

**The Treachery of the Blue Books: The Impact of the 1847 Educational Reports on
Welshwomen and Welsh National Identity**

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Upon my Honor, I have neither received nor given unauthorized aid on this assignment.

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“Whatever [the Blue Books] could prove (which is usually anything you like), they proved there, in an army constantly strengthening by the arrival of new recruits. In that charmed apartment, the most complicated social questions were cast up, got into exact totals, and finally settled – if those concerned could only have been brought to know it [...] Mr. Gradgrind [...] had no need to cast an eye on the teeming myriads of human beings around him, but could settle all their destinies on a slate, and wipe out all their tears with one dirty little bit of sponge”

Hard Times, Charles Dickens

Introduction

During the nineteenth century, England governed Scotland, Ireland, and Wales from its parliamentary base in London. Wales had been the subject nation under the longest parliamentary governance, having been part of the English political system since 1542. Britain's nineteenth-century colonial interests prompted a concerted effort from the British Parliament to standardize cultural beliefs, practices and actions. This standardization was due to a need to manage British resources (legal, judicial, economic), and garner support for international colonial enterprises. Although Wales was considered a part of Britain, and thus not a colony in the traditional sense (such as India, the Cape Colony, Hong Kong), the treatment of Welsh citizens as incompetent barbarians who needed aid to develop was reminiscent of the more racialized 'white man's burden' seen in late nineteenth century approaches to colonialism. Thus, it is apparent that although Wales was not referred to as a colony during the nineteenth-century, the perception of the Welsh was analogous to colonial impressions of subaltern nations such as India. In order to standardize beliefs across the British Isles, the English Parliament sought to apply a cohesive set of policies throughout Wales, Ireland, and Scotland rather than tolerate cultural heterogeneity throughout the islands. They made a particularly concerted effort in Wales during the mid-nineteenth century through attempting to standardize educational systems to unite Wales with English culture. The parliamentary aim of unifying England and Wales would result in Wales becoming a subaltern, powerless nation in the shadow of England, similar to an English county.

In this essay, I argue that the English Parliament attempted to standardize a system of educational practices across England and Wales for the purpose of forming a compliant Welsh population. Parliament desired docile Welsh to capitalize on a labor force that would in turn bolster the growth of the industrial movement, and thus aid the growth of the economy, benefiting colonial

enterprises. It sought to standardize Welsh culture through commissioning a series of educational reports that would underscore the problems inherent in Welsh educational institutions. These criticisms would justify English intervention to change laws and practices. The Reports of The Commissioners of Inquiry Into the State of Education in Wales, one of the most notable educational reports, was published in 1847. This report claimed that the poor state of Welsh education created barriers for Welsh citizens in adhering to the judicial system, in career opportunities, and in competently developing an economy that could capitalize on all of the natural resources in Wales.

In particular, the commissioners extrapolated from the state of education in Wales to suggest that Wales was immoral and barbaric. They used Welshwomen as markers of moral deviancy to support claims of barbarism. Upon the publication of these reports, Welsh elites responded combatively. To protect the honor of the nation, Welsh men defended Welshwomen, as men believed that the English wronged women. As a result, Welshwomen became significantly more visible within Welsh society.¹ Parliament and the Welshmen portrayed Welshwomen in opposite ways. Welsh elites tokenized women as positive portrayals, resulting in a feminized Welsh national identity.² Women gained visibility through this mid-nineteenth-century focus on them, but women were thus held to unattainable ideals. Essentially, English attempts to standardize

¹ Welsh mythology includes many women. The Mabinogion, folktales from the Middle Ages, include many princesses, witches and other mythical beings. Often, the women in these stories fulfill cultural ideas of domesticity and passivity. Additionally, these women regularly transform themselves into parts of nature, like birds, flowers and more. There is a certain degree of agency these women possess which allows them to control forces of nature, bewitch men, and shift their own shapes. Women are often given as the reason for great adventures and battles. Many themes in Welsh folkloric tales include women embodying the nation, bewitching men, and being the catalyst for numerous adventures. Frequently, it is men who are the actors in the tale, and when women do take action in the tales, it is often for negative reasons (escaping evil men, plotting against their husbands etc.). Women were represented as mysterious and supernatural in Welsh folklores, and so there was no reasonable parallel for nineteenth century women to live up to, outside of religion.

² By tokenized, I mean that responders to the Blue Books did not portray women in their actuality. An ideal version of womanhood was constructed to respond to the Blue Books, as opposed to communicating the lived reality of many women. Thus, positive characteristics were ascribed to Welshwomen as a whole, as opposed to underscoring the nuanced reality of women's lives.

systems across England and Wales led to an unforeseen cultural backlash in Wales, positing women as indicators of the state and creating a totem to center a cultural renaissance. This sense of direction and clustering of cultural traditions led to an articulation of a Welsh national identity. It supported yearning for Welsh independence and at the same time hindered Welshwomen's self-expression.

In this thesis, Chapter One will discuss the English relationship with Wales during the nineteenth century as well as assess the way in which the Commissioners portrayed women in the Reports of The Commissioners of Inquiry Into the State of Education in Wales. Chapter Two will discuss the reactions of the Welsh people to the educational reports. Sources on how both Welsh men and Welshwomen responded directly or indirectly to the reports include plays, poetry, speeches, literature, organizations and magazines. Chapter Three will discuss how women were integral to building a sense of Welsh national identity. This chapter will analyze how the reactions of the Welsh to the reports, as described in Chapter Two, led to a more coherent Welsh identity, explained through assessing tourist paraphernalia and the personification of the Welsh nation.

Wales and England in the Nineteenth Century

The nineteenth century saw a wave of great change across England and Wales as a result of industrialization. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Welsh population was 600,000. By the turn of the twentieth century, the population had increased to just over 2 million people. Changes in labor were equally vast. In the late eighteenth century 80% of Welsh people lived in rural areas. At the beginning of the twentieth century, 80% of Welsh people lived in centers of industry.³ Similar demographic changes occurred in England during the nineteenth century, with

³ Deirdre Raftery, "Historiography on social change and education in Ireland, Scotland and Wales," *History of Education* 36, no. 4, 5 (2007) : 448.

the population increasing from 8.3 million in 1801 to 30.5 million in 1901.⁴ With such large population changes and growth of colonial interests abroad, the maintenance of a cohesive Great Britain, ruled through Parliament, was paramount. Parliament was keen to enact comparable laws across Britain in order to normalize the nation.

The English Parliament needed to ensure the compliance of the British population due to the pressures of colonization. More explicitly, the necessity to ensure that there was cultural cohesion came from the need to preserve resources and political inquiries in order to make best use of these resources abroad. Ruth Watts, a British educational historian, writes of education opportunities such as museums and tourism, that reveals how informal education was used as a way of “civilizing the ‘lower’ classes and as promoting a particular version of Englishness (rather than Britishness) in relation to the ‘Other’ within the Empire.”⁵ Watts’ view supports the notion that English views and beliefs were more integral to the development of the British nation than those of ‘subordinate’ nations such as Wales, Ireland, and Scotland. Watts also stresses that informal education taught Britons to see themselves as holding a “superiority” over all colonized nations. This superiority was manifested in assuming that the people of the colonies were barbaric, lesser, and generally inferior to the British population. Although Watts focuses on the internal relationship of Britain to the external colonies, she draws important conclusions concerning the prioritization of ‘Englishness’ over ‘Britishness’. Harri Roberts develops these claims in claims in the context of the Reports of The Commissioners of Inquiry Into the State of Education in Wales;

⁴ Julie Jefferies, “Focus on People and Migration, The UK Population: Past, Present and Future,” (Government Report, London, December 2006), 3.

⁵ Ruth Watts, “Education, empire and social change in nineteenth century England,” *Paedagogica Historica* 45, no. 6 (2009) : 778.



Fig. 1.1 : Will Owen, *A Map of Wales according to the Antient Divisions of Gwynedd, Powys and Dinefawr with their respective Cantreys subdivided into Comots*, 1900, foldout map, 30cm x 30cm. *The Welsh People*.

From John Rhys and David Brynmor-Jones (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1900), to face p. 1.

In practice, this disavowal of internal British difference entailed an extension of core “English” (that is bourgeois) values to all classes and linguistic groups in Britain: a process of cultural homogenization [...] contiguous with that of abjection, entailing as it did the exclusion and rejection of all that threatened the stability and unity of an inherently unstable, heterogeneous British self.⁶

Roberts writes that it was important for Britain to have one unifying character. As England was the governing nation in the union of Britain, English values overshadowed the values of subordinate nations. During the nineteenth century, England thus attempted to standardize cultural systems across all of Britain to reflect views of the center, that is those advanced by Parliament.

Although Parliament prized English values, Wales had been testing the English parliamentary authority throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A deep concern of Parliament was the riots in Wales. These riots displayed overt intolerance of English government, with key events including the Chartist riots and the Rebecca riots, which were particularly violent and destructive.⁷ Both reflected Welsh discontent with the governing body. Parliament had commissioned a series of educational reports to be conducted in Wales throughout the nineteenth century, attempting to identify the causes of the riots.⁸ In trying to smother all forms of protest and government criticism in Wales, the English government then attempted to create conformity and contentment in a nation through using educational reports.

The Role of Education in the Nineteenth Century and the Genesis of the Blue Books

Education reforms were the catalyst of events which led to Welsh national identity formation as the Parliament emphasized the values of education in forming compliant citizens.

⁶ Harri Roberts, “Embodying Identity: Class, Nation and Corporeality in the 1847 Blue Books Report,” *North American Journal of Welsh Studies* 3, no. 1 (2003) : 4-5.

⁷ Chartism was a larger movement began by the lower classes in the United Kingdom. It was a movement asking for votes for any man over the age of 21 who was legally sane. Additionally, it aimed to allow any man, regardless of property, to be able to serve as a member of Parliament.

The Rebecca Riots were a series of riots in response to unfair taxation. These riots involved men dressing in traditional Welsh women’s dress and breaking tollgates as they were symbolic of the perceived unfair taxation.

⁸ Ieuan Gwynedd Jones, “1848 ac 1868: Brad Y Llyfrau Gleision A Gwleidyddiaeth Cymru,” in *Brad Y Llyfrau Gleision*, ed. Prys Morgan (Llandysul: Gwasg Gomer, 1991), 54.

Education is, however, a complicated field for historians. Historians of education debate about the aims and objectives of the field as well as the most appropriate targets for study.⁹ Educational history has burgeoned since the 1950s, adopting new approaches to education. Jones and Roderick write that “the history of education up until the 1950s [...] tended to be about state involvement [...]. In more recent decades fashions have changed, prompted originally by American initiatives [...]. [Historians] take a much broader definition which involves all-embracing frames of reference.”¹⁰ The inclusion of informal education opportunities, such as museums and tourism, in historical study allows for a great spectrum of cultural analysis. The exhibits and sites most popular for broadening an individual’s knowledge suggest how to understand the topics that people were curious about. This knowledge is particularly useful in studying the nineteenth century, as it allows historians to see how British citizens related to new information regarding colonies, scientific discoveries, and economic growth. It clarifies the beliefs and perspectives of citizens, leading to a richer understanding of a nation’s national identity and cultural values.

The importance of the studying the education system, particularly informal education opportunities, is further supported by philosophers’, politicians’ and elites’ discussion of education at length during the nineteenth century. Across all of Europe education addressed by philosophers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Adam Smith, who argued for the education of every free man. Although similar discussions had taken place during the eighteenth century, European nations only gradually began implementing nationwide systems of education.¹¹ The international emphasis on education throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth, pressed Britain to begin to understand the

⁹ Gary McCulloch, *The Struggle For the History of Education* (New York: Routledge: 2011), 1.

¹⁰ Gareth Elwyn Jones and Gordon Wynne Roderick, *A History of Education in Wales*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003) vii.

¹¹ The first to implement compulsory attendance to Lutheran schools was Prussian King, Frederick William I in 1717. It was not until 1803 that secular national education was provided for all children. (Jones and Roderick, 2003, 27.)

ways in which education was politically useful, and thus led to state intervention in educational practices.

William Williams, a Welshborn MP for Coventry who proposed the Reports of The Commissioners of Inquiry Into the State of Education in Wales, said, “the moral power of the schoolmaster was a more economical and effectual instrument for governing this people than the bayonet.”¹² Following early educational reports of Wales in the early nineteenth century that were relatively focused and small in scope, Williams proposed a thorough assessment of the state of education afforded to the working classes in Wales. The House of Commons approved this proposal and so the proposal was sent on to Sir James Kay Shuttleworth. Shuttleworth headed a committee newly established in 1839 to administer government funds for state education. This committee predated laws which would require free primary education of all citizens in Britain. Shuttleworth then commissioned the Reports of The Commissioners of Inquiry Into the State of Education in Wales in 1846, following William Williams’ speech. Shuttleworth chose three English monoglot commissioners, Jellynger C. Symons, R. R. W. Lingen, and H. R. Vaughan Johnson, all trained in law, to assess every school available to the working class of Wales. The instructions given to the commissioners included attending each school designed for the laboring classes of Wales and assessing the learning environment of the school. From this investigation the commissioners were expected to “form some estimate of the general state of intelligence and information of the poorer classes in Wales, and of the influence which an improved education might be expected to produce, on the general condition of society, and its moral and religious progress.”¹³

¹² Roberts, *North American Journal of Welsh Studies*, 6.

¹³ Jellynger C. Symons, R. R. W. Lingen, H. R. Vaughan Johnson, *Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales* (London: William Clowes & Sons, 1848), iv.

The claims made in the resulting Reports of The Commissioners of Inquiry Into the State of Education in Wales were in similar to claims in prior educational reports. From 1816 forward, the report which had the greatest relevance for the later development of the Blue Books was the 1839 document which emphasized the obstructive nature of the Welsh language, and proposed that Welsh citizens would be able to function more effectively through using the English language. Like those before them, the 1847 Commissioners wrote that the Welsh language was a large obstacle in reaching any level of success. However, the commissioners expanded on previous reports and discussed the moral degradation of the people, particularly of Welshwomen. Gareth Elwyn Jones writes in “Llyfrau Gleision 1847” that “the Commissioners were not measuring [the state of education in Wales] against the average standard of education for the peasantry in England. The situation in England was not a grain better.”¹⁴ This lack of comparison suggests that the English Parliament was attempting to degrade the Welsh nation to standardize laws across England and Wales easily, as England would demonstrate that Wales lacked a solid infrastructure, allowing it to use its larger resources to aid the Welsh. But primary sources, especially the Commissioners’ reports, show that the Welsh responded in an unforeseen way, negating the English attempts to enforce rule in Wales.

Questions, Sources, and Frameworks

The Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales use harsh terms to describe the population of Wales so showing the English parliamentary attitude to the Welsh. This posture is revealed as cultural imperialism, an attempt to standardize cultural systems in Britain. The reports reveal how England attempted to create a standardized thought

¹⁴ Gareth Elwyn Jones, “Llyfrau Gleision 1847,” in *Brad Y Llyfrau Gleision*, ed. Prys Morgan (Llandysul: Gwasg Gomer, 1991), 47.

process across England and Wales to aid its international colonial interests. Feminist writing of the time also shows how women were able to take up positions of agency to critique contemporary systems of education, assessment, and ethnocentrism. Jane Williams' writings, for instance, directly responded to the educational reports. Williams also wrote biographies of notable Welsh women and a complete history of Wales. She attempted to validate the Welsh culture and history in these texts, and so the texts are indicative of a national identity and the role which women played in creating one. Various literary works demonstrate the Welsh response to the educational reports. R. J. Derfel's "Brad Y Llyfrau Gleision" ("Treachery of the Blue Books"), for instance, underscores the Welsh disgust towards the educational reports. Additionally, Ieuan Gwynedd's speeches, letters and public written work reveal how men attempted to validate Welshwomen's position in the nation.

