

Y Drych and American Welsh Identities, 1851-1951

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In 2001, Y Drych will celebrate its one hundred and fiftieth anniversary.¹ It is by far the eldest of the two Welsh newspapers published in America today, the other, of course, being Ninnau. Its one hundred and fifty years of, as far as we know, continuous publication, first as a weekly, then, from the 1940s, as a monthly, means that it forms an invaluable and formidable archive of, potentially, some 45,000 pages. We estimate that it contains some 20,000 Welsh poems, let alone acres of news stories, biographical information on individuals, topographical descriptions, travel writing, serialized fiction, comment on virtually every subject under the sun, readers' letters and advertisements. It is without doubt a key source of information on the history of the Welsh in America, one that gives us some rare insights into the structure of feeling of some, at least, of the Welsh who settled in the United States.

Yet, despite its undoubted richness, Y Drych is not an easy source to get into. For one thing, no library, in the United States or in Wales, holds one continuous run of all extant copies. For another, its use of the Welsh language until the linguistic transition to English of the 1930s and 1940s has rendered it an awkward text for many modern researchers who are not familiar with Welsh. In Britain, it has been marginalized by being printed in the United States – only one copy of one issue is held in the British Library in London.² In the United States, on the other hand, one could argue that it has also been marginalized by the relative weakness of the Welsh as an ethnic group. In neither of two important recent studies of the ethnic press and of print culture in the United States, edited by Sally Miller in 1987 and

¹ An earlier version of this article was first delivered by Aled Jones as a Keynote Address at the North American Association for the Study of Welsh Culture and History Conference at Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, June 2000. This revised version has retained some of the idiom of an oral presentation. We wish to thank the University of Wales Board of Celtic Studies and the University of Wales Academic Support Fund for financial assistance for the "Y Drych and American Welsh Identities" project. We are also grateful for the valuable help received from, in particular, Huw Griffiths, the project's researcher, and Bryn Jones of Cardiff Central Library, Utica College, Mary Morris Mergenthal and Professor Eugene Nasser.

² This is Y Drych a'r Gwyllydydd 13 Mar. 1858. It is the only known extant copy of that issue.

Danky and Wiegand in 1998, is any reference made to the Welsh press.³ And that in spite of the fact that *Y Drych* is not only the oldest surviving Welsh newspaper in the United States, but is also one of the oldest, if not the oldest, continuously running and extant ethnic newspaper in North America (although it is possible that the German New York newspaper *Staats-Zeitung*, established in 1834, may have that honor). In any case, its longevity is amazing, especially when one considers that most ethnic, non-English-language newspapers were so short-lived. Seen in that light, *Y Drych* is not only an important Welsh newspaper, but it is also a major element in the neglected field of what historians like Danky, Wiegand and Rudolph Vecoli have termed ethnic American print culture.⁴

In order to try to set the record straight, the authors, with the able assistance of Huw Griffiths, a researcher funded by the Board of Celtic Studies of the University of Wales, have since last October been collecting information about the history of *Y Drych*.⁵ We recognize that it is not the only Welsh American title of note, but we do take the view that, largely because of its longevity, it needs to be given if not special then at least separate treatment. We have now gathered information on all the editors and publishers, and on as many reporters, agents and readers as is possible. We have tried to reconstruct the paper as a business venture, and to disentangle its financial structure. We have undertaken content analyses by decade, which not only makes explicit the kind of material it contains, but also how it changes over time. We have constructed distribution maps that show how the paper pulsed through North America along the rail routes. And we also have data on the sources of its news stories, its language shift, and the changing gender balance of its editors and correspondents. Over the next few months, we intend to condense that information into a book to coincide with the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary celebrations.

This article will raise in a preliminary way some of the issues that our study has addressed. The problems involved in writing a biography of this newspaper begin with the title itself, *Y Drych*, which translates into English as “The Mirror”. The title conveys the impression of a journalism that seeks to “reflect” the world around it, to show it as it is. Many of us will suspect that journalism has never really been that straightforward, and by the very act of selecting or spiking or editing a story, what emerges on the page are various mediated versions of that world. Far from being reflective of social reality, newspaper

³ Sally M. Miller ed., *The Ethnic Press in the United States: A Historical Analysis and Handbook* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1987); James P. Danky and Wayne A. Wiegand eds, *Print Culture in a Diverse America* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998).

⁴ Rudolph J. Vecoli, “The Italian Immigrant Press and the Construction of Social Reality, 1850-1920,” in Danky and Wiegand, *Print Culture*, 17-33.

⁵ Brief accounts of the paper’s history etc., though sometimes containing inaccurate and contradictory information, can be found in Paul Demund Evans, “The Welsh in Oneida County, New York”, unpublished MA thesis, Cornell University, 1914, 107-109; Deian Rhys Hopkin, “Welsh Immigrants to the United States and their Press, 1840-1930” in Christine Harzig and Dirk Hoerder (eds.) *The Press of Labor Migrants in Europe and North America 1880s to 1930s* (Bremen: Publications of the Labor Newspaper Preservation Project, University of Bremen, 1985) 349-365; E. G. Hartmann, *Americans from Wales* (Boston: Christopher Publishing, 1967) 128-129; T. M. Jones, *Llenyddiaeth Fy Ngwlad sef Hanes y Newyddiadur a'r Cylchgrawn Cymreig yn Nghymru, America, ac Awstralia* (Holywell, Wales: P. M. Evans, 1893) 205-206; Idwal Lewis, “Welsh Newspapers and Journals in the United States”, *National Library of Wales Journal* II (Summer 1942) 124-130; Bob Owen, “Welsh American Newspapers and Periodicals”, *National Library of Wales Journal* VI (Winter, 1950) 373-384. The Welsh press in the United States is generally an under-researched subject. For a useful interpretive introduction see Hopkin, “Welsh Immigrants to the United States and their Press.”

journalism may actively be constitutive of that reality, as editors communicate their own definitions of what they perceive in the world around them.⁶ In other words, we need to be aware that what we read in *Y Drych* may not only be diverse reports of what the Welsh were up to from week to week. It is possible that it also embodies a series of concerted attempts by its editors and main correspondents to define a Welsh identity, an ideology, if you like, for the Welsh in America. To get a better sense of what's going on in *Y Drych*, it helps to gather as much information as possible about the ways in which it worked as a newspaper. And while this article will seek to convey something of the flavor of the material that the project has unearthed, it will also consider three aspects of *Y Drych* during its first hundred years.

