slate* (Aberystwyth: Planet, 2002), p. 177.

16 Chris Evans, *Slave Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010).

17 Evans, *Slave Wales*, pp. 35–9, 56–65.

18 Marian Gwyn, 'Merioneth and the Atlantic Slave Trade', *Journal of the Merioneth Historical and Record Society*, 18/3 (2020), 284–98 (286).

19 Some individuals combined several roles, such as mariner Thomas Phillips of Brecon, who acted as agent for the Royal African Company, and who, along with captaining *The Hannibal* in 1693–4, bartered goods from Britain, including Welsh woollen textiles, for captive Africans, whom he then sold in Barbados. Stephanie E. Smallwood, 'African Guardians, European Slave Ships, and the Changing Dynamics of Power in the Early Modern Atlantic, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, third series 64/4 (October 2007), 679–716 (680).

20 Richard S. Reddie, *Abolition – The Struggle to Abolish Slavery in the British Colonies,* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2007), p. 99.

21 Daniel G. Williams. *Black Skin, Blue Books: African Americans and Wales 1845–1945* (Cardiff: Cardiff University Press, 2012), p. 28.

22 The British Museum, for example, was founded as early as 1753, and it is now actively engaged in exploring the complex histories of its objects, *https://www.britishmuseum.org/blog/collecting-and-empire*.

23 NMW was founded in 1905, receiving its royal charter in 1907, *https://museum.wales/about/work-for-us/background/*.

24 Gwyn, 'Heritage Industry', p. 122.

25 CyMAL has since reformed as Museums, Archives and Libraries Division (MALD).

26 Gwyn, ‘Heritage Industry’, p. 124.

27 *https://antislavery.ac.uk/items/show/567*, Gwyn, ‘Heritage Industry’, p. 125.

28 Gwyn, ‘Heritage Industry’, p. 125.

29 Gwyn, ‘Heritage Industry’, p. 141.

30 Gwyn, ‘Heritage Industry’, p. 145.

31 For complexities around debates of identity and engagement with the Atlantic slave trade, see, for example, *https://www.newyorker.com/culture/personal-history/my-great-grandfather-the-nigerian-slave-trader https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-53444752*; *https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2020/7/30/the-bbcs-latest-attempt-to-play-down-the-uks-role-in-slavery*; *https://www.thecable.ng/a-response-to-adaobi-tricia-nwabuanis-article-my-nigerian-great-grandfather-sold-slaves*.

32 Gwyn, ‘Heritage Industry’, p.145.

33 Charlotte Williams, ‘Experiencing Rural Wales’, in *A Tolerant Nation? Revisiting Ethnic Diversity in a Devolved Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2015), p. 251.

34 Gwyn, ‘Heritage Industry’, p. 150.

35 Bernadette Lynch, ‘Reflective debate, radical transparency and trust in the museum’, in *Museum Management and Curatoriship*, 28/1 (2013), 1–13, *https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/09647775.2012.754631?needAccess=true&role=button*.

36 Gwyn, *Heritage Industry*, pp. 151–2.

37 Alchemy, *A Review of the HLF's Activity During 2005–2007 to Mark the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade in British Ships (2007)* (HLF, 2009).

38 *http://acidfreeblog.com/workforce/curators-and-workers-who-is-doing-the-work-and-who-is-seen-to-be-doing-the-work/*.

39 Gwyn, ‘Heritage Industry’, p. 157.

40 Lynch, ‘Reflective debate’, p. 5.

41 Pers comm, anon., Gwyn, *Heritage Industry*, p. 157.

42 *https://museum.wales/news/400/Slavery-exhibition-wins-top-UK-award/*.

43 Irving notes that income from iron and coal was extremely high at Erddig compared to much larger estates. R. J. Irving, ‘Coalmining on the Erddig Estate in North-East Wales, 1715–1880’, *Welsh History Review*, 29/2 (2018), 196–217 (200).

44 *https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/member/myddelton-sir-thomas-i-1556-1631*.

45 Ross Wilson, ‘The Curatorial Complex: Marking the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade’, in Laura Smith, Cubitt, C., Wilson, R. and Fouseki, K (eds), *Representing Enslavement and Abolition in Museums* (New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 131–46 (139).

46 Gwyn, ‘Heritage Industry’, p. 162.

47 Alchemy, *A Review of the HLF's Activity During 2005-2007 to Mark the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade in British Ships (2007)* (HLF, 2009).

48 Gwyn, 'Heritage Industry', p. 268.

49 *https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/our-work/investing-heritage-diverse-ethnic-communities*.

50 Gwyn, 'Heritage Industry', pp. 158–9.

51 Including Trefor Owen, 'Iorwerth Peate a Diwylliant Gwerin', *Transactions of the Cymrodorion*, new series 5 (1995), 62–79.

52 *https://antislavery.ac.uk/*.

53 *https://advisor.museumsandheritage.com/news/austerity-measured-spending-uk-museum-services-nearly-third-since-2010/*.

54 Felicity Heywood, 'From Where I'm Standing', *Museums Journal*, 110/09 (1 September 2010), 9, *http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/1823/?article_id=400*.

55 The site is now renamed Centre for the Study of the Legacy of British Slavery, *https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/*.

56 One such initiative was What a World, at Penrhyn Castle, *https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/wales/penrhyn-castle-and-garden/what-a-world-exhibition-at-penrhyn-castle*. A small group of NT members has formed Restore Trust to resist all changes to the public presentations of its properties.

57 *https://racecouncilcymru.org.uk/+Black-Lives-Matter-Wales*.

58 *https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-06/anti-racist-wales-action-plan_0.pdf*, p. 7.

59 *https://museum.wales/about-us/Black-lives-matter/reframing-picton/*.

60 *https://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/decolonising-museums/the-vision-for-an-anti-racist-wales/*.

61 See for example *https://news.wrexham.gov.uk/another-amazing-wrexham-quilt-goes-on-display/*.

62 For example, *https://gem.org.uk/event/anti-racism-and-black-history-in-the-curriculum-for-wales-context-part-1/*.

63 *https://fohmuseums.wordpress.com/*.

64 *https://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/workforce/a-front-of-house-charter-for-change/recognition/*.

65 Robert Janes, *Museums in a Troubled World: Renewal, Irrelevance or Collapse?* (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), p. 74.

66 *https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/our-work/dynamic-collections*.

67 Andrew Flinn and Mary Stevens, '"It is noh mistri, we mekin histri." Telling our own story: independent and community archives in the UK, challenging and subverting the mainstream', *Community Archives: the Shaping of Memory,* Principles and Practice in Records Management and Archives (London: Facet Publishng, 2009), pp. 3–27. Kiran Cymru, which promotes the wellbeing of ethnic minorities, for example, was one of the twenty-two recipients of ARWAP funding.

68 *https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-06/anti-racist-wales-action-plan_0.pdf*, p. 55.

69 Support for museums include *https://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/decolonising-museums/supporting-decolonisation-in-museums/*.

70 *https://www.gov.wales/programme-government*.

CHAPTER 7

Phillips Must Fall: Histories and Legacies of Slavery and Colonialism at St David's College, Lampeter

Alexander Scott

Introduction

The year 2022 marked the bicentenary of St David's College (SDC), Lampeter, today part of University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD). A special edition of BBC *Songs of Praise* discussed UWTSD's history and interviewed representatives of thirty-seven students from St Vincent and the Grenadines. The programme explained that the students received scholarships after discussions between Vice-Chancellor Medwin Hughes and the then-Prince of Wales following a volcano eruption on St Vincent.[1] Vincentian students subsequently enjoyed an audience with Prince Charles.[2] Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines, accepted an honorary doctorate when visiting Lampeter in September 2022.[3]

The same year was also the 201st anniversary of SDC's patron, Thomas Phillips, purchasing Camden Park sugar plantation in St Vincent. In accordance with the Abolition of Slavery Act 1833 and the Slave Compensation Act 1837, Phillips received £4737 8s 6d for loss of title over 167 enslaved people.[4] A British East India Company surgeon who donated 22,500 books to what is now UWTSD's Roderic Bowen Library and Archive (RBLA), Phillips, like other university benefactors, has been remembered uncritically for the past two centuries.

This chapter acts as a corrective. It begins by situating SDC within historiography on Wales, empire and slavery, demonstrating that (in addition to abolitionists) the university received patronage from enslavers and businesspeople who profited from slavery and colonialism. The chapter then explores Phillips's financial interests and his support of SDC and Welsh-language education, notably Llandovery College. It argues that previous scholarship underplayed Phillips's slave-ownership whilst paying Camden Park little heed. Counteracting this, the final two sections discuss St Vincent's colonial history before presenting a demographic sketch of people enslaved by Phillips. The chapter concludes with reflections on issues of reparatory justice.

The chapter draws on newspapers, printed works and manuscripts, plus two online resources: Deed Books (containing indentures relating to properties on St Vincent available on the British Library Endangered Archives Programme webpage) and Slave Registers (censuses of colonies' enslaved population accessed via Ancestry.com).[5] University College London's Legacies of British Slavery (LBS) database, which aggregates Slave Compensation Commission records, is used to contextualise Phillips. The emergent prosopography – or collective biography – shows that colonialism and slavery were quotidian features of British and Welsh society. Simply put, Phillips was nothing special.

A corresponding prosopographical approach yields insights about Camden Park's enslaved population.[6] Without denying their inherent bias, my analysis emulates Ann Laura Stoler in reading Slave Registers *along the archival grain* (i.e., interpreting them at face value) to make plausible inferences about some enslaved people's collective and individual identities.[7]

A necessary disclaimer. Before joining the International Slavery Museum, I was a lecturer in Modern History at UWTSD. Leading up to UWTSD's bicentenary, I worked with colleagues including Andy Bevan, Ann Bevan and Hilary Slack to raise awareness of problematic aspects of its history.[8] Dialogue with Adrian Fraser and Akley Olton in St Vincent followed. At no point did UWTSD obstruct my research; RBLA staff were supportive, and the university funded a conference on Wales and empire in June 2022.[9] Nonetheless, what follows aims to be unsparing in criticising how the university and scholars affiliated with it have previously (mis)represented its early benefactors.

Empire, Slavery and Abolition in Welsh History

Wales's status as 'the first and final colony' has sometimes obscured its participation in empire.[10] Michael Hechter's *Internal Colonialism* (1975) inspired a body of scholarship that emphasised examples of English colonialism in Wales ranging from the Norman conquest to suppression of the Welsh language in the Blue Books era.[11] In the 1980s, Gwyn A. Williams contrastingly explored Welsh influence on the Tudor empire and highlighted the later importance of coal from 'Imperial South Wales' in fuelling British colonialism.[12] Essays by Aled Jones, Bill Jones and Neil Evans latterly recentred empire in Welsh historiography.[13] H. V. Bowen, Lowri Ann Rees, Andrew Mackillop and Andrew May have examined contributions by people of Welsh heritage (including Thomas Phillips) to British imperialism in India.[14] Lucy Taylor has similarly reappraised Welsh migration to Patagonia through the lens of 'settler colonialism'.[15]

A nascent public reckoning with empire has also occurred. Responding to Black Lives Matter protests in 2020, the Welsh Government commissioned an audit into commemoration of empire and the slave trade in statues, street names and buildings.[16] The following year, it accepted a report chaired by Charlotte Williams recommending that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic histories become statutory in the Curriculum for Wales.[17]

As Chris Evans has demonstrated, Wales was impacted by, and impacted, transatlantic slavery in myriad ways. Elite families like the Morgans of Tredegar were shareholders in the Royal African Company.[18] The privateer Henry Morgan owned a plantation at Llanrumney, Jamaica – one of several toponyms (including Llandovery) that recall the Welsh presence in the colonial Caribbean.[19] Bordered by Liverpool and Bristol, two key slave-trading ports, transatlantic slavery helped shape Wales's economy throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Mid-Wales towns produced Welsh plains or Negro

Cloth used to clothe enslaved people in the Americas. Ironworks in Merthyr Tydfil were established by Anthony Bacon, co-owner of slave ships. Richard Pennant, founder of Penrhyn slate quarry in Denbighshire, was a Liverpool slave trader who owned sugar plantations in Jamaica. Bristolian merchants with intimate links to the slave trade were investors in Swansea copper industry.[20]

The flipside was the emergence of a Welsh antislavery movement. Abolitionism fostered a Welsh-language public sphere through publications such as *Cylch-grawn Cynmraeg* and Moses Roper's slave narrative.[21] Opposition to slavery intersected with the Welsh national revival. The founder of the Gorsedd of the Bards, Iolo Morganwg (Edward Williams), sold East Indian sugar and boycotted sugar grown by enslaved labour. However, Iolo's legacy is muddied by having inherited the estate of John Williams, one of three brothers who were slaveowners in Jamacia.[22]

Empire, Slavery and Abolition and St David's College, Lampeter

Similar contradictions characterised SDC's early benefactors. Prior to moving to Wales, the college's founder, Thomas Burgess, published *Considerations on the Abolition of Slavery and the Slave Trade* (1789). Forthright in condemning slavery's brutality, *Considerations* affirmed 'absolute dominion of man over man is inconsistent with the rights of society deducible from Scripture.'[23] Yet, like Iolo, Burgess's abolitionist credentials need qualification. A conservative who opposed Catholic emancipation, Burgess adopted a gradualist stance, favouring a prohibition of the slave trade over 'immediate emancipation'.[24] *Considerations* also anticipated Victorian imperial rhetoric, expressing hope that abolition would 'prepar[e] for diffusion of Christianity and Civilization' and 'induce Africans to cultivate other branches of commerce'.[25]

Burgess's later bequests to SDC featured books by antislavery campaigners such as John Wesley, Granville Sharp and Anthony Benezet. UWTSD's archives contain correspondence with the abolitionists William Wilberforce and Hannah More. More and Wilberforce were acquaintances with another key figure, John Scandrett Harford.[26] Harford donated land for the construction of SDC after assuming ownership of Lampeter's Peterwell estate from his father-in-law, Richard Hart Davis, in 1819.

Part of a merchant dynasty which invested in various industries in south Wales, Harford's wealth owed much to transatlantic slavery.[27] His great grandfather imported enslaved-grown tobacco, and the family owned Bristol Brass and Copper Company which (like Swansea's copperworks) produced manillas, pots and kettles that were common slave-ship cargoes.[28] Enslavers and anti-abolitionists were within Harford's immediate circle. Davis presented petitions opposing emancipation as MP for Bristol 1812–31. Harford's brother-in-law, Edward Gray, received £4624 4s 9d from the Slave Compensation Commission. One of the largest awards went to Harford's associate, Philip John Miles.[29] The pair were partners in Miles Harford bank – into which subscriptions for SDC building fund were deposited.[30]

Abolitionists like More, Wilberforce, Henry Thornton and William Henry Hoare subscribed to the building fund. But so did Lord Carrington, owner Llanfair Clydogau estate, near Lampeter, whose other properties included a plantation and enslaved people in Jamaica.[31] Furthermore, the architect of SDC's Old Building, Charles Robert Cockerell, had slave-owning genealogy. His brother Samuel Pepys Cockerell Jr received compensation for 1,998 enslaved inhabitants of ten plantations in Jamaica.[32] Three close relatives were compensated as slaveowners in Mauritius.[33] His uncle, Sir Charles Cockerell accumulated a private fortune whilst working for the East India Company (EIC). Sir Charles employed his brother, Samuel Pepys Cockerell Snr (Charles Robert Cockerell's father) to construct a Mughal-style mansion at Sezincote, Gloucestershire.[34] Sezincote features in the background of a portrait of Sir Charles Cockerell which is owned by UWTSD.[35]

Thomas Phillips: Biography and Prosopography

Thomas Phillips concretises Lampeter university's connections to slavery and empire. Born to Welsh parents in London in 1760, Phillips apprenticed as an apothecary before studying under the famed surgeon John Hunter. After qualifying as a surgeon, Phillips entered the Royal Navy's medical service. He joined the EIC in 1782, undertaking periods of service in Madras, Calcutta, China, Penang, Java, Nepal and Botany Bay. Phillips returned to England and married Althea Edwards of Herefordshire in 1800. Between 1802 and 1817, Phillips resumed his EIC career as superintending surgeon for the Bengal Medical Board. Upon retirement, Phillips purchased 5 Brunswick Square, London and Camden Park plantation in St Vincent. He made a series of donations to SDC and founded Llandovery College in 1848. Phillips died in June 1851, bequeathing Camden Park to 'John Whittall of Pipton in Radnorshire' and 'Richard Whittall of the Bengal Medical Service'.[36]

Extant archival material written by Phillips is scarce. He left no personal papers and had no children, leaving biographers heavily dependent on two documents: a last will and testament and handwritten notes by his friend, John Jones of Cefnfaes. Previously a Bank of England clerk, Jones prepared his notes on Phillips for an obituary in *The Gentleman's Magazine*.[37] Housed at the National Library of Wales (NLW), the Jones manuscript makes passing reference that:

> [Phillips] had an estate in St Vincent and kept supplying his slaves – and after they ceased to be slaves – with whatever could add to their comfort; particularly the women and the aged. On one occasion he sent over a cargo of umbrellas to be used as parasols. On the first Sunday after distribution a sight was seen which had never been seen before – a black procession marching to church skreened [*sic*] by umbrellas.[38]

However, the printed version eliminated this section.[39] Various obituaries did similar, initiating habitual minimisation of Phillips's involvement in slavery (see below).[40]

The LBS database helps contextualise Phillips. The bare detail of Phillips's home address establishes that fellow enslavers were amongst his neighbours. LBS names four other enslavers who lived at Brunswick Square around the same time as Phillips, including a free man of colour, John Athill.[41] Brunswick Square was adjacent to the Foundling Hospital, an institution which housed some enslaved children but also received bequests from enslavers.[42]

Phillips's profession was intimately connected to slavery. The experiences of slave-ship surgeons were important to several medical advances.[43] LBS records 171 individuals whose profession was listed as physician, 35 surgeons and one medical student. Phillips was not the only medical professional to invest in St Vincent's slave economy. A Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, Robert Glasgow (late Robertson), was compensated for two plantations on the island, inherited from father-in-law Dr Robert Glasgow.[44] One of Phillips's successors as Camden Park's proprietors, Richard Whittall, was a surgeon during military campaigns in India, Pakistan and Afghanistan.[45] Hinting at the origins of Phillip's wealth *The History of the Indian Medical Service* (1914) by Dirom Grey Crawford, an Indian-born army surgeon, noted that EIC employees were 'allowed, even expected, to add to their incomes by private trade'. Grey mentioned Phillips when discussing surgeons who made 'fortunes' trading tea, cotton, jute, indigo or opium.[46]

Post-abolition, Phillips participated in a 'swing east' which recirculated slavery-derived wealth in British India.[47] Previously an anti-slavery cause, several former enslavers invested in East Indian sugar during the 1840s, and Phillips held shares in the short-lived Dhobah East India Sugar Company (chaired by Henry Morris Kemshead, an enslaver in Jamaica).[48] Other business ventures confirm Nicholas Draper's analyses of how compensation dividends transformed Victorian Britain. Like many former enslavers, Phillips invested in the financial sector as a shareholder in the London and Westminster Bank (today part of NatWest).[49] Similarly, Phillips was one of numerous planters who capitalised industrial Britain's transport infrastructure: primary sources list shares in the Manchester and Leeds, London and Birmingham, London and North-Western and the Great Western Railway companies, plus Preston and Wyre Railway, Harbour and Dock Company.[50] Paralleling Kate Donnington's analysis of the slaveholding Hibbert family's charitable endeavours, Phillips donated London's Asylum for the Support and Education of the Deaf and Dumb Children, and adopted the 'annual custom' of 'present[ing] … blankets and useful clothing' to the poor of Hay-on-Wye.[51] He also supported learned organisations such as the Russell Institution for the Promotion of Literary and Scientific Knowledge and mechanics institutes in Leominster, Brecon and Hay.[52]

More distinctive was Phillips's promotion of the Welsh language. A subscriber to the Welsh Manuscript Society and texts by Iolo Morganwg, Phillips established the Welsh Collegiate Foundation in Llandovery, Carmarthenshire.[53] A riposte to the *Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales* (aka the Blue Books, 1847), Llandovery College was dedicated to 'the study of the Welch and ancient British language and literature … as a medium of colloquial communication [and] means of promoting antiquarian and philological investigation'.[54]

This aspect of Phillips's philanthropy was not necessarily divorced from his Eastern interests. One of Llandovery College's trustees, Revd Thomas Price (bardic name Carnhuanawc) propagated theories about 'the cognate origin of the Hindoo and Celtic races … the similarity of the Druidic and Brahminic tenets … and the many striking resemblance[s] between Sanscrit and Cymraeg'.[55] Revealingly, Phillips wrote a letter to Price supporting a Llandovery applicant whose 'being born in India, of Welsh parents, is rather a recommendation'.[56] India seems to have been important to Phillips's self-identity. The Jones manuscript recounted Phillips granting a friend financial assistance 'to enable him to live … as an East Indian ought to'.[57] While not an ostentatious Nabob, Phillips was a member of the Royal Asiatic Society and 'East India Ornaments' were amongst the personal effects auctioned after his death.[58]

Donations to SDC reflect Phillips's affection for Eastern exotica. Between 1837 and 1839, he deposited a range of 'curiosities' in Lampeter with the aim of 'commencement of a museum'. There is no record of the museum opening, so the fate of these artefacts – 'Indian idols', 'warlike implements from the Eastern Archipelago and the South Sea Islands' and 'the head of a buffalo of colossal size' – is unknown.[59] Phillips made numerous shipments to the SDC library, bequeathing many more books posthumously.[60] The RBLA houses volumes on India by James Rennell, Warren Hastings and Thomas Pennant. Other books relate to slavery and St Vincent, notably Thomas Jefferys's *West India Atlas* (1775) and Matthew Gregory Lewis's *Journal of a West Indies Proprietor* (1834).[61]

Ceremonials at Llandovery College's opening played up Phillips's dual kinship to Wales and India. John Williams, Archdeacon of Cardigan, performed a poem narrating how Phillips returned from 'India's sultry plain' to 'wish thy countrymen to raise'.[62] An 1851 memorial sermon by Rowland Williams, SDC's vice principal, heralded

Phillips as 'a patriotic and liberalminded Welshman' whose 'desire to enlarge the literary horizon … of our mountain land' differentiated him from 'many of Britain's sons in the East [who] become wealthy for self rather than for others'.[63]

Thomas Phillips: Memory and Historiography

Phillips was, and is, publicly memorialised. In 1847, SDC installed a marble likeness by John Evan Thomas, sculptor of statues commemorating the Second Marquess of Bute, Cardiff and the Duke of Wellington in Brecon.[64] The bust was placed inside the college's library – Phillips's patronage of which, *The Carmarthen Journal* claimed, 'erected for himself … a monument *aere perennius* [more lasting than bronze] by truly disinterested munificence'.[65] Before Phillip's death, Llandovery College commissioned a portrait by Charles Augustus Mornewick.[66] Now a fee-paying private school, one Llandovery College's buildings is still named Canolfan Thomas Phillips.