A feminist analytical framework is useful in addressing the power dynamics of this period. Feminism is an inherently multifarious approach, with numerous contrasting feminist theories existing in the larger posture of feminism. Feminist histories can vary between the reintroduction of women into the grand narrative of male history to the study of women and men as inherently different people. I approach feminist history as a way in which to study the impact of identity on power. I believe that feminism is a study of both equality and inequality. Although feminist methods are commonly linked to gender studies, they are also directly related to postcolonial and subaltern theory. Thus, studying national identity and gender together is in itself a distinctive approach to traditional feminist theoretical approaches in history. My approach has been informed by theorists such as Edward Said, Chandra Mohanty, Peter Burke, and Helene Cixous, to name but a few. In the Welsh context, a feminist approach applies to the English-Welsh imperialist relationship, as well as to the differing powers afforded to each gender. Parliament's attempts to

standardize legal, educational, and cultural systems across England and Wales are a result of different powers afforded to privileged groups. Thus by my definition, the study of the Blue Books in relation to Welsh national identity is a feminist history. National identity impacts the opportunities and expectations of the people.

Studying the political power afforded to men and women, a more traditional approach to feminist history, reveals expectations of women and men. Power falls to those who occupy privileged identities. In the nineteenth century, a person who was English, male, and of a higher class could occupy many privileged positions of power. Delineating the English-Welsh relationship as well as the different social roles occupied by the two genders shows how different identity categories impacted the lived experience of human beings of the past. People occupy many positions of identity: class, race, religion, sexuality, and myriad others. They manifest identities at different times, depending on the context.¹⁵ This concept is commonly referred to as intersectionality. The salient identities determining an individual's opportunities in nineteenth century Wales were nationality and gender, and so I choose to focus on these. My approach emphasizes the intersecting identities of every individual and how each of these is situated in a hierarchy of power.

The Use of Studying Welsh National Identity

I undertake this project for multiple reasons. First, I believe it important to identify Wales as a place culturally distinct within Britain, and thus emblematic of the heterogeneous nature of the British Isles. Thus, I will explore the relationship between England and Wales, which remains

¹⁵ For example, as I study in the United States of America, I am all the more aware of my Welsh nationality. Due to the integrated co-educational environment of my college, I am more aware of my female gender identity. When I visit my family in Wales, these identities take less precedence as I am in Wales and surrounded by a female-dominated family. Instead, the most salient identities I feel include my privileged position of middle class which allows me to study abroad and my able-bodied self which allows me to do as I wish in contrast to my disabled relatives. My identities change depending on my context.

complicated to the present day. Cultural rivalry between England and Wales is evident even on the surface level of the media in Great Britain.¹⁶ Through writing this thesis I hope to explore potential reasons for these constant cultural conflicts.

I also hope to be able to write a history in which a place in history is awarded to women through emphasizing the role of Welshwomen in forming a Welsh national identity. As Joan Scott writes, however, it is not always useful to simply place women back into a history of men.¹⁷ With this in mind, I intend to see how both women and men, by virtue of their gender and by virtue of the specific political position they occupy, have worked together in order to create a distinctly Welsh national identity.

¹⁶ For example, It is not uncommon to hear the English and Welsh derisively talk about one another, such as when the popular presenter Jeremy Clarkson “lambasted the Welsh language, saying it provides a ‘maypole around which a bunch of hotheads can get all nationalistic.’” The Welsh can have an equally scornful view of the English, such as when “prominent Welsh figure John Elfed Jones [...] said that ‘outsiders’ coming into Wales were the equivalent of ‘human foot-and-mouth disease.’” (<http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/jeremy-clarkson-under-fire-over-1808877>) (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/1478230.stm>)

¹⁷ See: Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and The Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

Chapter One: The Bestial Welsh: English Perceptions of the Principality

The Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales used a framework of values in assessing the Welsh nation. Their contempt for the Welsh is apparent in reading the following quotation:

In walking down a lane which forms one of the principal entrances to the town, I saw a huge sow go up to a door [...] and put her fore-paws on the top of it and begin shaking it; a woman with a child in her arms rushed across the road from the other side of the way, and immediately opened the door, and the animal walked into the house grunting as if she was offended at the delay, the woman following and closing the door behind her.¹⁸

This quotation is characteristic of the nature of the 1847 educational reports. In this passage, Commissioner Symons emphasizes the similarities between the woman and the sow. He bestializes and conflates the woman with the baser side of nature. Harri Roberts writes that “this depiction of the Welsh as bestial in their habits is thus both indicative of their inferiority in the eyes of the Commissioners, and a marker of their bodily transgression, of a moral laxity equated with a failure to regulate and suppress the body and its functions.”¹⁹ Thus, the quotation above shows that the Commissioners ascribed negative characteristics to the people of Wales. The pig was let in to the house demonstrated Welsh living conditions. Symons description of the scenario would add to the poor English regard of the Welsh standard of living, contributing to the belief that the Welsh were savage in comparison to the English. Christian and mythological imagery associated pigs with dirt, disease, and immorality, due to their filth and physical nature. The woman in the quotation manifests these characteristics, substantiating the reputation and perspective of the Welsh.

The Commissioners educational reports contain myriad themes. Hierarchies of behavior and character are established and run parallel to one another. Man is greater than woman,

¹⁸ Jellynger C. Symons, H. R. Vaughan Johnson, R. R. W. Lingen, *Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales*, 293.

¹⁹ Harri Roberts, *North American Journal of Welsh Studies*, 14.

humankind is greater than nature, and urban is superior to rural.²⁰ The following table summarizes the major traits explored and valorized or degraded by the Commissioners.

Urban (superior)	Agrarian
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civilized • Elite • Capable • Leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undeveloped • Peasantry • Incapable • Followers • Bestial
Man (superior)	Woman
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dominant • Infallible • Ideals: strong, stoic, leader, patriarch of the family, punisher, provider, physical activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dominated • Fallible • Ideals: motherhood, caring, teachers, transmission of culture to the next generation
Public (superior)	Private
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superior field of work • Most important field of work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inferior workplace • Workers in this sphere act as support to workers in the public sphere
Moral (superior)	Immoral
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered as: religious, educated and chaste/married. • Can act as a guide • Legitimate • Correct • The only way to behave respectably 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered as: alcohol consumption, sexual activity, promiscuous • Incapable • Barbaric • Disgusting • Low

²⁰ Although the 19th century saw a Romanticist revival of the virtues of nature, it is clear that these revivals contained themes of urban superiority. That is, the countryfolk were often seen as living a simple life, full of nature's beauty and the ease of accessing a number of resources. Although urbanites were depicted as cynical and aggressive, and perhaps unhappy, their intellect and the systems in place in urban centers were superior and thus on a higher intellectual level. The countryside was considered to be a retreat, not a place for action. Finally, the way in which Romanticists valued nature was very specific. Large open spaces of untouched land were seen as superior, not small crowded villages. Although romanticists considered the wilderness (untouched by man) to be the most significant work of God and the most beautiful retreat, contained nature was also prized, such as long ranging gardens which were carefully cultivated to present a contained sense of nature. The pastoral ideal, was in effect very limited across class boundaries and specific aesthetics. Thus, the Welsh rural regions under discussion which were largely impoverished villages did not fit into the Romanticist ideals.

The Commissioners used these binaries to make judgments of the Welsh people. As Simone de Beauvoir wrote, “no group ever sets itself up as the One without at once setting up the Other against itself.”²¹ The English cultural biases reflected perceived superiority of morality, the public sphere, masculinity and urban behavior. All categories could be simplified to a larger binary of right and wrong, where England (the Commissioners, the Parliament, the good citizens, the nation as a whole) was always right, and Wales (the people, the land, the relationships, the resources, the industries) was consistently wrong. They assumed that by creating a hierarchy within Britain, England would reign supreme and create a legitimate hegemony from which to dictate and prescribe legislation and cultural movements.²²

The Commissioners used the binaries to ascribe cultural value to Wales and Welsh citizens through ‘othering.’ Analogously to Edward Said’s theory of orientalism, my critique suggests that the process of othering resulted from English elites’ dissection of cultural differences between England and Wales.²³ They found it important to present the Welsh culture as inferior, so othering and creating a perception of the Welsh as globally lesser than the English. Denigration of the Welsh culture would create a vulnerability on which the English could capitalize in order to institute English values and policies. The English could destroy the inferior Welsh identity through appealing for the betterment of the Welsh citizens; England would be able to provide the instructions on how to improve. This would then allow for the absorption of the Welsh under the

²¹ Simone De Beauvoir, “The Second Sex: Introduction,” in *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*, ed. Carol R. McCann and Seung-kyung Kim (New York: Routledge, 2013), 41.

²² It must be noted that the English actions in Wales during the mid-nineteenth century were not an isolated incident. The Irish received similar treatment to the Welsh in this period. England attempted to morally regulate Ireland so as to quell a social contagion of immoral values (Hickman 1991, 293). Education was considered to be the best way to improve the morals of a people, as well as Anglicizing citizens. Ireland received these attentions in an attempt to develop the rest of Britain. In essence, England was acting as a cultural imperialist throughout the nineteenth century through attempting to impose England’s cultural values on [subordinate] nations. This shows that the Blue Books are not an isolated occurrence, but rather reflect general English political intentions during the nineteenth century.

²³ For further information, see Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

British national identity. In reality, however, the Welsh responded to the Blue Books in such a way as to construct their own sense of national identity, thus negating the English attempts to absorb the Welsh under a unified cultural system.

The Educational Reports in Wales

William Williams said, in proposing the reports, that due to the Welsh language, “although [the Welsh are] equally industrious with their English neighbours, the Welsh are much behind them in intelligence, in the enjoyment of the comforts of life, and the means of improving their condition.”²⁴ Williams claimed that the main barrier for the Welsh was the prevalence of the Welsh language in the education system. Williams cited evidence such as the reports into the Rebecca Riots, which claimed that due to the Welsh language:

The children of the labourers [and] the large class of working farmers, are almost beyond the reach of mental improvement. It is needless to remark how greatly such a state of things is calculated to minister to those prejudices and misconceptions to which so much of the recent excitement of the county may be justly attributed.²⁵

English elites regarded Welsh as a language of stagnation and an obstacle to gaining success.

Throughout the speech, Williams claimed cultural superiority in his criticism of the Welsh language. Williams reinforced the excellence of the English language through citing a report which said “why [...] harp on so much on the necessity of learning English? Because it is the road, the only road to knowledge. Because it is the road to improvement and civilization; and because it is the road to advancement to the poor Welshman.”²⁶ Williams continued to condescend to the Welsh, claiming that “if the Welsh had the same advantages for education as the Scotch, they would, instead of appearing a distinct people, in no respect differ from the English; would it not,

²⁴ William Williams, “Education in Wales,” *Commons Sitings*, accessed February 21, 2014, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1846/mar/10/education-in-wales>.

²⁵ The Rebecca Riots were a series of anti-governmental protests in which Welshmen dressed as Welshwomen in order to protest the tolls on bridges. The rioters caused a significant amount of damage during the period of the riots. (William Williams, *Commons Sitings*)

²⁶ *Ibid.*

then, be wisdom and sound policy to send the English schoolmaster amongst them? [sic]²⁷ Williams' comments clearly suggest that for the good of Wales, England, and the British nation as a whole, efforts should be made to incorporate Wales into the British nation. These sentiments reflect the nineteenth-century aims of England; to quash all nationalist heterogeneity across the British Isles.

Williams further critiqued the Welsh language by paralleling the popularity of the language to the failings of the Welsh justice system. Williams called Welsh an “impediment thrown in the way of the administration of justice in Wales, from the people not understanding English.”²⁸ He said that if the population had known English, Newport Rising and the Rebecca Riots would never have happened.²⁹ This attribution of the recent violence in the nation to the Welsh language demonstrates that England believed itself to be a significantly more genteel nation. Thus, through the parliamentary influence of the Welsh education, linguistic and cultural arenas, Wales would be comparatively equal in etiquette, crime levels, and human flourishing.

Williams also cited the economic benefits of incorporating English lessons into the Welsh system as he said that education in Wales “would raise up an intelligent population, who, by the superior skill which it would bring forth, would greatly increase the productiveness and wealth of their country, whose mountains abound in rich minerals, and valleys in rich soil, now to a large extent undeveloped.”³⁰ In uniting the oppressed (Wales) with the oppressor (England), vehement Welsh anti-governmental feelings could be quelled in favor of more profitable ventures. England was attempting to capitalize on the Welsh resources for colonial purposes. These material

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Newport Rising was a Chartist riot. It must be noted that the Chartist riots in Wales were particularly violent. In particular, a riot known as Newport Rising was an armed and expansive rebellion. There were 5000 participants. 24 rioters died, 50 were wounded, and 200 were arrested. This was one of the largest riots in the nineteenth century. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newport_Rising). (William Williams, *Commons Sitings*.)

³⁰ Ibid.

requirements meant that a docile Welsh population was required to maintain order and create a more efficient population. Thus, the intended integration of Wales into England was partly due to the desire to capitalize on Wales' economic potential.³¹

Williams was supported by members of his audience. Sir J. Graham, agreeing with Williams, said that "the ignorance of the people not only lowers them intellectually, but depraves their moral qualities."³² The English criticized the Welsh for their perceived immorality, criminality, and lack of productivity, showing that the Welsh language was indicative of larger cultural failings. In short, the English used the vernacular as a gateway to critique in order to move on to more significant and profound characteristics attributed to the Welsh. Essentially, the Parliament supported the abandonment of the Welsh vernacular in favor of the English language.³³ Although the English had demonstrated a historical intolerance of Welsh speech, the nineteenth century saw the amplification of these efforts in the narrative of the Blue Books.³⁴ Parliament's myriad reasons for wishing to quash the language included the economic benefit, the benefits to

³¹ Wales was crucial to the success of British colonial efforts, thus the economic benefits of a docile Welsh nation were large. According to Ian Pritchard, "by 1830 iron and coal production from south Wales became vitally important, particularly in terms of British imperial ambition." (Pritchard, 2012, 328). The Royal Navy was the most mobile force that Britain could capitalize on to keep the colonies in order, thus Welsh coal was of huge importance (Pritchard, 2012, 328). Pritchard explicitly states that the "successful manipulation and exploitation of the workforce in Wales required the promotion of a coherent 'British-Welsh' cultural identity." (Pritchard, 2012, 329).

³² William Williams, *Commons Sitings*.