Firstly, it will tell something of the story. By rooting this newspaper in its material world, we begin to see it both at the level of the individual issue, in terms of its format, content and iconography, and as part of a longer-term process in which style, the balance of content, the motivations of editors, the paper's very identity and the ways in which it located itself politically, evolved or shifted. Secondly, it will examine the ways in which *Y Drych* articulated the changing cultural definitions of the Welsh in America, particularly with reference to its use of the Welsh language. And, finally, it will explore the paper's value as a link between the Welsh in the United States and in Wales.

The title page of *Y Drych's* first issue, dated 2 January 1851, is dominated by poetry (including a melodramatic "*Cwyn Y Fam Dros Ei Phlentyn Y Noson Cyn Ei Diennyddiad*" [Lament of a mother for her child the night before her execution]) and music, a hymn tune composed by J. M. Thomas while returning to "*wlad ei enedigaeth*" [the land of his birth].⁷ It appears that this issue was actually produced in November 1850 as a flyer to test the market. If, as we have alluded, the first problem is the title, the second lies in securing the names of the individuals who produced it, a difficulty exacerbated by the dense and confusing thicket of Joneses who were involved with the paper's early production. Most important of the early Joneses (to make matters worse they were all also called John) were John Morgan Jones, John William Jones, and John Mather Jones. *Y Drych* was founded by John Morgan Jones in New York City in January 1851. He was born in Llanidloes in 1818, emigrated to the United States in 1832, and died in Utica in 1912.⁸ He identified two initial readerships. One, the monolingual Welsh immigrants, and two, those settlers who though able to speak English could not read it, putting them at a disadvantage in relation to access to useful knowledge.⁹ As Vecoli has argued, immigrants needed access to journalism both for factual information, such as employment notices, and "an orientation to the social reality" of their new country.¹⁰ *Y Drych* sought to provide both. John Morgan Jones claimed an implausible potential readership of 250,000, a figure that was wielded largely to attract advertisers.¹¹ Actual circulation was more likely to be in the hundreds, at best, but their geographical range

⁶ See the various essays in Laurel Brake, Bill Bell, David Finkelstein eds, *Nineteenth-century Media and the Construction of Identities* (London: Palgrave, 2000).

⁷ *Y Drych* 2 Jan. 1851.

⁸ For biographical details of John Morgan Jones (1818-1912) see *Y Drych* 4 Jan. 1912; *The Cambrian* (Cincinnati and Utica) XXII No. 4 (15 Feb. 1912) 14; *Utica Herald Dispatch* 1 Jan. 1912; *Utica Daily Press* 2 Jan. 1912; National Library of Wales [hereafter NLW] Ms 9262A, Henry Blackwell, "A Dictionary of Welsh Biography," 374-376.

⁹ *Y Drych* 2 Jan. 1851.

¹⁰ Vecoli, "The Italian Immigrant Press" 18.

¹¹ *Y Drych* 2 Jan. 1851.

was impressive. Of the thirty-one agents who distributed the earliest issues, seventeen lived in Welsh settlements in Pennsylvania, six in New York State, five in Ohio, two in New Jersey and one in Massachusetts. Two further agents distributed the paper in Wales, while a third was responsible for the rest of the United Kingdom.¹² Within a matter of weeks, additional agents had been appointed in the States of Louisiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Vermont and Maryland.¹³

Welsh writers in other periodicals warmly welcomed the new title. For *Y Dysgedydd* it marked the beginning of “*cyfnod newydd yn hanes ein cenedl*” [a new period in the history of our nation].¹⁴ Others saw it as a means of bridging the divide between the Welsh in Wales and in America. *Y Gymraes*, for example, observed how

Nis gall helyntion America fod yn ddibwys yn y wlad hon, tra y mae cynifer o filoedd o'n cydgenedl yno, a miloedd yn debyg o'u ddilyn cyn hir. Gwna hyn ryw gyfrwng gohebiaeth rhwng y ddwy wlad yn angenrheidiol, ac addawa y “Drych” y bydd iddo wneyd yr angen i fynu.¹⁵

[Events in America cannot be considered unimportant in this country while so many thousands of our countrymen have migrated there, and thousands more are likely to follow them. This makes some form of correspondence between the two countries a necessity, and *Y Drych* promises to fulfill this need.]

What kind of newspaper was it? In addition to poetry and the usual news items, editorial columns, readers' letters and advertisements, *Y Drych* in 1851 was dominated by two key issues. Firstly, it argued that Welsh Americans had a duty to assist their fellow countrymen to emigrate to the United States.¹⁶ Furthermore, to maintain a sense of Welsh identity amongst these emigrants, *Y Drych* held it to be vitally important that they settled in Welsh-speaking homelands.¹⁷ The more prominent of the two schemes that emerged in the paper during 1851 were a planned Nova Cambria in Brazil¹⁸ and the proposed acquisition by the Welsh of Vancouver Island.¹⁹ Neither got off the ground, but the idea of creating a Welsh homeland remained a central driving force behind *Y Drych* for at least the following twenty years. As we shall see, however, it quickly came to prefer that homeland to be sited within its own geographic domain rather than outside the United States. Secondly, it advocated the placing of a Welsh memorial stone in the Washington Monument, then in the process of being erected. Following a series of forceful editorial articles, a Central Committee was formed in Utica to co-ordinate the work of raising the required \$400.²⁰ One of the leading figures behind the Central Committee was T. B. Morris (Gwyneddffardd)

¹² *Y Drych* 16 Jan. 1851.