Historians have lionised Phillips. The *Dictionary of National Biography* (1896) described him as 'the only Welshman of his day who made large sacrifices in the cause of the education of his countrymen'.[67] The author was Thomas Frederick Tout, lecturer and librarian at SDC from 1881–90. A scholar credited with 'refashioning history for the twentieth century', Tout's biography made no reference to St Vincent or slavery.[68] This omission may have been deliberate. Henry Summerson surmised Tout's decision to write about Phillips was 'moved by institutional piety and personal gratitude to the benefactor whose generosity had helped to make his first academic post possible'.[69] Information on Camden Park would likely have been accessible to Tout: a 1915 article had repeated the umbrellas story as proof that Phillips 'was solicitously attentive to the comforts of his slaves (later labourers)'.[70]

Subsequent scholarship – including works published by University of Wales Press (UWP) – circumnavigated Phillips's status as an enslaver. Published 1988 and 1998, two articles by NLW librarian Gwyn Walters discussed slavery generally and the 'purchase of an estate on St Vincent' but stopped short of specifying that Phillips enslaved people.[71] As Draper has pointed out, the 2004 *Oxford Diction-*

ary of National Biography (*ODNB*) labelled Phillips a 'philanthropist and surgeon', ignoring St Vincent and slavery. Since amended for the online version, the *ODNB* article's author was D. T. W. Price.[72] Like Tout before him, Price was a history lecturer at Lampeter, also serving as university archivist and chaplain. Price's official *History of St David's College, Lampeter* (UWP, 1977) opted not to discuss slavery, colonialism or abolitionism. A predecessor as Lampeter chaplain, Gwilym Owen Williams, followed suit in *The Dictionary of Welsh Biography*.[73]

Price's *ODNB* article reads like conscious whitewashing. For the smaller audience of Lampeter's in-house journal *Trivium* in 1999, Price had – without naming slavery explicitly – written about Phillips's 'vast estates on St Vincent', trotting out Jones's umbrella anecdote to show 'not least of the recipients of [Phillips's] largesse were the *workers* on his Caribbean estates' [emphasis added].[74] A 2019 essay on Tout by William Gibson, a Lampeter alumnus, discussed Phillip's 'extraordinary endowment' of SDC without nods towards slavery.[75] H. V. Bowen's oeuvre likewise elided Phillips's slave-ownership.[76]

UWTSD's official publicity has often downplayed institutional connections to slavery. In 2010, the RBLA dedicated a special exhibition to 'celebrating the 250th anniversary of the birth of the great benefactor Thomas Phillips'.[77] The catalogue featured an essay by John Morgan-Guy, another scholar with longstanding UWTSD affiliations.[78] Comparing his EIC career to the *Hornblower* and *Sharpe* novels, Morgan-Guy wrote that, 'although an absentee landlord', Phillips was 'solicitous of the welfare of his slaves before manumission … and careful of the welfare of his employees thereafter'.[79] A 2014 exhibition focused on Phillips's 'love for the Orient' without mentioning St Vincent.[80]

Morgan-Guy modified his stance introducing *Treasures: The Special Collections of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David* (UWP, 2022). After a nuanced analysis of Burgess's abolitionism, *Treasures* afforded several pages to Camden Park, slavery and Phillips's compensation package. But even here, Morgan-Guy equivocated that 'it is difficult to ascertain with any degree of certainty Phillips's personal feelings on the ownership of slaves' before likening him to two major historical figures:

> Perhaps Phillips saw things in a similar light to Thomas Jefferson … who accepted the moral arguments against slavery but was not moved to liberate enslaved persons working on his own plantation in Virginia. We shall never know; as Steven Brindle said of … Isambard Kingdom Brunel he was 'paradox – rooted in the old world, he imagines, and helps create, the new'. All that can be said is that, although a non-resident proprietor, Phillips maintained an active concern for those who worked at Camden Park; he encouraged churchgoing … and required … particular care of the aged, infirm and women.[81]

Morgan-Guy's rationale was muddled, exercising a double standard by stating that Phillips's views on slavery are unknowable yet remaining assured of his 'active concern' towards enslaved people. No substantiating evidence (not even umbrellas) was provided. The NLW manuscript looks to have been principal reference, but Morgan-Guy's footnotes did not cite it – nor any primary sources.

Morgan-Guy, like Price and others, received Jones's manuscript uncritically, without verifying its claims. Besides basic methodological weaknesses, previous historians have shown striking incuriousness about Phillips's business dealings in St Vincent. Contra Morgan-Guy, the next two sections have *plenty* to say about Camden Park and its enslaved population, demonstrating that, firstly, Phillips was not an entirely absentee planter and, second, that there is little reason to suppose he did anything to ameliorate slavery's inhumanity.

Colonial History of St Vincent and Camden Park

Camden Park is located at York Bay a few miles from St Vincent's capital, Kingstown. The estate's first colonial-era proprietor was Charles Payne Sharpe, an attorney general and speaker of St Vincent's assembly. Sharpe entered mortgages with a series of financiers, whose heirs owned Camden Park when Phillips bought it in 1821.[82] The Welshman John Whittall managed the estate until his death in 1857, and has a memorial in St George's Cathedral, Kingstown.[83] Camden Park subsequently passed between two major landholding families –

the Porters and the Barnards – before entering public ownership in 1943.[84] Today, it is home to Campden Park Container Port.

Before colonisation, the land that became Camden Park was populated by the Indigenous Kalinago people. Kalinagos, or Island Caribs, descend from the Kalina of mainland South America, who migrated to St Vincent sometime around 1200. Archaeological artefacts from Camden Park include Cayo ceramics – a Kalinago artform similar to Koriabo pottery from Guiana, Brazil and Suriname.[85] Affinities between Cayo and Koriabo pottery possibly indicate that York Bay was a 'gateway' linking the Lesser Antilles and South America.[86] In the post-Columbian era, Indigenous people fled to St Vincent from European colonies elsewhere in the Americas. Enslaved people too escaped to the island, forming the Garifuna – a community of mixed African and Kalinago descent also known as the Black Caribs.[87]

St Vincent remained autonomous for longer than most Caribbean islands. In 1660, Britain and France signed a treaty acknowledging St Vincent (*Iouloúmain*) and Dominica (*Oüáitoukoubouli*) as Kalinago territories. Undeterred, French creoles settled in St Vincent in the eighteenth century, importing enslaved people from neighbouring colonies to grow coffee and cacao.[88] In 1763 St Vincent was ceded to Britain after defeating France in the Seven Years War. Britain quickly transformed St Vincent into a sugar economy. Slave Voyages database shows that at least 62,176 captives were trafficked from West Africa to St Vincent between 1764 and 1808 (11 per cent of whom died during the Middle Passage).[89]

Indigenous land was expropriated for plantations.[90] This met armed resistance. The First Carib War (1769–73) concluded with Indigenous sovereignty over northern St Vincent being reaffirmed. Britain lost control of St Vincent to France from 1779 to 1783, but territorial expansion resumed once its rule was restored after the American Revolution. Black Caribs occupied much of St Vincent during the Second Carib War (1795–7), before defeat by a British expeditionary force led to 5,000 Garifuna people being forcibly exiled to Baliceaux in the Grenadines. Beset by starvation and disease on Baliceaux, 2,500 survivors were subsequently transported to Roatán in the Bay of Honduras. Garifuna diaspora communities today exist in Honduras, Belize, Guatemala, Nicaragua and the United States. A small Kalinago-Garifuna settlement is also extant in northern St Vincent.

Charles Payne Sharpe was an early proponent of Garifuna expulsion: in 1770, he petitioned to remove 'those savages, the Black Charibbs' who inhabited 'two thirds of the cultivable and best lands'.[91] Owner of property in Tobago, Antigua, Dominica as well as St Vincent, primary sources indicate that Camden Park was in Sharpe's possession by 1766.[92] Like many Lesser Antillean planters, Sharpe drew on external credit.[93] In 1770, he agreed a mortgage London-based financiers George Hooper, John Trevanion and William Wood. The indenture listed 'two hundred negroes or slaves' amongst Camden Park's contents.[94] In 1772, Sharpe took out another mortgage with Sir John Boyd II. [95]

Camden Park's financiers had numerous links to the slave trade. William Wood and John Trevanion were in a 'cadre of transatlantic merchants' associated with John Boyd's grandfather Augustus Boyd – a planter in St Kitts and co-owner of the Bance Island slave factory in West Africa.[96] Trevanion also joint-owned an estate in Grenada.[97] The Sharpes were multigenerational enslavers. Two brothers owned plantations in St Vincent – as in turn did his son, Edward.[98] A grandson and great-nephew received compensation for properties in Barbados, St Lucia, Grenada and St Vincent.[99] Sharpe's uncle Sir Gillies Payne, owned three plantations in St Kitts and Nevis.[100] Colonial governors of Grenada and Antigua featured on either side of the family of Sharpe's wife, Paulina Jodrell Sharpe. Her mother's half-brother, Valentine Morris Jnr, was Governor of St Vincent from 1772–9.[101]

The Morrises owned Piercefield estate near Chepstow, south Wales. Valentine Morris Jr oversaw a series of 'improvements' accentuating Piercefield's views of surrounding countryside and Tintern Abbey. Acclaimed by artists and writers, Victoria Perry interprets Piercefield as an example of how slavery influenced Romantics' idealisation of rural Britain.[102] Geoff Quilley similarly argues that slaveowners' taste for pastoral landscapes constituted a 'disavowal of the plantation'.[103] Juxtapositions between metropolitan and colonial aesthetics offer an interpretive context for Cockerell's 'picturesque' designs at SDC.[104]

Piercefield's later ownership adds further entanglements between colonialism, slavery and the Welsh countryside. Morris sold Piercefield to a Monmouthshire banker, who was succeeded by Sir Mark Wood, an EIC general.[105] The estate was later bought by

Nathaniel Wells. Born enslaved in St Kitts, Wells was the son of an enslaved woman Joardine 'Juggy' Wells and her Cardiff-born enslaver William Wells.[106] Granted freedom upon William Wells's death in 1794, Nathaniel Wells also inherited his father's estate, including the enslaved population of three plantations – one of which he was compensated for in 1837.[107]

Piercefield is one of many examples of lavish properties that were purchased by slaveowners in Britain. Simon D. Smith has identified 17 country homes that belonged to individuals who enslaved people in St Vincent and the Grenadines between 1814–34.[108] Phillips's philanthropy in Lampeter and Llandovery followed a well-trodden path connecting Caribbean slavery to rural Britain.

Thomas Phillips and Camden Park

Charles Payne Sharpe died in 1780, bequeathing Camden Park and 'all my slaves' to John Trevanion.[109] In 1805, Trevanion entered an indenture on Camden Park with three financiers: John Drummond; George Grote, an investor in plantations in Dominica, Grenada and St Kitts; and William Manning, Governor of the Bank of England, and spokesman for the West Indies 'Interest'.[110] In April–June 1821, London newspapers advertised an auction of 'the valuable Plantation and Sugar Work, called Camden Park', detailing its:

> Convenient Residence, overseer's house, negro houses, sick house, magass house, set of works, mule pen … with about 225 acres of prime cleared land, 159 valuable slaves; the live and dead Stock, consisting of, two horses, 12 mules, and 31 heads of cattle, with all necessary plantation implements and utensils.[111]

The sale was cancelled, with Camden Park 'disposed of by Private Contract'.[112] Later deeds record Phillips having entered 'articles of agreement' with Drummond, Grote and Manning on 10 July 1821. He paid £5000 upfront, with £16,300 instalments due to heirs and annuitants. Satisfying these payments, Phillips became sole proprietor in January 1826.[113]

Phillips spent some time in person in St Vincent. A January 1823 deed saw 'Thomas Phillips of Brunswick Square in the County of Middlesex but at present residing in St Vincent' purchase an estate adjacent to Camden Park.[114] Phillips's stay appears to have been brief. Another deed from August 1823 showed Phillips 'at present residing in the island of St Vincent but intending shortly to depart' grant power of attorney to Alexander McBarnet – a Scottish enslaver.[115]

There is limited evidence for the (oxymoronic) assumption that Phillips was a beneficent slaveowner. Between 1824 and 1828, Phillips made three donations (totalling £8 10s) to the Society for the Conversion and Religious Instruction and Education of the Negro Slaves.[116] Post abolition, the Commons allocated funds to establish schools for newly-freed children. Records show 'Dr Phillips' authorising a chapel school at Camden Park in 1838.[117]

Human misery abounded during Phillips's ownership of Camden Park. Draper calculates that one quarter of the estate's enslaved population died between 1822 and 1825, with the same proportion of casualties recorded 1825–8.[118] There is no documentation of Phillips manumitting any one prior to abolition. Conversely, there *are* records of him engaging in slave trading. Deed books name Phillips in the purchase of an adult domestic, Ruthy, and a child, Sandy or Alexander, in September 1826.[119] The 1822 Slave Register recorded Camden Park's enslaved population expanding to 231 by virtue of 85 people 'purchased from Mr McLean in Carriacou in December 1821'.[120] Cross-referencing with the LBS database and Slave Registers from Carriacou (an island in the Grenadines, today a dependency of Grenada) determines that the enslaved were trafficked from Belair, Belvedere and Petit Carenage estates, owned by George McLean – compensation claimant on 1,180 enslaved people across ten plantations.[121]

McLean provides yet another example of the slave economy's penetration into Britain's Celtic fringe. Originally from Ross-shire, McLean was part of a sizable population of Scots in the Ceded Islands – many of whom redirected slavery-derived wealth into Highland 'improvement' initiatives.[122] The McLean family history also connects to the Black presence in Victorian Britain. A Carriacou-born enslaved woman, Malvina Wells was servant to George McLean's niece in Edinburgh.[123] Forty-nine enslaved people from St Vincent were resident in Britain at the time of abolition.[124] One enslaved Vincentian, Ashton Warner, escaped to England, and had a slave narrative published in 1831.[125] Warner gives a very clear example of enslaved people's agency – a theme the next section pursues.

Camden Park's Enslaved Population

Researchers face immanent constraints in that documentary sources were overwhelmingly written by enslavers and colonists. Compared to voluminous records of slaveowners in wills, deed books and suchlike, scant information is available about most enslaved people.

Slave Registers do, however, provide a snapshot of colonies' enslaved populations. Five registers are available for Camden Park (1817, 1822, 1825, 1828 and 1834), supplemented by two for McLean's Belair, Belvedere and Petit Carenage estates (in 1817 and 1821).[126] Registers numbered plantations' enslaved residents alongside some biographical and demographic information: forenames (but not surnames), age, sex, occupation, 'country' and 'colour'. In Carriacou, 'conspicuous marks' were also recorded.

This data can be extrapolated to identify patterns. In total, I have identified forenames of 329 enslaved people who lived at Camden Park between 1817 and 1834. Of the 164 names resident in 1817, 66 reappear in the 1834 register – the eldest being a woman named Becky, born sometime around 1747. Becky was one of 42 of the 1817 population (about 25 per cent) listed as 'African' with the rest 'Creole' (i.e., born in the New World). Twelve African-born residents were registered in 1834.

Most of Camden Park's enslaved population were fieldworkers. In 1817, 'labourer' was listed as 137 people's occupation, with eighteen 'invalids', four coopers (Armande, Bob, Phillip and Roley), two masons (Dean, Lindsey) and three carpenters (Baptist, Tom, William).[127] All of these specialists were male. Enslaved females (79 women to 58 men) initially constituted the majority of plantation labourers (57.7 per cent). The ratio flipped by 1834, with 42 female labourers to 59 males, reflecting a broader demographic shift: whereas 90 female residents (54.9 per cent) were registered to 74 male (45.1 per cent) in 1817, the 1834 figures were 76 females

(45.5 per cent) to 91 males (54.5 per cent). In 1834, five females had specialist occupations: two washers (Margaret and Phillida), a sick nurse ('Margaret 2nd'), a midwife (Mary) and a domestic (Jessie). This still lagged behind the eleven males with specialist occupations (three carpenters, three coopers, one groom, one smith, one fisherman and a boilerman).

Occupational mobility was infrequent. The five Camden Park registers contain only eleven instances of an enslaved person changing employment. Retirement was rarer still: just three superannuants (Jim, Barbary and Jessy) were registered in 1834. Nor were children spared fieldwork: for example, the 1825 register noted deaths of four children aged 8–11 who were listed as labourers (Coubina, Naro, Lucinda and Belly). The deaths of four 'vine gang' members – Penny (aged 5), Rachel (5), Christian (8) and Yankey (8) – appeared in 1828. Vine gangs completed tasks such as weeding, hoeing and collecting livestock feed, which enslavers believed children 'performed infinitely better than grown people' and were 'proportioned to their size'.[128]

Where racial classifications were provided – 293 of 329, with 37 blanks – the vast majority of Camden Park's enslaved population (273, about 93 per cent) were labelled 'negro'. Various classifications were used for the interracial population. The most common (18 of 19) was 'mulatto', a phrase generally denoting children of sexual unions between white men and black women. In one instance, 'mongrel' described Elsy, a 28-year-old woman who died in 1825. In plantation society, the strong likelihood is that mixed-race children resulted from coercive sex.

The Carriacou Slave Registers provide more granular racial classifications for some people trafficked to Camden Park. Carriacou enumerators applied the term 'cabre' (meaning copper) to Georgie and Robert, and 'cabresse' for Jeany and Peggy, plus 'mustee' for William. 'Cabre'/'cabresse' described children with one black and one 'mulatto' parent, whereas a 'mustee' was a child whose parents were respectively white and 'quadroon' – the latter referring to 'children of white-mulatto unions'.[129] Although a small sample size, people with mixed heritage were noticeably overrepresented in non-praedial employment: 'mulattoes' constituted 18.5 per cent (five from a total of 27) of those with specialist occupations but just 7 per cent of the enslaved population overall. Three out of five domestics registered between 1817 and 1834 (Amelia, Margaret and Dolly) were 'mulattoes' – hinting at a preference for employing mixed-race people in household occupations.[130]

The problem with this type of demographic analysis is that it compels a researcher into the mindset of the colonist and enslaver, quantifying people in accordance with racist and colourist discourses and their perceived utilitarian value. Slave Registers are products of epistemic, physical and archival violence, and playing the 'numbers game' risks compounding chattel slavery's dehumanising ethos.[131] Nevertheless, reading registers *along the grain* discloses some individualising details about enslaved people.

The Carriacou registers list 'conspicuous marks' for eighteen people that Phillips purchased from McLean. The information provided attests that many enslaved labourers had physical disabilities. 'Bob 1st' had 'elephanteases on both feet'. Esther was 'blind of one eye'. Ned was 'flatfooted'. Coffee had 'six fingers on each hand'. Other distinguishing features hint at the perilousness character of plantation life: Chance and Cudjoe were missing digits, and eight people had scars.

Scars may have been incurred as injuries or corporal punishment – but they could express an Old-World cultural inheritance. Scarification is common in West African societies, making it plausible that the 'small scars on his cheeks' of George (registered as African, born *c*.1752) and the 'scars on both cheeks' listed for Babba (African, *c*.1757) reflected their Yoruba heritage.[132]

Slave Registers hint at narratives of endurance and survival. That a 100-year-old African woman Cumba was registered in 1817 is remarkable in the context of plantation slavery. Moreover, her forename has resonances in African diasporic culture. Variants on 'cumba' appear in the Afro-Portuguese language Calunga, and scholars of Cumbia, a Colombian dance, speculate the term might derive from '"Cumba" … the Congolese word for "loud rejoicing" … a Mandingo placename, or Kumba in Nigeria'.[133] Kuumba ('creativity') is one of the seven principles of Kwanzaa celebrations.[134]

Other names had more precise cultural origins. As was typical throughout the Caribbean, forenames of Camden Park's enslaved populace variously derived from Classical history (Cato, Caesar, Dido), English literature (Hamlet, Yarrico), and places in the British Isles (Belfast, Dublin, Exeter, Glasgow, Oxford).[135] Yet these coexisted with names denoting days of the week in Akan-Twi language groups: Cudjoe, Cuffy/Coffee, Jubba, Mimba, Phibba, Quashey, Quashiba and Quomina.[136]

Margaret Williamson has suggested that day names exemplified Coromantee identity – a creole cultural formation which fostered solidarity between enslaved people originating from diverse West African societies. Coromantees' 'reputation for being strong and fearless' made them highly sought-after fieldworkers. As such, Akan day names 'probably signalled to slaveowners superior strength and skill in individuals who were … in owners' eyes at least, also successfully subordinated'. Conversely, because Coromantees' supposed physical aptitude made them 'feared as potential rebels', Akan nomenclature simultaneously evoked enslaved people's capacity for revolt. [137] Indeed, Coromantees fought major uprisings in eighteenth-century Jamaica.[138]

Akan day names thus latently signified Africans' resistance to enslavement. The point is even clearer in the name of one of the enslaved trafficked from Carricou: Toussaint (spelt 'Toutsaint' or 'Tutsant' in some registers, born *c.*1814), presumably named after the Haitian revolutionary, Toussaint Louverture. Better still the name of one Camden Park's African-born residents (b. *c.*1757, d. 1822): Trouble.

Conclusion

The Thomas Phillips bust was removed from UWTSD's Founders' Library in November 2021. A copy of the Mornewick portrait was also removed RBLA's Reading Room. Both items are now stored in the RBLA vaults. Unlike Cecil Rhodes statues in Oxford, the removal attracted little controversy and was approved by the Vice Chancellor amid tacit agreement that memorials to enslavers were an impolitic welcome for Vincentian students.