³³ Throughout the nineteenth century, the English were clearly attempting to limit the use of the Welsh language. However, these intentions were not new in the nineteenth century. The 1536 Act of Union under Henry VIII deliberately attempted to limit the usage of Welsh. Following an explicit declaration stating that Wales would be united and annexed to England, and thus under the same legislation, the Act of Union continued to say that: "No Person or Persons that use the Welsh Speech or Language shall have or enjoy any Manner, Office or Fees within this Realm of England, Wales or other the King's dominion, upon pain of forfeiting the same Office or Fees, unless he or they use and exercise the English Speech or Language" (Act of Union, quoted in R. Brinley Jones, "Wales: A Case of Identity," in *Comparative Education* 19, no. 2 (1983) : 157). This led to an increasing Anglicization of the elite classes within Wales as these rules limited the usefulness of knowing the Welsh language. This led to an increasing divide between the lower class monoglot Welsh speakers and the elite bilingual Welsh citizens.

³⁴ Before, the English had only attempted to create barriers to monoglot Welsh speakers in career advancement and legislation. The Blue Books levied an attack on the actual culture of the Welsh, saying that due to the influences of the Welsh language, the Welsh culture was inherently backwards. The development of the restriction of Welsh usage from purely legislative to cultural is indicative of the English's overwhelming desire to quell the language and create a standardized, homogenous culture across Britain.

the justice system, and the advantages that would be available to English speaking Welsh citizens. The desire to quell the use of Welsh stemmed from a long English tradition of belittling languages, such as Cornish and Celtic languages, which were other than the dominant language. As Peter Burke shows, the gradual standardization of language across a nation is not unique to Britain. Throughout Europe, the standardization of language was evident. Burke argues that the generalized determination that members of a nation should speak the language came after the French Revolution.³⁵ Thus, in the British case, the English were attempting to create unification across the Isles in order to create an easier mode of administration. The English evidently had no respect for any vague sense of national identity that existed in Wales during this period. Rather, the English focused on extending their own values to the Welsh to create a cohesive British population.

The Education Reports: A Condemnation of Welsh Women

The Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales, moved on from demonstrating linguistic barbarity to claiming that immoral behavior was rampant across Wales. The remarks in the Blue Books leveled blame for Welsh immorality and barbarism particularly on the women of Wales. The Commissioners saw women as ignorant, sexual, bestial, victims, and lazy. The commissioners wished to educate women to both improve their participation in, and confine them to the domestic sphere. In amplifying the English Parliament's attempts to control Wales, the Commissioners used women as scapegoats of the virtue of the nation.

They did so for many reasons. First, women were the weakest individuals within the state, thus suggesting that their position was less revered, and subsequently more malleable. Second, the manipulation of the lowest position in society would create a trickle-down (or rather, trickle-up)

³⁵ See Peter Burke, *Language and Communities in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

effect in which men, the most powerful group within Wales, would seek to reinforce and propagate the values set for women. Third, women were regarded as the caretakers of a nation through which the values of the next generation would be transmitted. Finally, the teacher-position of Welshwomen suggested that language was a matrilineal gift and as such, Welsh would be taught by mothers to their children. As a result, controlling Welshwomen's morality, language and value systems was integral to creating a standard that would be reprised through the following generations. This exercise of social control was analogous to that of many other times and places in which women were seen as and, circularly, ensconced as demonstrative of a nation's values.

Although the reports represented women as the key influence in the Welsh society, the Commissioners simultaneously described women as inferior to men. The reports compared women and men in terms of their educational prowess. The Commissioners regarded men as intellectually superior. They wrote things such as; "the writing was clean, but not so good as that of the boys,"³⁶ "they are more backward in English than the boys,"³⁷ and following sitting in a class of well-read male students, "I endeavoured to listen to a class or two reading [for an adult female class], but the buzz of the school was so great, and the tone of the reading [...] was so low, from an awkward sort of shyness, that I could not hear sufficiently to form an accurate opinion."³⁸ Harri Roberts sums up the implications of these claims by stating that;

In taking this harder line on women, the Commissioners were simply reflecting conventional thinking of the day, which tended to view women as less capable of rational thought than men and therefore as closer to the world of animals.³⁹

Although women were intellectually inferior, because they were integral in imparting wisdom to the next generation, the English Parliament could respond to the unfortunate state of women by

³⁶ Symons, Johnson, Lingen, *Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales*, 144.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 167.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 135.

³⁹ Roberts, *North American Journal of Welsh Studies*, : 16.

providing more education for Welshwomen. This would allow the Welsh nation to become less barbarous as women would become more educated and raise their children in a way appropriate according to the Victorian Parliament. Sara Ruddick elaborates on the problematic nature of assigning women as the primary educators of their children as she says that “Mothers have been a powerless group whose thinking, when it has been acknowledged at all, has most often been recognized by people interested in interpreting and controlling rather than in listening.”⁴⁰ Thus, the interference of the government to assign more responsibly and expectations to mothers as opposed to intervening to aid the difficult task of raising a child shows the disregard for a powerless group. Although Parliament’s attempts to educate mothers for the purposes of educating their children were seemingly altruistic, they reinforced the ideal position of women as mothers, carers, and educators, as dictated by the English government. Thus through giving the freedom of a superior education to the Welsh, the English would actually narrow the fields of self-expression available for Welshwomen. In bestializing the women of Wales, the Commissioners attempted to create an avenue of influence that would garner greater control over the Principality for the English Parliament. Following the establishment of the inferiority of women, the way in which the Commissioners criticized women was multifaceted, with women’s sexuality, domesticity, servitude and education assuming central places.

The Commissioners promoted the reinforcement of gender binaries through education. The gender binary itself is a poor development of the understanding of humans, as “gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow: rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space [...]”⁴¹ That is,

⁴⁰ Sara Ruddick, “Maternal Thinking,” in *Feminist Theory: A Reader*, ed. Wendy K. Kolmar and Frances Bartkowski (New York: McGraw Hill, 2013), 37.

⁴¹ Judith Butler, “Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity,” in *Feminist Theory: A Reader*, ed. Wendy K. Kolmar and Frances Bartkowski (New York: McGraw Hill, 2013), 443.

gender is a socially constructed category which means only what is politically expedient at any given time. Thus, the Commissioners' adoption of a gender binary suggests that it is beneficial to demarcate men from women so as to create power dynamics beneficial to the British system at large. Throughout the reports, the Commissioners referenced the system of education available to men and women. They described male educational systems in depth, while for women, they often simply stated "the girls learn sewing,"⁴² or "the girls are taught needlework."⁴³ Symons underscored the necessity for men to have a superior education to women, saying that "men are supposed to be more in need of arithmetic and writing for their advancement in life."⁴⁴ The Commissioners repeatedly referenced differing opportunities for both genders. Popular belief in the nineteenth century held that girls could not manage academic thought as it was too much for their inferior brains⁴⁵: "the general view was that what was needed for girls was 'accomplishments', that which was 'showy and attractive', whereas 'more solid achievements are actually disadvantageous.'⁴⁶ Appropriate feminine accomplishments would also give a woman high regard in her community, thus attracting a husband and allowing her to rear children. The implication of designing a woman's education to bolster her marriage prospects are vast. Adrienne Rich writes that "the heterosexually constituted family is the basic social unit; [...] women who do not attach their primary intensity to men must be, in functional terms, condemned to an even more devastating outsiderhood than their outsiderhood as women."⁴⁷ Thus, educational prospects for women reinforced expected heterosexual behavior that limited women's opportunities should

⁴² Symons, Johnson, Lingen, *Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales*, 167.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 227.

⁴⁵ Jones and Roderick, *A History of Education in Wales*, 68.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁴⁷ Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," in *Feminist Theory: A Reader*, ed. Wendy K. Kolmar and Frances Bartkowski (New York: McGraw Hill, 2013), 304.

they decide not to marry. The Commissioners wished to reinforce the binary in the system of education to keep women in the private sphere so bolstering the notion of male superiority, superiority in the public sphere, and the necessity for women to be dominated by men. The infantilization of Welshwomen reinforced English Victorian values while suggesting that Welshmen should have more dominance in the home.⁴⁸ This double bind for women aided the English in solidifying their governance of the Welsh state. Meanwhile, following the unsuccessful Chartist and Rebecca riots against the government, curtailment of women's roles subtly drew otherwise disempowered Welshmen into collaboration with the British state by offering them control at least in their homes. This would have been useful in tempering the lack of direction and feelings of futility that presented in the riots, channeling the energy of leadership into the nuclear family. Thus, the Commissioners stressed and developed women's naivety in order to allow the men to hold arenas of power.

Welshwomen's sexuality was problematic for the Commissioners of Inquiry. Throughout the reports, the Commissioners conflated negative characteristics. Thus, they considered Welshwomen's sexuality to be indicative of the failings in education. If a Welshwoman were to be appropriately trained, theoretically, her sexuality could be tamed. The taming of a woman's sexuality is important; Laura Mulvey suggests that a woman's body is to be consumed, and not to

⁴⁸ English Victorian values on women have been studied extensively. Victorian ideals of womanhood and femininity were restrictive. Women were supposed to act as the carer and educator for the household (W. Gareth Evans, *Education and Female Emancipation: The Welsh Experience, 1847-1914*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1990) 12). Women were supposed to teach their children how to best behave so that "her offspring became morally upright and thereby were a beneficial influence on society at large" (W. Gareth Evans 1990, 13). However, Welshwomen did not operate in circumstances that would allow this behavior. 25 – 30 per cent of working class Welshwomen worked in a heavy industry or in an agriculture outside of the home in order to make a salary (W. Gareth Evans 1990, 14). These circumstances were not valorized and simply reflected the harsh reality of the Welsh woman. Thus, many working class Welshwomen, the primary people under discussion in the Blue Books, were unable to fulfill English Victorian ideals. This in turn reinforced the Commissioners' negative perceptions of Welshwomen as they failed to fulfill their idealized gendered duty.

consume.⁴⁹ Thus women must passively contain their sexuality in order to conform to the expectations of a patriarchal society. Counter to these assumptions, Symons considered Welshwomen to be unchaste:

There is another very painful feature in the laxity of morals voluntarily attested by some of those who have given evidence. I refer to the alleged want of chastity in the women. If this be so, it is sufficient to account for all other immoralities, for each generation will derive its moral tone in a great degree from the influences imparted by the mothers who reared them. Where these influences are corrupted at their very source, it is vain to expect virtue in the offspring. The want of chastity results frequently from the practice of ‘bundling’. Or courtship on beds, during the night – a practice still widely prevailing.⁵⁰

The Commissioners understood a woman’s behavior as responsible for the morality of her children, suggesting that women should safeguard the morality of the nation through parenting. It is important to note that the Commissioners labelled only women as unchaste throughout the reports. The Commissioners rarely mentioned male involvement in sexual activities. Oblique references to male sexuality only served to suggest that a woman should have resisted a man’s advances. The Commissioners regarded Welshwomen as being “almost universally unchaste.”⁵¹ The sexualization of the subordinate nation is a typical method of colonial powers. Ann Laura Stoler writes that “if, as Sandra Gilman (1985) claims, sexuality is the most salient marker of otherness, organically representing racial difference, then we should not be surprised that colonial agents and colonized subjects expressed their contests – and vulnerabilities – in these terms.”⁵² However, Lingen nuances the sexualization of women as he writes that the lack of chastity “arise[s] rather from the absence of all checks than from the deliberate infringement of them, and betoken

⁴⁹ Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” in *Feminist Theory: A Reader*, ed. Wendy K. Kolmar and Frances Bartkowski (New York: McGraw Hill, 2013), 259.

⁵⁰ Symons, Johnson, Lingen, *Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales*, 294.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁵² Ann Laura Stoler, “Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in Twentieth-Century Colonial Cultures,” in *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation & Postcolonial Perspectives*, ed. Anne McClintock, Amir Mufti and Ella Shohat (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 346.

therefore much less depravity than the same conduct in persons more favourably situated.”⁵³ In this quote, Lingen appears sympathetic to the plight of a peasant Welshwoman, but his paternalistic assessment of the Welsh society reinforces the notion that the English must intervene to aid the morality of the nation. Mohanty writes of the difficulties associated once a monolithic image of ‘those in need’ has been established;

The definition of a “third world woman” as a monolith might well tie into the larger economic and ideological praxis of “disinterested” scientific inquiry and pluralism which are the surface manifestations of a latent economic and cultural colonization of the “non-Western” world. It is time to move beyond the Marx who found it possible to say: They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented.⁵⁴

In assessing women’s sexuality, the Commissioners ascribed values to actions. They considered sexual conduct to be profane and indicative of a base culture. They considered women to be incapable of fulfilling the English expectations of chastity, motherhood and transmitting positive behaviors to the next generation. Additionally, the Commissioners’ suggestion that the women fell into sexual activity through a lack of ‘checks’ suggests that in a more urban area, these behaviors would not be observable. Finally, women’s sexuality essentially placed them into the public sphere, where they did not belong, as they took assertive roles in fulfilling their sexual desires.

The Commissioner’s discussion of female sexuality aimed to display the barbarism of the Welsh nation. Due to the rural nature of the Principality, Welshwomen were able to engage in immoral behavior, enter into the public sphere and shuck the idealized behavior expected of women. Thus, the Commissioners’ discussion of Welshwomen’s sexuality was used to display the negativity of the system in Wales as there were no positive outcomes from women’s sexual depravity. The degradation of the Welsh through the bodies of Welshwomen underlines the distinct

⁵³ Symons, Johnson, Lingen, *Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales*, 34.

⁵⁴ Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,” in *Feminist Theory: A Reader*, ed. Wendy K. Kolmar and Frances Bartkowski (New York: McGraw Hill, 2013), 334.

cultural hierarchies operating during the time of the educational reports. From the zeniths of multiple hierarchies, the Commissioners were able to conclude that English intervention and aid was necessary to enhance the Welsh morality. This augmentation would allow for Wales to become more culturally similar to England and also allow the English to practice greater control over the nation, thus benefiting the British economy and promoting a homogenous population.

The English Commissioners emphasized the need for women to remain in the domestic sphere. The reports stated that:

When it is considered how influential is the mind of the mother in moulding the conduct and determining the character of her offspring, it appears doubly essential that girls should be and carefully educated.⁵⁵

The Commissioners' stressed Welshwomen's heterosexuality, and the necessity for her to be educated to serve her children. The prominence of childrearing reinforced the notion of women as holding the virtue of the Welsh nation in their hands, as women actively brought the next generation of citizens into being. The Commissioners presented the domestically capable woman as a foil to the unchaste woman. They encouraged women to have "the entire management of the house, and [...] sew and knit [and be] very industrious."⁵⁶ They applauded this lifestyle as the ideal that Welshwomen could reach and reiterated this claim with numerous examples. Lingen wrote that "there were among the scholars three old women, one upwards of 80, who, at that advanced age, had learned to read. She was now blind, but attended the class as a listener, and could repeat many psalms."⁵⁷ The description of this aged woman suggests that her dedicated approach to learning was something for other women to emulate. The Commissioners' stress on her age suggested that if an older woman could conduct herself in such an appropriate manner, a younger

⁵⁵ Symons, Johnson, Lingen, *Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales*, 227.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

woman could too. The Welshwomen described by the Commissioners were posited as the height of moral behavior which could be expected from Welshwomen of the working class.