¹³ *Y Drych* 8 Mar. 1851.

¹⁴ *Y Drych* 29 Mar. 1851.

¹⁵ *Y Drych* 1 Mar. 1851.

¹⁶ *Y Drych* 17 May 1851.

¹⁷ *Y Drych* 9 Jan. 1851.

¹⁸ *Y Drych* 5 Apr. , 24 May, 4 Oct. 1851.

¹⁹ *Y Drych* 12 Apr. , 4 Oct. 1851.

²⁰ *Y Drych* 3 Feb. , 8 Mar. 1851.

who in 1858 was to become joint editor of *Y Drych*. Other committees were quickly formed in Radnor Ohio, Chicago Illinois, New York City, Remsen New York State and the Pennsylvanian towns and cities of Philadelphia, Summit Hill, Catasauqua, Blossburg, Ebensburg, Pottsville, Big Rock and Welsh Creek.²¹ Exemplifying the kind of sentiments expressed at meetings were the words of the Welsh in Pottsville, Pennsylvania who declared in a resolution in support of the scheme:

*Ein bod ni, er yn Dramoriaid trwy enedigaeth, yn Americaid a Gweriniaid mewn teimlad; ac wedi gwneud gwlad Washington yn dir mabwysiedig; ac yn gwerthfawrogi y Rhyddid a'r Cyfleusderau a ganiateir i ni idd eu mwynhau.*²²

[That we, although foreigners through birth, are Americans and Republicans in sentiment; and have made Washington's country our adopted land; and [we] appreciate the Freedom and Conveniences that we are allowed to enjoy.]

Significantly, others among the Welsh objected to their symbolic inclusion in the project. The Welsh in Bradford, Pennsylvania, for example, refused their support because “*ni fyddai yn gyson â'n hegwyddorion i adeiladu cofgolofn i'r caethfeistr llywyddol cyntaf a fu yn ein gwlad*” [it is not consistent with our principles to build a memorial to the first slaveholding president of our country].²³ The storm that broke in the pages of *Y Drych* in the weeks following the publication of that letter only strengthened the editor's own, favorable line on the matter, and he urged the Bradford Welsh to reconsider their position.²⁴

The quest for a Welsh colony and the Washington Monument affair suggest two things about *Y Drych*. Right from the start, it knew how to mobilize its readers as well as to inform them. It also was unafraid to create controversy, or to divide the Welsh on political or linguistic lines. But even more significantly, perhaps, its early campaigns had encapsulated the ambivalence that was to characterize its dominant, editorial attitude towards the Americanization of the Welsh. They wanted to be recognized as Americans, but they also wanted to be different, to be Welsh in their Americanness, to be American with qualifications, and on their own terms.

Looking back at the paper's history since those early issues in 1851, we can discern four major phases. The first, from 1851 to 1860, established a style and a readership base for a paper whose content was mainly cultural and religious. Though strongly nonconformist, it nonetheless sought to avoid the rampant sectarianism of the newspaper press in Wales. Not that non-partisanship meant an absence of controversy; *Y Drych* never recoiled from doing its fair share of brawling in the in-fighting between rival camps that characterized the world of Welsh-American newspaper publishing at the time.²⁵ The paper's founder, John Morgan Jones, sold *Y Drych* in December 1854 to what was described as a Welsh “*Cwmni o Foneddigion*”²⁶ [Company of Gentlemen] in New York ostensibly to save it

²¹ *Y Drych* 19 Apr. , 3, 10 May, 16 Aug. , 13 Sept. , and 29 Nov. 1851.

²² *Y Drych* 19 Apr. 1851.

²³ *Y Drych* 19 Apr. 1851.

²⁴ *Y Drych a'r Gwyllydydd* 3 May 1856.

²⁵ *Y Drych* 28 June 1929.

²⁶ *Baner ac Amserau Cymru* 2 Apr. 1862.

from termination.²⁷ Jones immediately established a competitor, *Y Cymro Americanaidd*, and, unjustifiably it seems, alleged that the new company had reneged on financial agreements and accused *Y Drych* of being pro-slavery and too sympathetic to the Democrats.²⁸ The bitter feuding between John M. Jones and his brainchild of 1851 would last for well over a decade. Under the chairmanship of another Jones, William B. Jones (who used the bardic name, Ap P. A. Mon)²⁹, a successful New York entrepreneur and owner of the Columbia Hall Dry Goods Store in Brooklyn, the Company in 1855 bought a rival Welsh American newspaper *Y Gwyllyddydd Americanaidd* (The American Sentinel) and merged the two to form *Y Drych a'r Gwyllyddydd*.³⁰ The new editors were Morgan A. Ellis and John William Jones, a Utica man, who himself bought the paper from the Company in 1858.³¹ The takeover of 1855 was to be the first of many such acquisitions.

The second phase, from 1860 to 1869, encompassed the years of Civil War and Reconstruction. Though a great many copies from this period are missing, we can nonetheless perceive an intensification of the language of republican patriotism that marked some further vicious internecine conflicts between *Y Drych* and other Welsh journals and individuals over the issue of slavery, whose powerful reverberations divided Welsh communities both in the United States and in Wales. This period was distinguished principally by three sets of circumstances: firstly, a new home and a measure of consolidation and expansion; secondly, the crises instigated by the American Civil War during the first half of the decade, and finally, in the late 1860s, opportunities presented by increased emigration and Reconstruction.