The lack of fanfare was appropriate to this chapter's analysis. Spotlighting institutional and methodological blinds-spots in the small canon of Phillips scholarship has value within a political climate where contemporary historians stand accused of distorting the past.[139] Yet individual reputations are relatively inconsequential to redressing slavery and colonialism's systemic consequences. The sheer volume of people named in my collective history of St David's College and Camden Park is testament to slavery and colonialism's widespread and enduring impacts. Enslavers' enrichment of educational and cultural institutions – including my current employer, National Museums Liverpool – remains a constitutive factor in global inequalities and structural racism.[140]

The University of Glasgow responded to a report on its complicity in slavery by partnering with the University of the West Indies on a programme of reparative justice.[141] By contrast, the language of reparation remained formally detached from UWTSD's scholarship agreement with the government of St Vincent and Grenadines. La Soufrière's eruption was the main impetus for the Vincentian scholarships, which exist independent of research into UWTSD's history.

Positive steps have been made, though. Ahead of the bicentenary, Andy Bevan, Lecturer in International Development at UWTSD, initiated correspondence with one St Vincent's foremost historians, Adrian Fraser.[142] Fraser shared his extensive knowledge and UWTSD commissioned Vincentian filmmaker Akley Olton to make a documentary about Camden Park.[143] Available via YouTube, *Sugar Lands* concludes by appealing for reparatory justice.[144]

These calls are getting louder. Echoing scrutinisation of the Royal Family's slavery-derived wealth, reparations protestors assailed Prince Edward when visiting St Vincent in April 2021.[145] Attending King Charles's coronation in May 2023, Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves called for Britain to formally apologise for its involvement in slavery, also declaring his intention for St Vincent and the Grenadines to become a republic.[146] The latter is St Vincent citizens' decision to make. It is, however, within my purview to conclude that Vincentian voices should heard when rethinking histories of empire and slavery – and Wales's relationship to the wider world.

Notes

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Part Three

Social And Cultural Change

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CHAPTER 8

Very Black and Very Welsh: Race, National Identity and Welsh Writers of Colour in Post-Devolution Wales

Lisa Sheppard

> Everybody else at Farnham, both staff and participants, were very white and very English and I suddenly felt very black and very Welsh.[1]

Introduction

Taken from her award-winning autobiography *Sugar and Slate* (2002), Charlotte Williams's startling awareness of her racial and national identity in her description of an information session for prospective expats moving to Guyana might, at first, seem to suggest that there are obvious parallels between her experience as a mixed-race person and a Welsh person. Blackness and Welshness appear to be aligned in an uncomplicated way, both clearly denoting feelings of being oppressed or marginalised by more powerful groups – one might even imagine that there is a suggestion here that Welsh people's oppression at the hands of their English neighbours is comparable to the horrific racism in all its various guises suffered by black people for centuries.

Those familiar with Williams's volume as whole, however, as well as much of her wider oeuvre, will know that the nature of the relationship between Wales and its black communities and their histories is far from this simplistic. *Sugar and Slate* interrogates definitions of Wales and Welshness based on simplistic divisions between Wales and England, Welsh and English, black and white, which Williams argues can lead to the exclusion of many, and confronts its reader to acknowledge Wales's complicity in the British Empire's oppression of people of colour, rather than its position as a victim of England's dominance.

One does not need to think too hard about the way Welsh identity is discussed to realise that binary oppositions often dominate the way Wales has been defined both from within its borders and beyond. Writing in 1996, a year before the Welsh people voted, by a whisker, to establish a devolved government in Cardiff, Katie Gramich noted:

> the cultural situation of Wales does seem ineluctably divided: north versus south, Welsh versus English, town versus country, industry versus agriculture, chapel versus pub, and so on. Such dualism seems to pervade Welsh culture: is it apparent or real? … the reason that the binary model is still so strong in Wales is that it is still a colonized country, subject to imperialist ways of thinking.[2]

In the more than two and a half decades that have passed since Gramich proposed this argument, and since the devolution process in Wales began, she and other Welsh literary critics including Kirsti Bohata, Jane Aaron and M. Wynn Thomas have undertaken postcolonial readings of a range of Welsh literary texts, analysing in particular how they explore and also challenge the binary oppositions between Wales and England, and Welsh and English. White authors of fiction and poetry, too, have increasingly questioned these stereotypical divisions in Welsh life too: novels by Catrin Dafydd, Christopher Meredith and Llwyd Owen portray the bilingual communities of Cardiff and the south Wales valleys, using both Welsh and English in their work to reflect the linguistic hybridity of the area; and the late Tony Bianchi's fiction often draws its inspiration from the author's own identity as a Geordie who moved to Wales and learnt Welsh, often recalling the early medieval period where an early version of Welsh was spoken in his native Northumbria, and thus calling into question modern boundaries and cultural divisions between Wales and England, Welsh and English. It has been argued, too, that an integral element of contemporary fiction from Wales is its persistent deconstruction of the 'self/other' binary, which has ultimately created a body of work which offers its readers many multifaceted ways to identify as Welsh.[3]

Welsh writing by people of colour, too, consistently interrogates these binary positionings, and in doing so these writers, it could be argued, are declaring their Welshness too. One binary division in particular, though, permeates the work of many of these writers – that of victim/oppressor. This, on the one hand, is likely due to the fact that many of these writers, and/or their characters, are descended from people who were oppressed, colonised, or enslaved as a result of British imperial expansion. This chapter, however, will argue that their work poses an inherent challenge to the victim/oppressor divide in its consideration of Wales's duality in the British Empire. Although often described as England's first colony (and, facetiously, by some, as its final colony too – see former Plaid Cymru leader, Adam Price's rather indulgently-titled 2019 book for example), Welsh people played important roles in British colonial exploits across the world too, and this dual role is a focal tension in writing by Welsh people of colour. In the work of authors like Charlotte Williams and Nikita Lalwani it can, on occasion, lead to a sense of alienation from Welsh identity, or a difficulty in belonging. Younger writers such as Hanan Issa, however, seem more at ease with these dualities and use them to stake a claim to new kinds of Welshness.

Issa's appointment as the first non-white National Poet of Wales is itself a sign that Wales's literary establishment is beginning to make an important contribution to forging a more inclusive Welsh identity.[4] In their seminal work on multiculturalism in Wales, *A Tolerant Nation?*, Charlotte Williams, Neil Evans and Paul O'Leary remarked that Welsh authors often demonstrate a more progressive and thoughtful engagement with diversity in Wales than politicians and other public figures.[5] Thankfully, the Welsh Government has begun to recognise the importance of acknowledging Wales's varied racial and ethnic communities, in the designing of the new Curriculum for Wales – Charlotte Williams herself was appointed Chair of the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities, Contributions and Cynefin in the New Curriculum Working Group, and, following her final report, it was decided to make black, Asian and ethnic minority history a compulsory element of the education of all children in Wales.

If realised to its full potential, this development could bring about a significant change in the way Welshness is defined by generations to come – and there remain some aspects that must change if Wales is to fully come to terms with its diversity. One of these is the overwhelming tendency to equate Welshness with whiteness. This unconscious bias was perhaps most famously confirmed in recent times by the Office for National Statistics' omission of categories such as 'Black Welsh' on the 2021 Census, meaning that only white people could identify as 'Welsh', and that black, Asian and minority ethnic people could not. Williams's description at the beginning of this chapter and its equating of Welshness with blackness disrupts this seemingly unquestioned connection between whiteness and Welsh identity, and this chapter will also examine the ways some white Welsh authors, too, are overturning this often unchallenged assumption in their nuanced depictions of people of colour.

Charlotte Williams's *Sugar and Slate*

Charlotte Williams's voice is one of the most prominent in Wales on the subject of race and multiculturalism. Although her black and Welsh identities are aligned in the description at the beginning of this chapter, she has written extensively, from both an academic and personal perspective, of the barriers to acceptance black, Asian and minority ethnic people in Wales face.[6] Amongst these is her contention that Wales's linguistic divide could lead to the creation of a 'bicultural, rather than multicultural Wales',[7] and that animosity between Welsh speakers and English speakers is seen as 'the real issue of Welsh racism',[8] meaning that actual racism towards Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities is ignored, or not prioritised. *Sugar and Slate* interrogates this and other divides that have been used to define Wales and Welshness – particularly the perceived divide between a rural, Welsh-speaking, homogenous north and an urban, Anglophone, multicultural south – and ultimately demonstrates how rigid categorisations can lead to the exclusion of many. Central to the text's deconstruction of these binaries is the fact that Charlotte was raised in a mixed race family in north Wales, and much of *Sugar and Slate*'s portrayal of Welsh life focuses on the town of Llandudno.

Williams recalls a conversation with her friend Suzanne, which reveals the problematic nature of the idea that black and minority ethnic communities are only to be found in south Wales, or Cardiff in particular – indeed, in one small part of Cardiff:

> I thought Suzanne was lucky. She's Cardiff black and that's at least a recognised, albeit tiny, patch of Wales shaded with a little colour. She knew people who looked and thought like her. She belonged to something called a black community. She had history on her side.
>
> 'You're not so bothered about the roots business Suzanne, because you've got roots,' I said. 'Africans have been in Cardiff for a hundred and fifty years at least. You don't need to go checking out your ancestors, they're right here on your doorstep explaining you.'
>
> …
>
> 'You're Welsh all right. I envy you that,' I said.
>
> 'You've got that one wrong for a start. I belong to a little bit of Cardiff, not Wales at all. Wales, what's that?' she asked.[9]

Here we see that it is not only black people living in other parts of Wales (like Williams herself) who feel excluded by the tendency to think of Wales's capital as the sole location of multicultural Wales. Butetown's black community itself, the community to which Suzanne belongs, also feels that it only belongs in one small part of Wales, rather than the whole nation. Williams has discussed elsewhere how the act of defining identity using oppositional or binary categories can be detrimental to the understanding of hybrid identities and a sense of inclusion. In an essay where she uses literary texts that have made an impression upon her to explore her identity, Williams rejects texts by Caribbean authors such as Jean Rhys or Grace Nichols, and Welsh texts by Kate Roberts and Marion Eames, thus rejecting the idea that that these aspects of her heritage are separate or oppositional:

> I felt inadequate to the predominant representations of Welsh cultural identity and inadequate against some notion of 'Caribbean-ness'. However, it was within this quest that I

> came to a profound rejection of the 'half-half' binary as it had been presented to me. I grew up half-Welsh, half-black, half-caste, half-white, never whole … There could be no singular mode, or even binary mode, of identifying across these potential positionings …'[10]

Instead of defining her identity in an 'either/or' fashion, Williams advocates 'a constant mixing of heritage and traditions and a constant movement towards their identification and reformulations. It is within the remix that the spaces open up for the claiming and the negotiation of multiple identities.'[11]

Sugar and Slate's form echoes this sentiment. It is a hybrid text that cannot be easily categorised, and includes prose, poetry and letters. It is divided into three parts, Africa, Guyana, and Wales, which allows it also to refute the idea that the polarisation between Wales and England, a central thematic concern in numerous literary works from Wales, is a defining character of Welsh identity. This, along with the fact that Williams narrates the story from Piarco Airport in Trinidad as she waits for a delayed plane, suggests that she refuses to be tied to one place and one identity. As Williams narrates the story of her travels between Wales, Africa and Guyana, she also narrates how other cargoes made parallel journeys centuries earlier, linking her own history to black history and the history of industrial Wales:

> Perhaps the iron bar may have gone down in history as a simple fact of the industrial development of parts of Wales were it not for other world events … It was the ingenious coupling of iron hunger with a sudden increase in the need for labour on the West Indian sugar plantations that sealed a terrible fate. As the sugar industry grew in the Caribbean so did the need for manpower and this could only ever mean one thing – the evolution of a malignant trade. The African iron hunger was fed and strengthened by the trade in human beings … a great movement of human cargo to the Caribbean. Only by trading their fellow man could the Africans acquire the iron they needed so badly. Iron had become the back-bone of industrial development in many areas of Britain; in Wales in particular, the iron masters grew wealthier and wealthier,

> ploughing back the profits of spices and sugar and slaves to make more and more iron bars and then manacles, fetters, neck collars, chains, branding irons, thumb screws …[12]

The three sections of the book thus re-enact the transatlantic slave trade, highlighting Wales's central role in the process. Rather than foregrounding the unequal relationship between English or anglicised industrialists and Welsh workers often featured in popular histories and fictional accounts of Wales's industrial past, Williams connects industrial Wales to Africa and the Caribbean and claims a space for her black ancestors in the nation's history by reminding her reader that Welsh iron was used in the slave trade. As such, it can be argued that, as well as an autobiography, *Sugar and Slate* serves as an autoethnography, an exploration and explanation of Wales's black community.[13]

In the extract above, Williams also refuses to divide different communities as simply victims or oppressors – whilst it reminds us of the suffering of enslaved black people at the hands of white people during the middle passage and on the plantations, there is an acknowledgement of the albeit limited African complicity, and the reference to the iron masters' wealth serves as a reminder of the poverty the industrial workers faced. Whilst Williams's academic work has cautioned against defining Wales's relationship with England through a postcolonial lens, others have found such analyses of Wales's literary output to be fruitful.[14] *Sugar and Slate* can certainly be read as a postcolonial text – its hybrid form and engagement with the imperial past alone lend themselves to such a reading. But its exploration of the Welsh people's dual status within the British imperial endeavour, as both victims of English cultural and economic dominance and participants in the colonising and oppression of others, aligns with Ken Goodwin's assertion that postcolonial studies 'ought to encourage the view that we are all colonial, imperialist, and postcolonial in various proportions'.[15] *Sugar and Slate*'s interrogation of binary definitions of identity – Welsh/English, black/white, victim/oppressor – broadens the reader's understanding of Wales's past, a past in which it has played many roles, with the aim of widening the definition of Welshness for present and future generations. It is no coincidence that it ends with Williams's assertion that she wants to 'tell Ruby [her granddaughter] all about it'.[16] Her character is determined that future generations will have a broader and more inclusive understanding of what it is to belong to Wales.

Nikita Lalwani's *Gifted*

It could be argued that the duality of Wales's status within the British imperial project is an underlying concern of another writer of colour from Wales, Nikita Lalwani, in her novel *Gifted* (2007), which was longlisted for the Booker Prize and shortlisted for the Costa First Novel Award. The title of the novel refers to its main character, Rumika, a young mathematics prodigy born in Wales to Indian intellectuals, and the family's engagement with the British education system allows the text to explore their complex relationship with British culture, where they are at once accepted by some of Britain's most famed institutions, but are also alienated due to their Indian heritage. Whilst most of the narrative takes place in the United Kingdom (mainly Cardiff and Oxford), it occasionally takes the reader to India to tell the story of Rumika's parents Mahesh and Shreene's courtship. This is not the only division or duality that defines the family's world: Mahesh often discusses the history of Indian Partition and the violence between Hindus (like his family) and Muslims that ensued; the Wales/England divide is emphasised, too, as Rumika and her friends cross the English border to attend a chess competition. Another duality Rumika and Shreene must navigate is the traditional expectations of womanhood, particularly within Indian culture, and their academic abilities. Indeed it is her talent for mathematics, as well as her family's heritage, which sets her apart from her peers. In the novel's first chapter, we first hear that Rumika has not been allowed into the house of her friend as the friend's mother does not like 'coloured people',[17] and soon after, Rumika's teacher comes to her house to tell Mahesh and Shreene that their daughter is 'Special. Different. Gifted.'[18]

As a child, Rumika admires the Indian prodigy, Shakuntala Devi, who multiplied two 13-digit numbers in 28 seconds, an achievement *The Guinness Book of Records* refused to believe was possible. To Rumika's family, this incident epitomises the British orientalist attitude that still affects India: Mahesh rages, 'The British still think they are better than us, that we are dirty, cheating scoundrels. That is why they insulted Shakuntala Devi in this way.'[19] Education and academic achievement are used in the novel as a way to emphasise tensions between the family's Indian and British identities. Its extended exploration of education in the context of British Indian identity brings to mind one infamous record of the British Empire's rule in India, namely Thomas Babington Macaulay's Minute on Indian Education presented in 1835 to the Council of India. It proposed passing a new education act in British Indian territories, which would educate the Indian people in the English fashion thus creating 'a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect'.[20] Macaulay asserts that 'I have conversed, both here and at home, with men distinguished by their proficiency in the Eastern tongues. I am quite ready to take the oriental learning at the valuation of the orientalists themselves. I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia.'[21] He argues that introducing English educational standards would ensure 'the intellectual improvement of the people of [India]'.[22]

This history echoes in Rumika's modern-day story too. When her teacher, Mrs Gold, visits the family to suggest that Rumika sits the Mensa examinations, Mahesh's response reminds the reader that the people of India are all too familiar with being forced to comply with another country's educational standards:

> 'Have you heard of a place called Mensa?' said Mrs Gold. Mahesh felt exasperated. He had seen all the same adverts as her. The ads for this place she named with such careful tedium, as though she was rolling a diamond round her mouth. 'Mensa'. He'd seen their childish IQ tests, fooled around with filling them out in the Sunday papers. He knew what Mensa was, for goodness' sake. What did she take him for? And why was she so surprised that he and his daughter could string numbers together with reasonable panache? They were hardly shopkeepers.[23]

Mahesh has little time for the patronising Mrs Gold and the system she represents, but he, too, is guilty of judging those whom he considers to have fewer educational achievements with disdain, which can be seen in his eagerness to distance his family from the image of Indian immigrants as shopkeepers. As such, it seems that Mahesh has internalised the colonial discourse of those such as Macaulay, appearing to disparage those who have not met Western educational standards. This is reflected by the pressure he puts on Rumika to attend Oxford University, an internationally recognised mark of outstanding academic achievement. When it comes to his attitude towards education, Mahesh is both affected by colonialist attitudes and uses similar attitudes to judge or oppress others.

The fact that the family have moved to Wales in particular reflects this duality. Throughout the majority of the novel, Rumika's family do not differentiate between Britain and Wales, as seen in Mahesh's reference to 'the British' when talking about Shakuntala Devi. Perhaps this is due to Wales's role in colonising India, and the family do not see the Welsh as any different from the other people of Britain in that respect. Past events in Wales, however, are present under the surface of Rumika's family's experience of British educational standards. Considering that education as a tool of colonialism is one of *Gifted*'s main themes, a reader with knowledge of Welsh history might be reminded of the *Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales* in 1847. Commonly referred to as 'The Treachery of the Blue Books', these reports admonished the Welsh people for loose morals and poor educational attainment, and led to the imposition of English educational standards (and education through the medium of English) in Wales, not unlike the system proposed by Macauley in India.[24] The family's location in Wales confirms the duality inherent in their experiences as it reminds the reader of the oppression both the Welsh and Indian people have experienced.

Rumika is pulled in all directions by the different dualities and divisions that define her world. It is not easy for her to identify as Welsh, British or Indian. In the British context, as Mahesh's comments about shopkeepers demonstrate, her identities as both a second generation immigrant and an intellectual do not necessarily coexist easily. Similarly, in the Indian context, and likely in Britain too, her intellectual abilities do not coexist easily with the expectations placed upon women and girls. Her mother Shreene's history illustrates this as she gives up on her ambition to become a doctor when she marries, and has to show her sewing diploma certificate as well as her bachelor's degree to prospective mothers-in-law as proof she is worthy of marrying their sons. The family exists on the borders between different countries, cultures and identities. Gita Rajan has explored how British-Indian intellectual women are portrayed as border crossers in British Indian fiction, with particular focus on the work of Kamala Markandya, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala and Suniti Namjoshi. Rajan argues, '[d]isplaced intellectuals cannot be distinguished merely as self/other, center/periphery, provincial/metropolitan, homo/heterosexual, and so on, but can be examined through their trails as border crossers', which rings true in relation to *Gifted*'s characters too.[25] As previously discussed, Mahesh's character blurs the lines between victim and oppressor, and when he tries to define his identity as a Hindu, these lines become blurred once more. In conversation with his Scottish friend Whitefoot, Mahesh recalls the Indian Partition in 1947, and the related violence between Hindus and Muslims, and refuses to acknowledge that members of each of these religions both inflicted and suffered violence during the conflict. Whitefoot reminds him of the reality of the situation: 'I'm sorry to say this, man, but I want to know. Are you saying that you don't believe Hindus were massacring too? It was a civil war. You're an academic, you know the score – someone starts it and retribution runs the rest …'.[26] Echoing Rajan's contention that the border intellectual cannot be defined using simple binaries, Whitefoot reminds Mahesh that it is because he is an academic that he should be aware that the situation is more complex than simply seeing one group as victim and the other as oppressor. It is interesting that it is a Scot who reminds Mahesh of this, as it reminds the reader of the different countries of the United Kingdom's interchangeable roles within the British Empire, as Scotland, like Wales, aided in the colonisation of others across the world as well as experiencing its own political and cultural oppression.

If one considers their 'trails as border crossers',[27] one can see echoes of Rajan's argument in Rumika and Shreene's lives too. On two occasions in the novel, Rumika and Shreene cross physical borders and it is at these points that their complex identities come to light. Rumkia travels to England on a school trip to attend a chess competition. A memorable point in the journey is crossing the Severn Bridge: 'When they zoom over the Severn Bridge they curse the English and cheer for Wales.'[28] To the children, the Wales/England divide seems clearly demarcated, but it is notable that we do not see Rumika's actions clearly here, and we do not know if she joins in with her peers. Perhaps she does not find it as easy as others to identify with Welshness. Another passage in the novel where travel and crossing borders highlights the characters' complex identities is when Shreene travels through India by train to visit her parents. As well as crossing state boundaries, she crosses a metaphorical boundary too, between life in the United Kingdom and life in India, and the train attendant reminds her of this when she asks for water after the train breaks down:

> 'Baby is OK, I take it?' he asks, gesturing at Rumi, making his eyebrows jump in her direction. Shreene responds by smiling and looking directly at him, bashfully.
>
> 'Well, I would like to give her some water if there's any chance, bhaisahib?' she says.
>
> 'Madam, seems to me you are from abroad, am I right?' he says.
>
> 'Yes.'
>
> 'And you are only drinking bottled water in that case I am imagining – Bisleri, Aqua, these kinds of brands … Or might be you drink cold drinks.'
>
> …
>
> 'Yes,' says Shreene.
>
> 'In that case, madam, how can I help you? You understand that we are stuck in an isolated place. There is no soft drinks stand here… You agree with me, madam, we are not in Lessisster Square of London, are we?'[29]

The way the train attendant asks Shreene if she is from 'abroad' reveals that her time in Britain has made her unfamiliar with daily life in her homeland. Moreover, he makes her feel like a sort of oppressor, chastising her for expecting the same service in India as in Britain despite the differences in culture, resources and modes of travel. His mispronunciation of Leicester Square is also significant. On the one hand it seems he is mocking the metropolitan culture of India's British colonisers. But he also misunderstands Shreene's identity. As an Indian woman living in Wales, she does not represent the metropolitan centre. She resides in a country whose culture and language existed on the margins of the British Empire, as India's languages and cultures were oppressed too. The train attendants two-fold mistake therefore emphasises that identities are not easily categorised as coloniser/colonised, and it is *Gifted*'s location in Wales, with its ambiguous status within the British imperial project, that allows Lalwani to explore these complexities.