The implications of the valorization of certain Welshwomen was vast. The Commissioners approved of hardworking, dedicated Welshwomen. They applauded the moral, appropriately behaved, rural Welshwoman who knew the correct avenues for self-expression. The preferences displayed by the Commissioners reinforced the place of women in the private sphere and applauded the Welshwomen who embraced English Victorian ideals of womanhood. The consequences of narrowing a woman's forms of self-expression to domestic spaces are phrased by Betty Friedan; "It is easy to see the concrete details that trap the suburban housewife, the continual demands on her time. But the chains that bind her in her trap are chains in her own mind and spirit. They are chains made up of mistaken ideas and misinterpreted facts, or incomplete truths and unreal choices. They are not easily seen and not easily shaken off."⁵⁸ Thus through creating social expectations linking women with femininity, the English created a social sphere which would create unfulfilling prospects for Welshwomen. English logic suggested that the gender appropriate values would be passed on by the women to their children, ensuring a new generation of compliant and appropriate Welsh citizens. Additionally, the relegation of women to the private sphere would allow men to take a dominant role in the family structure, in turn allowing them to flourish in the public sphere and follow the pattern expected in English Victorian males. Finally, the affirmation of the behavior of some lower-class Welshwomen served to aid the reinforcement of gendered behavior. These women could thus serve as role models to other Welshwomen of the same situation, while simultaneously creating 'realistic' expectations that men could hold for the women in their lives.

⁵⁸ Betty Friedan, "The Problem That Has No Name," in *Feminist Theory: A Reader*, ed. Wendy K. Kolmar and Frances Bartkowski (New York: McGraw Hill, 2013), 177.

The Commissioners criticized Welshwomen who failed to emulate idealized domesticity. They considered any woman who was incapable of fulfilling her duties a negative influence on her community. They believed that the women should serve their husbands, writing that:

It is a general practice with the women to have tea as early as four or five. For this meal they resort very much to one another's houses, and it is the occasion of all sorts of gossip and tattling. When the husband comes home he does not mind a meal ready for him, with his family to share it; he is therefore the more ready to resort to the public house. 'If I ever do marry,' said a collier, 'I will marry a cook, for she will have something ready for me when I do come home from work;' implying that such a person was not to be found among the females of his own class.⁵⁹

The drunkenness of Welshmen is a persistent theme throughout the reports. The Commissioners believed the Welshwomen were responsible for the drunken behavior of industrial workers. This responsibility was due to their failure in preparing dinner for their husbands. They considered Welshwomen to be of a lower standard than the Welshmen in the same region. The claims of the Commissioners show that women served as the markers of whether their communities would flourish or fail. They repeat these claims in descriptions of women as "the great centre of idle gossip and scandal."⁶⁰

The Commissioners regarded a woman who swerved from her domestic duties as a negative addition to her community. Throughout the reports, women are described as unchaste, lazy, and ignorant. These descriptors are often followed by an assertion of women as the primary upholders of Welsh morality. These assumptions reiterate the hierarchies of characteristics adopted by the Commissioners.

Any fault of the man was due to the mistakes of a woman. By displacing blame from men, the Commissioners made Welshwomen scapegoats. Their claims served diverted responsibility

⁵⁹ Symons, Johnson, Lingen, *Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales*, 35.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 116.

from men, meaning that men would be more likely to accept the claims as they were the innocent parties in the barbarity of the Principality. This motion forwarded Welshmen's compliance with the claims of the English, in turn promoting English authority in supporting the Welsh to become a more moral nation. Additionally, in claiming that women were gossipers, the Commissioners denigrated the private sphere as a location of nonsense and idleness. Thus, men and the public sphere were held in greater esteem by the Commissioners and the idealization of fully privatized women was promulgated as the only productive form of womanliness.

The Commissioners wrote about Welshwomen in a way that purported these females' bestial nature. They described the working class as "in their habits [...] particularly dirty."⁶¹ As in the story of the woman and the sow, the Commissioners stressed that the women were physically unpleasant. Lingen travelled around a school that hosted sick children and was able to sit with the boys for a while. However, upon attempting to see the sick girls, he wrote that they were "suffering from the same complaint as the boys. I opened the door, but the room was so close and offensive *that I could not enter.*"⁶² Remarks on Welshwomen's bodily repellence was unnecessary to express the state of education in Wales. So evidently the hierarchies of moral, educational and physical being used by the Commissioners were at work. Put simply, the Commissioners could not overcome their biases in assessing the state of education in Wales. These biases served to degrade and bestialize the Principality. Lingen, Symons and Johnson used women as the malleable tools that would aid the English in gaining further control over Wales. In bestializing Welshwomen, the Commissioners were able to bestialize Wales. The woman was used as the representation of the nation.

⁶¹ Ibid., 33.

⁶² Ibid., 146.

The Implications of the Blue Books

The Commissioner's cultural values had a huge impact on their assessment of the Welsh nation. H. G. Williams asserts that the completion of the reports meant that the Welsh culture existed in a tenuous position.⁶³ Williams writes that:

The underlying messages [of the reports] were that the Welsh language and its culture were dangerously backward influences and that any system of schools must have as its aim the incorporation of Wales into the dominant culture of English. Coupling a disorderly and insurrectionist population with an isolating culture added force to the argument.⁶⁴

The English supported educational reforms to tame a barbarous Welsh culture. This meant that Wales would find itself incapable of independent governance due to English pressures to enact reform. The recommended changes included the language, the sexuality, and the gender roles of the nation. Wales needed to respond to the claims levelled on it by the English in order to establish the Welsh nation as a competent Principality, capable of some level of self-governance. Following the declaration of legitimacy of the Welsh language and the Welsh culture, feelings of inadequacy would pervade the nation. Nonetheless, in attempting to establish the Principality as a nation worthy of self-governance, a cultural renaissance followed these insults, in which the Welsh grasped back through history to display the rich culture present in the land. The Welsh attempts to legitimize the nation necessarily displayed a vulnerability in attempting to legitimately establish independence and international respect. Although these methods were useful in the decades following the publication of the educational reports, the Welsh continue to attempt to prove legitimacy to this day.

⁶³ Culture can be defined as the livelihood of the nation, that is, what makes the nation unique. Typical explanations of this include societal values and expectations, the vernacular of the nation, the arts and self-expression of the nation, and that which is regarded as human achievement within the nation.

⁶⁴ H. G. Williams, "Nation State versus National Identity: State and Inspectorate in Mid-Victorian Wales," *History of Education Quarterly* 40, no. 2 (2000) : 150.

Ironically, through leveling the blame of the degradation of Wales on women, the Commissioners included Welshwomen in a meaningful dialogue regarding the state of the Welsh nation. Through the English's including women in a national dialogue, women gained visibility within Wales. Although this development was positive in that the Welsh society began to consider womanhood as a necessary point of discussion, the ultimate consequence for women was that they would become the subject of much debate. The discussion that ensued following the publication of the Blue Books aimed to construct the notion of the ideal Welshwoman. For the Welsh, this woman was the ideal representative for the nation, to salvage the reputation of the Principality. Thus the discussion of women would result in a crystallization of ideals for women, narrowing expectations of Welshwomen in the long run. The representation of woman as nation is not isolated to Wales. Woodhull writes that;

As the embodiment of conflicting forces that simultaneously compose and disrupt the nation, women are both the guarantors of national identity – no longer simply as guardians of traditional values, *but as symbols that successfully contain the conflicts of the new historical situation* – and the supreme threat to that identity, insofar as its endemic instability can be assigned to them.⁶⁵

Thus women would subsequently be blamed for the ills of the nation and men would recognize the need to control women's self-expression and lives in order to maintain the morality and legitimacy of the nation.

Finally, the Blue Books would serve to create the impetus for the formation of a Welsh national identity. Through attempting to legitimize the Welsh culture by harkening back to Welsh history, Welsh elites succeeded in creating an image of Wales which served as a national identity. This national identity was again centered on Welshwomen, posing Welshwomen as mothers of the nation, in keeping with the English Victorian expectations of women who were described as

⁶⁵ Winifred Woodhull, "Unveiling Algeria," in *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Reina Lewis and Sara Mills (New York: Routledge, 2003), 569.

the keepers of culture who would pass on the ways of the world to the next generation. Although Wales created a new national identity, it thus fell into line with the bourgeois cultural assumptions that had created the Welsh cultural crisis. Morality, urban life, masculinity, and the public sphere were regarded as superior within revived Welsh culture as in the prior English critique. Hence, the only way in which Wales was able to differentiate itself from England was through the inclusion of language and the valorization of the Welsh arts. Essentially, the two cultures remained similar to one another, although the Welsh national identity insisted on a repudiation of all things English.

Chapter Two: Politics, Literature and the Media: The Welsh Reaction

The Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales sparked a virulent response in Wales. Social elites began responding on behalf of the working class Welshmen and women whom the Commissioners had denigrated. Middle and elite classes possessed a cultural capital allowing them to navigate the bureaucracy to be heard, workers and farmers did not.⁶⁶ Responders reacted from political, media, and literary fields.

Welsh responders spoke in detail about Welshwomen, who they felt had been slighted or rightly depicted, depending on individual responders' personal views. They also discussed the Welsh language in depth. Welshmen evidently required no defense. No responders discussed claims made against Welshmen as males. The lack of blame placed on Welshmen was because the faults of the men were a direct consequence of the faults of the women, according to the Commissioners. Thus responsibility was removed in the Blue Books from men and the problems Wales faced were due to Welshwomen exclusively. The silence regarding men further suggests that men were above discussion, suggesting that the problems of the nation were related to the 'other.' Edward Said discusses at length the way in which identity groups can be stereotyped and formed into monolithic figures.⁶⁷ Such negative stereotyping was demonstrated in the way the Commissioners perceived Welshwomen, and correspondingly, responders needed to valorize the role of women in Wales in order to negate the negative claims made about the Welsh culture. The educational reports sparked a passionate dialogue within Wales on the nature of Welsh society in an attempt to legitimize the autonomy of the Principality. The increased visibility of women, as of

⁶⁶ Cultural capital is defined as the funds and reputation to be able to publish, speak, and discuss in the public sphere. In the context of nineteenth century Wales, these were typically male, typically wealthy, and perhaps religious people. Through occupying this identity categories, these individuals held positions of influence and/or power from which to have their voices heard.

⁶⁷ For further discussion on the impact of ascribing characteristics and creating a stereotype for identity groups, see Edward Said's *Orientalism*.

the Welsh language would lead to a more coherent iteration of what formed the Welsh national identity. The Welsh response to English attempts at colonialism incorporated a dialogue on women. This dialogue would allow the Welsh nation to coherently characterize its culture, values and beliefs.

Following the publication of the education reports, responders attempted to attack the values, facts, and opinions of the Commissioners and England as a whole. Welsh aggressors established Wales as an entity culturally separate from England. The subaltern repudiation of a despotic nation's values was a challenge to the power dynamics that had long been established within Britain, but both the reports and responders tokenized women, that is they did not represent women as they truly were. Women were not involved in the discussion of their gender, except for Jane Williams, at least in written discourse. Thus a discussion and emphasis of women (which had the effect of heightening the visibility of women in Wales) was used to create a tokenistic ideal of women which would inform the anti-colonial movement, and contribute to the formation of a Welsh national identity.

The Political Response

Henry Richard was among prominent Welsh responders. He commented on the educational reports in an attempt to establish Welsh independent political representation in the English Parliament. Richard was a political reformer who worked in London.⁶⁸ In an 1868 speech, he sought to answer the question raised by the educational reports, of what constituted the Welsh nation:

The people who speak this language (the Welsh), who read this literature, who own this history, who inherit those traditions, who venerate those names, who have created and sustained and worked those marvelous organisations – the people forming three-fourths of the people of Wales – Have they not a right to say We are

⁶⁸ Gwyneth Tyson Roberts, *The Language of the Blue Books*, 217.

the Welsh nation? Have they not a right to say to those [sic] small propertied class, but say it calmly and respectfully, and yet with energy and emphasis, We are the Welsh nation; and not you? The country is ours and not yours, and therefore we claim the right to have our principles and sentiments and feelings represented in the Commons House of Parliament. (*Aberdare Times*, 14 November 1868).⁶⁹

Prior to making this speech, Richard had appeared in London to discuss the educational reports. He had opposed the claims made about Welsh lack of chastity in an attempt to protect the women of the nation. Richards was defensive to the point of demanding Welsh participation in the English Parliament so that Welsh interests might be presented. His attempt to form a sense of national identity, as well as to repudiate English control over Britain was a grand effort to regain control of Wales' government. Richard was trying to provide the voiceless (the Welsh, women) with a voice. He attempted to subvert the system in order to gain a fairer representation of voices in the government to shift the power dynamics for more equality within Britain.

Richard's comments reflect the desire to escape the claims that the Commissioners had made of Wales. His speech lays out his opinion that the English had assessed the Welsh nation on the poor behavior of a few individuals. His deep desire for Welsh autonomy is evident and connects with larger issues. Usefully in this context, contemporary theorist Uma Narayan discusses how "national and cultural contexts [are] sealed rooms, impervious to change, with a homogenous space 'inside' them, inhabited by 'authentic insiders' who all share a uniform and consistent account of their institutions and values."⁷⁰ Narayan argues that institutions establish themselves, and by virtue of being recognized as long-standing, they hold an innate authority which is difficult to question. As a result, people who do not benefit from the institutions (in Narayan's discussion, third-world feminists, but for our purposes the Welsh), must dissent and question the impenetrable cultural

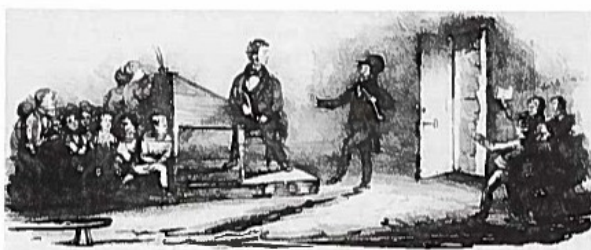
⁶⁹ Ibid., 218.

⁷⁰ Uma Narayan, "Contesting Cultures: 'Westernization,' Respect for Cultures, and, Third-World Feminists," in *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Reina Lewis and Sara Mills (New York: Routledge, 2003), 49.

institutions. Richard's speech, seen in these terms, clearly attempts to question the authority of the English in order to gain a better representation for the Welsh. The Welsh did not fit well in the nineteenth-century system, and so they had to push back, questioning and asking for more in order to be able to aid the reestablishment of institutional practices that would aid them.

Responding Through Media

Hugh Hughes, a Welsh cartoonist made a series of drawings attacking the English reports as forcefully as had Richard's words. Hughes' drawings suggest that he believed that the reports had been written to accommodate an English political agenda, thus the Commissioners' comments were not to be trusted. Hughes began drawing the narrative of the Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales in 1848. Below is a selection of his work.



Cartŵn Hugh Hughes yn 1848. Un o'r is-ddirprwywyr yn taro i mewn yn annisgwyl i edrych dros ysgol.

(Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru)

Figure 2.1: Hugh Hughes' Cartoon in 1848. One of the sub-delegates bursting in unexpectedly to look over the school. (National Library of Wales).

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⁷¹ Found in W. Gareth Evans, "Y Ferch, Addysg a Moesoldeb: Portread Y Llyfrau Gleision 1847," in *Brad Y Llyfrau Gleision*, ed. Prys Morgan (Llandysul: Gwasg Gomer, 1991) 86.