In June 1860 *Y Drych* was relocated from New York City to Utica, in upstate New York. In terms of its long-term future, the move proved to be a fortuitous one for *Y Drych* by bringing it into contact with its later owner and financial benefactor Thomas J. Griffiths, who in 1860 had won the contract to print the paper.³² Significantly, though of Welsh ancestry, Thomas J. Griffiths was not a Welsh speaker.³³ More people began to take the paper during these years. While in 1856 it was estimated that *Y Drych*'s subscription figures stood at 2,750, by the late 1860s the number of subscribers had almost doubled to 5,000, and from July 1868 onwards it began to boast on its first page that its circulation was

²⁷ *Y Drych a'r Gwyllyddydd* 21 Jun. 1855, 6 Jan. , 1 Mar. , 20 Dec. 1856.

²⁸ *Y Drych a'r Gwyllyddydd* 18, 25 Oct. 1856.

²⁹ For biographical details of William B. Jones (1815-1887) see *Cambrian* Vol. VIII No. 1 (Jan. 1888) 1-2; R. Hughes, *Enwogion Mon 1850-1912* (Dolgellau: E. W. Evans, 1913) 66.

³⁰ *Y Drych a'r Gwyllyddydd* 22 Feb. 1855.

³¹ For biographical details of John William Jones (1827-1884) see *Dictionary of Welsh Biography down to 1940* (London: Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, 1959): 489-490; NLW Ms 9262A Blackwell, "Dictionary" 407-409; *Y Drych* 16 Oct. 1884; *Y Geninen* Apr. 1886: 131-133; *Cymru* Dec. 1905: 274-276; *Utica Daily Press* 9 Oct. 1884; *Utica Morning Herald* 9 Oct. 1884; *Western Mail* 1 Nov. 1884.

³² For biographical details of Thomas J. Griffiths (1835-1924) see *Y Drych* 4 Mar. 1921, 7, 14 Feb. 1924; NLW Ms 9258A Blackwell, "Dictionary" 403-408; *Utica Daily Press* 7 Feb. 1924 *Utica Observer-Dispatch* 7 Feb. 1924. See also D. H. E. Roberts, "Welsh Publishing in the United States of America" in *A Nation and its Books: A History of the Book in Wales* ed. Philip Henry Jones and Eiluned Rees (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1998) 253-264.

³³ Griffiths is alleged to have once said "I don't read or speak Welsh, and it saves people complaining to me." NLW 9258A Blackwell, "Dictionary," 407; cited in Roberts, "Welsh Publishing in the US."

extending "more or less, into every State in the Union".³⁴ Circulation drives involved many of the marketing strategies of nineteenth-century journalism, such as free gifts to subscribers, though with a Welsh twist. One such gift offered by *Y Drych* was a carved image of the famous Welsh Calvinistic Methodist minister John Elias (1774-1841), awarded to those who paid their subscriptions for 1861 before 31 December 1860.³⁵

Yet, if in general the 1860s brought some consolidation and expansion, the onset of the Civil War nevertheless embroiled *Y Drych* in some of the bitterest controversies of its long life. It instantly became a passionate supporter of the Northern cause and saw the conflict as a righteous crusade to free the slaves from "*uchel-deyrnfradwyr, llofruddion a lladron*" [high treasonous murderers and thieves].³⁶ In the Welsh American press in general there was an attempt to portray the Welsh as above reproach in their patriotic fervor for the union cause. In order to show their patriotism to the American public at large, Welsh newspapers began to encourage the formation of Welsh soldier regiments and companies to fight for their adopted country.³⁷ *Y Drych* was swept up by this pro-Union zeal, and sharply criticized British neutrality. Articles on the war culled from *Y Drych* were printed in their entirety in the weekly newspaper *Yr Herald Cymraeg*³⁸ in Wales, and were taken to task for what the latter regarded as a savage attack on Britain.³⁹ It should be emphasized that the lack of survival of many issues of *Y Drych* from this period means that much of our evidence is drawn from hostile commentaries in the press back in Wales, and from the remarkable and deeply divisive conflict between *Y Drych* and Samuel Roberts (S. R.), Llanbryn-mair, who had settled at Brynffynon, in slave-holding Tennessee.⁴⁰ S. R., a pacifist, penned a self-justificatory book to defend himself against accusations of treachery made by *Y Drych*.⁴¹ Mindful of its own place in American history, *Y Drych* celebrated its Republicanism by producing a six hundred page book, *Hanes y Gwrthryfel Mawr yn y Talaethau Unedig* [History of the Great Civil War in the United States], written by the paper's previous editor J. W. Jones and one of its co-editors, with the financial backing of J. Mather Jones.⁴² Intended as a "*HANES yr oeddid y gallai Cenedl y Cymry ymddybynu arno, a'r oes a ddaw gyfeirio ato fel awdurdod ddilys o barth yr hyn y traetha yn ei gylch*" [HISTORY that the Welsh people can depend upon, and the age to come can refer to as an authentic authority about what it discusses], it turned out to be an extremely expensive disaster.⁴³ An example, perhaps, of vaulting Welsh ambition o'erleaping itself.

³⁴ *Y Drych* 9 July 1868. The phrase is taken from the English-language notice to advertisers first introduced in this issue

³⁵ *Y Cyfaill* Sept. 1860.

³⁶ *Yr Herald Cymraeg* 8 Feb. 1862.

³⁷ *Y Seren Orllewinol* July 1861, May 1863; *Yr Herald Cymraeg* (quoting a report taken from *Y Drych*) 9 Aug. 1862. For fuller discussion of these crucial years in the history of the Welsh in America see Huw Griffiths's forthcoming University of Wales PhD thesis on the Welsh and the American Civil War.