Hanan Issa's *My Body Can House Two Hearts*

One wonders what Thomas Babington Macaulay, or the Commissioners of Inquiry, for that matter, were they alive today, would have made of a Welsh-Iraqi woman being named National Poet of Wales? Would her work be worthy of a place on Macaulay's shelf of superior Western literature? Hanan Issa's announcement of her appointment as National Poet of Wales on her Instagram page (@hananelizabethissa), complete with photos of her dressed as Blodeuwedd, the 'fickle flower princess'[30] from the fourth branch of *Y Mabinogi*, in a purple hijab and a cape of locally-grown flowers in the Arab Room of Cardiff Castle, would at the very least have challenged his understanding of culture and literature as being divided along national borders, or by Eastern or Western tastes and mores.

The unveiling of the veiled and flower-cloaked Issa in her new role in 2022 seems almost a companion piece to 'Lands of Mine', the opening poem of her 2019 volume *My Body Can House Two Hearts*. As well as a reference to Blodeuwedd, the poem conjures images of various myths and legends from Welsh and Iraqi history, as well as the persona's dreams and desires in relation to both countries. All of these, however, seem unobtainable or obscured in some way: there is the a reference to an unnamed 'lovesick girl [who] jumped to join the deaths / of Mongol hordes';[31] and 'stories of loyal dogs and fickle flower princesses', references to Llywelyn Fawr's legendary heroic hound, Gelert, and *Y Mabinogi*'s adulterous Blodeuwedd who was conjured from flowers by the wizard Gwydion, have been stored in 'the dark wooden drawers of my Nan's Welsh dresser'.[32] Personal dreams and family mythologies are also out of reach. The persona says to her grandfather 'mishtaqeen, gentle George'[33] – 'I miss you' – and Issa's explanatory note elaborates: 'My mum and nan speak so fondly of my maternal grandfather George that it sometimes feels like I met, loved, and lost him when they did.'[34] In addition to this, the poem begins with the persona's realisation that 'Al Askari is gone', a mosque in the Iraqi city of Samarra that she will never get to visit, after it was damaged by ISIS.[35] She seems to exist at a distance from both countries.

The opening line of the poem, however, hints that she is reimagining these nations identities and their significance to her, in order to create a space to which she can belong. The line '*Hen wlad fy nhadau* occupies my thoughts' is an instantly recognisable reference to the Welsh national anthem.[36] The land of the persona's fathers is not Wales in this instance, but Iraq, and the image of the damaged mosque almost replaces the anthem's 'gwrol ryfelwyr', its brave soldiers, with the destructive insurgents of the Islamic State, thus disrupting the idealised or romanticised images of national identity seen in anthems across the world. Midway through the poem, the persona turns away from her visions of Iraq, and focuses instead on '*hen wlad fy mamau*' – Wales.[37] She is the daughter of a Welsh mother, and her willingness to rewrite this famous line of the national anthems signals her intent to reclaim, reinvent and reimagine the identity of the two nations to which she feels a connection, in order to make her own mythologies:

> *Kan yawmah kan*, I am a woman of neither here nor there.
> Although it is here I have bled and brought forth my child
>
> of more than two places. I gift him with the names
> of extraordinary princes, and the stories of my people:
>
> of Fallujah, of Aberfan, of Baghdad, of Caerdydd.[38]

Her assertion that she belongs 'neither here nor there' is reminiscent of the other texts already discussed in this chapter, and their exploration of the difficulties of trying to identify with more than one culture, or having one's conception of identity limited by binary categories. There is a sense here, however, that she wants to tell her own story of Wales and Iraq, and to embrace many different aspects of their cultures. '*Kan yawmah kan*' is an Arabic phrase similar to 'Once upon a time', and the use of Arabic, English and Welsh here suggests she is confident in her identification with all aspects of her cultural heritage. Thus the histories of Wales and Iraq become 'the stories of [her] people', and the lands of her father and her mother become hers, as signified by the poem's title 'Lands of mine'.

An unapologetic confidence in her multifaceted identity abounds in Issa's work. Whilst not a fluent Welsh speaker she often uses the language in her poetry, and she makes similar use of her elemental Arabic. Her references to Fallujah and Baghdad at the end of 'Lands of Mine' will no doubt remind many readers of the controversial Iraq War, one of the more recent incidents in a long history of British interference in the politics of the Middle East. But as well as this nod to British colonial history, in which Wales of course played a part, the mention of Aberfan reminds the reader of Welsh suffering too. The Aberfan disaster of 1966, where, due to the negligence of the National Coal Board, a colliery spoil tip collapsed killing 144 people, is often framed as another in a long line of industrial disasters across the south Wales coalfield, which affected Welsh communities as they toiled to ensure Britain prospered. Wales's dual role in the British Empire is present here again. Indeed, the shadow of Aberfan looms over another poem of hers, '*Croesawgar*'. The title is the Welsh word for 'welcoming', and the poem takes Wales and its people to task over the result of the Brexit vote and their failure to welcome refugees fleeing conflict in Syria, chastising the people of Merthyr Tydfil in particular, who 'blame difference for their downfall'.[39] Central to the poem, however, is the history of two young boys, pulled from different piles of rubble, 50 years apart – Jeff Edwards the 'last survivor to be pulled from the rubble of the Aberfan mining disaster' and Omran Daqneesh, who was 'pulled from rubble in Aleppo, Syria, after surviving a Russian airstrike' in 2016.[40] The poem directly asks '[w]hat difference is there between the suffering / of Jeff Edwards and Omran Daqneesh?',[41] pointing out that both the people of Wales and Syria have 'suffered for their own sunken black gold … fossil fuels / buried and baked beneath the earth / for greedy hands to grasp …'.[42] Whereas the work of Welsh writers of colour of a slightly earlier generation, such as Charlotte Williams and Nikita Lalwani, makes inferences to Welsh oppression whilst primarily illustrating the long history of subjugation, racism and discrimination directed towards black and Asian people, Issa is comfortable drawing direct parallels between the Welsh and other oppressed peoples, at the same time as she castigates them for their own bigotry.

Catrin Dafydd's *Olion* and Angharad Price's *Caersaint*

As Welsh writers of colour have sought to deconstruct the binary categories that have been used to define stereotypical understandings of Welsh identity, white writers from Wales, too, have contributed to this venture. Some in particular have directly challenged the assumption that to be Welsh is to be white. Catrin Dafydd's poem 'Mae Ahmed yn siarad Cymraeg' (Ahmed speaks Welsh), taken from her series *Olion* (Remains) which won the Crown at the 2018 National Eisteddfod, bears a striking resemblance to Issa's 'Lands of Mine'. The series as a whole depicts the Grangetown area of Cardiff, and charts the development of its multi-ethnic and Welsh-speaking communities. In 'Mae Ahmed yn siarad Cymraeg' we learn that Ahmed is a young Muslim boy who attends a Welsh-medium school. This in itself challenges many misconceptions about Welsh identity – the Welsh language is shown to be thriving in the city, rather than gasping for its last breaths in the northern or western heartlands, and it is spoken by a diverse range of people, not just white, middle-class families. His choice of bedtime stories is a sign of his connection to many cultures:

> Beth hoffet yn stori? Gallaf hudo'r *Arabian Nights* yn fyw iti,
> neu gall Dad ddod at erchwyn y gwely i adrodd yr *hadiths*.
> Neu beth am y llyfr lliwgar sy'n llawn Cymraeg?
> Gall Mami lyncu print du'r geiriau Saesneg
> a gelli di droi'n athro balch, fel rwyt mor hoff o wneud.
>
> [Which story would you like? I can conjure the *Arabian Nights* to life for you,
> or Dad can come to the edge of the bed to recite the hadiths.
> Or what about the colourful book bursting with Welsh?
> Mami can mull over the black print of the English words
> And you can act the proud teacher, as you are so fond of doing.][43]

Welsh, English and Arabic coexist in Ahmed's home. As well as this, the reader gets the impression that it is a location of cultural exchange which encourages both the child and the parents to become a part of different cultures – the mother and father's choice of texts open Ahmed's eyes to Arabic culture and Islam, and in reading Welsh books, Ahmed teaches his parents a new language as well. At the end of the poem, Ahmed's bedroom is described as 'man lle mae Muhammad a'r Mabinogi / a Mami, Ahmed, yn disgwyl amdanati ti' [a place where Muhammad and the Mabinogi / and Mami, Ahmed, are waiting for you].[44] The alliteration brings different cultures and members of the family together and demonstrating the connections forming between them, emphasising the proses of change and exchange that means our sense of identity can change over time. This is demonstrated throughout the series of poems, as it begins and ends with images of Afon Taf flowing to the sea, which reminds us of Wales's connections with the wider world – from here the Valleys' coal began its journey across the world to fuel the fires of the British Empire, and it was the same port that welcomed newcomers to Wales, giving rise to Cardiff's multicultural community.

Contemporary Welsh language texts are also expanding our understanding of the location of multiracial, multicultural Wales, by introducing their readers to diverse communities beyond the capital city. One such text is Angharad Price's 2010 novel, *Caersaint*, which focuses on the characters of a multiethnic town in north Wales, based on Caernarfon. Charlotte Williams's report on black, Asian and minority ethnic history and the curriculum found that focusing on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic themes was not thought to be a priority for areas where minority populations are small, and as such these themes should be taught nationwide, and the diversity of areas beyond multicultural cities like Cardiff should be emphasised.[45] In discussing her novel, Price suggest that one of her motivations in writing was to encourage people to realise that multicultural communities exist in Wales outside of Cardiff, and that some of these communities communicate in Welsh:

> Mae o'n fy niflasu i weithiau, clywed pobl yn sôn am y gogledd, neu'r gorllewin, fel rhyw lefydd Cymreig hen ffasiwn, mewnblyg sydd â rhyw obsesiwn efo purdeb diwylliannol ac ati. 'Di hynny ddim yn wir o gwbl. Mae Caernarfon, er enghraifft, yn lle cosmopolitan ers canrifoedd lawer – ymhell cyn Caerdydd!
>
> [It gets me down at times, hearing people talk about north or west Wales as if they're old fashioned, insular Welsh places, obsessed with cultural purity and so on. That's not at all true. Caernarfon, for example has been a cosmopolitan place for many centuries – far longer than Cardiff!][46]

To this end, for example, the novel tells the story of Jamal Gwyn Jones, the son of a local white Welsh woman and a Pakistani man, as he campaigns to become Mayor of Caersaint. A conversation Jamal has with his neighbours, Trefor and Miriam, reveals the extent of the multi-ethnic nature of the local population:

> ‘Ti ddim yn bad, chwaith, a chysidro. O frown, dwi’n meddwl. Mi fasat ti’n pasio amsant isio sgrwb. Neu un o’r petha ’na sy’n mynd o dan lamp.’
>
> …
>
> ‘A deud y gwir, ti fawr brownach na Miriam … Jipsiwns oedd teulu’i thaid hi. Y Roma yna. Dim Romans Segontiwm, dydi hi ddim mor hen â hynny. Y lleill. Ond bod y cradur bach wedi priodi dynas capal. Dim rhyfadd bod dy fam yn hurt erbyn heddiw, Mir, a’i gwaed hi’n llifo ddwy ffor.’
>
> ‘Gwyn oedd Mam yn ’y ngalw fi,’ [medd Jamal] wedyn, gan dynnu’n groes iddo.
>
> …
>
> ‘Gwyn?A chdithau’n half caste? Honna ydi’r ora eto!’
>
> … Daeth ebychiad o siom o du Miriam.
>
> …
>
> ‘Hei, hold on, dydw i ddim yn racist, os mai dyna be ti’n feddwl [medd Trefor …]
>
> ‘Padi oedd ’y nhaid i. Ac mi oedd gin Nain ei hun waed Sbanish, fatha’r rhan fwya o bobol Pen Llŷn …’
>
> [‘You’re not bad either, considering. Not too dark, I mean. You’d pass for a local who just needs a wash. Or one of those ones who use the sunbeds.’
>
> …
>
> ‘To be honest, you’re not much browner than Miriam … Her grandfather’s family were gypsies. Those Roma. Not the Romans of Segontium, she’s not that old. The others. But the poor thing married a chapel woman. No wonder your mother’s nuts by now, Mir, with her blood flowing both ways.’
>
> ‘Mam used to call me Gwyn,’ [said Jamal], playing devil’s advocate.
>
> ‘Gwyn? But you’re half caste? That’s the best one yet!’
>
> … Miriam sighed her disapproval.
>
> …

> 'Hey, hold on, I'm not racist, if that's what you're thinking' [said Trefor]. 'My grandfather was a Paddy. And my grandmother had Spanish blood too, like most of the people in Pen Llŷn …'][47]

Despite his protestation that he is not a racist, the irony here is that Trefor's racist attitudes reveal his own multi-ethnic background. We are reminded both of the everyday racism faced by people of colour in Wales, but also the far-reaching extent of the cultural, racial and ethnic diversity of many of our communities. Jamal's comment that his mother would call him Gwyn is also significant in the novel's deconstruction of Welshness as white, too. As Trefor mocks Jamal's mother's habit of calling him 'Gwyn' because of his skin colour, the stability of 'white' as an ethnic category is brought into doubt. Jamal, Trefor and Miriam's mixed backgrounds all suggest that the ethnic purity denoted by the term 'white' simply does not exist. In complicating Jamal's identity and demonstrating that he cannot be easily categorised as 'black/brown' or 'white', Price also deconstructs the idea that Welshness is white. Gwyn's Welsh name also challenges the notion that Welsh-speaking culture is exclusively white. A similar play on words is seen again in Jamal's campaign slogan, 'Y dyn gwyn. A'r ddalan wen' ('The white man. And the white/blank page').[48] One of his supporters is quick to point out 'Ond blincin dyn du ydi o!' ('But he's a blinking black man!').[49] Jamal, of course, is not black, and thus these categories are called into question yet again. Moreover, when Jamal's campaign manager, Babs, explains that 'gwyn' signals that Jamal's election could be an opportunity fresh start for the town after the corruption of the previous administration, there is a sense too that looking beyond simplistic binaries could offer Wales an opportunity to celebrates its diversity anew.

This Blank Page of Ours …

Perhaps it is significant, too, that many of the texts discussed in this chapter offer the reader an image similar to that of Price's 'blank page': Williams concludes her autobiography wanting to tell the story of Wales's black community to her granddaughter and her writing itself is a version of that story; Issa expresses her desire to share the story of her people with her son; and Ahmed in Dafydd's poem is offered the opportunity by his mother to choose his own story. There is a sense that Wales has many stories to tell, many of them thus far untold or unfamiliar. Charlotte Williams's recent report as the Chair of the Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic Contributions and Cynefin in the New Curriculum Working Group also champions the idea of telling our individual stories as a way to realise the diversity of Welsh society and the many different experiences that make up modern Welsh life. Drawing inspiration from the BBC's *Who Do You Think You Are?*, she advocates for a week of learning activities designed to familiarise children with their own history, and through this, the history of their community, and Wales too, and to re-write the story of Wales to reflect more faithfully who we are now. In challenging the binaries, and shedding light on forgotten aspects of Welsh history and society, the literary work of authors such as Williams, Lalwani, Issa, Dafydd and Price is already helping to fill the blank pages that lie ahead of us, asking us to re-evaluate who we think we are, and to reshape the stories the Welsh nation will tell itself in the future.

Notes

1 Charlotte Williams, *Sugar and Slate* (Aberystwyth: Planet, 2002), p. 103.

2 Katie Gramich, 'Cymru or Wales? Explorations in a Divided Sensibility', in Susan Bassnett (ed.), Studying British Cultures (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 97–112 (101).

3 Lisa Sheppard, *Y Gymru 'Ddu' a'r Ddalen 'Wen': Aralledd ac Amlddiwylliannedd mewn Ffuglen Gymreig er 1990* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2018).

4 Since the time of writing, this contribution has been further enhanced by the appointment in 2023 of Nia Morais, a Welsh Cape Verdean poet and playwright, as Bardd Plant Cymru.

5 Charlotte Williams, Neil Evans, Paul O'Leary, 'Introduction: Race, Nation and Globalization', in Charlotte Williams, Neil Evans, Paul O'Leary (eds), *A Tolerant Nation?* Exploring Ethnic Diversity in Wales (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), pp. 1–13 (11); Charlotte Williams, Neil Evans, Paul O'Leary, 'Introduction: Race, Nation and Globalization in a Devolved Wales', in Charlotte Williams, Neil Evans, Paul O'Leary (eds), *A Tolerant Nation? Revisiting Ethnic Diversity in a Devolved Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2015), pp. 1–23 (7).

6 See, for example, Charlotte Williams, '"Race" and Racism: Some Reflections of the Welsh Context', *Contemporary Wales*, 8 (1995), 113–31; Char-

lotte Williams, '"I Going away, I Going home": Mixed-"Race", Movement and Identity', in Lynne Pearce (ed.), *Devolving Identities: Feminist Readings in Home and Belonging* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 179–95; Charlotte Williams, 'Claiming the National: Nation, National Identity and Ethnic Minorities', in Charlotte Williams, Neil Evans, Paul O'Leary (eds), *A Tolerant Nation? Exploring Ethnic Diversity in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), pp. 220–34; Charlotte Williams, 'Strange Encounters', *Planet*, 158 (April/May 2003), 19–24; Charlotte Williams, 'Can We Live Together? Wales and the Multicultural Question', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* 2004, 11 (2005), 216–30; Charlotte Williams, 'Claiming the National: Nation, National Identity and Ethnic Minorities', in Charlotte Williams, Neil Evans, Paul O'Leary (eds), *A Tolerant Nation? Revisiting Ethnic Diversity in a Devolved Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2015), pp. 331–51.

7 Williams, 'Claiming the National' (2003), p. 226.

8 Williams, 'Claiming the National' (2003), p. 220.

9 Williams, *Sugar and Slate*, pp. 168–9.

10 Williams, '"I Going away, I Going home"', p. 182.

11 Williams, '"I Going away, I Going home"', p. 180.

12 Williams, *Sugar and Slate*, pp. 91–2.

13 See Lisa Sheppard, 'Autoethnography in post-British Literatures: A Comparative Reading of Charlotte Williams and Jackie Kay', in Hywel Dix (ed.), *Autofiction in English*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

14 See Charlotte Williams, Neil Evans, Paul O'Leary, 'Introduction: Race, Nation and Globalization', pp. 1–13; Kirsti Bohata, *Postcolonialism Revisited* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004); Jane Aaron, 'Postcolonial Change', *New Welsh Review*, 67 (spring 2005), 32–6 (36); Katie Gramich, *Twentieth-Century Women's Writing in Wales: Land, Gender, Belonging* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press 2007); Lisa Sheppard, *Y Gymru 'Ddu' a'r Ddalen 'Wen': Aralledd ac Amlddiwylliannedd mewn Ffuglen Gymreig er 1990* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2018).

15 Ken Goodwin, 'Celtic Nationalism and Postcoloniality', in Stuart Murray and Alan Riach (eds), *SPAN: Journal of the South Pacific Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies*, 4 (October 1995), 23. Quoted in Bohata, *Postcolonialism Revisited*, p. 4.

16 Williams, *Sugar and Slate*, p. 192.

17 Nikita Lalwani, *Gifted* (London: Penguin, 2008 [2007]), p. 3.

18 Lalwani, *Gifted*, p. 6.

19 Lalwani, *Gifted*, p. 37.

20 Thomas Babington Macaulay, *Minute by the Hon'ble T. B. Macaulay, dated the 2nd February 1835*, *http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00generallinks/macaulay/txt_minute_education_1835.html* (accessed 4 January 2015).

21 Thomas Babington Macaulay, *Minute by the Hon'ble T. B. Macaulay, dated the 2nd February 1835*, *http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00generallinks/macaulay/txt_minute_education_1835.html* (accessed 4 January 2015).

22 Macaulay, *Minute by the Hon'ble T. B. Macaulay*.

23 Lalwani, *Gifted*, p.7.

24 Committee of Council on Education, *Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the state of education in Wales* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1847), *https://www.library.wales/discover-learn/digital-exhibitions/europeana-rise-of-literacy/the-blue-books-reports/report-of-the-commissioners-of-inquiry-into-the-state-of-education-in-wales* (accessed 4 June 2023). For a detailed analysis of the 'Blue Books', see Gwyneth Tyson Roberts, *The Language of the Blue Books: Wales and Colonial Prejudice* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011).

25 Gita Rajan, '(Con)figuring Identity: Cultural Space of the Indo-British Border Intellectual', in Gisela Brinker-Gabler a Sidonic Smith (eds), *Writing New Identities: Gender, Nation and Immigration in Contemporary Europe* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 78–99 (81).

26 Lalwani, *Gifted*, p. 67.

27 Rajan, '(Con)figuring Identity', p. 81.

28 Lalwani, *Gifted*, p. 98.

29 Lalwani, *Gifted*, pp. 33-4.

30 Hanan Issa, 'Lands of Mine', in *My Body Can House Two Hearts* (Portishead: Burning Eye Books, 2019), p. 9, l. 16.

31 Issa, 'Lands of Mine', ll. 5-6.

32 Issa, 'Lands of Mine', ll. 15-16.

33 Issa, 'Lands of Mine', l. 14.

34 Issa, 'Glossary', in *My Body Can House Two Hearts*, pp. 33–8 (33).

35 Issa, 'Lands of Mine', l. 3.

36 Issa, 'Lands of Mine', l. 1.

37 Issa, 'Lands of Mine', l. 12.

38 Issa, 'Lands of Mine', ll. 17–21.

39 Issa, '*Croesawgar*', in *My Body Can House Two Hearts*, pp. 13–15, l. 52.

40 Issa, '*Croesawgar*', see epigraph.

41 Issa, '*Croesawgar*', ll. 64–5.

42 Issa, '*Croesgawgar*', ll. 57–62.

43 Catrin Dafydd, 'Mae Ahmed yn siarad Cymraeg', *Olion*, in W. Gwyn Lewis (ed.), *Cyfansoddiadau a Beirniadaethau Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Cymru Caerdydd 2018* (Llys yr Eisteddfod, 2018), pp. 35–42 (36–7, ll. 6–10). My translation.