Cartŵn Hugh Hughes yn 1848. Ysbïwyr yn casglu tystiolaeth i'r Llyfrau Gleision trwy ysbïo ar fywydau preifat trwy dwll bach y clo. (Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru)

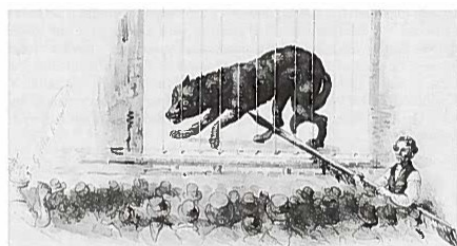


Cartŵn Hugh Hughes yn 1848. Dirprwywr, a chlustiau asyn o dan ei beriwig, yn gwrando ar ficer yn dwyn camdystiolaeth yn erbyn y Cymry. (Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru)

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Figure 2.2: Hugh Hughes' Cartoon in 1848. A spy collecting evidence for the reports through spying in keyholes. (National Library of Wales).

Figure 2.3: Hugh Hughes' Cartoon in 1848. A Commissioner with an ass' ears under his wig, listening to a vicar speaking against the Welsh. (National Library of Wales).



Cartŵn Hugh Hughes yn 1848. Ieuan Gwynedd yn procio'r blaidd, sef John Griffith, ficer Aberdâr, a oedd wedi pardduo moesau merched Cymru yn y Llyfrau Gleision.

(Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru) 73

Figure 2.4 Hugh Hughes' Cartoon in 1848. Ieuan Gwynedd poking the wolf, which is John Griffith, the vicar of Aberdare, who had sullied the morals of Welsh women in the educational reports. (National Library of Wales).



Cartŵn Hugh Hughes yn 1848. J. C. Symons y Dirprwywr yn chwilio am atebion hurt.

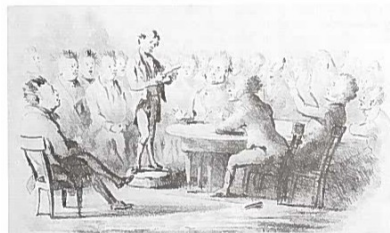
(Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru) 74

Figure 2.5: Hugh Hughes' Cartoon in 1848. J. C. Symons, the Commissioner, looking for foolish answers. (National Library of Wales).

⁷² Found in W. Gareth Evans, *Brad Y Llyfrau Gleision*, 84.

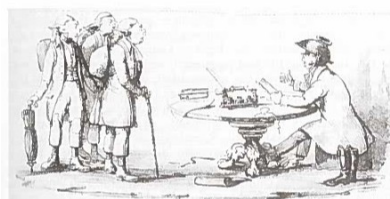
⁷³ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁷⁴ Found in Gareth Elwyn Jones, "Llyfrau Gleision 1847," *Brad Y Llyfrau Gleision*, ed. Prys Morgan (Llandysul: Gwasg Gomer, 1991), 26.



Cartŵn Hugh Hughes yn 1848. Y Cyfrin Gyngor yn dychryn o glywed yn 1839 am ddiffygion addysg yng Nglymru a Lloegr. (Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru)

Figure 2.6: Hugh Hughes' Cartoon in 1848. The House of Commons frightened after hearing of the lack of education in Wales and England in 1839. (National Library of Wales).



Cartŵn Hugh Hughes yn 1848. Syr James Kay-Shuttleworth yn anfon y Dirprwywyr allan i Gymru yn 1846. (Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru)

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Figure 2.7: Hugh Hughes' Cartoon in 1848. Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth sending the Commissioners out to Wales in 1846 (National Library of Wales).

Hugh Hughes' work contains many themes, the most prominent of which is bestial behavior. Figure 2.3 shows one of the Commissioners with an ass' ear under his wig, listening to a vicar give evidence. Figure 2.4 shows a notable Welsh advocate, Ieuan Gwynedd, poking a wolf representative of John Griffith, a vicar who had spoken of the immoral behavior of Welshwomen. The bestialization of enemies of the Welsh state speaks volumes of the Welsh opinion of the educational reports. A donkey is considered to be a stubborn, ridiculous animal, suggesting that that Welsh thought very poorly of the Commissioners. The representation of the vicar, who besmirched the reputation of Welshwoman, as a wolf also suggests his cruel, aggressive nature. The mockery of the wolf, through having a responder poke it, further shows that Hughes believed that the Welsh were able to overcome the claims made against them. In essence, Hughes portrayed the English as ridiculous and dishonorable.

Developing the imagery of the English as ridiculous, Hughes portrays them as emotional and irrational. Figure 2.6 shows the House of Commons reacting with fear to the claims of the

⁷⁵ Ibid., 25.

poor education available in Wales. Figure 2.7 displays Shuttleworth, with a pot on his head, wearing no shoes, sending the three bemused Commissioners off on their travels. The absurdity in overt displays of emotion and Shuttleworth's discomposure displays the lack of respect for the English. Once more, Hughes portrays an anti-governmental sentiment in suggesting that the Commissioners are not functioning on the same level as the working class-people. That is, the English visitors are removed from the population, and subsequently fail to understand the people they are supposed to serve in government.

Finally, Hugh Hughes creates images that show the Commissioners intruding and spying on the people of Wales dishonestly. Figure 2.1 shows a Commissioner bursting in confidently to a classroom with no prior notice of his arrival. Figure 2.2 shows a spy looking through the keyholes of the houses to find evidence to include on the Blue Books. Figure 2.5 depicts a Commissioner in a classroom looking for foolish answers. Hughes clearly sees the English as uncivil and backhanded in order to gain enough evidence to support their claims.

All of Hughes' images clearly express his opinion that the Blue Books were incorrect, divisive, and overly hostile. In responding in this way, Hughes made a mockery of the Commissioners, and aimed to reduce the impact that the Blue Books had had on the population of Wales. His refusal to respect the inspection and the Commissioners aimed to demonstrate that women, the Welsh language, and everything else that the Commissioners had negatively assessed was actually acceptable and normal, meaning that the Commissioners, for their own aims, had taken a derogatory stance of Wales simply to ruin the nation's self-image in order to ease the implementation of English control over Wales.

The most prominent example of media response was the publication of Y Gymraes (The Welshwoman), a magazine aimed at women. The magazine was created by Ieuan Gwynedd in

1850 “following two years of argument and debate concerning education and morality in Wales, which had become burning issues following the publication of the 1847 Education Report.”⁷⁶

Gwynedd proposed the aims of the magazine as follows:

Up until now, the women of Wales have not received the attention that their situation warrants, nor have they enjoyed equal opportunities with the menfolk of their country. Less attention has been paid to their education, not one periodical has aimed to serve their particular needs...

... our interest is the elevation of the female sex in every respect – social, moral and religious. Our intention is to co-operate with the educational establishments of our time to produce faithful maids, virtuous women, thrifty wives and intelligent mothers ...

... we know of no other task more worthy than that which we have undertaken.⁷⁷

These aims are very particular in attempting to vindicate the place of women in Wales. Gwynedd aimed to do this through educating Welshwomen on the correct behavior to emulate. Sian Rhiannon Williams wrote that “his detailed defence of the morality, religion and language of the Welsh people in the face of scathing criticism by the Commissioners and their supporters, earned him great respect as vindicator of the nation, while his defence of the character of Welsh women made him their champion.”⁷⁸ Gwynedd aimed to help Wales through educating the women in the proper way to behave. Although the people of Wales considered Gwynedd’s methods a vindication of the nation, his strategies were reflections of the values England wished to see in Wales. Gwynedd was not a radical, but simply tried to make Welshwomen civilized, suggesting that he implicitly agreed with the English Commissioner’s comments on the barbarous nature of the Welsh. In fact, “he personally disapproved of ‘bundling’, and although he defended their character to the outside world, the moral champion of Welsh women felt that there were indeed serious

⁷⁶ Sian Rhiannon Williams, “The True ‘Cymraes’: Images of Women in Women’s Nineteenth-Century Welsh Periodicals,” *Our Mother’s Land: Chapters In Welsh Women’s History 1830-1939*, ed. Angela V John, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1991), 69.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 70.

deficiencies which could be eliminated through education.”⁷⁹ Thus, Gwynedd was constructing an ideal woman not for the sake of Welshwomen, but for the sake of aiding the development of the Welsh nation. Like the Commissioners, he used women (who had been identified as the weakest segment of the Welsh nation) to legitimize the cultural cornerstones of the Welsh nation. This form of delineating women’s development is effectively a form of policing values. Hazel V. Carby describes the way in which policing the values of an identity group stems from a ‘moral panic,’ that is “a series of responses, from institutions and from individuals, that identified the behavior of [an identity group] as a social political problem, a problem that had to be rectified in order to restore a moral social order.”⁸⁰ This explanation is parallel to the occurrences in Wales at this time, in which women were told to emulate certain values in order to act more appropriately for their social standing.

Sobriety, chastity and Christianity were the paramount values encouraged by Gwynedd, whose larger aims are described by Williams:

From its inception, the magazine created and perpetuated an ideal to which the women of Wales could aspire. This ideal was part of a more general idea of Wales which was being created during the middle years of the century [...] it [was] necessary to ensure that in future Wales would be above [...] criticism [...] a still and peaceful land where violent crime did not occur – became the traditional image of Wales portrayed in the literature of the period. It was intended that women would play an important part in the achievement of this ideal.⁸¹

Gwynedd thus attempted to shape the role of women in Wales so as to vindicate the reputation of the Welsh. Although his defense of them seems heroic, he still intended to shape women according to the expectations of women as put forth by the Commissioners. Therefore, he was not radically

⁷⁹ Ibid., 70

⁸⁰ Hazel V. Carby, “Policing the Black Woman’s Body in an Urban Context,” *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 4 (1991) : 739-740.

⁸¹ Williams, *Our Mother’s Land*, 72.

heroic, but deferential to colonial powers. Gwynedd's female ideal involved embodying passivity and caregiving:

If your husband happens to come home feeling rather miserable, do not make a frightful face and ask him, 'What is wrong with you?' Do not persist in bothering him; if he wants you to know, he will be sure to tell you in due course ... Do not let him find that his shirt collars have buttons missing each week. This is often the cause of many a family storm. See to it that the collars are as perfect as possible, and if they do not entirely please him, remember that men are permitted to complain about the state of their shirt collars.⁸²

This passage from Gwynedd's work shows the servitude expected of women in order to fulfill the ideal Victorian Welsh womanhood, revealing Gwynedd as an enforcer of ideals and stereotypes. The problematic notion of women's service to their husbands' simply mimics what the English wished to see in Wales.

For Gwynedd, women were able to take an active role in educating their children and preparing them to take part in the Welsh society.⁸³ The ideal woman would make sure that her children were educated in Welsh and that Welsh was spoken freely among family members.⁸⁴ In order to maintain the appropriate family dynamic, women and men were to undergo a gender divided education;⁸⁵

The information and the education which will make the woman a better wife, and a better servant. The education which will make her a better mother, and a better nurse; and the education which will make her more fit for the task of keeping house for herself and for another.⁸⁶

A Welshwoman's education was simply to aid her in better serving her family. Williams writes that "it was certainly not the editor's intention to create independent, educated women."⁸⁷ In essence, *Y Gymraes* was attempting to create women who would follow the English Victorian

⁸² Ibid., 74.

⁸³ Ibid., 74-5.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 73.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 75.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 75.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 75.

female ideal of passivity, submissiveness, and service. Through following the English ideals, Wales was submitting to one form of cultural domination in an attempt to protect its language. The importance of the Welsh language in family life was apparent throughout the magazine, yet women were urged to change. The female ideals presented by Gwynedd are stifling and compliant, yet as Williams writes, this was “the first magazine for women,”⁸⁸ so it brought attention to the need to improve the Welshwoman’s living conditions. Although the ideal that was being promulgated by Gwynedd was largely irrelevant to the living conditions of Welsh women, it evidenced a growing visibility of the female population in Wales.⁸⁹ This visibility contributed to a recognition of women which would gradually develop an arena for early feminist movements.⁹⁰ Unfortunately, the publication ended in 1852 due to a lack of support and sales.⁹¹ However, the aims of the magazine were clear in that Gwynedd wished to create a new presentation of women to improve upon the claims made against the Welsh in the Blue Books. Unlike other responders, he implicitly agreed with the negative perceptions of women’s sexuality, domesticity, and motherhood proposed in the Blue Books, and aimed to rectify women’s behavior as opposed to denying the claims made against women.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 75.

⁸⁹ Williams writes that 26% of women over ten were in paid employment in 1851, showing that there was a disconnect between what Gwynedd believed that women could achieve and the necessity of the hard living conditions in Wales. See Williams, *Our Mother’s Land*, 76.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 75.

⁹¹ Welsh women had much lesser levels of literacy than men. As a consequence, men were the main contributors to the magazine as opposed to Gwynedd’s original intention of having women write for women. (Williams, 1991, 78). This added to the magazine being considered as men paternalistically preaching at women. Gwynedd’s final words encapsulated his opinion on the failure of the magazine; “Since *Y Gymraes* was never supported by the women of Wales ... we were forced to make the magazine more literary and more general in content than we had wished it to be ... When we began publishing *Y Gymraes*, we were eager to keep on new ground since we were addressing a new class of reader. But we were soon to find that that class did not wish to accept that which was appropriate for them ... Our girls and women did not need any help in these kinds of matters. Their cookery was perfect, their family organization above improvement. And so we were forced to leave them.” (Williams, 1991, 78)

Literary Responses

Jane Williams was one of the most aggressive authors who defended Wales. This Welsh writer, originally born in Chelsea but brought up in Wales, had a passionate interest in Welsh literature, folklore and famous figures. Williams' early works were poetry and discussions on religion. Following the publication of the educational reports, however, she released an acerbic diatribe against the educational reports entitled Artegall: or Remarks on the Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales. Williams writes venomously of the Commissioners asserting that the reports "have threatened an infringement on [the Welsh people's] manifest social rights."⁹² She discusses the lack of cultural knowledge that the Commissioners displayed, saying that:

They have brought an abstract principle, a transcendental notion of what education and condition ought to be, mercilessly and directly to bear upon the people of the Principality. They have condemned their customs, habits, and conduct by it, without the slightest reference to comparative merits as regards those of England and other countries.⁹³

Williams writes of the injustice of the English Commissioners in discussing the Welsh system in isolation, as opposed to comparing Welsh and English behaviors. She notes that the Commissioners manipulated the evidence in order to show that Wales was a nation suffering from a barbaric nature.⁹⁴ She proceeds to study the evidence presented by the reports, noting that a number of the witnesses were English and so had "no previous acquaintance with Wales, and [their] subsequent experience [had] been closely limited to [their] own locality."⁹⁵ Williams discusses not only the witnesses' incapability to provide an accurate testimony, but notes that many

⁹² Jane Williams, *Artegall; or Remarks on the Reports of the Commissioners of Enquiry into the State of Education in Wales* (London: Longman & Co, 1848), 5.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

“had a direct personal interest in furthering the plan of the Commissioners.”⁹⁶ She observed that schoolmasters and landowners wanted to hand off responsibility to the government, and proceeded to compare rates of illegitimacy, drunkenness, and theft between the nations within Britain, concluding that Wales was not the worst. Williams also asserts that children who answered the Commissioner’s questions incorrectly were likely “disturbed, and their attention led astray by the presence and interference of strangers.”⁹⁷ The most vitriolic depictions of the Commissioners appear in William’s direct criticism of their assessments of Wales:

Commissioner Symons remarks, -

“I have asked the boys selected by the master as his best grammarians in several schools, which is the adjective in the sentence, ‘I am going to beat the dog,’ or the adverb in ‘I shall stir the fire,’ and have rarely found them to fail to guess half the words in the sentence, so thoroughly devoid of thought, or inculcation of principle, is the whole system of teaching.”