³⁸ *Yr Herald Cymraeg* 8 Feb., 2 Aug. 1862.

³⁹ *Yr Herald Cymraeg* 15 Feb. 1862.

⁴⁰ For S. R. and Brynffynon see Wilbur S. Shepperson, *Samuel Roberts: a Welsh Colonizer in Civil War Tennessee* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1961); Glanmor Williams, *Samuel Roberts, Llanbryn-mair* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1950). For some of *Y Drych*'s accusations see e. g. *Y Drych a'r Gwylledydd* 24 May, 19 July 1856, 23 Nov. 1865.

⁴¹ Samuel Roberts, *Hunan-amddiffyniad S. R. : yn ngwynneb y camddarlunio fu arno drwy adeg cynddaredd. y rhyfel cartrefol yn America* (Conway: R. E. Jones, 1882, first pub. 1867).

⁴² J. W. Jones and T. B. Morris, *Hanes y Gwrthryfel Mawr yn y Talaethau Unedig* (Utica, J. Mather Jones, 1866).

⁴³ Jones and Morris, *Hanes y Gwrthryfel Mawr*, 3.

Towards the end of this decade of mixed fortunes for *Y Drych*, however, reconstruction and renewed emigration created their own opportunities. John Mather Jones, who purchased the paper in 1864, dominated this second phase in the history of the paper.⁴⁴ Also born in Wales, he had emigrated to the United States in 1849. We have seen how, since the mid 1850s, *Y Drych* had been closely associated with emigration and homeland settlement schemes, and naturally favored the ones in which it had some investment. Others got shorter shrift. A serialized novel entitled “*Y Carcharor yn Mhatagonia*”⁴⁵ [The Prisoner in Patagonia], sought to discourage migration to the area, which was already being mooted as a possible site for a Welsh *Gwladfa* [colony].⁴⁶ As if to emphasize the dangers, the novel’s episodes were accompanied by illustrations of ferocious natives and scorpions. Its interest in the emigration schemes of its owners may also help explain the ferocity of the attack on S. R. , who had sought to build his Welsh community at Brynffynon. This time, the fierce native was slavery. In the early 1860s John Mather Jones, who had previously worked as a trader of property lots and mortgages in Wall Street, set about founding new Welsh homelands in America. By 1863 he, together with William B. Jones (Ap P. A. Mon), former owner of *Y Drych*, had bought a large tract of land in Macon County, Missouri and had set about creating the community of New Cambria.⁴⁷ In 1864, John William Jones returned to Wales to stimulate interest in Mather Jones’s scheme, and transferred the ownership of the newspaper to him. They later formed a partnership to buy land in Osage County, Kansas, to found the Welsh settlement of Arvonnia in 1869.⁴⁸ At this point, Mather Jones relinquished his editorship of *Y Drych*, but continued as its owner until his death in December 1874. In his place as editor in 1869 he appointed John C. Roberts or “John C. y ‘Drych’” or simply “J. C. ” as he became generally known. Originally from Llysfaen in Caernarfonshire, he had started work at the offices of *Y Drych* in Utica within a year of emigrating to America in 1866.⁴⁹ He remained an editor of *Y Drych* for over forty-two years until his death in November 1911, and must be regarded as one of the most important individuals in the paper’s history. A memorial tribute to him maintained that the success of the paper was “*i raddau uchel yn ddyladwy i’w ddiwydrwydd, ei ffyddlondeb, ei chwaeth dda, a’i ymroddiad difflino*” [to a high degree due to his diligence, faithfulness, good taste, and tireless commitment].⁵⁰

The third phase, from 1870 to 1920, saw the consolidation of the paper’s dominance of its market under T. J. Griffiths, who had purchased it on John Mather Jones’s death in

⁴⁴ For biographical details of John Mather Jones (1826-1874) see NLW Ms 9262A Blackwell, “Dictionary”, 378-379; *Y Drych* 24 Dec. 1874; *Utica Observer* 21 Dec. 1874; *Utica Morning Herald and Daily Gazette* 22 Dec. 1874.

⁴⁵ *Y Drych a’r Gwyllydydd* 12 Apr. - 27 Dec. 1856 passim.

⁴⁶ e.g. *Y Drych a’r Gwyllydydd* 1 Nov. 1856.

⁴⁷ NLW Ms 9262A Blackwell, “Dictionary” 378-79.

⁴⁸ For details of the scheme see, e. g. *Y Drych* 24 Mar. 1870 (advertisement). See also *Baner ac Amserau Cymru* 25 Aug. , 22 Dec. 1869; Phillips G. Davies, “The Welsh in Kansas: Settlement, Contributions and Assimilation”, *Welsh History Review*, Vol. 14 (1988/89).

⁴⁹ For biographical details of John C. Roberts see *Y Drych* 9, 30 Nov. 1911; *Cambrian* XXV No. 13 (July 1905): 312-313, XXXI No. 22 (15 Nov. 1911):15-16; NLW Ms 9272A Blackwell “Dictionary,” 138; *Utica Daily Press* 6 Nov. 1911; *Utica Herald-Dispatch* 6 Nov. 1911.

⁵⁰ *Y Drych* 9 Nov. 1911.