44 Dafydd, 'Mae Ahmed yn siarad Cymraeg', ll.20–1. My translation.

45 Williams, *Adroddiad terfynol*, p. 9.

46 Angharad Price, quoted in Menna Baines, 'Y Saint yn eu gogoniant: holi Angharad Price am ei nofel newydd', *Barn*, 566 (Mawrth/March 2010), 33–4 (34). My translation.

47 Angharad Price, *Caersaint* (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 2010), pp. 34–6. My translation.

48 Price, *Caersaint*, p. 256.

49 Price, *Caersaint*, p. 256.

CHAPTER 9

Black Welsh Cinema as Afro-futurist movement

Dedicated to Laolu Alatise

Yvonne Connikie

When I coined the phrase Black Welsh Cinema years ago some were not very happy about the concept at all, but it opened up a way of thinking about the politics of Blackness in contemporary Welsh cinema and visual practice and the power of film to contribute to shaping representations of nation. I became interested in the practices, values and networks of collaborations that might shape the development of Black film culture and representation in Wales. The principles of Afrofuturism and the insights of Black artists and writers helped me appreciate why someone, coming from a Black Caribbean background in Wales can experience a mix of feeling alien, cosmopolitan and futuristic all at the same time. The notion of Black Welsh Film has emerged slowly and tentatively from small and disparate beginnings. In this chapter I choose to explore how this has, and is, taking place for Black Wales, and to do this I draw on the Tiger Bay community in Cardiff and utilise the term Afrofuturism as my starting point.

Afrofuturism, is a concept first recognised by Marc Dery.[1] This term, which was originally associated with science fiction in modern African art, has come to encompass a range of other genres such as fantasy, magical realism, music and creative practices aimed at generating alternate visions of the future and as a means of exploring the future through an Afrocentric lens. Afrofuturism challenges existing power structures, celebrates cultural heritage, and imagines new possibilities for Black and marginalised communities. I choose to adopt the concept of Afrofuturism to explore the making and viewing of Black film in Wales. I offer an overview of some of the prominent filmmakers of Black Welsh heritage and explore some developments in Black Welsh Film. I ask, how can the idea of Black Welsh filmmaking facilitate new modes of representation, authorship and exhibition? However, even using the optimistic notion of Afrofuturism to examine Black Welsh Film, I appreciate the many challenges faced by Black filmmakers and artists in Wales. To illustrate their positioning within the arts sector in Wales I undertook interviews with two young Black creatives who are active in the business. My argument is that given so much available talent there is much that needs to be done to cohere, support and nurture their growth.

The space of Black Welsh film is increasingly populated and expanding, opening up the potentials of Afrofuturism and providing forthright messages from creative practitioners about identity, nation and a changing Wales. In contemporary Wales, there exists a renewed focus on systemic racial injustice. Afrofuturist cultural power to imagine a more just society is increasingly relevant. Here I offer a critical dialogue as a springboard for further debate, research and development on issues of race/ethnicity within the arts sector.

Tiger Bay and Afrofuturism

Somewhat surprisingly a lack of academic work exists on the available footage and film clips relating to Cardiff's black communities. Gill Branson's writing on cinema going amongst the black population of Cardiff Bay paints a vibrant picture of the history and culture of personalities that lived there.[2] Her chapter, entitled 'What a difference a Bay makes', tells one story of a local schoolteacher Olwen Watkins whose aunty danced with Josephine Baker. Another is of Paul Robeson's visit to his uncle Aaron Mossell, who came to Cardiff as an exile and continued to work as an activist, subsequently campaigning against racist councillors in Cardiff and for fairer pay for Black sailors. These stories affirm how multi-cultural Wales is, brimming with stories, mixing, and blending cultures from all over the world, to create something that is uniquely theirs and recognisable and simultaneously Black, multi-ethnic Welsh and futuristic. Through her interviews with elders, with the intention of memorialising their experiences, Branson discovered how the locals actively consumed British and Hollywood films demonstrating how their film engagement held a dual nature. Bay folk, young and old, embraced Hollywood's lively film genres, learning songs made famous in Hollywood musicals, and repeatedly watching films at affordable cinemas. At the same time, they criticized Hollywood's racism towards Black dancers and the imperialistic assumptions embedded in its productions. Local people were conscious of the cinematically racist depictions of Africa as 'the jungle'. Interviews with elder Olwen Watkins revealed the awareness of Hollywood's limitations, when she recounted her Filipino-Irish grandmother reacting angrily against the cinematic portrayal of Filipinos as savages. Many of the Tiger Bay community members, with their innate taste for glamour and first-hand knowledge of distant lands as a part of their cultural heritage, were often invited to be involved in British film productions at Pinewood, frequently participating as extras. This connection tied the pleasure of cinema to potential work opportunities. But it also indicates that the critique of mainstream filmmaking was not lost on them.

The pleasure of the cinema and the growth of video and independent filmmaking in the 1980s inspired my own love for film and has led me into the field of film curation, with an appreciation for Black Welsh art and film. I find myself not only observing but actively participating in this vibrant creative landscape. My definition of Black Welsh film comes from my enthusiasm to engage with global majority filmmakers in Wales, and I am using this term in the broadest and inclusive sense, since Wales, particularly the south has a strong and longstanding multi-ethnic community. But what is exactly is Black Welsh film and how does this concept, however defined, open up spaces of meaning through visual culture, and what might be the political, social and aesthetic effects of pursing this idea?

Black Welsh cinema is a cultural space of self-identification and representation in film by filmmakers who are from Black and multi-ethnic backgrounds, born or based in Wales. This is not to tie Black Welsh filmmakers to solely making film about their Welsh/dual heritage, they can and do make films in wide range of genres, including stories influenced by their ethnic background. In doing so Black and ethnic minority communities in Wales counter any imagined stereotype of Wales as a homogenous monocultural nation, illustrating the multi-connections migrations to and from Wales have in defining what is Wales today. Thus, I am seeking to acknowledge Black Welsh cinema as something recognisably distinct that affects our understanding of Wales as a whole and of Wales within the world at large.

The principles of Afro-futurism and the writings of Stuart Hall on race and representation helped me shape these ideas and appreciate why being from any ethnic minority background in Wales can feel at the same time alien, cosmopolitan, and futuristic.[3] To date, Black Welsh Film has little or no academic research to support it, despite their being a broad field of studies on black arts filmmaking and cinematic aesthetics.[4] However, there is now some appreciation of Black film as a part of Welsh culture. Notable is the Film Hub Wales website,[5] which now has a page dedicated to Black Welsh Film suggesting it is being recognised by the creative sector as something recognisable and distinct.

Black filmmaking in Wales emerged with the Cardiff Film and Video workshops of the 1980s. Members of the Cardiff Workshop included artist/activist Simon Campbell, son of the first memorialised Black head teacher Betty Campbell, and David 'Collie' Smith, now working as a filmmaker in Los Angeles. Community filmmaking was happening in many cities in the UK at that time, with many factions such as LGBTQI and women also wanting to provide accurate representations of themselves.[6] This movement was supported by the birth of Channel 4, and of S4C, capturing the zeitgeist of the 1980s.

These workshops were set up across the UK by what Kobena Mercer called 'cinema activists',[7] exploring issues of race and identity and representation, using film as their medium. The work produced was theorised by Stuart Hall, Kobena Mercer, and Paul Gilroy, plus by the artists and filmmakers themselves. In Wales, cultural theorist Glenn Jordan and his partner, academic and writer Chris Weedon, worked with the local community and founded the Butetown History & Arts Centre in Cardiff, a project dedicated to local history and education. The centre's aims were to educate the public on the history of the multi-cultural community within the city of Cardiff and Wales more broadly through events, exhibitions, books and other publications. The centre highlighted the vibrant diversity of the area campaigning for compassion and appreciation for everyone[8]. All were welcome, and the centre was frequented by academics and locals until it closed due to lack of funding in 2017. Jordan's work, informed by major cultural theorists such as Stuart Hall, looked to the democratisation of culture, utilising a broad range of participatory methodologies to build a living history and authentic representation of the Butetown communities.

In the 1990s, the cultural landscape began to shift, and this change manifested itself in the films created by visionaries like Kyle Legall and Tony Johnson. These filmmakers embarked on animated ventures that introduced audiences to imaginative and authentic characters, marking a significant stride in Black Welsh futurism. Tony Johnson's animated masterpiece, *Fallen Angels* (1996),[9] occupies a prominent place in this narrative. This groundbreaking film, a 57-minute animation, stands as the sole feature-length work of its kind to emerge from the UK's Black filmmaking community. Despite its distinction, *Fallen Angels* is not just a cinematic triumph; it is a testament to the innovative essence of Black Welsh futurism. Within its dystopian framework, scenes of American disarray, including the destruction of the iconic Chrysler Building, are vividly depicted. Tony Johnson's commitment to his craft led him to forgo a Black filmmaker talk on animation in 2001, refraining from any associations with the sensitivities of 9/11. His animation transcends stylistic norms and employs characters that navigate time and space with the fluidity emblematic of this genre. Johnson seamlessly melds technology and imagination, capturing the essence of Afrofuturism.

A close collaborator of Johnson's, Legall, established himself as a vital figure in Black Welsh animation. Legall, rooted in Cardiff, drew inspiration from his community in Tiger Bay. His works often stemmed from partnerships within his multi-cultural milieu, notably with Gavin Porter, a childhood friend and creative companion, who is well known for his work in Film and Theatre. Legall's journey extended across various platforms, encompassing roles as a graffiti artist, visual creator, and, more recently, a theatre maker. *Rats* (2017), a theatrical production borne from Legall's life in Tiger Bay, exemplifies his versatility and commitment to storytelling. Notable is Legall's digital illustration *1919 Riots Redrawn*, *the story of the Cardiff riots*, retold from newspaper articles and first-hand accounts passed down through the generations. Similarly, Gavin Porter has created award winning short films telling the stories of racial injustice served upon Tony Paris (*Tony P*) (2004) and extending himself as a theatre director of the acclaimed *Circle of Fifths* (2022).

These early developments in Black Welsh filmmaking, addressing the issues of inequalities at home and away, looked both within and beyond urban cosmopolitanism towards reimagined futures. Perhaps the single orchestrating factor was place itself. The Tiger Bay legacy.

Unveiling International Recognition: Remarkable Filmmakers Shaping Cinematic Landscapes

In the world of cinema, visionary filmmakers have carved their names internationally, by screening their features and documentaries at major film festivals and reaping awards for their exceptional works. This trajectory has led to resounding international recognition, further amplified by distribution through online platforms. Among these luminaries are Branwen Okpako, Florence Ayisi, John Giwa-Amu, Sally Hossani, and Lianne Stuart who have each etched their unique narratives into the global cinematic tapestry.

Branwen Okpako's work seeks to portray complex issues of identity and diversity. Okpako, a Welsh-Nigerian filmmaker, ventured into the realm of cinema with her debut *Searching for Taid* (1997), marking the beginning of a cinematic journey that would echo her exploration of racial identity through the lenses of both Blackness and later Germanness. Now based in the United States, Okpako's cinematic journey reflects her commitment to dissecting Black identity and the intricacies of being African both within one's homeland and beyond. Her films, such as *Dirt for Dinner* (2000) and *Valley of the Innocent* (2003), delve into the depths of societal issues while challenging preconceived notions. Moreover, her poignant work *The Education of Auma Obama* (2011) chronicles the life of a remarkable African filmmaker and intellectual, and sister of the former US president, while shedding light on the nuances of her creative pursuits and intellectual and political growth. Through her documentaries, Okpako magnifies the stories and experiences of Black individuals in Germany, and beyond, contributing valuably to the discourse on cultural identity, representation, and the intricate tapestry of race in modern society.

Hailing from West Africa's Cameroon, Florence Ayisi planted her roots in south Wales over two decades ago, leveraging her extensive experience to both educate as a university lecturer and to craft impactful films. Her cinematic opuses are a celebration of the multifaceted layers of her Cameroonian heritage, offering vivid imagery that challenges conventional and derogatory narratives about the African Continent. Ayisi's groundbreaking films, notably *Sisters in Law* (2005) and *Zanzibar Soccer Queens* (2007), dive into the stories of African women who courageously shatter sexist stereotypes in the legal profession and on the soccer field. Through her filmmaking prowess, Ayisi empowers these women, elevating their agency to surpass societal confines. Her films have garnered global acclaim, captivating audiences with their resonant narratives and earning her a distinct place among the realm of accomplished filmmakers.

John Giwa-Amu, a pioneering Welsh-Nigerian filmmaker, stands tall amidst the industry's dynamic landscape. Notably recognised for his ability to bring his creative visions to life while adeptly navigating industry shifts, Giwa-Amu's works have enjoyed international acclaim. His earlier contributions, including *Little White Lies* (2006), centred on Welsh narratives about race. However, it was the critically acclaimed *The Machine* (2014), a science-fiction marvel, and the poignant drama *The Party* (2017), directed by Sally Potter, that solidified his position as a cinematic force. Through his production company Red and Black Films, Giwa-Amu capitalised on the burgeon of online distribution, attaining widespread visibility for his works on major platforms like Apple Film and Netflix. His groundbreaking interactive film *The Complex* (2020) stands as a testament to his ingenuity, emerging as the most successful interactive film to date. Giwa-Amu's cinematic journey continues to captivate audiences, perpetuating his influence within the realm of Afrofuturist storytelling.

Pushing out the frontiers, Sally Hossani and Rungano Nyoni have produced work that unveils new narratives. Welsh-Egyptian director Sally Hossani stunned audiences with the multi-award-winning film

My Brother the Devil (2012). She has gone on to make *The Swimmers* (2022), now available on Netflix. These masterful creations have painted vivid stories of youth with Hossani's distinctive touch. Adding to the tapestry of diversity, Hossani boldly addresses LGBTQI, and migration issues within ethnic minority communities, becoming a notable trailblazer in the list. Her transition from winning a Welsh BAFTA for her short *The Fifth Bowl* in 2008 to feature films underscores her prowess and versatility.

Rungano Nyoni, a Welsh-Zambian filmmaker, created the ingeniously original *I am not a Witch*. This work, characterised by its craft and wit, competed at the Cannes Film Festival in 2017, and reaped numerous awards, including a BAFTA for Outstanding Debut. Nyoni's exploration of the ridiculousness of female oppression has earned her a nomination for the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film. At the 2024 Cannes Film Festival, Rungano Nyoni won the Best Director award (*ex-aequo*) in the Un Certain Regard section for her feature film *On Becoming a Guinea Fowl*.

In the realm of cinematic achievements, success has unfailingly trailed Cardiff native Liana Stewart. At the heart of this acclaim stands the Bafta Award-winning documentary *Black and Welsh* (2020). This documentary resonates with audiences by acknowledging what it means to navigate multiple identities. In this remarkable production, individuals hailing from diverse backgrounds across Wales, come together to unravel their deeply personal, intergenerational narratives, offering a poignant exploration of the of being both Black and Welsh. Stewart's directorial prowess shines brightly through the documentary, skilfully capturing the essence of these individuals' experiences. The film weaves together a mosaic of stories, each a testament to the unique journey of identity and belonging. Against the backdrop of Wales, the documentary provides an intimate glimpse into the lives, struggles, and triumphs of those who navigate the intersection of their Black heritage and Welsh identity.

Beyond the work of these groundbreaking filmmakers, the Welsh landscape itself has served as a backdrop for innovative works that challenge norms in re-imaging the past, present and future of multi-ethnic Wales. According to *Wales Arts Review*, *Galwad* stands out as a highly collaborative production that breaks new ground, avoiding cultural stereotypes and celebrating diversity.[10] With a multi-ethnic cast and a multi-language script including sign language, the story revolves around two dual heritage women, Aeisha-Mae Hunt and Alexandria Riley. They portray one character, Efa, a 16-year-old who claims to have switched places with her 46-year-old self during an electrical storm. This futuristic Welsh sci-fi drama prompts audiences to ponder the implications of future communication and climate change. *Galwad* aligns with the Welsh Government's Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015), prioritising the needs of upcoming generations in decision-making. The production unfolds over a week in real time, utilising various channels and social networks. The film also boasts writing from Steven Kavuma, a Welsh-Ugandan actor and writer, now programmer at Seven Dials Theatre, and noted as one of the hundred most influential people in theatre today.

Similarly, the historical play *Trouble in Butetown* recreates the community life of Tiger Bay. Set against the backdrop of American soldiers stationed in Cardiff, the play centres on Gwyneth, a Valleys matriarch, and her boarding house in Tiger Bay. The arrival of an African American soldier named Nate unravels a series of secrets, threatening Gwyneth's efforts to provide for her daughters after the loss of her Nigerian husband in a U-Boat attack. The script navigates between the warmth of the house and the coldness of the community, where tensions arise over interactions between African-American soldiers and locals in the Bay.

The expanding genre of innovative filmmaking, theatre and arts in Wales demonstrates a remarkable commitment to re-imagining the past, present, and future of multi-ethnic Wales. The creative vision of groundbreaking filmmakers and playwrights has not only captivated audiences but has also challenged established norms and celebrated the rich diversity found within the Welsh landscape. The range of work being produced in and outside of Wales illustrates the development of innovative filmmaking and theatre. The creative vision of filmmakers and playwrights has not only captivated audiences but has also challenged established norms and celebrated the rich diversity found within the Welsh landscape. These works challenge stereotypes, celebrate diversity, and engage with critical issues such as climate change and cultural interactions, making them vital contributions to the ongoing narrative of Wales. As these stories continue to captivate and enlighten audiences, they reinforce the notion that Welsh artistry knows no bounds, and its impact extends far beyond the stage and screen.

New contributions – navigating the arts scene in Wales

The success of these film makers and the emergent focus on ethnic diversity in portrayals of Wales and Welshness perhaps belies some of the challenges and struggles facing young filmmakers. I chose to interview two individuals to illustrate what it is to be a contemporary Black Welsh multi-disciplinary artist in Wales today. Although this chapter has focused on creativity in film, many filmmakers in Wales are choosing this path in order to finance themselves and to give their work reach and to remain relevant. Writer and Children's Poet Laureate Connor Allen, and Um Mohamed, graciously shared their insights, shedding light on how diversity in the arts is shaping up for Generation Y.

Connor Allen is a poet and multidisciplinary artist from Newport. Since graduating from Trinity Saint David as an actor in 2013, Connor worked with companies such as Taking Flight Theatre, Sherman Theatre, Royal Exchange Manchester, Tin Shed Theatre, BBC Wales, and National Theatre Wales. He is a member of National Youth Theatre of Great Britain, and was also the winner of Triforces Cardiff Monologue Slam, representing Wales at the London winners edition. Connor's work is heavily inspired by elements of his own life such as grief, love, masculinity, identity, and ethnicity. Here he talks about his emergence as a writer and establishing himself in the field. Umulkhayr Mohamed is a Welsh Somali artist, writer, and curator. Her artistic practice involves creating primarily artist moving image and performance work that explores the tension present between enjoying the act of wandering between emancipatory temporalities and a functional need to position oneself in the now. I asked them both to talk about their induction into an arts career, their progression and their issues and concerns in navigating the arts scene in Wales.

Connor Allen

> I started my career as an actor, and completed a degree at University of Wales Trinity Saint David and studied drama. Writing came later. I won a writing competition and I was introduced to the National Theatre Wales. That was my first introduction to working with a theatre.

The former Theatre Director John Mcgrath and I got on well and he encouraged me to sign up to a scratch night called 'Storms in the Streets'. John offered me some support in the way of mentorship. It was there that I wrote my first piece for theatre, a monologue, and this was my first experience of collaborating with a director and an actor while I wrote my script. From that experience I met an arts professional who liked my work and asked if I had anything else I had written. They started to work with me giving me some suggestions and feedback. I eventually got into the BBC Writers' Room and then the Welsh Royal Court Writers' Room. By this time, I began to understand myself as an actor and a writer, a storyteller, and an artist and not just one thing.

The question I asked myself was how to develop my acting craft alongside my writing craft. I was developing my one man show. I began to reflect on the things I had learned which had given me greater self-confidence. I had won the Jerwood Award and received mentorship from writer/actor Debis Stevenson, Bryony Kimmings and Frazer Ayres. The award coupled with the mentorship really pushed my craft. In terms of the BBC writers group it was Helen Perry (BBC Wales Writers' Group) Gary Owen (Welsh Royal Court Writers' Group) that supported me on those groups.

In terms of confidence, I've believed if you write you are a writer and if you act you are an actor, you don't need a professional credit to call yourself a writer. On saying that you do have to look for places where you can get help. In Wales we have 'Dirty Protest' that works with new writers. You also need to get the confidence to message people who work in the Literature departments so you can find ways to get your work on stage. I have always said if you don't ask you don't get. The worst that can happen is that the person you are asking says no, but again, you are in no worse position than if you didn't ask so you may as well ask. You must take responsibility for your work.

I harassed Bryony Kimmings for a year. I think for some working-class people there is a culture of getting shit done but then no one wants to ask for help. There is a narrative that needs to shift because three minds are always going to be better than one when you are aiming for the same goal.

I think the landscape for young creatives looks promising at times, but there is not enough work being seen on a mainstream platform and when Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic work is on a mainstream platform there is a weight of expectation when it is seen. It is held at a higher standard and that can be detrimental to someone's career. White artists don't have that pressure. If you ask someone to name some white Welsh playwrights there are many names to choose from, but if you ask someone to name a Welsh playwright of colour there is always a pause and there shouldn't be. There is a whole list of writers of colour but they are not seen in the same sphere by white audiences.

For me, personally the landscape is more promising because I am now making the moves I want to make. I have created a collective of Black artists to readdress the balance. The collective is called Loyalty and through Loyalty I am nurturing and supporting the next generation of Black and Mixed-Race artists in Wales, and we are developing together. However there needs to be more representation and the burden of representation should not be carried by me alone, there should be other organisations who are doing the same. Jukebox Collective (a youth dance organisation based in Cardiff) are doing similar work and have been for many years prior but how much funding are they getting to produce work compared to other (similar) organisations? There needs to be a shift, the ratio between Black-led organisations and white-led organisations is very different. Until those changes are made, we will not have safe Black spaces that we can readily go to. There is a stereotype that theatres are very middle class because they are the ones that can afford to go. When you're working-class Black or mixed race, you are fighting that stereotype. That's what needs to change. How do we make these spaces ours?