The Commissioners would have done more justice in giving them credit for the deference which could not believe he would suggest an error, and for the native courtesy, which even when it was discerned, restrained them from apparently contradicting him, by saying that neither adjective nor adverb was there.⁹⁸

Williams has no qualms about critiquing the Commissioner’s intelligence and assessment of the state of education in Wales.

The vehement nature with which Williams denies each one of the claims of England speaks to both her patriotic nature and her negative sentiment of the English. This was an aggressive stance against the English as it listed all the ways in which England was incapable of assessing the Welsh nation. A woman’s aggressive rejoinder went against the expectations of femininity and passiveness prevalent in Victorian Britain. Jane Williams was empowered by her privilege and elite class position to be able to respond to the Commissioners directly, so was able to shape the

⁹⁶ Ibid., 15.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 37.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 39.

response of the Welsh to the educational reports, through categorically denying all of the Commissioners' methods and claims, and suggesting that they were incompetent.

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Figure 2.8: Hugh Hughes' cartoon in 1848. Jane Williams, the historian, is giving a beating to the three commissioners. Her book was named after Sir Artegall, the protector of equality in *The Faerie Queen*.

This image of Jane Williams expresses the way in which the Welsh perceived Jane Williams. Drawn by Hugh Hughes, it shows Williams literally beating the commissioners with wheat, similar to how a mother might punish her unruly children. The Commissioners' faces are contorted in pain and a childish mixture of surprise and offense, showing how Williams was both in a position of motherhood and as such, able to punish her children. These images reveal the expectation that women were children's disciplinarians, and the way in which Williams' response was held in high regard for significantly damaging the Commissioners' arguments.

As a woman of privilege, Williams was able to write extensively in defense of Wales. Although her most significant repudiation of the educational reports was Artegall, her literary career continued after its appearance. Following the publication of the Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales, Williams continued to write about Welsh figures and the history of Wales. She seemed intent on creating a positive image of Wales

⁹⁹ Found in Prys Morgan, "Introduction" in in *Brad Y Llyfrau Gleision*, ed. Prys Morgan (Llandysul: Gwasg Gomer, 1991) ii.

for the consumption of the outside world. She wrote biographies of notable Welsh figures such as The Autobiography of Elizabeth Davis, also known as Betsi Cadwaladr.¹⁰⁰ Cadwaladr rejected a culturally ‘normal’ life. However, she created a life for herself as a nurse, cleaner or homemaker, all classically female roles. For Williams, emphasis on this Welshwoman’s story served a twofold purpose. Firstly, her biography served to display Wales as a nation which could create innovative and hardworking citizens. Secondly, it showed a *Welshwoman* as a competent, hardworking individual. This rhetorical achievement was useful in legitimizing the place of women in the Welsh nation after the Commissioners had denigrated their behavior in the educational reports. Williams reclaimed, repackaged and showed womanhood to be positive, and not in need of male support. Ultimately, this image would be superseded by male interpretations of ideal femininity, but Williams at least provided an attainable feminist ideal. Her words responded to the educational reports and posit Wales as a competent nation, contrary to the claims of the Commissioners.

Williams also wrote A History of Wales Derived from Authentic Sources. This history revealed a pro-Wales perspective. Williams posits Welsh people as the victims of a tyrannical English rule. She writes of the first Earl of Shrewsbury that he “rode rough-shod at his will over the whole kingdom of Gwynedd. Nowhere, however, did the Normans possess themselves of a single acre of Cymric soil without being constrained to defend it by a strong neighbouring castle and a watchful garrison.”¹⁰¹ She continues, writing that “incited by patriotic sympathy, the Cymry arose against their Norman oppressors in several of the conquered districts of South Wales.”¹⁰² Williams’ use of ‘Cymry’ showed disregard for the English terminology in adopting the self-

¹⁰⁰ Although it is titled Betsi Cadwaladr’s autobiography, the text was actually written by Jane Williams, following a lengthy interview with Betsi.

¹⁰¹ Jane Williams, *A History of Wales: Derived from Authentic Sources* (London: Longmans, Green, And Co, 1869), 194.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 195.

referential Welsh term. Additionally, she describes the Normans as oppressors, suggesting that Wales has always struggled with the English. Williams' valorization of the Welsh in battle, spirit, and passions suggest that Wales is a superior nation. Her commentary contributed to the anti-colonial intellectual rebellion of Wales.

R. J. Derfel created a further response to the Blue Books in his play, Brad Y Llyfrau Gleision (Treachery of the Blue Books). Derfel was the first to term the educational reports as a treachery, as he wrote that "It is sure to see that there is some treachery / Against the quiet people of the Principality."¹⁰³ Derfel deliberately drew a comparison of the publication with the Treachery of the Long Knives, part of the historical relationship between England and Wales. The Treachery of the Long Knives was

the story of the sixth-century Saxon lord who invited British chieftains to a banquet to celebrate a truce, required them to leave their weapons at the door as a sign of goodwill and then had them murdered by his followers who had cunningly concealed their own knives about their persons [...] It had been presented as fact in many histories of Wales, and was sufficiently well known to be used in threatening letters from the Daughters of Rebecca to their targets as well as in an earlier (highly romantic) play on the same subject.¹⁰⁴



Fig 2.9: Night of the Long Knives, Hugh Hughes picture for the 1822 publication of Drych Y Prif Oesoedd. (National Library of Wales)

Quoted in Prys Morgan, "R. J. Derfel a Drama Brad Y Llyfrau Gleision," in *Brad Y Llyfrau Gleision*, ed. Prys Morgan (Llandysul: Gwasg Gomer, 1991), 1.

¹⁰⁴ Gwyneth Tyson Roberts, *The Language of the Blue Books: The Perfect Instrument of Empire* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998), 216.

¹⁰⁵ Prys Morgan, *Brad Y Llyfrau Gleision*, 3.

In his play, Derfel portrayed the Commissioners as servants of Beezlebub.¹⁰⁶ He opened the play in hell and had Beezlebub manufacture the circumstances of the educational reports:

Scorn the entire literature of Wales -
 Connect everything in the land with ink:
 And attack the language most seriously
 Do not account for the posterity or fairness of the land
 Present all of the women as prostitutes
 And the children that they bear as bastards.¹⁰⁷

This section of the poetry derogated the Commissioners' aims as they wrote the report, pointing out the Commissioners' negative assumptions about women. Claims of prostitution scapegoated the women in the educational reports. Derfel takes into consideration how the Commissioners portrayed Welshwomen and, in a tongue-in-cheek way, points to the devil as the reason for this portrayal. Derfel's aggressive attack on the English Commissioners seeks to protect the Welsh cultural heritage and Welshwomen. His comment that Beezlebub produced the educational reports suggests that the reports are illegitimate. His demonization of the reports extends to the demonization of the English pawns in the devil's hands, evil by association. Derfel's metaphorical representation of the education reports is a direct anti-colonialist reaction. He shows innocent women subjected to the devil's cruel intentions once again objectifying women as tokens in the anti-colonial response of the Welsh. As Gwyneth Tyson Roberts writes, "Derfel's play mockingly dramatized the serious contention of many Welsh that the Report attacked not merely educational standards in Wales but everything that made Wales and Welsh people distinctive – in short, Welsh identity."¹⁰⁸ Derfel, in association with Hugh Hughes, thus actively attempted to invalidate the claims made against Wales in the Blue Books through showing the incompetence and nefarious

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 12.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 14.

¹⁰⁸ Gwyneth Tyson Roberts, *The Language of the Blue Books*, 216.

connections of the Commissioners. His effort would aid Wales in asserting that it was not immoral, or poor, or in any way worse than England.

A United Front

Welsh responses to the English-commissioned educational reports, were broadly speaking, political, literary, and in the media, stimulating Wales to protect herself from unwarranted claims. Some responders such as Hugh Hughes, R J Derfel, Henry Richards, and Jane Williams challenged the frameworks and assumptions of England about Wales through essays, speeches, pictures and stories. Ieuan Gwynedd wished to accommodate Wales to English standards of order to show the Welsh as a civilized and competent people. Overwhelmingly, his and other responses used discussions of women to respond to the English. Their 'use' of women was problematic in itself as the responders reduced women to objects that were used to manipulate a contentious discussion between England and Wales. Welsh responses to the Blue Books both showcased the unfair assumptions made about Welshwomen and sought to protect females from English criticism, raising their visibility within Wales. Responders across the board paraded an ideal of Welshwomen as opposed to their true state in order to repulse the colonial aims of England.

Many of the responses are interesting in that they repudiate English values. However, these pro-Welsh examples of resistance still operate in a Victorian rhetorical framework of speeches at Parliament, and traditional methods of communication. Importantly, the Welsh responses to the English were largely made on the intellectual plane, rather than as riots or other physical/group resistance. This moderation in resistance perhaps speaks to the sense of shame which the educational reports had instilled in the Welsh. The Commissioners had claimed that Wales was barbarous and the Parliament had discussed the Rebecca Riots and Chartist Riots at length in the nation. It follows that the response to the educational reports were conducted by literary and

political elites to demonstrate that the Welsh were as civilized and as superior as the English. Helene Cixous writes that “Writing is for you, you are for you; your body is yours; take it [...] woman must write woman. And man, man.”¹⁰⁹ The implications of this are numerous. First, Cixous stresses the need for self-representation, which is what the Welsh did in the face of the colonial powers; the disadvantaged took a voice for themselves to express their positionality. Second, Cixous writes of the need for genders to self-represent; this was Wales’ failing. For the most part, men spoke on the behalf of women in order to legitimize the Welsh national identity. Thus, in a complex way, the Welsh both recreated and rejected Cixous’ belief that the underrepresented should gain a voice for themselves.

Responses to English expectations and English ways of thinking as set forth in the Blue Books enabled Wales to articulate itself as a nation apart from England. Welsh responses, largely in defense of women, served to aid the formation of a new sense of national identity. England critiqued Welshwomen, eliciting an unforeseen retaliation which aimed to dismantle English expectations and allow Welsh people to live in their own way. Whatever the Welsh did was acceptable, as they were not attempting to live up to standards imposed on them by a dominant nation. Anti-colonial rhetoric, informed by the tokenism of Welsh womanhood, created a totem from which a national identity would form.

¹⁰⁹ Helene Cixous, “The Laugh of the Medusa,” in *Feminist Theory: A Reader*, ed. Wendy K. Kolmar and Frances Bartkowski (New York: McGraw Hill, 2013), 225.

Chapter Three: Dame Wales and Welsh Peasants: A Female-Centered National Identity

Welsh responses to the English educational reports created a self-defined national identity revolving around women and articulated in ripostes to the Blue Books, yet despite the successful claim of Welsh national identity, political autonomy from the English eluded Wales. In attempting to respond to the English claims of their barbarism, the Welsh formulated a sense of self that emulated the cultural ego of England. Thus, the Welsh national identity would affirm and recreate the bourgeois merits that the English expected of the Welsh as outlined in the educational reports as opposed to creating a sense of self that did not rely on the dominant nation's values. In particular, English emphasis on the failures of Welshwomen led to bourgeois representations of Welshwomen in the years following the Blue Books. The Principality came to be personified as a woman in political cartoons, postcards and tourist paraphernalia, exhibiting a feminized national identity. Women became a focal point in nationalist discourse, and were represented according to bourgeois Victorian values.

The Feminized Welsh National Identity: Early Construction and Popularization

One of the most suggestive representations of the feminization of the Welsh nation is evident in the 'Dame Wales' cartoons which became popular in the late nineteenth century. These were drawn by Joseph Morewood Staniforth of the *Western Mail*, a Welsh newspaper. A selection of his work can be seen below:



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Figure 3.1: Dame Wales reads of the Welsh triumphs on the French coast in 1918.



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Figure 3.2: Dame Wales calls for soldiers to fight in the First World War

¹¹⁰ "In pictures: World War I cartoonist JM Staniforth," *BBC News*, last modified 21 March 2013. <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-21879127>.

¹¹¹ Neil Prior, "World War I cartoonist JM Staniforth's work to be digitized," *BBC News* last modified 20 March 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-21853670>.



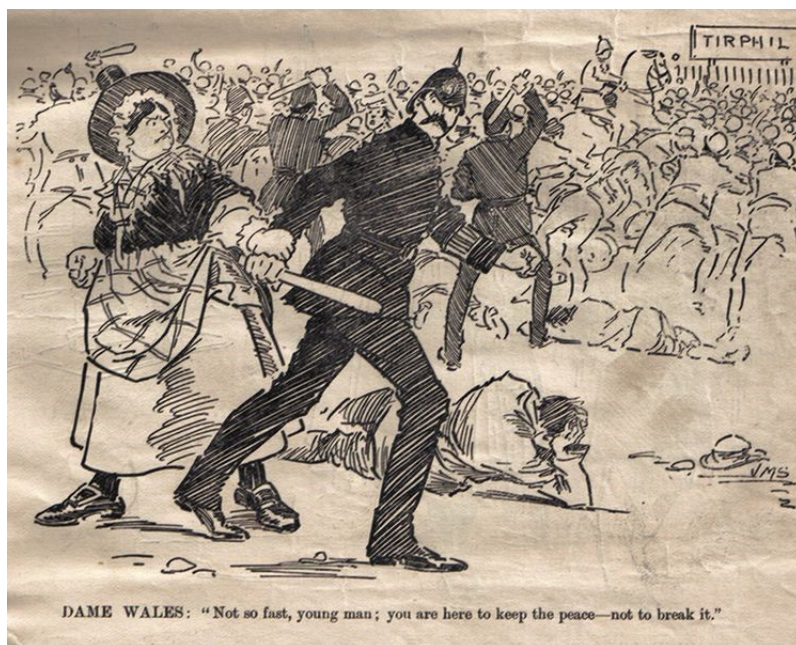
Making Growth.

JOHN BULL: Compliment you, ma'am, on your new plant! How's it getting on?
 DAME WALES: Fammous, look you. I do expect it will be a fine, sturdy plant in a few weeks' time; yes, indeed.

Considerable progress was reported in the formation of the Battalion of Welsh Guards.

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Figure 3.3: Dame Wales depicts the growth of the Welsh battalion in 1915.



DAME WALES: "Not so fast, young man; you are here to keep the peace—not to break it."

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Figure 3.4: Dame Wales confronts policy brutality at a striker's riot in 1898.

¹¹² "In pictures: World War I cartoonist JM Staniforth," *BBC News*, last modified 21 March 2013. <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-21879127>.

¹¹³ "Dame Wales" *Wikipedia*, last accessed March 9 2014, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Dame_Wales.jpg.