1874, and his editors John C. Roberts and, later, Dafydd Rhys Williams (Index).⁵¹ Its survival, let alone flourishing, occasioned triumphalism, declaring in 1890 that “*cydnabyddir ei blynyddau lawer mai prin yr oedd gan Y DRYCH gystadleuydd yn eangder ei gylchrediad, helaethrwydd ei newyddion, a chymeriad ei lenyddiaeth*” [it has been recognized for many years that Y DRYCH had few competitors in the breadth of its circulation, the extent of its news, and the character of its literature].⁵² Y Drych's late nineteenth - early twentieth century period may be described as its imperial phase, when it expanded geographically by buying up its rivals. In 1877 the Scranton based Baner America was bought and amalgamated with Y Drych, who thus acquired its subscribers and advertisers.⁵³ It also kept open the old Baner office for a further seven years, driven by the need to attract fresh migrants who were moving in large numbers from Wales to the Pennsylvanian anthracite coalfield and to the Scranton area in particular at this time.⁵⁴ The final decade of the nineteenth century saw Y Drych also take over the Pittsburgh based Y Wasg in 1890⁵⁵ and the bi-lingual Chicago based Y Columbia in 1894⁵⁶, again acquiring not only the titles but also their subscription lists, readers and advertisers. Each of these developments involved the making of some shrewd commercial calculations. After 1870, the proportion of space taken up by emigration advertisements declines, and we see an increase in other kinds of consumer goods, from artificial limbs to pistols.⁵⁷ This may suggest the existence of a more settled Welsh commercial community. But of all the advertisements that appeared in Y Drych, one product stands out very clearly – tea. Tea, moreover, with evocative names, *Te'r Hen Wlad*⁵⁸ [Old Country Tea], *Te Y Ddraig Goch* [Red Dragon Tea], *Te Y Werin*⁵⁹ [The People's Tea] and, most implausibly of all, *Eryri* [Snowdonia] Tea.⁶⁰ George T. Matthews rode the crest of the Welsh tea market, and made a fortune. Advertisements for his *Te-Y-Brenin* [The King's Tea] brand appeared continuously in Y Drych from 1873 until Matthews's death in February 1932. In a letter to the paper in July 1929, he explained the role played by Y Drych in his success:

[F]or some fifty five years our business ad has had a prominent position in its columns every week without a break, making us, we think, its oldest advertisers. . . . Few indeed are the places on the map of the world where *Y Cymry* [the Welsh], few or many, cannot find Y Drych and inquiries come from the interior of the Argentine Republic, the Klondike as well as Australia for our goods in response to the ad in Y Drych.

Repeating a slogan that had become commonplace since the late nineteenth century, Matthews insisted that there were two things that made the Welsh excellent - “*Yfed Te'r*

⁵¹ For biographical details of Dafydd Rhys Williams see Y Drych, 24 Mar. 1921, 10 May 1928, 19, 26 Mar. 1931; Dictionary of Welsh Biography: 1029.

⁵² Y Drych 8 May 1890.

⁵³ Y Drych 15 Mar. 1877.

⁵⁴ See William D. Jones, Wales in America: Scranton and the Welsh 1860-1920 (Cardiff and Scranton: University of Wales Press / University of Scranton Press, 1993).

⁵⁵ Y Drych 8 May 1890.

⁵⁶ Y Drych 8 Feb. 1894.

⁵⁷ See e. g. Y Drych 10 Dec. 1889, 9 Nov. 1899.

⁵⁸ Y Drych 20 Jan. , 17 Feb. 1898.

⁵⁹ Y Drych 26 May 1898.

⁶⁰ Y Drych 20 Apr. 1893.

Brenin a darllen y Drych" [Drinking The King's Tea and reading *Y Drych*].⁶¹ Ever the Republican, a *Drych* editorial in 1893 warned its readers that the perfidious Democratic Party intended to impose a thirty per cent tax on tea imports.⁶² The tea drinking Welsh, it thundered, would not stand for it.

Advertisements and notices could also strike a more solemn note. A disturbingly large number of missing persons enquiries were placed in its pages by Welsh Americans who were attempting to track down relatives who had migrated westward. One, in August 1891, reads like this:

*DAVID R. JONES, mab i'r diweddar Meredith Jones, Arthog, Meirionydd.
Ymfudodd i'r wlad hon tua 18 mlynedd yn ol. O Dakota y clywyd oddiwrtho ddiweddaf.
Teimlaf yn hynod ddiolchgar am air oddiwrtho ef neu rywun sydd yn gwybod am dano. Ei
frawd - JOHN M. JONES, Box 339 Granville, N. Y.*⁶³

[DAVID R. JONES, son of the late Meredith Jones, Arthog, Meirionydd. He emigrated to this country 18 years ago. He was last heard from in Dakota. I will be very grateful for word from him or anybody that knows of him. His brother - JOHN M. JONES, Granville, N. Y.]

Others spoke of loneliness and isolation. In December 1887, the following notice appeared:

*Eisiau Gwraig - Dymunaf agor gohebiaeth a merch ieuanc neu gwraig weddw ieuanc; dim gwrthwynebiad fod ganddi un plentyn ieuanc. Rhaid iddi fod o gymeriad da ac yn proffesu crefydd. Y bwriad yw gwneyd dau yn un i gario yn mlaen ffarm yn y Gorllewin, a gwneyd cartref yn gysur. Dim twyll na chwareu.*⁶⁴

[Wife Wanted - I wish to commence correspondence with a young woman or a young widow; no objection should she have one young child. Must be of good character and religious. The intention is to make two into one in order to run a farm in the West, and to make home comfortable. No trickery or playfulness.]

Notices such as these suggest the paper's importance in reuniting families divided by immigration and the vastness of the West.

The paper's fourth phase, from 1920 to 1960, completes the first century. After 1920, the newspaper faced a number of serious challenges and struggled to survive. Subscriptions declined, the most important cause being the declining numbers of Welsh speakers in the United States, although other factors were also at work. In the period between the end of the First World War and the end of the Second, the newspaper changed greatly. It became a monthly and not a weekly; it shrank in size and above all it switched to

⁶¹ *Y Drych* 4 July 1929.

⁶² *Y Drych* 14 Sept. 1893.

⁶³ *Y Drych* 20 Aug. 1891.