The next generations are becoming more entwined, speaking both Welsh and English, I think that surge is needed. Wales is a nation of sanctuary, we already to have so many people coming to Wales to live and they want to learn the Welsh language so that makes sense, it's not shocking.

I won the Jerwood Award back in 2021, which was used to sustain my craft during Covid so that I didn't get 'lost' as an artist. This made me think about how many other artists had the potential of being 'lost' especially if you are Black or Mixed Race. With the conversation at this time focused on George Floyd and institutionalised racism in the arts; I was being invited to panel discussions on Zoom with corporations and institutions asking me what they could do. I got sick and tired of constantly talking and began thinking about what I could do to create equitable change. I am a very light-skinned Mixed-Race person and I understand the privilege of being light-skinned and I get a lot more privilege than my darker-skinned brother, for example. I wanted to use my privilege as an artist to help other artists and that's where Loyalty, the collective I established, came from. I copied artists that I admire and saw that J, Cole, Donald Glover and Skepta all had collectives. I wanted to do the same but in Theatre and use my power as a Jerwood winner for this work. I then spoke to every organisation in Wales that I knew with the tag line 'Knowledge is Power – Power Up'. The result was I managed to generate almost £19,000 and this money paid for Loyalty's first year. We were able to programme master classes with Rikki Beadle-Blair, Selina Thompson, Luisa Omeilan, Lynette Lynton a whole host of people who powered us up, they gave us knowledge … One of the tangible outcomes for Loyalty has been the support and emergence of new talent.

Umulkhayr Mohamed

Growing up in a working-class community, I wasn't aware of the possibilities in the arts. The focus was on university education for secure jobs. At eighteen, I initially studied pharmacy but was eventually kicked out for failing exams because my heart wasn't in it. I then pursued a business degree, thinking it could be a gateway to the arts. After completing my degree, I came across a traineeship in film exhibition, which appealed to me since film was a more accessible art. I applied for the position and got it. Around the same time, I started attending open mic sessions called 'Where I'm Coming From', specifically for people of colour. It ignited my interest in creative writing and performing my poems, marking my first steps as both an artist and an arts professional.

While working in arts administration for Ffilm Hub Wales (in film exhibition), I learned about the organisational aspects of the arts, even though it was far from my background. I had supportive managers and ample opportunities to grow and align with my interests. Alongside my job, I took part in various creative workshops and pursued anything of interest that could generate income.

One significant project I undertook was a writing workshop at the National Museum of Wales, which was connected to the open mic events I attended. I noticed a poorly displayed bust of a Congolese man named Pani, wrongly titled as 'Ney Chief'. I approached the museum with the idea of honouring his story and giving it more prominence. I advocated for displaying it like a portrait and bringing out other busts of Black individuals from storage to create a sound installation and tell their stories. It was a transformative experience for both the museum and my career as a curator.

In terms of race and gender, I understand that I am often perceived as an articulate, non-threatening Black woman. I've learned to code-switch and adapt my language to fit in with certain expectations. While it allows me to navigate spaces more comfortably, I'm aware that my presence may not challenge people's preconceptions. I've used my position to extend opportunities to other Black individuals, but sometimes I've lost sight of my own artistic practice in the process. It's important to recognise the diversity within the Black community and that I am just one representation.

The arts can be so tough in the beginning, especially when you're working hard and not seeing immediate results. But if you can persevere and push through, things start to get better.

… Being visible and actively creating opportunities for others who may not have the same avenues is something I'm passionate about. I want to help those who don't have the luxury of time or access to certain resources.

Currently, I've been focusing on learning and researching. I joined a curator cohort and delved into the history of the Black arts movement. It's essential to understand and honour that legacy. I want to ensure that future generations don't feel like they're the first ones doing things.

Recently, I've been more engaged in arts education, working with schools and providing guidance. I did have the opportunity to attend an exhibition in Venice, which was an amazing experience. However, there was an unsettling incident where I felt singled out as a Black person in the space.

I had never seen Simone Lee's work in person before. She was the American artist featured in the American pavilion. I was excited because I had been following her work online for years. However, my

> experience at the exhibit was completely ruined. Every time I entered a new section, white people with cameras would immediately turn and photograph me looking at the artwork. It prevented me from truly experiencing the exhibit. I was furious and walked out after a short time because they had completely ruined it for me. It was terrible, awful, and I don't think they even realised the impact of their actions, although it was painfully obvious to me.
>
> For me, the first couple of years in my career felt like I was constantly stuck in a burnout cycle. I would take on so many responsibilities and tasks, pushing myself to the limit. Compared to others, it seemed like I was always doing more. I come from a background that pushes me to constantly do more, more, more.
>
> However, last year was a wake-up call for me. I was suddenly hospitalised due to a cancer scare. It made me realise the most important thing in life is taking care of myself … It's challenging because society often tells us that our worth lies in serving others or achieving certain levels of productivity. If you're not constantly delivering and meeting expectations, you can feel like you're becoming irrelevant in the eyes of others.
>
> But that perception is false. We are not defined solely by our ability to constantly work and meet external expectations. It's crucial to remember that our well-being and self-care are equally important. We shouldn't have to justify or prove our worthiness to anyone else. We have the right to take the time we need and focus on ourselves without feeling guilty or lesser for doing so.

What emerges from these interviews is a renewed emphasis on collaboration, where Black artists are working both within and outside established institutions to advance their careers and provide support to emerging artists of colour. The growth of independent Black film reflects a confidence in Black Welsh artists and filmmakers and in the work they have produced. However, those working in isolation within established arts organisations often bear the weight of being regarded as tokens of Black excellence, where failure is not an option this impacts their health and wellbeing.

Another factor faced by some Black and brown individuals from working-class backgrounds given that many are not in education or employment, is the acquisition of employable skills and training, alongside the development of soft skills. By 'soft skills' I refer to the ability to navigate both formal and informal modes of communication, as well as the capacity to build networks with potential employers. However, there is an awareness by successful members of generation Y who openly recognise their privileged status as being seen as the non-threatening representation of Blackness by creative institutions.

Many Black working-class individuals often find themselves employed as freelancers, valued for their creativity, intellect, and real-world experiences, their insider knowledge of grassroots communities, left-wing political affiliations, and personal encounters with racism and discrimination. All of this enhances their 'real world' expertise. However, despite being prized for their unique perspectives, they are often denied full-time or permanent employment in arts institutions. Government initiatives such as Culture Change are addressing the reasons behind this, citing a perceived lack of opportunity to acquire the professional skills and experience needed for leadership positions.[11] It is clear that financial support, sponsorship and opportunity is vital to the development of Black film and art in Wales if we are to see the exciting and vibrant work we have witnessed continue to grow and flourish. I also believe that the collaborations and the recreation of artist collectives, taking place within the Black community could go a long way in fostering personal development and career aspirations.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored the evolution of Black Welsh film as an embryonic concept that is now rapidly gaining recognition and sponsorship. The distinctiveness of this genre speaks to aspects of Afro-futurism in its efforts to achieve cultural transformations by artists, musicians, writers, icons, filmmakers, actors, activists and academics and in its attention to the contributions of African and Caribbean diaspora and their descendants in reshaping ideas of nation and national identity. I have shared observations of this development but this field deserves more rigorous research and a consideration of how this development resonates with wider trends in black film making.

In the grand tapestry of world cinema, these visionary filmmakers have contributed narratives that transcend borders, challenge perceptions, and redefine storytelling. With their distinct voices and innovative perspectives, they have truly left an indelible mark on the global cinematic landscape. Together, these filmmakers have woven an intricate tapestry of Afrofuturist storytelling in Wales, defying norms, illuminating diverse narratives, and reshaping cultural identity.

Films

Black And Welsh (2020), Liana Stewart, Wales, Ie Ie Productions [BBC iPlayer]

Dirt For Dinner (2000), Branwen Okpako, 20th Century Studios, Hammer Film Productions Germany [DVD]

Galwad (2022), Claire Doherty, National Theatre Wales [online *https://www.Galwad.Cymru/*, accessed 6 November 2023]

I Am Not A Witch (2017), Rungano Nyoni, UK [DVD]; France, Germany, Zambia, Soda Pictures, Clandestine Films; 90 minutes

Little White Lies (2006), Caradog James, UK Red And Black Films [DVD]

My Brother The Devil (2012), Sally El Hosaini, UK, Julia Godzinskaya, Gayle Griffiths and Michael Sackler [DVD]; 109 minutes

Searching For Taid (1997), Branwen Okpako, Wales Teleysn Ltd [DVD]

Sisters In Law (2015), Florence Ayisi, Kim Longinotto Cameroon, prod. Kim Longinotto [DVD]

The Complex (2020), Paul Raschid, UK Red And Black Films, Little Jade Productions [DVD]

The Fifth Bowl (2008), Little Fish Films, Sally El Hosaini [DVD]

The Machine (2014) Caradog James, UK Red And Black Films [DVD]

The Party (2017), Sally Potter Adventure Pictures, UK Great Point Media [DVD]

The Swimmers (2022), Sally El Hosaini, Working Title Films, AZ Celtic Films [DVD]; 134 minutes

Valley Of The Innocent (2003), Branwen Okpako, Germany, Teamworx Produktion, Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (Zdf) [DVD]

Zanzibar Soccer Queens (2007), Florence Ayisi [DVD]; 52 minutes

Animations

1919 Riots Redrawn (2019), directed by Kyle Legall, with voice actors Ali Goolyad, Mike Pearson; National Theatre Wales

Fallen Angels (1996), directed by Tony Johnson, Bristol, Fuji Television, Intel

Plays

1919 Riots Redrawn (2019), directed by Kyle Legall, with voice actors Ali Goolyad, Mike Pearson; National Theatre Wales

Circle Of Fifths (2022), directed by Gavin Porter, with Drumton Ward, Kiddus Murell and Maureen Blades; National Theatre Wales

Rats (2017), directed by Kyle Legall, National Theatre Wales, with Danielle Fahiya; Wales Millennium Centre

Notes

1 M Dery (ed.), *Flame Wars: the discourse of cyberculture* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1994).

2 Branson, 'What a difference…'

3 Stuart Hall, *The Fateful Triangle: Race, Ethnicity, Nation* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2017).

4 See, for example, the special edition *Black Camera: the newsletter of the Black Film Center/Archives*, 4/2 (2013), 3–21; C. C. Nwonka, *Black Boys: The Social Aesthetics of British Urban Film* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023); C. C. Nwonka and A. Saha, *Black Film British Cinema II* (London: Goldsmiths Press, 2021), p. 184.

5 *The Whole Story: Silent Twins and Black Welsh Film* (2022), Film Hub Wales, *https://filmhubwales.org/en/tws-silent-twins* (accessed 9 November 2023).

6 *https://www.frieze.com/article/so-mayer-british-film-collectives*. Issac Julian made several gay films, *Looking for Langston* (1989) was identified as New Queer Cinema, *https://www.isaacjulien.com/projects/looking-for-langston/*.

7 Kobena Mercer, *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 53.

8 Butetown History & Arts Centre (Wikipedia, 20 May 2023), *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Butetown_History_and_Arts_Centre* (accessed 19 October 2023)

9 *Fallen Angels*, 1996, animation, Tony Johnson. UK, BBC, Fuji Television Network, ITEL.

10 Emma Schofield, 'Galwad: Is The Future Calling For Theatre in Wales?', *Wales Arts Review*, 36 (25 September 2022), *https://www.walesartsreview.org/2022/09/* (accessed 19 November 2023). When broadcast, *Galwad* received mixed reviews; see Raymond, G. (2022), 'Deafening silence, the weakness of Wales', *Wales Arts Review* (11 November 2022), *https://www.walesartsreview.org/critics-are-important/*.

11 Newid Diwylliant / Culture Change, is a groundbreaking initiative dedicated to fostering lasting equity within the arts sector in Wales, with a particular focus on its leadership.

CHAPTER 10

'The First Condition of Freedom': A Century of Anti-Racist Resistance in Cardiff

Neil Evans, Emily Pemberton and Huw Williams

Introduction

Angela Davis once observed that '[t]he first condition of freedom is the open act of resistance … In that act of resistance, the rudiments of freedom are already present.'[1] Acts of resistance ran through the history of slavery from sabotage to flight and on to revolt and revolution. Such acts contributed significantly to the abolition of slavery in the western hemisphere. Free black labour faced rather different challenges: discrimination in work and in the wider society, racist abuse, and the anti-black terrorism of what is usually called the race riot. Ideas of freedom run through the black political tradition from at least Frederick Douglass onwards and on to Black Lives Matter (BLM). While the ideas are complex and varied, in essence they have a common denominator, the assertion of common humanity. BLM has to assert this in a world where many are indifferent to black deaths in encounters with the police and in custody.[2]

BLM took off in Cardiff in 2020 as in much of the rest of the world, but it is important to root it in a tradition of resistance which goes back over a century. A long history of opposition to racism from within the black community has been evident, one which inevitably had a global perspective. Much of the political history of the Butetown area of Cardiff is sadly lost and probably irrecoverable, but enough is known so that at least an outline can be presented. In this chapter we consider the contemporary moment of the Black Lives Matter campaign and locate it in this historical context of resistance. We outline the triggers to resistance and conclude by asking questions of the Welsh government in relation to policing and injustice.

The 1919 Resistance

We need to start in 1919 with what has become the iconic moment in Black Welsh history, the anti-black riots of that hot summer. There was strong armed resistance to the attacks on the streets and particularly in homes and businesses in Butetown to the extent that the police feared many deaths if the white crowds broke into what was in the process of forming into a ghetto. Resistance was part of the response to all the riots in Britain and elsewhere in that year and can be linked with the idea of the 'New Negro' an assertiveness in the face of discrimination and a determination to build community and culture.[3] But there was also resistance in the form of holding protest meetings, articulating grievances, and making demand on public bodies. In Cardiff this was led by Rufus Fennell a man with a varied past, born in Georgia but very likely with Caribbean heritage. He had been briefly in the US army, in the Royal Navy in the Gallipoli campaign, served as a medic there, and come to Lancashire as a music hall artiste. By 1919 he said he was in Pontypridd and practising as a dentist. Once the riots broke out in Cardiff he immediately went there and assumed command.[4]

Fennell addressed protest meeting and was prominent in negotiations with the authorities in Cardiff and in London. Mainly this concerned the repatriation of those sailors and others who wished to return home after their wartime experiences and the violence with which they were rewarded for their efforts on the streets of the British ports in 1919. He was obstructed in his efforts by the authorities and arrested for alleged misappropriation of funds in London but the charge was quickly thrown out by a magistrate in Cardiff. He protested about the lack of food and water for those journeying to join a vessel transport and at the failure to provide the promised financial inducements. Their return to the West Indies led to outbreaks of violence against white settlers and the authorities there, underlining the imperial context of black politics - a feature for decades to come. Fennell built nothing lasting in Butetown; he quickly left and had a career on the stage and in film as well as in various business ventures. Involvement in repatriation was a fragile basis for building political action in a settled community, anyway, to say the least.[5]

Local opinion, which showed an acute awareness of international movements and trends, was evident in the next year. It arose in the context of what was known as the ‘black watch on the Rhine’. This had nothing to do with a regiment in the British army but was reference to a German patriotic song ‘Die Wacht am Rhein’, written around 1840 and very anti-French in sentiment. It had a revived popularity in the First World War. In the aftermath of the war, French troops occupied the Rhineland and some of them were Senegalese or from other colonial origins. Right-wing and patriotic politicians and commentators in Germany whipped up racist hatred of them, though the local population found them to be less aggressive than white French troops. But stories of rape and assault began to circulate. In Britain, the chief instigator of these was E. D. Morel, and his attacks were published in the *Daily Herald* before being collected in a pamphlet. At first sight both the author and the location of his attacks are puzzling. Morel had started life as a shipping clerk in Liverpool and had worked out from the statistics that King Leopold’s empire in the Congo had to be based upon slavery. He was instrumental in exposing the scandal.[6] The *Daily Herald* was the mouthpiece of the TUC and the Labour Party. But, of course, being anti-slavery did not mean that someone was necessarily anti-racist and there was plenty of racism within the working class and its organisations. Morel’s accusations plumb the racist depths, including accusations that black men had such large penises that they could physically damage white women. One voice of protest found its way from Butetown to the columns of the *Herald*. The letter signed only as ‘One of the Oppressed’ placed this in the context of the ‘new spirit’ of the British workers and of ‘The New Negro’, stressed the achievements of the ‘black race’ and saw it as being exemplified by the movement being launched by Marcus Garvey. In the interwar years there would be many efforts to link the international workers movement with back emancipation, from W E B Du Bois to Paul Robeson.[7]

In 1921, this movement asserted its place in trans-Atlantic and Pan-African politics. On the first of August Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association, as part of its meteoric rise, held a vast parade in Harlem to inaugurate the Second Annual International Association of Negroes. It was echoed in Cardiff by a parade at two p.m., to align as closely with New York time as was possible. It had not been possible to send a delegate there, but it could be marked on the street in Butetown. It was organised by W. D. Collins, President of No 269th Division of the UNIA and ACL. Cardiff and Newport. The parade was small but was followed by musical performances and the singing of the UNIA anthem 'From Greenland's Icy Mountain'. The UNIA aimed to return the diaspora to Africa and build a strong and united continent out of the imperial ruins. Garvey himself had come to Britain in 1912–14 and apparently worked on the docks in Cardiff for part of that time. What bound the movement together was the newspaper, *The Negro World*, banned from distribution in many territories. Three reports of activities in Cardiff survive. Collins articulated the creed of the movement: 'we fully realise that in unity of action lies our ultimate success as a race.' But the local branches had their own emphases and reworkings of the creed. In Cardiff, the chaplain M. Williams was particularly keen on the millenarian aspects, and leading the race out of Babylon. They were part of what has been called a black public sphere and participated in 'diasporic conversations.' In May 1922, John Actie, giving his address as 'Dock, Cardiff', reported on the conditions he had observed in West Africa, something which sailors must have done informally in many ports. If nations can be seen as imagined communities so the black race could be imagined because, as John Thorold puts it: '… Britain's ports [were] … nodes of maritime networks on which Garveyism flourished…'.[8]

One of the issues of concern to Garveyism in Britain was the Alien (Coloured Seamen) Order of 1925, part of a global effort to restrict the flow of labour of colour. In Cardiff the police enthusiastically followed Home Office instructions and registered as many imperial subjects as aliens as they could, treating the absence of birth certificates as evidence of a lack of connection (despite the fact that such documentation often was not provided in their countries of origin) and in some cases seizing passports which were held. Registration meant the need for an identity card bearing a fingerprint so that racist officials had no need to learn to look at faces and it subjected the sailors to more control and harassment.[9] But there is no evidence of Garveyites activity in Cardiff over this. Instead, what seems to have been created in 1927 was the Colonial Defence League (CDL) with some links to the Communist Party. In the years that followed, there were many organisations created in the community and to make sense of them it is necessary to explain the underlying issues. The Seamen's Union wanted to restrict or keep out of employment those not white and British-born, and was generally supported by the institutions of the British state and the local institutions like the police. Sailors of African origin often accused the Arab population and their boarding house masters of bribing officials to secure preferential treatment for their compatriots. In 1930, a Rota system was introduced in an effort to control the numbers of sailors of Middle-Eastern origin who could enter the port and sign on ships. The mosque was an important institution of resistance for them while those of African origin tended to form political organisations and breakaway trades unions to contest the complex of institutions arrayed against them. They were often sustained by Christian churches and missions which opened in the community.[10]

The central figure in leading resistance was Harry O'Connell, a man born in Guyana who had been in Cardiff from around 1910. He seems to have established the CDL in 1927, but had been challenging the racism of the Seamen's Union since at least 1922. He was a Marxist, but while being ferociously anti-Trotskyist had come to reject the position of the Communist Party by the 1930s. When Trade Unions pressed for the Mercantile Marine Act of 1935, which provided subsidies for British ships as long as their crews were British, this immediately caused a severe crisis in Cardiff where so many seamen of colour had been registered as aliens in 1925. O'Connell was part of a vigorous campaign, but it was mounted and led by the League of Coloured Peoples (LCP), a London-based pressure group dominated by middle class professionals and led by Dr Harold Moody. It saw an opportunity to expand its tiny membership and for a short time had a branch with 178 members out of its total of 262. It conducted an investigation, exposed the actions of the police in the past and secured the ending of alien status for some of the seamen. O'Connell worked with it but ultimately the CDL came to supplant the opportunist LCP and its branch evaporated.

Throughout the interwar period there was a good deal of disunity in the politics of Butetown. The War produced the full employment that the protests of the 1930s had failed to produce. Following a visit from Leary Constantine in 1943, there were efforts to build greater unity and in 1946 this led to the blocking of a city council proposal to build an area of housing for 'coloured people' in Butetown. A community which was mixed and had resisted racism internally rejected this, and could mobilise effectively enough to impose its will. In 1945, five men from the community attended the crucial Manchester Pan-African Congress, which called for complete decolonisation. The opening session raised the issue of the condition of Black communities in Britain an indication of their growing significance in the global world of anti-racist politics.

Post War resistances and the Anti-Apartheid movement

After the Second World War, the political framework established in the 1920s went into decline. The port was in rapid decline and the old leaders with their international connections began to show their age and eventually died. Jim Callaghan represented the area from 1945 until 1987 and was constantly stalked by the Guyanese-born veteran political activist Alan Sheppard, much to his annoyance.[11] But the next eruption of activity of which some record survives came about because four students from the University College came into the Butetown Community Centre in September 1969 and made some people, predominantly the young it seems, aware of the realities of Apartheid in South Africa. But something of the old international connections remained.

Gaynor Legall recalls that her uncles had told her that they could not get shore leave if docked in South Africa.[12] The intervention of the students was the basis for an organisation known as Black Alliance. It worked against racism and discrimination. In Butetown, drawing on the area's history, it had black and white members, and it operated in a context of the radical movements which had come out of the 1960s, which included anti-colonialism, the struggle for Welsh language rights, student radicalism, feminism, and labour militancy.