These images represent various traits of the feminine persons of the Principality, especially themes of domesticity and motherhood. In image 3.2 Dame Wales is portrayed as calling Welsh soldiers to participate in the war, with men running toward her. She is depicted as the guide for Welsh citizens, influencing them to serve their nation. The mothering aspect of her countenance is emphasized in her influence of the path of her children/soldiers. In image 3.4 Dame Wales is shown protecting Welsh men who are being unjustly beaten by policeman in the course of a peaceful protest. Her protective instincts bring to mind images of a mother who is attempting to defend her citizen children. In figure 3.1 Dame Wales reads of the triumph of Welsh soldiers in France during the First World War. She scans the newspaper with an excited, proud, and maternal expression. Her home is shown to be comfortable, small, and pleasantly homely. Havoc ensues around her, due to her absorption in the newspaper. However, this absorption emphasizes her focus on the accomplishments of her children/soldiers, showcasing her maternal nature. Finally, in Figure 3.4, Dame Wales is depicted as domestically watering her garden, growing soldiers for the upcoming war, and her nurturing, caring qualities are underscored. This image is particularly salient in its depiction of Dame Wales as being a carer, mother, teacher, and helper.

Maternal depictions of Dame Wales in these cartoons emphasize the qualities that the 1847 Commissioners had established as the ideal for women. The responders to the Blue Books had also emphasized the ideal nurturing nature of women. Subsequently, women were expected to influence the next generation and aid them to achieve a serviceable, fruitful, and happy life. This approach to motherhood was clearly problematic, as a 25% of working class Welshwomen worked.¹¹⁴ Alexandra Kollontai depicts the difficulties for working class women to be the ideal mother as she depicts a working class woman, Masha, and her difficulties in motherhood. Kollontai writes of;

¹¹⁴ W. Gareth Evans, *Education and Female Emancipation*, 14.

Masha, the working women – the dyers, weavers, laundresses and the other hundreds and thousands of working class women – motherhood is a cross. The factory siren calls the woman to work but her child is fretting and crying. How can she leave it? Who will look after it? She pours the milk into a bottle and gives the child to the old woman next door or leaves her young daughter in charge. She goes off to work, but she never stops worrying about the child. The little girl, well—intentioned but ignorant, might try feeding her brother porridge or bits of bread.¹¹⁵

Clearly, these same difficulties were faced by working class women in Wales. As a result, the idealistic depiction of motherhood could not possibly ring true for a large population of Wales. Thus, the way in which motherhood was constructed as an integral part of Welshwomen's nationhood meant that many would be unable to live up to the standards of the Welsh nation. Thus, it is apparent that the images of women in Wales were not representative of the reality of the lived experience for many women.

The sacrificial ideal for mothers is depicted in images of Dame Wales' approach to her children/citizens. The implications of depicting woman as mother are vast. Relegating women to motherhood is a way of ensuring that women carry out their biological functions, a way of 'doing gender' that hardens accepted forms of behavior for women.¹¹⁶ According to scripts established by gender, these norms "divides work in the home and in economic production, legitimates those in authority, and organizes sexuality and emotional life [...] As primary parents, women significantly influence children's psychological development and emotional attachments, in the process reproducing gender."¹¹⁷ Thus, the onus of raising successful kin is placed on women. The display of Dame Wales as a mother, with the notable absence of a fathering counterpart, reinforces domestic stereotypes. Through creating a space in which men cannot participate as involved fathers: "social disapproval and economic inequality put full-time domesticity out of reach for

¹¹⁵ Alexandra Kollontai, *Working Woman and Mother in Feminist Theory: A Reader* p 135.

¹¹⁶ For further information on 'doing gender,' see Judith Lorber "The Social Construction of Gender."

¹¹⁷ Judith Lorber, "The Social Construction of Gender," in *Reconstructing Gender: A Multicultural Anthology*, edited by Estelle Disch, (Boston: McGraw Hill Education, 2009), 116.

almost all men.”¹¹⁸ The depiction of women exclusively as mothers thus aids the creation of a stratified system in which women and men must proceed on mutually exclusive paths. Thus in the patriarchal composition of Western societies, male activities in the private sphere are revered, while women’s involvement in the domestic sphere is diminished.

Images of Dame Wales from the nineteenth century also evince many themes of patriotism. In figure 3.2, Dame Wales stands above all of the other characters in the frame. She holds a horn traditionally used as a way to call people to battle. She stands in an industrial location, with a factory spewing fumes behind her. In the fumes, “Threat of War” is written in a way that shows that the ominousness of the First World War is encroaching on the Welsh territory. Welsh industrial workers, equipped with pickaxes held aloft in a way that suggests weaponry, run to Dame Wales’ battle cry. The picture is captioned with “The Call for Patriotism.” Dame Wales is explicitly associated with garnering patriotic support, thus make her a proponent of Welsh nationalism. Figure 3.4 shows Dame Wales with an aggressive expression as she forcefully holds a policeman back from engaging in the riots. In the background, policemen are beating unarmed rioters, and the Welsh citizens are shown in retreating positions, defenseless and weak in comparison to the armed policeman. Dame Wales is captioned as saying “Not so fast, young man; you are here to keep the peace – not to break it.” Interestingly, the policeman are depicted as wearing helmets that would be more appropriate for German police or military men. During the late nineteenth century, Britain was concerned about a German invasion. Policemen in Wales were British. Thus it is suggested that the British(/English) policemen are ‘invading’ Wales just as the British feared the Germans would invade. The injustice of police action in the image of this riot is apparent. The artist evidently believed that the rioters were peacefully protesting and the

¹¹⁸ Kathleen Gerson, “Dilemmas of Involved Fatherhood,” in *Reconstructing Gender: A Multicultural Anthology*, edited by Estelle Disch, (Boston: McGraw Hill Education, 2009), 325.

policemen saw fit to beat them needlessly. Dame Wales' role is attempting to reinstitute justice through stopping a policeman from joining in with the riots. Thus, Dame Wales is effecting justice for her nation in the face of non-Welsh citizens, in a patriotic act. Figure 3.3 depicts Dame Wales watering the Welsh guards, a subdivision of the British army. The sun, helping the plants in her garden grow, hangs in the background with 'Welsh Nationalism' stamped across it. The rest of the plants in Dame Wales' garden are other 'homegrown' products of Wales, such as Welsh horses, and the 37th Welsh Regiment. Behind the wall of the garden, John Bull stands in army gear, watching Dame Wales water her garden. The captioned dialogue reads as follows:

John Bull: Compliment you, ma'am on your new plant! How's it getting on?

Dame Wales: Fammous, look you. I do expect it will be a fine, sturdy plant in a few weeks' time; yes indeed"

The presence of John Bull, representative of Britain, though more specifically England, suggests encroachment on the freedom of the Welsh in parliamentary assessment of the ability of the Welsh to govern themselves. However, the cordial dialogue between the two characters suggests that Wales and England are capable of helping one another. The lines spoken by the characters emphasize the Foucauldian watching eye of the English, although cordial. The clear demarcation between Dame Wales and John Bull emphasizes the way in which Wales and England are considered to be definitively separate nations, although linked by their union on the same island.

Emphasis on Dame Wales' patriotism reflect the emphasis of women's role in forming her children's national identity, as stressed throughout the Blue Books, and in the Welsh responder's texts. The matrilineal nature of culture transmission is emphasized throughout images of Dame Wales. The implications of emphasizing her patriotic nature are multifaceted. First, the woman is held to be representative of the nation. As is clear in the case of nineteenth century Wales, ideals

are created and continuously reiterated through designating the woman as the representative of a nation, thus locking women into expectations. Patriotism itself is problematic. As Immanuel Wallerstein writes in reference to national identities;

Why should the establishment of any particular sovereign state within the interstate system create a corresponding ‘nation’, a ‘people’? This is not really difficult to understand. The evidence is all around us. States in this system have problems of cohesion. Once recognized as sovereign, the states frequently find themselves subsequently threatened by both internal disintegration and external aggression.¹¹⁹

England and Wales navigated their relationship during the nineteenth century in this way. In establishing a patriotic sense of self, Wales left itself vulnerable to the need to legitimize its nationhood. Media images of Dame Wales, are in themselves, an attempt to legitimize the patriotism of the Principality. However, in creating a definitive personification of the nation, Wales opened itself to further criticism and further questioning of Wales’ claim to autonomy.

The depiction of Dame Wales in the traditional Welsh dress in all of the images is an important aspect of this representation. However, in image 3.1, she does not wear the usual hat, opting for the underbonnet suitable for indoor wear only. In this image, her home is traditionally Welsh, in that there is a fireplace for the stove and tea, a cat to catch mice and rats (important in an agricultural setting), a tea set and wooden furniture. Figure 3.3 also emphasizes Dame Wales’ outfit in contrast to John Bull’s military outfit. Wales is thereby depicted as more homely than the forceful and brutal England, even though in other images Dame Wales is depicted as patriotic. She is simply less brutal than England, though still patriotic. In essence, in these images Dame Wales, the woman, wears the nation. That is, the traditional Welsh costume is its clearest emblem. There is no male equivalent. Dorothy Ko, in writing of the way in which women’s cultural dress was significant, writes that “getting dressed was thus at once a cultural act, one that distinguished

¹¹⁹ Immanuel Wallerstein, “The Construction of Peoplehood: Racism, Nationalism, Ethnicity,” in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, edited by Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, (London: Verso, 1991), 81.

humans from beasts, and a political act.”¹²⁰ Ko continues, in discussing Chinese footbinding, to say that women “represented [...] the boundaries of China’s “national” identity before the age of modern nationalism.”¹²¹ The same can be said about women wearing traditional dress in Wales. Through displaying Dame Wales as a thoroughly Welsh woman wearing traditional dress, the expectations, pride in, and need for adorned Welsh women was emphasized to legitimize Wales as a nation and inspire women to actively take part in the ideal female role.

Dame Wales, as shown in these images, encompasses the positive qualities promoted by the responders of the Blue Books. The personification of the nation as a woman affirms that the Welsh articulated their national identity through women. The feminization of Wales is counter to other nations such as the United States of America, which is personified as Uncle Sam, or John Bull, who represents the United Kingdom. These masculine images often convey strength and vigor as well as a good sense of leadership on the part of the nation. The personification of John Bull is complex in that he is conveyed as a representative of the people, without overt strength or masculinity, but Bull is a man with intelligent ideas and is thus a good leader for the nation. These masculine images create ideals for men to live up to, including a lack of emotion, an ability to lead, a strong countenance, and breadwinning.¹²² The conscious decision to present Wales as a woman thus suggests that Wales is neither aggressive nor a prominent international leader.

Female personifications of women are tropes in many nations: Britannia (England), Germania (Germany), and Athena (Greece) are female personifications of the nation. However, these female personifications are often displayed with grace and serenity, wisdom and guidance,

¹²⁰ Dorothy Ko, “The Body as Attire: Shifting Meanings of Footbinding in Seventeenth Century China,” *Journal of Women’s History* 8, no. 4 (1997) : 12.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 15

¹²² See: *Tough Guise: Violence, Media & the Crisis in Masculinity*, directed by Sut Jhally (1999; USA: Media Education Foundation), Documentary.

and femininity and glamor. Dame Wales does not display any of these lofty traits. She appears as dumpy, somewhat clumsy, motherly, conventionally unattractive and in no way ethereal. The personification of Wales as an overwhelmingly average woman (although savvy and gutsy) suggests that Staniforth perceived Wales as a nation that was altogether 'normal,' in the sense that Wales had no significant amounts of power, could exert no pressures on other nations, and consequently could not match up to the beautiful, ethereal Britannia. The popularity of Dame Wales among the Welsh population suggests that Welsh citizens tended to agree with Staniforth. Dame Wales thus appears to be a self-mocking caricature to personify the nation. She was an active member of the Welsh nation who was unafraid of approaching perilous situations for the good of her nation. Absence of glamor and grace in her portrayal suggests that Dame Wales, to some extent, is more realistic than other nations' personifications. Thus, although Staniforth depicted Dame Wales as an unappealing and ridiculous character, she consistently rallied the Welsh to fulfill their patriotic duties, thus ensuring the positive impact of the nation. Dame Wales was a tongue-in-cheek depiction of the Welsh, by the Welsh.

In addition to the images of Dame Wales, Wales was represented by women in popular tourist images of the early twentieth and late nineteenth century. Some examples have been collected below.

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Figure 3.5: “Postcard entitled ‘Welsh Fisherwomen’ (no 5,987); of unknown date, but postmarked 1907. Note the distinctive hats, sometimes called ‘cockle bonnets’, worn by coastal market women, who often carried baskets of marine produce balanced on their heads. Author’s collection. Copyright untraced.”

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Figure 3.6: “Postcard entitled ‘Welsh Cockle Girl’, from the ‘Kromo’ series (No.21924/x), published by ‘B&D.’ of London; of unknown date but postmarked 1908. Selling cockles and laver door-to-door was an important part of the coastal produce trade. Author’s collection. Copyright untraced.”

¹²³ Kaori O’Connor, “The Secret History of ‘The Weed of Hiraeth’: Laverbread, Identity, and Museums in Wales,” *Journal of Museum Ethnography* No. 22 (2009) : 91.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 92.

These images were the chosen representations of Wales. The themes they exhibit are useful in explicating how Wales was commodifying its culture for outside consumption.

Figure 3.5 shows Welshwomen in a culturally traditional field of work. The women are clad in informal versions of the Welsh national dress and are shown with the goods of their work. The relaxed, conversational positioning of the women allows the women to appear non-threatening and genial. Their regionally specific employment serves to remind the viewer of Wales' long coasts. The perspective on the women reminds us that we, as viewers, are not part of the scene. Their traditional dress and occupation, as well as their non-urban location, also suggests that the women may have been speaking in Welsh to one another, further emphasizing the distance between the receiver of the postcard (presumably located outside of Wales) and the participants in the photograph. To a certain extent, the image thus indicates that there is a specifically Welsh culture to which we (as viewers, senders/receivers of the postcard) are not privy. Thus, the 'Welshness' of the image is preserved and commodified to be displayed to different people in different places. Interestingly, the occupation and dress of the women in the photograph suggest that the women were in the working class. The representation of the working class for the consumption of the middle [international] classes mirrors the production of the Blue Books, in which the Welsh were taken advantage of by the English. That is, the working class served as a basis for the significant criticism levied against Wales by the English upper and middle classes. Thus the English approach to the working class Welsh had changed from using them as a tool to fulfill their goals to commodifying them for tourist enjoyment. Welsh culture is presented as unique, distinct from that of the English, and relaxed in this postcard. Thus, like Dame Wales, these women were adorned with the nation in order to emphasize the matrilineal nature, the

necessity for pride in one's cultural traditions, and the distinct space traditionally clad Welshwomen could occupy.