⁶⁴ *Y Drych* 22 Dec. 1887.

being an English-language newspaper.⁶⁵ The latter was a gradual and uneven process that to a certain extent depended on policies adopted by individual editors. But these changes also occurred in the context of changing perceptions of the place and role of the Welsh in American society. Yet the newspaper continued to be published with a much smaller circulation thanks to the dedicated efforts of the editors and owners, such as Hugh Hughes (editor 1923-33 and April-July 1945), Sallie Evans (assistant editor 1923-31 and editor 1931-33), John Foulkes Jones (1933-1945), Arthur M. Roberts (editor 1945-1960, owner 1951-60), Horace Breese Powell (owner and editor 1960-1980), Patricia Powell Viets (1980-89) and, most recently, Mary Morris Mergenthal (1989 to date). In 1960, after being published in Utica for a century, the home of the paper moved to Milwaukee, and later to De Pere, Wisconsin and St. Paul.⁶⁶

These, then, were the four major phases in the history of *Y Drych*, a history marked by initial difficulties, financial and otherwise, followed by a long period of stability and growth during the paper's heyday, and then in turn decline and uncertainty. In a very broad sense these periods coincide with the rise and decline of Welsh immigration to the United States, and parallel the increase and subsequent fall in the number of Welsh speakers in America. Given the presence of such an intimate link between the fortunes of the paper and the structural changes that shaped the history of the Welsh in America, we may be justified in making the following general observations:

Firstly, *Y Drych* was principally a newspaper for immigrants. Its content, and its regularity, helped to establish and sustain supportive networks of migrants by providing them with advice about travel, finance, American civil and property law, and agricultural conditions and technology. Its weekly job advertisements, for positions from maids to miners, were accompanied also by feature articles on working conditions in mines and mills. This was above all an aspirational text, projecting positive images of "successful" emigrants. While being a journalism of dreams for many of its readers, the paper is for us, looking back, a particularly rich source of biographical information, and not only on prominent Welsh Americans.

Secondly, however, *Y Drych* was always more than a guide for emigrants. It fits Sally Miller's definition of an ethnic American newspaper in the sense that it sought to sustain a distinctive cultural identity for the Welsh-speaking Welsh.⁶⁷ It acted as a screen, a kind of cultural Ellis Island, through which successive waves of Welsh-speaking emigrants passed on their journey to America. Its title, after all, also translates as a looking glass, through which Welsh migrants passed to enter new lives and to make new allegiances.

While *Y Drych*, mainly through its letters columns, allowed many, often discordant voices to be heard, its most dominant and privileged voices were those that legitimated and promoted the idea of Americanizing the Welsh. In 1893 an editorial succinctly and

⁶⁵ It has been published monthly from Jan. 1941 to date.

⁶⁶ *Y Drych* Jul. 1960, Oct. 1980, May 1989.

⁶⁷ "Introduction" in Miller, *The Ethnic Press in the United States*. For a discussion of late-nineteenth century Welsh American attitudes towards the Welsh language, Welshness and Wales which draws extensively on *Y Drych* see Hywel Teifi Edwards, *Eisteddfod Ffair y Byd. Chicago, 1893* (Llandysul, Wales: Gomer Press, 1990) 34-61.

forthrightly issued the following advice: “*Dylai y Cymry sydd yn dyfod i America i ymgartrefu gymeryd y cyfle cyntaf i ymddinaseiddio, fel ag i allu cymeryd rhan weithredol yn y llywodraeth, trwy bleidleisio a dylanwadu ar ei chymdeithas a'i gwleidyddiaeth. Wrth wneyd hyn, ni raid i ni gollu dim o'n cariad at yr Hen Wlad, ei hiaith a'i deifion.*”⁶⁸ [The Welsh who come to make America their home should take the first opportunity to become citizens, so they can take an active part in government, through voting and influencing their society and politics. In doing this, they need not lose any of their love for the Old Country, its language and customs]. On 28 April 1892, an editorial article on “*Rhagoriaethau Cymry America*” [The Excellences of the Welsh in America] argued at length that life for the Welsh in America was better in a variety of ways to life in Wales. Compared to the Welsh in their ancestral homeland Wales, those in America were, in their view, less servile, more egalitarian, more tolerant and broad-minded, they had expanded horizons, they were more practical and adventurous in spirit, more willing to strive for money and fame, more practical and better-mannered. The last was the product of greater contact with other nationalities, which they argued was a civilizing process.⁶⁹ Yet, they also knew whom to exclude. On 29 March 1888, a *Drych* editorial, seemingly without hint of irony, had inveigled against “*Peryglon Ymfudiaeth*” [the perils of immigration], by which it meant Asian, African and East European migration, and issued a challenge to the country’s statesmen to “*trefnu ffyrdd a moddau i ochelyd yr hyn sydd yn ein bygwth - darparu cynllun a fydd yn effeithiol i gadw America yn Americanaidd*” [devise ways and means to avoid that which is threatening us - to prepare a plan which will be effective in keeping America American].⁷⁰

Part of the process of learning how to be American was the unlearning of the language of Britishness. By distinguishing in essays, letters and editorial columns between Americans (enlightened and progressive) and the English (oppressive and backward-looking), that most powerful collective voice of the paper was encouraging a not-so-subtle process of de-Anglicization. Acculturation was not a simple linear process, it entailed much more than the abandonment of subject status and the acquisition of citizenship, important as that constitutional change undoubtedly was. It also involved the transformation of identity. On 16 March 1893, the Revd W. Tudwel Williams, Slatington, observed in *Y Drych* that it was better to be Welsh in the United States than in Wales, since here the Welsh were no longer under threat from “John Bull”.⁷¹ Three years later, during a bad-tempered debate in the paper on whether immigrants were “better Welsh”, than those born in the United States, R. C. Roberts of Utica pronounced that he was “*yn falch o fod yn frodor o Sir Feirionydd, ond yr wyf lawer balchach o fod yn ddinesydd o'r Talaethau Unedig*” [proud to be a native of Merionethshire, but prouder still to be a citizen of the United States].⁷² This was amplified later in 1896 by G. W. Prees, M. D., from Cambria, Wisconsin, who gave two reasons for leaving Wales, one to improve his material circumstances, the other to escape the “*afiechyd oedd wedi cymeryd gafaél yn ein cyfansoddiad moesol*” [sickness that had taken hold of our moral constitution], which had been caused by centuries of what he termed “*gorthrwm y Sais*” [English oppression]. Only having fled his country could he fully comprehend the mess he had left behind. “*Wedi dod i awyr glir annibyniaeth America y gwelsom yn ddigon eglur arwyddion y*