The Cardiff People's Paper ran from 1969 until it ran out of money in December 1976. It focused on tenants' rights, opposed much of the projected civic 'improvements' of the era and was generally the voice of the poor and the inner city. It seems to have had little connection with Butetown, though it revealed that there was a Residents Association for which Betty Campbell was the contact and that the paper could be bought at various places in the community. Perhaps it was significant that the bulldozers had already done their damage to Butetown by then, and the community had been displaced and only partly rebuilt. The experience was clearly traumatic.[13] The final issue, did however, give prominence to charges brought against some men from Butetown accused by the police of 'affray', which was a vague, blanket charge easy to convict on and hard to defend against.

The very first issue of the paper had stressed the importance of rejecting the Springboks. This highlights a cause which was to be very important in Butetown and in Wales generally. Boycotts of South African goods and criticism of business and financial links with the Apartheid regime started from the origins of Black Alliance. On one anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre of 1961, younger people from Butetown marched into the city centre and reenacted it using cap guns; men did the shooting and women dropped to the floor. The fountain outside City Hall was dyed red. Older, residents in the community often opposed this kind of activity as 'troublemaking'. But patient organising work wore this down, particularly the bringing of Butetown's powerful athletic club, the CIACs, into line behind the movement.[14]

Haneef Bhamjee (1946–2022), a refugee from persecution for his political activities for the ANC in South Africa, came to Cardiff in 1972. He quickly came to set up branches of the Anti-Apartheid Movements in many parts of Wales and sought to make a distinctive Welsh variant of the global movement. He had much support in the labour movement, especially from Dai Francis the General Secretary of the South Wales NUM, as well as from Mick Antoniw who had been the secretary of the NUS in Wales. But what really made the Wales Anti-Apartheid Movement distinctive, when it was finally established in 1983, was the black presence within it. From the beginning, Haneef had spent much of his leisure time in Butetown and saw it as a basic principle that people of colour should be involved. This set it apart from the British movement that wanted a broad base, to rock the boat as little as possible, and saw the black presence and any concern for racism and discrimination in the UK as a potential stumbling block. WAAM proudly declared that it was ‘beholden to no-one except the oppressed of South Africa’, unlike what it saw as the role of other anti-racist organisations in Wales as ‘gatekeepers’ financed by government, or sources close to government. It faced much opposition from within Wales, but won over many institutions to the cause, such as the WRU, the Eisteddfod, Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg, as well as the labour movement. When Nelson Mandela came to Cardiff in June 1998 to receive the freedom of the city, anti-racist campaigners noted the irony of those who had opposed WAAM and had called Mandela a ‘terrorist’, but werenow lining up to shake his hand.[15] The importance of Butetown to WAAM and Haneef’s role within the community led to a renewal of its politics and their global connections.

In the 1980s, black politics in Britain turned from what Ambalavaner Sivanandan called ‘resistance to rebellion’.[16] Rebellions, mainly sparked by police actions, broke out on the streets of many cities starting with Bristol in 1980, and spreading much more widely in 1981, 1985 and 2011. While sometimes called ‘race riots’, these were very different from the events of 1919 in that the ghetto rose up against the police rather than racist crowds attacking the ghetto. None of these outbreaks was matched in Butetown, though there seems to have been an effort to create something in 1981 that was dampened down by a news blackout, while an attempt was made to ambush a police car in 1985. The only urban riots in Cardiff during the period in question were in Ely, in 1993 and 2023.[17]

This location of riots has a connection with the changing geography of race and ethnicity in Cardiff. After the outbreak in Ely in 2023, a caller named only as ‘Sarah’ phoned into Jason Mohammad’s Radio Wales show to talk with insight and knowledge about what she called ‘the southern arc of Cardiff’. By this she meant an area ranging across Ely, Grangetown, Butetown, and St Mellons, divided between east and west, but comprising some of the most deprived wards in Wales. Investment goes into the northern areas of Cardiff, but apart from some prestige projects technically within the southern wards there is little or no benefit to most local residents.[18] Stop and Search is six times more likely for black than white residents, while preventive measures like floodlights are not switched on; a stabbing in Butetown was not even reported on the news. To live in these areas can itself be seen a stigma, and can result in snarky comments. This division of the city has official recognition: 'The "Southern Arc" of Cardiff is made up of the following electoral divisions: Adamsdown, Butetown, Caerau, Canton, Ely, Grangetown, Llanrumney, Riverside, Rumney, Splott and Trowbridge.'[19] It has a population variously estimated at between 150,000 and 170,000. Were it a single local authority, it would be 'by some margin' the most deprived in Wales.

It may be that the divisions within this territory are significant. Butetown was cut off from the new developments of Cardiff Bay by a dual carriageway, Lloyd George Avenue. While it no longer has all the physical barriers of railways, canals and docks that once kept it apart, the railway lines are still there, complemented now by 'the no-man's land of Callaghan Square to the north, the back of Dumballs Road to the west, and the Bay development to the south', which created substantial though perhaps more permeable boundaries. Certainly, people of colour have moved around within the arc. For instance, when Butetown was redeveloped in the 1960s, a docker might move into Grangetown to remain within reach of employment. Others would have been rehoused in an area such Llanrumney. Anecdotal evidence also suggests movement continues within the arc; this is frequently not voluntary, but a response to gentrification and rising rents. Many people want to stay close to areas they know with familiar restaurants, shops, and food, but gentrification is tending to fragment the arc, and movement follows cheaper rents. In London in 2011, it seems that the vast spaces of deprivation were significant, but they were broken up by pockets of affluence and shopping centres which formed the targets of rioters. Cardiff lacks such shopping hubs breaking up the arc. Only City Road might provide an example, but it is north of Newport Road and located in Roath. However, despite lacking such a hub, as the biggest social housing estate in Europe and Cardiff's most vast space of deprivation, Ely has nevertheless been the generator of rebellion.[20]

The fundamental issue which underpinned these wider 'rebellions' was resentment at the style of policing. This was echoed in Butetown by the trial and conviction of the Cardiff Three for the murder of Lynette White on Valentine's Day in 1988.[21] The conviction came despite strong contrary evidence, a highly implausible prosecution case and no evidence linking the men to the scene of the crime; it has been kept alive by their subsequent retrials and acquittals, as well as failed prosecutions against the police officers involved. But this was not the only issue in the news. Mahmood Mattan was hanged in Cardiff for the murder of Lily Volpert in 1952, but the miscarriage of justice it involved was far from forgotten. In 1998, he was pardoned in the first case taken to the Appeal Court by the recently formed Criminal Case Review Commission. It took South Wales Police until 2022 to apologise to his family; the previous year, Nadifa Mohamed was nominated for the Booker Prize, and won the Welsh Book of the Year prize for her fine novel *The Fortune Men*, which reconstructed the case and its world.[22] Deaths of people in custody, allegedly at the hands of the police, have continued. So, it is little wonder that Black Lives Matter resonated in 2020.

Black Lives Matter

Black Lives Matter was a somewhat older social movement in the US that emerged in a particular context. Civil Rights had long since ceased to be a major activating cause. The politics of the right had arisen from the 1970s in many ways in reaction to it. Reagan was an opponent of Civil Rights, but activated his politics by talking of 'welfare queens'. It was not necessary to *say* that they were black. The victory of the US in the Cold War led to competing anti-socialist visions of the future: either it was the end of history, and nothing stood in the way of liberal capitalist democracy, or the world would fragment into a religiously based 'clash of civilisations'. Osama Bin Laden seemed to confirm the latter view, and the so-called 'war on terror' stoked Islamophobia. Then the world entered recession in 2007–8.

Onto this stage emerged a series of social movements that were seen as 'leaderless'. Certainly, they lacked a commanding figure like Martin Luther King or Malcolm X. Occupy Wallstreet spread widely outside New York and had many imitators; it said it spoke for the 99 per cent, not the 1 per cent, and crystallised the issues of the banking crisis. There were many others, such as #MeToo, The March for

Lives, and on the right the Tea Party movement. We might also consider the *gilets jaunes* in France, as well as the Yes Cymru affiliates who painted ‘Cofiwch Dryweryn’ murals all over Wales, in similar ways. Social media played an important role in spreading the word about the causes, and Black Lives Matter is very much part of this landscape. However, we should not get too carried away by the novelty. Each cause had lower profile leaders, but leaders nonetheless. BLM likes to say it is *leaderful* rather than *leaderless*. It clearly had originators, one of whom issued the dictum: ‘Hashtags don’t make movements. People do.’ So, the new style invites us to think on new ways of organising, rather than supporting the view that spontaneity is the key to social protest and that organisation leads to incorporation and emasculation. Disruption is what produces results.[23]

BLM as a global movement originated in 2013 with Alicia Graze, Patrisse Collins and Opal Tometi. It drew on recent developments in black feminist theory, and stressed intersectionality. The trigger was a series of killings of black people who posed no threat to anyone. On 26 February 2012, Tryvon Martin was killed in Sanford, Florida, because he had walked through a white neighbourhood and made a white man (George Zimmerman) fear for his property. Zimmerman stalked Martin, and shot him. It took forty-five days of protest to secure charges against Zimmerman, and on 13 July 2013 he was acquitted. The president at the time, of course, was Barak Obama, and there was much talk of the US being post-racial. The president himself was not keen to criticise law enforcement, and stressed the need for people of colour to look to their own behaviour – don’t wear hoodies, hitch up your pants, get a better education, don’t give occasion to be killed. The case of Martin made a mockery of this. Then, on 9 August 2014, Michael Brown was killed by a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, a suburb of St Louis, and became another high-profile case. Days of protests and clashes with police followed, which grew as a new style of ‘freedom ride’ was introduced and protestors travelled over long distances in buses to join in. Along the way, there were discussions and consciousness raising; Opal Tometi gave it a social media presence and a hashtag. All three originators of BLM had experience in social movements and organising, and they knew each other.[24]

So, when George Floyd was murdered by a police officer in Minneapolis on 25 May 2020, BLM was already a well-established movement and had organised more protests than at any time since the Civil Rights movement. The excruciating footage of his death went viral and was more visible because so many people were confined to their homes because of the Covid-19 pandemic. But what was critical was that it became an issue of concern to many white people. If you were a person of colour, of course, with a family tradition of political and trade union activism, you were well aware of global events and that it was no novelty. It wasn't a watershed moment for black people, it is what they had been saying this for years, and to be unaware of it revealed one's privilege.

What of the movement in Cardiff, and how was it inflected by the Welsh context? These events are very recent and it is difficult at this stage to achieve a comprehensive perspective and place them historically or to characterise them precisely. From a young black standpoint, nevertheless, there can be some preliminary reflections in attempting to analyse the recent activism from various relevant perspectives. Protests were held on the streets despite the restrictions on public meetings, whilst books addressing racism sold in large quantities.[25] In keeping with the wider movement, events in the city lacked visible and high-profile leaders. This, no doubt, was partly in order to prevent victimisation; for gathering masses, the wearing of masks because of Covid-19 provided anonymity, increasing exposure for speakers in relative terms. There was generally an avoidance of being distinctive, of wearing bright colours that were noticeable. Microphones were also passed around at public meetings. All of this reflected the gradual increase of policing, with the South Wales Police being leaders in the use of facial recognition technology. There were some attempts to make arrests, one of many challenges from policing faced by social movements; it had been the previous experience of Anti-Apartheid in Wales that black people were singled out for police attention.[26] Another aspect was revealed in Swansea when a young, visible, activist was targeted by the same force in an attempt to turn her into an informant;[27] this eventually led to the dissolution of the group.[28]

Regardless of such problems, the demonstrations in other parts of Wales could be experienced as transformational, even if fleeting. In Rhyl in 2020, the experience of mass lying on the ground and chanting 'I can't breathe' has been described as signifying

> the emotional reflexivity that existed in Wales regarding anti-racism. It demonstrated how people in Wales of all races and ethnicities were reflecting on the treatment of black people globally and felt moved to act, in an attempt to change the structural and institutional racism in our nation.[29]

In Cardiff, despite the very palpable impact of mobilisation, the actions could appear to participants be off the cuff or even chaotic. Meetings were simply announced on social media and the lack of figureheads and uniting leadership would inevitably be felt at an organisational level. But it is likely that there was considerable covert leadership to achieve the results it did. Fundraising seems to have been limited and to have been mainly to pay fines for those who were arrested. These factors were also presumably the result of the rapid emergence of the movement in Cardiff (ad hoc circumstances, in which fundraising might create problems rather than opportunities), with it being closer in some ways to the image of a hashtag movement and lacking the steady organisational work which characterised the US movement. Protestors were looked down upon as 'young, wokey, lefty, loony … just causing trouble'. There was much 'whataboutery' – things were worse in Russia or North Korea, decried the usual suspects from the right. More concerningly and symbolically, in a protest outside Butetown police station, during a minute of silence held for Mohamud Mohammed Hassan who had died there in police custody, some police officers appeared to talk through it and even seemed to laugh.

As with Anti-Apartheid, the issue of the relationship between the global and the local arose, starkly. Hassan was one of two men of colour who died in circumstances associated with police custody in south Wales in 2020, at a time when the protests were ongoing, but there was more concern in the public sphere with creating murals for George Floyd than with local victims.[30] The myth of Welsh exceptionalism to racial hatred – too busy hating the English, and inherently tolerant – reared its unhelpful head.

Whatever the obstacles faced and the attendant weaknesses in the organisation of BLM in Cardiff, it did mount a significant number of demonstrations and events. There were protests over the deaths of Hassan and Mouayed Bashir, as well as critiques of the nature of policing coupled with ideas for its improvement. This was contextualised with postings on the scandals over the behaviour of some Metropolitan Police officers and of the Met's general culture. There was condemnation of the use and the unreliability of facial recognition technology (in November 2021, the ex-Lib-Dem councillor Ed Bridges, with the support of Liberty, won an appeal against its use by the police, and studies of its efficacy suggest it is particularly vulnerable to error for people of colour).[31] There was a protest march against the Far Right, and to welcome asylum seekers. As so often in the past, internationalism was invoked with references to the war in Iraq, Islamophobia, imperialism, and the treatment of the Chagos islanders; even class featured explicitly, with protests over the cost-of-living crisis and references to anti-capitalism. Paul Robeson's birthday was marked with an account of his links with Wales.[32]

Out of this moment, or conjuncture, the Welsh Government has taken what many see as decisive action. There is an ambitious plan for an anti-racist Wales by 2030, for the education curriculum to include Black history, and a review has been made of monuments and street names linked with slavery and empire. But what might be the critical view from the activist, the social movement participant of these developments? They are clearly welcome developments, but there may also be reservations about them. Is a seven-year target too ambitious? Might seventy be more realistic? This is one question that may issue from below, from those with direct experience of the 'hidden injuries of race'. Additionally, are the plans too broad and not adequately focused? There are also conceptual and theoretical questions. Officially, we may speak of covert and overt racism; but from the perspective of the person of colour, both are overt. Framing is therefore an issue. The strategy is also one-dimensional, based entirely upon race, with little of the stress on the intersectionality that characterised the US movement. There should also be a focus on class and capital, which, from the presumed left-wing perspective of a Labour government, should be understood as being entwined with race in obvious ways. There is then the practical and fundamental issue of policing, particularly with regard to the Welsh Government's apparent lack of commitment in devolving power – yet it is obviously one of the main pressure points in terms of racial confrontation and harassment.[33] The communities in the southern arc are over-policed in this regard, and there is a sense that they are treated with contempt – a veteran Welsh language protester noted the difference between the policing of their demonstrations BLM demonstrations.

Conclusion: Welsh government and police injustice

In conclusion, it is pertinent to ask the following question. How will the Welsh Government address issues of policing when it has no appetite for it to be devolved?

Wales is a small country with a small elite, which can legitimately be seen as having a narrow and rather cosy political culture with a broadly progressive centre, one that tends to co-opt radicals rather than develop a hard edge. This can limit progress, where the requisite counterpoint to government-driven agendas are lost. Anti-apartheid in Wales resisted such incorporation, but there are danger signs. BLM is linked directly to the publicly funded Race Council Cymru. Will it become more difficult to speak truth to power when a movement with Marxist-intersectional roots is drawn into the soft middle of the Welsh political sphere? Its role is not hand-holding and singing songs around a campfire. Deva R. Woodly sees social movements as a fifth estate, always a necessary and independent part of the polity as a check on bureaucracy and oligarchy.[34]

Beyond this there is the wider British context. Policing is not the only area of concern outside of Welsh Government control. Wales remains part of a neo-imperialist system, with its borders controlled from Westminster, and a check upon the aspiration to be a nation of sanctuary.[35] The institutional framework within British political culture and the constraints it has imposed has seen a damaging general decline in political protest from the days of Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg, or the massive strike wave of 1970–4. The use of the resources of state to defeat the miners in 1984–5 was symbolic of this. Serious riots broke out over the poll tax in 1990, but since that time there has been a falling away of radical protest. Demonstrations have always been directed at the media as much as the immediate audience, and we are currently seeing how even larger demonstrations can suffer from virtual media blackouts. Repressive legislation is currently making protest even more difficult. The English right is weaponising devolution, and on its fringes there are mutterings about bringing it to an end. *The Daily Telegraph* has branded Wales 'the wokest nation in Europe', clearly something it does not consider a badge of honour.[36] Across Europe, police forces are countering criticism by arguing that the nature of policing is not understood, and that there ought to be respect, automatic rather than earned, for the uniform.[37]

These are concerns that need to be taken seriously, but a responsive government is something anti-racist campaigners a century ago could only have dreamed of. The contrast between Welsh Government's and the UK government's response to 2020 is palpable. Opinions may differ on whether 2020 is seen as a sea change, or as a passing opportunity whose moment should be seized. Each will require sustained political action and mobilisation. The current political situation remains tenuous in the light of the issues of progress and hope broached in the introduction to this volume; advance is never simple and uncomplicated, but any progressive movement needs hope as well as hard-nosed realism. Indeed, it might be seen as a precondition of radicalism. Pessimism of the intellect, indeed, but is there a fairly firm foundation for optimism of the will?[38]

Notes

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15 *Llafur* Summer Series: Hanef Bhamjee, 'Beholden to No-one but the Oppressed: The Welsh Anti-Apartheid Movement', *Planet*, 224. Details of Bhamjee's life can be viewed at *http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/2988990.stm*, *https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-59925458*, and *https://www.walesonline.co.uk/lifestyle/nostalgia/nelson-mandela-came-cardiff-made-8612607* (all accessed 23 October 2023).

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CHAPTER 11

An anti-racist plan for Wales: Prospects and limitations

Emmanuel Ogbonna

Introduction

Although previous governments in Wales have identified the problematic issue of racism in society, none have been willing to accept this as institutionalised or to turn the rhetoric on racial equality into sustained action to eradicate racism. The impetus to address institutional racism in Wales was strengthened as initial statistics from the coronavirus pandemic revealed the deleterious consequences of successive years of structural and institutional racism. The chilling effects of the realisation that members of racial and ethnic minority groups were contracting Covid-19 and losing their lives at faster rates than their white counterparts coincided with another profound manifestation of racial prejudice: the brutal murder of a black man, George Floyd, by police officers in the USA. The combined impacts of these two events in 2020 provided the catalyst for the Welsh Government to accelerate the progress of the race equality strategy it was developing prior to the pandemic, with the aim of embarking on a comprehensive strategy to eradicate racism. This process led to the development of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan (ARWAP) which was published in 2022.

The aim of ARWAP is to make Wales an anti-racist nation by 2030. Anti-racism in this sense refers to a country wherein individuals, organisations and institutions are consciously and proactively changing systems, policies, processes and behaviours that may give rise to racially differential outcomes.[1] In this regard, the ramifications of the anti-racist policy initiative are not only profound and pervasive but are also more far-reaching than conventional policies to achieve racial equality that have been pursued hitherto by western governments. However, achieving the objective of anti-racism is likely to be hindered by a variety of obstacles, not least because racism is embedded in the history of Wales and UK and has, in many respects, become part of the organising principles that guide many aspects of life. It is thus necessary for researchers and commentators to interrogate this plan, and to uncover the potential prospects and limitations. This chapter explores, describes and analyses the key ramifications of the plan to eradicate racism in Wales. It begins with a brief overview of the context for racialisation in Wales and the UK which helps to locate the anti-racist plan. The justifications for the adoption of an anti-racist approach are discussed prior to an exploration of the potential factors that may be critical to the achievement of anti-racism in Wales. The challenges that are likely to be encountered as part of the implementation of the plan are also discussed and some of the ways in which these could be overcome are highlighted.

Racism in Wales and the UK

Racism is a common experience of people from racial and ethnic minority groups in Wales and in the UK, and it is one which encompasses all aspects of their lives. Numerous accounts of this racism have been documented in several quarters and it is difficult to do justice to the enormity of this in the limited space we have here (interested readers should refer to a recent collection by Finney et al., 2023).[2] Similarly, it should be noted that there are few Welsh-specific statistics on racial and ethnic minority groups. Indeed, available statistics are often aggregated and are reported as England and Wales. While there are similarities in the accounts of discrimination experienced by racial and ethnic minority groups in different parts of the UK, it is necessary, where possible, to highlight data on racialisation that are specific to Wales to help in locating ARWAP. For example, in relation to unemployment, racial and ethnic minority groups are consistently more likely to be unemployed than their white counterparts. Indeed, recent labour market statistics record the unemployment rate for racial and ethnic minority groups in Wales as 6.9 per cent compared with 2.8 per cent for white people.[3]

Evidence of racial discrimination in employment is provided by research experiments which involve speculative applications wherein samples of job seekers are matched on all criteria but features which identify key ethnicity markers such as names. These studies are known to be the 'gold standard' in uncovering discrimination and they commonly show that candidates with white sounding names are more likely to be interviewed for the same jobs than those whose names are identifiably from a minority group either on the basis of race, ethnicity or religious affiliation. A recent review of these studies by Heath and Di Stasio concluded that racial discrimination continues to blight the lives of people from many racial and ethnic minority groups, and is particularly striking against those from black Caribbean, black African and Pakistani backgrounds.[4] Similarly, an earlier study by Heath and Cheung found that ethnic minorities suffered racial and ethnic penalties in employment including in relation to securing jobs, the level of work secured and the rate of pay achieved.[5] They argued that the negative outcomes remained, even after allowing for the differences in the characteristics of the groups. For example, racial and ethnic minorities who were born and brought up in the UK were just as likely to experience discrimination as those who were not. Indeed, these field experiments have been conducted across the western world for many decades and they show remarkable consistency in their findings of racial discrimination.[6]

Evidence of discrimination can also be found in the cases of those racial and ethnic minorities who are able to secure employment. Two examples help to illustrate discrimination in this regard. The first is that those people from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds who are successful in securing employment commonly find that they are paid less for doing the same jobs. For example, evidence suggests that black doctors earn up to £10,000 less than their white counterparts, and black nurses earn up to £2,700 less.[7] Indeed, data from Resolution Foundation suggest that workers from racial and ethnic minority groups lose up to £3.2bn on pay which is linked to their race or ethnicity.[8] The second example is that racial and ethnic minority employees are less likely to achieve promotion in comparison with their white counterparts. This marker of discrimination can be found in almost all areas of work. For example, in academia, recent statistics suggest that while one in nine white academics achieve professorial status, the proportion for Asians is one in fifteen, and this diminishes to one in thirty-three for black academics.[9] The outcomes are far worse for female academics from racial and ethnic minority groups, and are particularly dire for black female scholars in ways that reveal the differential and intersected nature of racial discrimination.[10]

Racial and ethnic minorities do not fare better in business enterprises as data from FTSE 100 and 250 organisations show. Indeed, despite the concerted efforts to improve representation by the government-backed work by Lord Parker, there remains just six ethnic minority chief executive officers (CEOs) from the top 100 organisations (FTSE 100) and sixteen from the top 250 companies in the UK (FTSE 250). Further, just three of the FTSE 100 chairpersons are from racial and ethnic minority groups and only five of the FTSE 250 chairpersons are from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds.[11] To put this in context, these firms are the cream of the UK business sector and majority of them have their corporate head offices (where the directors and executives work) in the city of London business district. This district is located in the part of the UK that is home to predominantly racial and ethnic minority groups, with over fifty percent of people living within two-mile radius of the business district being from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds.