Figure 3.6 is different from Figure 3.5 in that the composition of the photograph is far more staged. Contrary to Figure 3.5, the woman in Figure 3.6 is young and beautiful. Her dress is more tailored and accentuates her figure, and her position is jaunty, almost flirtatious. Her facial expression is enigmatic and suggests a degree of entertainment and aloofness. She holds much more produce than the women in Figure 3.6. Finally, she is in front of a building, connoting a more urban location than her counterparts in Figure 3.5. This image is brimming with youth and opportunity as the woman is presented as being independent, sexually available, and exciting. Her lack of 'dowdiness,' compared to the women in Figure 3.5, suggests that this woman is more cosmopolitan and capable of entertainment than those cultural curiosities. However, the woman is still a cockle girl, working in a traditionally coastal occupation. Thus, although she is sexualized and depicted as desirable and exciting, she remains indicative of the Welsh culture through her dress and work. Relatedly, the representation of the woman's sexuality echoes comments in the Blue Books of women who were "almost universally unchaste."¹²⁵ Although there is no distinct evidence in this picture, the sexually charged image does remind us of the ways in which the women of Wales may be consumed (beyond the traditional perspective of Wales being consumed by the economy, the land, the legislature, the workers available, the agriculture). The sexual appeal of the woman evokes what Laura Mulvey describes as the 'male gaze' in cinema.¹²⁶ That is, women are constructed and designed as passive objects to be consumed by men. In this context, the idea of the 'male gaze' takes on a double significance, as women are both commodified in the postcards

¹²⁵ Jellynger C. Symons, R. R. W. Lingen, H. R. Vaughan Johnson, *Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales*, 34.

¹²⁶ See Laura Mulvey "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" for further information.

for men to gaze upon, and Wales itself is packaged neatly for the consumption of other nations. The way in which Wales commodifies itself underscores the desire for legitimacy and acceptance as a Principality.

The Commodification of Identities: Wales and its Failed Separation

While the feminized Welsh national identity successfully articulated separation from England, the way in which Wales presented its newly developed national identity at the same time served to affirm and recreate many English bourgeois values. Examples include the consumption of women for entertainment/visual pleasure and the pleasure in viewing the ‘humble peasant.’ That is, the Welsh working class who the Commissioners had degraded in the educational reports became symbolic of a way of life that was no longer desirable. The Welsh working class was reduced to a kitsch form of entertainment. Representation of the working class in postcards and illustrations suggests that an ironic pleasure was derived from viewing the lives of working class, ‘undeveloped’ peoples in what was long regarded as a barbaric nation. This phenomenon is comparable to the way in which indigenous groups are both exoticized and barbarized in contemporary times. Similarly, women were indicative of the Principality. Thus, both the working class and women were established as groups to be looked at by outsiders, consumed and absorbed as opposed to groups to be engaged. In comparing these postcard images, we see that numerous aspects of the Welsh culture and national identity were packaged and reproduced for external consumption. Regardless of which aspects of the Welsh national identity were publicized, the Welsh national identity was depicted through womanhood.

The internal dynamic of the Welsh nation with regard to these images was slightly different from their reception in England as evidenced in the depictions of Dame Wales. Whereas postcards and items for consumption outside of Wales used women as props, Dame Wales herself was

depicted as a lower class woman who carried the spirit of the Welsh in order to ensure that the nation flourished. Yet, Dame Wales attempts to support her children/citizens to succeed in the future. Thus her working-class appearance suggests that she is in a reduced state. Respect for the peasantry and working class is apparent in the depictions of Dame Wales, as she is representative of the roots of the nation (mother, carer, nurturer), but the details suggest that those who come after her must improve on her state, as the bumbling, clumsy nature of her life to accrue greater respect. Her general incompetence emerges at various points in her depiction, showing that although she is able to tap into the emotions of the Welsh population, she is unable coherently to run the nation.

Objectification of women and the working class in images of Welsh identity suggested that the viewer was other than the subject. In the display of images of women and the working class, the viewer (/consumer/actor/economic strength) came unconsciously to understand a contrast with the object of his gaze. The normalization of bourgeois values shows that the Welsh national identity and the English national identity prized the same things. The characteristics prescribed by England were useful for Wales to follow, as these characteristics would aid the economic development of the Welsh nation and the expansion of opportunities available for its citizens, but Wales aimed for cultural autonomy and so articulated itself as a separate nation through emphasizing the Welsh language and the unique mythology of the Principality. Harri Roberts discusses the implication of the educational reports, saying that:

The “national revival” which [the educational reports] stimulated, for instance, far from being opposed to these processes of assimilation, actively sought to construct Welsh culture in conformance with bourgeois notions of morality and bodily propriety. It is no surprise, then, given the corporeal foundations of subjectivity, that the concept of Welsh nationhood which emerged after 1847 found itself predicated upon, and contained within, the same bourgeois ideals which it purported to reject. The nascent Welsh nationalist movement, it could be argued, was doomed to operate within a bourgeois identity politics that regarded Welsh

culture – that is, Welsh working-class culture – as irredeemably subaltern and subject.¹²⁷

Although the language and the mythology used by the responders to the 1847 Blue Books purported a repudiation of all things English, the Welsh grew closer to the English ways of living. The oppressors had cast their judgment, and the Welsh had responded with a forceful assertion of what it meant to be Welsh, yet their national identity still reflected the values that the English were attempting to instill in the Welsh. In adhering to English Victorian standards, the Welsh crystallized unattainable ideals for both the working class and Welshwomen, so making them subjects as opposed to agents.

Not only did the idealized versions of women and the working class suggest that they were irreconcilably separate from a British bourgeois norm, these portrayals also served to reinforce expectations for women. First, women were to be motherly, caring, and selflessly aid the next generation to be the best that it could be. Second, women were to be hardworking, modest and caring, serving their community to the best of their abilities. Women were to be attractive, approachable, and interesting. They were to transmit the cultural values of the Welsh to their children. Women were to do a lot of things that no one person could possibly do all at once. These ideals together formed an unattainable image of womanhood. Women had to attempt to reach these ideals to effectively discredit the claims that were made in the Blue Books. If Wales was able to demonstrate that Welshwomen were ideal in every way expected of women, the claims made by the 1847 Commissioners would be discredited. Thus, Wales would regain legitimacy and be respected as an entity in of itself.

Prior to the publication of the Blue Books, Welshwomen *were* of course subject to expectations and ideals. Wales was an extremely religious society, with a majority of Welsh

¹²⁷ Harri Roberts, *North American Journal of Welsh Studies*, 21.

subjects identifying as Nonconformist (Calvinist-Methodist). Christian scripture described women as mothers to all, inferior to men, and as providers for the next generation. Additionally, Welshwomen were typically expected to occupy the private sphere while Welshmen worked in industries in the public sphere. Although these expectations and approaches to womanhood existed prior to the publication of the Blue Books, these reports had a vast impact on the ideals considered appropriate for Welshwomen, creating a chain of events which would amplify and isolate the ideals for Welshwomen. That is, the ideals were simply more rigorous constructions of what was expected for women than before. Thus, although the approach to women did not drastically change, the independence of self-expression available to women became significantly narrower than what was available prior to the Blue Books. The ideals for women became immobile, unwieldy and smothering, in contrast to more lenient and flexible expectations of womanhood prior to the publication of the reports.¹²⁸

The claim of separatist identity was not a total loss for the Welsh society. Welsh language was revived and celebrated, and women were given more visibility due to the frequent representation of women in new forms of media, but these representations were constrained to idealistic versions of womanhood. Welshwomen were nonetheless able to work within the ideals to achieve things that they had never been able to achieve before the publication of the educational

¹²⁸ Prior to the Blue Books, the ideals of womanhood in Wales were constructed in a more casual way. With up to a quarter of working-class Welshwomen working (W. Gareth Evans, 1990), the ideals for womanhood were less static as the Welsh were aware of living conditions that could not allow for immovable ideals. Thus, women were expected to be mothers. Women were expected to teach the young. Women were expected to be the emotion of the family. Women were supposed to be the discipliners of the family. Women were expected to maintain the home for the family's comfort. However, all of these ideals and expectations were flexible to the life and necessities faced by the woman. Religion was the strongest uniting force that dictated behavior for women, but not everyone was religious, and not everyone considered religious ideals to be relevant. Following the publication of the Blue Books, a clear secular articulation of what a woman should do was created. Due to the incorporation of these ideals in speeches which would aid the development of the Welsh national identity, the ideals expected of women became more widely supported. In a time when Welsh people felt anger, and the need to legitimize their identities to the English, the ideals for women became more crystalized. This is due to the fact that Welsh citizens were attempting to articulate what their lives meant in order to express the legitimacy of autonomy and thus win the ability to keep the Welsh language and other cultural treasures.

reports. Thus, the articulation of national identity created a sense of self for the Welsh, yielded a higher visibility for women in general, and gave individual women spaces to influence and create lives for themselves, however restricted those may have been.

Representation and the Implications

Welsh national identity centered on women. Women came to be symbolic of the Welsh culture, and concurrently, an ideal was created for Welshwomen. The women's ideal state was to be a caring and compassionate moral compass for the rest of the Welsh society. This ideal compacted the genders into respectably standard and appropriate behavior. Welsh women entered into fields of care and compassion such as teaching and nursing. However, some women were able to manipulate the expectations made of them to gain positions of power and greater access in male-oriented fields for other women. Although the Welsh national identity articulated itself as a cultural entity separate from England, the Welsh had not strayed far from the expectations that England placed on the Principality during the educational reports of 1847. The Welsh prized inherently anglicized bourgeois values. Apart from the Welsh language and the Welsh national dress and mythology, Wales failed to set itself outside of the system of the English oppressors. Instead, Wales was self-consciously attempting to quash evidence of the claims that England had made of the Welsh culture.

Conclusion

The Blue Books shaped the development of the Welsh nation. Not only did a new Welsh national identity form, but the Commissioners and responders increased the visibility of Welshwomen to the point that women now came to represent Wales. Unfortunately, Welshwomen were now *Welshwomen*; a static idealized identity which left no room for deviation. As discussed in Chapter Two and Three, a carefully formulated, precise, and impenetrable depiction emerged to identify as both female and Welsh. To save the face of the Welsh nation, women were to behave in a certain way, act in a certain way, and communicate in a certain way. The freedom of women was significantly limited in the successful creation of a Welsh national identity due to the burden of characteristics associated with women, such as domesticity, motherhood, and education of the next generation.

The creation of a Welsh national identity was equally limiting. The Welsh were able to assume a new sense of self. However, this was a pyrrhic victory. In constructing a sense of selfhood designed to legitimate the language and people of Wales, the Welsh established their identity as compatible with Victorian English bourgeois values. Thus, the zeniths of cultural achievement did not differ significantly from those of England. Wales simply included the Welsh language and an increased emphasis on the mythological history of Wales. Complexly, while the Welsh sense of national identity incorporated the English values, the Welsh themselves purported the repudiation of all things English. That is, the reinvigorated Welsh cultural history emphasized the antagonistic nature of the English and the early victories of the Welsh forces, yet the Welsh continued to employ the same bourgeois values as the English. These values were evident in the commodification of women and the working class. The media presented the voyeur of Welsh society as a middle or

upper-class man, thus designating similarly identifying individuals as the most influential class in Wales.

Welsh elites grasped for ways in which to legitimize the separation of Wales and England, resulting in a discourse that shaped the values that were important to the Welsh people, and the values that were important for women to hold. The completion of these aims resulted in a fulfillment of the Parliament's intentions. The English cultural values pervaded the Welsh system, creating a more distinct cultural homogeneity and cohesion amongst the British Isles. Thus, although not immediately apparent following the publication of the Blue Books, the Welsh adapted to English expectations enabling William Williams claims; "if the Welsh had the same advantages for education as the Scotch, they would, instead of appearing a distinct people, in no respect differ from the English"¹²⁹ Although the Welsh language and claims of cultural individuality were strong, the larger cultural frameworks shifted to mirror the bourgeois values of England.

Limitations

Due to limitations of space, this essay has been unable to tackle the myriad other factors that influenced the way in which Wales came to develop a national identity during the nineteenth century. The most significant understudied cultural arena is that of religion. Given the strong religious sentiments in Wales, to incorporate religious culture into the study of a Welsh national identity would be illuminating. Additionally, to assess how the working class reacted to the publication of the Blue Books, chiefly about them, would be instructive. Space limitations have meant here that a high portion of evidence and material went unused, as the bulk of primary material was simply too vast to include. Thus this thesis shows the absence of a number of voices which could have been included.

¹²⁹ William Williams, *Commons Sitings*.

Theoretical Dimension

The theoretical framework of this study combined feminism and history, establishing a departure from the methods of traditional feminist historians. Adopting an interdisciplinary lens allows the actors of history to appear together, rather than mutually isolated according to their gender. Thus, it has been possible to gain a broader perspective of what was at stake for individuals, based on their identities, whether the most salient and relevant identity category was the individual's gender, class, or nationality. This perspective can contribute to further collaborative and interdisciplinary research in order to gain a richer perspective on the historical past.

The inclusion of theorists from a broad base of disciplines has contributed to a breadth of understanding. Edward Said, Peter Burke, Chandra Mohanty, Sara Ruddick and Laura Mulvey, to name but a few, have contributed widely different perspectives and opinions to the academy, and these divergent theorists have here allowed for a broader perspective on a complex topic. The specific knowledge of each has served to inform and augment different aspects of this argument. Specifically, this thesis has added evidence corroborating a number of theories. Edward Said's orientalism applies to the relationship between England and Wales, as England attempted to bestialize the subordinate nation. At the same time Laura Mulvey's discussion of the 'male gaze' to include a voyeuristic class dimension has been affirmed in visual analysis here. Many other theories have been found to fit the circumstances of the Welsh nation at this time.

Further Areas of Study

Much more can be said about the national identity formation in nineteenth century Wales. A comparative study of Wales, Ireland, and Scotland would contribute to the discussion of England as a cultural imperialist power. A close examination of the language and rhetoric in both the Blue Books and the responses to the Blue Books would aid in fleshing out the perspectives of both the

Welsh and the English. I believe that the most fruitful next step would be in assessing the role of the church in the completion of the Blue Books, as well as the role of the church in responding to the Blue Books. This investigation would add much to the study of this topic, as churches in Wales fell under the jurisdiction of the Church of England. Attention to the competing interests of state authority and cultural authority would contribute a new dimension to understanding the educational reports.

Welsh history has thus far been undercut by the absence of theoretical frameworks, so it would be instrumental for historians to apply numerous different theoretical lenses in assessing the nineteenth century, a period of great change for Wales - a period in which the Welsh came to rally for whom they believed they were, and what they believed they wanted. The publication of the Blue Books, although relatively understudied, remains one of the most transformative periods of Welsh history.

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- Fig. 2.3 : Hughes, Hugh. *A Commissioner with an ass' ears under his wig, listening to a vicar speaking against the Welsh*. 1848, political cartoon. *Brad Y Llyfrau Gleision*. From Prys Morgan. (Llandysul: Gwasg Gomer, 1991), 84.
- Fig. 2.4 : Hughes Hugh. *Ieuan Gwynedd poking the wolf*. 1848, political cartoon. *Brad Y Llyfrau Gleision*. From Prys Morgan. (Llandysul: Gwasg Gomer, 1991), 82.
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- Fig. 2.8 : Hughes, Hugh. *Jane Williams beating the three Commissioners*. 1848, political cartoon. *Brad Y Llyfrau Gleision*. From Prys Morgan. (Llandysul: Gwasg Gomer, 1991), ii.
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Fig. 3.6 : Unknown. *Welsh cockle girl poses with her wares*. Unknown date, postcard. *The Secret History of 'The Weed of Hiraeth' : Laverbread, Identity, and Museums in Wales*. From Kaori O'Connor. *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, No 22, 2009, 91.

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