Other markers of racism extend to healthcare where data reveal that black women are up to four times more likely to die in childbirth and Asian women up to two times more likely to die than white women.[12] Significantly, a recent report into maternal mortality by Women and Equalities Committee of the House of Commons expressed concern at the reluctance of the UK Government and the National Health Service executives to recognise the role of racism in the disproportionate maternal deaths.[13] This denial of racism is not unusual but is just as damaging as racism.[14] Further healthcare examples of racism can be found in research from the Institute of Public Policy Research on the coronavirus pandemic which suggested that over 2,500 deaths of racial and ethnic minority groups could have been avoided in England and Wales during the first wave of the pandemic if black and South Asian groups did not experience additional risk of death.[15]

Specific data to illustrate racism in Wales show that there is a 40 per cent likelihood of living in income poverty in households where the head is from a racial and ethnic minority group. This compares with 22 per cent likelihood where the head of the household is white.[16] On crime and justice, race was deemed to be a motivating factor in two-thirds of all recorded hate crimes in Wales in 2020/21, a figure which represents a 16 per cent increase from 2019/20.[17] It is also telling that recent research published by the Wales Centre for Public Policy finds that racial and ethnic minority groups in Wales are over-represented at every stage of the criminal justice system, starting as victims of crime, in stop and search statistics and in the prison population.[18]

The brief review above provides some highlights of the nature and extent of racial discrimination in Wales and the UK. It sets the context for the decision of the First Minister to embark on a radical plan to eradicate institutional racism. It is to this plan that the chapter turns in what follows.

An Anti-racist Plan for Wales

The current administration in Wales has had a sympathetic attitude towards racial and ethnic equality. It developed an equalities strategy which included a race equality strategy but the implementation of this strategy was delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic subsequently introduced new and even more devasting evidence of the pernicious effects of institutional racism, as early data showed that racial and ethnic minority people were dying in greater proportions. The First Minister and Deputy Minister/Chief Whip expressed concern about the resulting data and they commissioned an advisory group to explore the issues that were contributing to the anomalies. This group was further divided into two sub-groups, one to explore the issues related to health and healthcare and the other to look into issues that were socio-economic in nature.

The report of the socio-economic sub-group was published in June 2020. The report concluded that structural and institutional racism were key factors, which in addition to the other socio-economic factors, contributed to the disproportionate impacts that were reported.[19] The finding of institutional racism in relation to the activities of a country was an important landmark in the history of race discrimination in the UK as previous accounts of institutional racism were restricted to organisations and institutions.[20] In this regard, racial and ethnic minority people were not dying from the pandemic because there were genetic markers from their race and ethnicity which predisposed them to such death. Indeed, while members of racial and ethnic minority groups in Wales and the UK were dying for a variety of reasons, it seems likely that their difference on the salient demographic characteristics of race and ethnicity was a crucial factor in this. This difference exposed them to pernicious discrimination which either killed them directly (through being more likely to be placed on the front-line, often without adequate protective equipment) or which killed them indirectly (through the negative effects of repeated exposure to stress or what is commonly referred to as 'weathering').[21] The report of the socio-economic sub-group urged the Welsh Government to take urgent action to stem the tide of the disproportionate deaths and to address institutional racism as a matter of urgency.

The Welsh Government responded positively to the findings of the report and established a high profile steering group to lead the work to eradicate racism in Wales. Work on the proposed plan started life as the 'Race Equality Action Plan' but was changed to 'Anti-racist Wales Action Plan' for reasons that will be explained later. The limited space in this chapter precludes detailed discussion of the plan.[22] However, it is necessary to highlight the key distinctive aspects of the plan. The first and potentially most important distinctive feature of the plan was political patronage. Previous politicians have preached the rhetoric of equality and diversity but this was the first example of genuine political leadership on race equality in Wales. The First Minister and the then Deputy Minister (who later became the Minister for Social Justice) displayed exemplary leadership and personal conviction to support this work. Importantly, this vision was shared by the cabinet and formed part of the partnership agreement for government with Plaid Cymru. In this regard, it is arguable that the First Minister and Minister for Social Justice succeeded in brokering a hugely important political consensus on race equality in Wales. The success of this plan requires this political consensus to be maintained long after the current First Minister and Minister for Social Justice have left office.

The second distinctive feature of the plan was the way the leadership of the steering group was structured. The First Minister and Minister for Social Justice believed that getting the leadership of the group right was important to signal the intention of the government to develop a strong plan and to make a significant change in the development and implementation of race policies. In this regard, this was the first example in which a major policy initiative in Wales was led jointly by the Permanent Secretary of the Welsh Government and an external expert with lived experience of the issues under investigation. Having the most senior civil servant in Wales as Co-Chair of the steering group was a particularly instructive act as it directed the attention of civil servants on the importance of the work and on the criticality of achieving the desired objectives.

The third distinguishing feature of the plan was the active involvement of people from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds in the development and implementation phases. Arguably, for too long, racial and ethnic minorities were the subjects of research enquiries and equality plans but they played little or no role in setting the agendas or in leading the implementation of the plans that emerge. This had the implication of marginalising them in ways that reduced the opportunities they had to understand the machinery of government and to develop the important skills of influencing government policies. The current plan was deliberately designed to reverse this process by putting racial and ethnic minorities at the centre through active engagement in the data-gathering, the interaction with key Welsh Government officials, the mentoring of predominantly white government policy-makers, the membership of the steering group that developed the plan and, above all, in the co-leadership of the development and implementation of the plan. It is arguable that the active involvement and leadership of this process by individuals from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds played a major role in the adoption of an anti-racist approach. Interestingly, from being largely inexperienced in the machinations of government policy-making at the beginning of this process, the racial and ethnic minorities involved developed the necessary skills quickly and embraced the opportunity to be active participants in the co-creation of policies. This is likely to be a lasting legacy of the plan in that it is likely to shape the future of race policy-making in Wales.

The rationale for an anti-racist approach

It is arguable that the decision to make this an anti-racist plan represents the most significant shift in race relations policy in Wales and the wider United Kingdom. The Welsh Government had wanted the steering group to build on the template of the equalities strategy it had developed prior to the pandemic which included a race equality element. Helped by the feedback from the initial public consultation on the plan, the steering group decided against the race equality approach for a variety of reasons. The most important reason was that the equalities strategy relied on the traditional principles of equal opportunities and managing diversity. These approaches were viewed as not making a meaningful difference to the lives of people from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds. This cynicism is linked to the failure of race equality and equality, diversity and inclusion approaches to deal with the problems of structural and institutional racism. The argument is that these approaches create a framework which purports to promote fairness, yet they pay little regard to existing power structures and racialisation in society which commonly combine to undermine equality. They work on the assumption that all individuals are afforded the same opportunities, such that any lack of success is treated as an individual or racial group problem for which support is required. In this regard, these approaches are criticised for the reliance on ‘fixing racial and ethnic minorities’ rather than fixing the system.[23] The overall concern is that at best, equality of opportunities and managing diversity perspectives are neutral in the way they are implemented because they fail to recognise or account for the ways in which pre-existing racialised power structures in society influence outcomes.[24]

Another reason for the adoption of an anti-racist approach is that racism is far more complex than is commonly understood in everyday life. The general understanding of racism is that it is a dichotomous construct with non-racism commonly positioned as the opposite of racism. However, this presents an incomplete understanding of the dynamics of race and racialisation. This is because of the problematic position of non-racism which appears positive in intention but which is commonly passive in action. It is arguable that the perpetuation of racism in society is linked to the prevalence and domination of society by racists and non-racists. This is particularly so in a context where, as in the UK, self-acclaimed non-racists comprise the majority of the population. Non racists will typically profess to oppose racism and would not knowingly engage in direct acts of racism. However, the everyday actions of non-racists may be helping to maintain racism, in that they are not thinking actively and changing the systems and behaviours that maintain racialisation.[25] Specifically, like others in society, non-racists typically develop racist stereotypes from childhood and these are commonly stored in the subconscious.[26] These stereotypes are often deployed in times of uncertainty and anxiety in ways that some describe as unconscious bias,[27] but which has the same effect of discriminating against racial and ethnic minority groups. Thus, rather than view racism as dichotomous, it should be conceptualised as a continuum wherein the racist is at one end, the non-racist is in the middle and the anti-racist is at the other end of the continuum. This means that the opposite of racism is anti-racism because it is only the anti-racist position that ensures that individuals and groups are consciously and actively identifying and changing structures, systems and behaviours that produce racially differential outcomes.[28]

Achieving an anti-racist Wales: Prospects and limits

The forgoing discussion has highlighted some of the pernicious consequences of racialisation to locate the key objective of making Wales an anti-racist country by 2030. In many respects, this objective and the target of 2030 are ambitious. This is because race is fundamental to individual and group identity and it is an issue on which gaining any sort of consensus is difficult. It is also the case that the key purpose of racialisation, the structuring of life into social and economic privileges, is to protect the beneficiaries from outside interference and this protection comes from maintaining the status quo. These privileges become taken for granted in ways that make changing them unthinkable and even anxiety-inducing to those who benefit from them.[29]

The implementation of ARWAP is thus a major development in the history of race relations in the western world and the Welsh Government has stated its intention to maximise this opportunity to create a more equal society. However, as the implementation process unfolds, the implications of executing such mammoth undertaking are likely to be profound. In this final section, the chapter explores the prospects and limits of the plan by examining the potential critical success factors, the difficulties that may emerge and suggestions on how these could be overcome.

The first critical factor is dealing with the magnitude of the culture change that will be required to dismantle racism. Culture is important in understanding racism in that racism is enshrined in values, beliefs, assumptions and behaviours that groups call on to distinguish them from those they view as 'others' in societies and organisations.[30] It is the sense-making that arises from these distinctions that gives rise to discrimination which, when combined with salient identity characteristic of race, becomes racism. In this regard, many scholars have made the link between culture and racism. For example, it has been argued that culture is key to the expression of intolerance, especially in relation to how and where such intolerance is communicated.[31] It has also been suggested that racism arises out of the desire of groups to maintain their culture as they commonly view culture as a significant aspect of their heritage.[32]

The difficulty that culture poses to the implementation of ARWAP is linked to the dual nature of culture in cultural understanding. Specifically, culture is both a societal construct and an organisational/institutional construct. Viewed as a societal construct, culture, or what Hofstede refers to as a 'collective programming of the mind', is particularly powerful and enduring.[33] Examples of the lasting effect cultural beliefs and values in relation to race and ethnicity can be found in the results of surveys that measure societal attitudes that are directly or indirectly associated with racism. For instance, analyses of the European Social Survey and Citizenship Survey find that attitudes towards immigration in Wales are broadly similar to those in

England and that these are commonly negative.[34] Studies conducted in the preceding years also show that attitudes towards race and ethnicity in Wales are broadly negative. However, a potentially instructive example of the enduring nature of cultural attitudes in relation to race and ethnicity is that since the inception of attitude surveys in Britain in the early 1980s, social attitude surveys on race have consistently concluded that a similar proportion of representative samples of British people self-report as racially prejudiced. The latest survey that was published in 2017 recorded this proportion as 26 per cent and this has been at around this level since records began. The consistency in the proportion of people who admit to being racially prejudiced over a long period of time suggests that it is difficult to change societal attitudes on race without sustained radical intervention over an extended period. To put this in context, attitudes towards other previously contested social issues such as same sex relationships have shifted markedly during the same period that attitudes to race and ethnicity have remained fairly stable.[35]

Although culture is equally powerful when viewed as an organisational construct, organisations are smaller units of societies and are bestowed with a greater latitude to influence culture than societies. It is thus arguable that, to overcome the culture change problem, the implementation of ARWAP should focus on changing the cultures of organisations and institutions as a way of accessing society in the short to medium term. This is because, in general, societal cultures change slowly and the direction of such change is commonly outside the control of change agents even if they are governments. In contrast, organisational culture is commonly viewed as more likely to be susceptible to the influence of organisations and their managers. Indeed, the debates on whether organisational culture can be changed are somewhat supportive of this position, with many scholars taking the view that cultures can change under certain organisational contingencies.[36]

As organisational cultures are more malleable, it would seem sensible to focus the ARWAP change efforts on organisations and institutions. However, this will require a re-orientation of what we understand by culture change in organisations. Whereas purist culture researchers will argue that change can only be said to be cultural if it is at the deepest level which comprises beliefs and basic underlying assumptions. This understanding of culture change is pragmatic and requires change to be conceptualised at any of the levels of culture including behaviours. [37] Thus, in relation to anti-racism, behaviour should be viewed as an important element of culture which could be particularly significant in promoting the objectives of ARWAP. Behaviour is also an element of individual repertoire for organisational survival and it is on this aspect that managers focus their contractual relationships with their employees. Put differently, organisations do not pay people for their beliefs and assumptions, they pay them for their behaviour and it is this behaviour that is within the control of the organisation for their service delivery. Anti-racism can be achieved by targeting behavioural change as a route to achieving deeper level culture change especially if accompanied by changing systems, processes and procedures. This is not to suggest that deeper level culture change is not desirable or achievable. Instead, it is a recognition that focusing on behavioural change in the short-term may be a more effective way of achieving longer-term culture change on issues that are as intractable as race and ethnicity. Indeed, there is a strong argument that changing behaviour may lead to changes in individual and collective interpretations and sense-making which may, over time, result in a change in values and underlying assumptions.[38]

Linked to the above is the criticality of closing the perennial implementation gap in change efforts, especially in relation to diversity change. As was highlighted earlier, diversity change initiatives are commonly undermined by middle and lower ranking managers who are not sufficiently invested in the ideals of diversity and who typically have to balance competing organisational demands.[39] This results in an implementation gap that ultimately leads to the failure of the policies to achieve their intended objectives. The significance of the implementation gap in race equality initiatives can be seen in the findings of one recent investigation into over forty years of British race equality reports which concluded that many of the recommendations have remained unactioned.[40] Thus, while there is often a strong desire on the part of governments to commission reports on race and ethnicity, this desire is frequently undermined by the difficulties associated with the implementation of the recommendations.

A key problem for ARWAP is thus to develop systems and processes that will help to monitor and ultimately close the perennial implementation gap that has marred the achievement equality and diversity initiatives in the past. While this is a significant success factor, it is arguable that the approach adopted by the Welsh Government presents an interesting and innovative opportunity for successful implementation of ARWAP. This significant development included the creation of an External Accountability Group which is led by the same leadership team that developed the plan. This group recruited experts in all areas of the plan through open competition. This was complemented by the recruitment of members of different racial and ethnic groups in Wales with strong roots in their various communities and with lived experience of racism. Importantly, these roles are remunerated and individuals members were carefully selected to maintain an appropriate balance of gender, race, ethnicity and other protected characteristics. The work of the group is also aided by some of the powers that have been vested on it. Significantly, the group has the power to call Ministers and other decision makers to explain the position of their relative departments and institutions in meeting the objectives of the plan. The group can also recommend changes to Welsh Government remit letters if these are required to improve specific outcomes.

One important issue that is worthy of note is that ARWAP is not enshrined in legislation in the way that other initiatives of this magnitude are. The steering group that developed the plan believed that enshrining the plan in law was important to provide an additional signal of its significance, and this group lobbied actively for this to be the case. The government explored this issue and concluded that such objective was hampered by the crowded legislative space. Indeed, there were fears that waiting for legislation could detract attention from the burning injustices that led to the present commitment to dismantle racism.

The lack of under-pinning legislation is undoubtedly a limitation of the plan, however, this may not be significant for a number of reasons. The first is that legislation that makes racial discrimination illegal already exists under the 2010 Equalities Act, and the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149) imposes a duty on organisations and institutions to eliminate discrimination in the delivery of public services. The second and perhaps more important reason is that the Welsh Government has considerable influence in Wales as the country is dominated by public sector organisations and institutions which rely on the government for all or some of their funding. This means that the Welsh Government can use its considerable power and influence to effect the direction of change through its procurement activities and through the judicious use of remit letters. Overall, the existence of political centrality and patronage in relation to the anti-racist work means that the absence of legislative backing may not be critical at this time. However, this is something that might change in the future if new leaders emerge with different priorities, although the risk will be lower if the plan is fully embedded by this time.

Finally, there is the important and often neglected issue of data or evidence base in decision-making and change on diversity issues such as racism. It is very important to look at the role of data in facilitating or dismantling racism because data helps to put the disparities in the experiences of people into focus. Data can also facilitate the learning that is required to eradicate racism. For example, Argyris and Schön view learning as an activity that relies on reflection, with reflection commonly induced or facilitated by data.[41] They argue that such reflection can lead to the suspension of beliefs and consideration of alternative perspectives. This analogy is important because a key problem that is linked with racialisation is the denial of racism. Indeed, the persistence of high incidents of racism in a context where the evidence from social attitude surveys suggests that majority of people are non-racist offers an intriguing conundrum.[42] One explanation to this is that there is an increasing tendency for this majority to believe that the best way to advance non-racism is to be colour-blind, hence advocate the same treatment regardless of race or ethnicity[43] (see Bonilla-Silva, 2022). However, such assumptions become difficult to uphold where data reveal systemic and structural disadvantages that are racialised. In this regard, data is key to exposing the injustices of racism and is important in convincing even the most recalcitrant that racism is real and deleterious.

The problem in relation to ARWAP is that there is paucity of ethnicity data and what data is collected is often not disaggregated in ways that would make it possible to understand the multiple particularities of the issues at play as well as the intersected nature of individuals and their identities. Data must be drilled down to understand the differences between and within groups. These concerns were central to the findings of the socio-economic sub-group report highlighted earlier. However, the Welsh Government's response to establish a Race Disparity Evidence Unit in Wales as part of the implementation of ARWAP provides a significant opportunity to generate timely and appropriate data which will help to monitor the progress of the plan.

However, it should be said that the notion of data paucity is sometimes used as smokescreen to conceal deep-seated problems arising from racialisation. Specifically, there are several examples where there is an abundance of data but where little or no action have been taken in line with the data. Indeed, the statistical indicators that were presented earlier in this chapter speak to serious anomalies along racial lines and these data have been available for years and generations in some respects. What this demonstrates is that data on its own is insufficient without conscious and proactive efforts to change systems, processes and behaviours that are responsible for producing racially disproportionate outcomes.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the key ramifications of the plan to eradicate racism in Wales. It presented the context of race and racialisation in Wales and the UK to argue that racism is an ever-present aspect of the lives of people from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds. The chapter presented the rationale for the adoption of an anti-racist approach and explored the process through which the plan was developed. This was followed by a discussion of the factors that are considered critical for the successful implementation of the plan, with particular emphasis on the prospects and potential challenges as well as how the challenges could be overcome.

The overall conclusion that can be drawn is that the objective of eradicating racism in Wales is a radical ambition and the anti-racist approach adopted is both innovative (in relation to being the first example of this objective by a sub-national state) and challenging in all its ramifications. Although the implementation of the plan is still in its early phase, there are signs that the plan has put the issue of racism at the top of the agenda of organisations and institutions in ways that are reverberating across society and in many parts of the world. Whatever happens in the future, this plan has helped to shine a light on the important role of race and racialisation in influencing societal outcomes and has opened much needed debates which have been avoided for many years. The successful implementation of this plan will be such that the lived experiences of the present and future generations of racial and ethnic minorities groups in Wales will be unlike those of the previous generations.

Notes

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‘Placing Wales in the world locates the nation within its broader, global interconnections. This remarkable volume draws attention to the place of Wales within the overseas colonial project and examines the legacies of those colonial connections back home. Addressing issues of labour migration, devolution, race equality, the challenges of heritage work, as well as the ongoing processes of social and cultural change, this UWP Series opener will ground scholarly work on Wales in the context of its diverse histories and histories of diversity.’

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Interest in race/ethnicity research in Wales has grown apace in the last decade, opening up wider debates about the nature, focus and content of what collectively is called Welsh Studies. Across a range of disciplines, we are witnessing not only a ‘global turn’ placing Wales more substantively within a plethora of global interconnections, but also a ‘decolonial turn’ that involves the questioning of disciplinary traditions and knowledge production, and highlighting the colonial legacy that shapes academic pursuits. This volume explores the development of Welsh Studies through the lens of race/ethnicity, with contributors presenting case analyses adopting new perspectives, theoretical routes and methodological innovations, illustrating aspects of the decolonising of knowledge production.

Neil Evans is Honorary Research Fellow at Bangor University, Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, and a Vice-President of Llafur: The Welsh People’s History Society.

Charlotte Williams OBE, FLSW, is Professor Emeritus in the School of History, Law and Social Science at Bangor University.

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