⁶⁸ *Y Drych* 5 Oct. 1893.

⁶⁹ *Y Drych* 28 Apr. 1892.

⁷⁰ *Y Drych* 29 Mar. 1888.

⁷¹ *Y Drych* 16 Mar. 1893.

⁷² *Y Drych* 19 Mar. 1896.

defyd parlysol" [Having reached the clear air of independent America, we could see very clearly signs of the paralyzing disease].⁷³

But the idea of transformed identities promoted by *Y Drych* was a complex one. This may be seen most clearly perhaps in its attitudes towards language. The *Y Drych* of the title, first owner and editor John Morgan Jones explained in 1851, referred specifically to the Welsh language, which in its vocabulary, syntax, inflection and idiom "reflected" the Welsh past, and was symbolic of their reading of that past, particularly the bits of it they wanted to preserve in a new geographical and political environment.⁷⁴ The dynamics behind the process of language shift of the 1930s and 1940s are themselves interesting, but whether that shift was a response to a changing readership, or to a changing perception of its cultural functions, or both (strong echoes of the broadcasting debate in Wales today), what is striking is that it happened so late in the day. While many had argued in the pages of *Y Drych* from as early as the 1860s onwards that English - American English - should be the principal language of the Welsh Americans, its editors remained committed to printing the paper in Welsh.⁷⁵

From its earliest beginnings, though, the Welsh press in America sought to communicate in both languages. *Cymro America / American Cambrian* in 1832 printed one of its four pages in English. Others such as *Cymro Americaidd / Cambro American* of the 1850s, as well as newspapers like *Y Wasg* and *Baner America*, both of which were bought by *Y Drych*, had included English language articles. Later still, newspapers and magazines like *The Druid* and *The Cambrian* were written solely in English. One might be tempted to see these bilingual policies as generational responses to the ever-changing composition of the Welsh immigrant group in America. Fresh immigration kept the Welsh language constituency going at the same time as the process of abandoning the language continued. In its first issue's English-language editorial, *Y Cymro-Americaidd* in 1855 acknowledged the "mixed population" of the Welsh, and believed it necessary to include the English language in its pages in order to reflect and serve that mixed population.⁷⁶ *Y Drych* would have none of it. It justified its purchase of *Y Wasg* in 1890 on the grounds that the latter was "half-English," whilst on 10 August 1893, it printed an editorial which summed up its position not only regarding the use of the language, but regarding the very idea of being Welsh.⁷⁷

*Yn unol a deddf anysgrifenedig ond anhyblyg, ni all dyn fod yn Gymro heb fedru Cymraeg.
Gall ei wythienau fod yn llawn o'r 'gwaed coch cyfan' puraf yn y byd; oni fedr ei dafod
barablu yr hen iaith, nid yw ond ysgymun yn ein plith. . . . I olwg allanol, yr iaith sydd
yn profi cenedl y Cymro, ac y mae yn rhy ddiweddar ar dydd i newid y rheol. . . . Pam
gyll Cymro ei Gymraeg, nid yw Gymro mwyach yng ngolwg cyffredinolrwydd ei gydgenedl.
Mae y peth yn reddf yn y natur bellach, ac nis gellir ei ddiwreddio. . . . [B]yddant yn sicr o
ymgollu ac ymdoddi yn y genedl Americanaidd pan gollir y Gymraeg. Unig obaith cadw*

⁷³ *Y Drych* 8 Oct. 1896.

⁷⁴ *Y Drych* 2 Jan. 1851.

⁷⁵ E. g. "Marwolaeth y Gymraeg" [The Death of the Welsh Language] 23 Nov. 1865; John Cadwaladr, "Y Cymry a'r Iaith Saesonaeg" [The Welsh and the English Language], 14, 21 May 1868.

⁷⁶ *Y Cymro Americaidd / The Cambro-American* 5 May 1855.

⁷⁷ *Y Drych* 15 May 1890.

yn fyw gymeriad a neillduolrwydd Cymreig yn America yw glynu wrth yr iaith. Bydded ddoeth, bydded annoeth, y mae bywyd Cymreig America yn guddiedig yn yr iaith.

In accordance with an unwritten but inflexible law, a man cannot be a Welshman without knowledge of Welsh. His veins can be full of the reddest, purest blood in the world; but if his tongue cannot speak the old language he is nothing but an excommunicate in our midst. ... Outwardly the language proves you are Welsh, and it is too late in the day to change that law. ... When a Welshman loses his Welsh, he is no longer in the eyes of his nation a Welshman. The thing is now an instinct and it cannot be uprooted. ... The Welsh will surely lose themselves in and melt into the American nation when the language is lost. The only hope of maintaining alive the Welsh character and separateness is through adherence to the language. Be it wise or foolish, Welsh life in America is concealed in the language.⁷⁸

Sociologists of race, such as Paul Gilroy, have used the term “ethnic absolutism” to describe attempts made by leaders of ethnic communities to define those communities in terms of a single, essential characteristic.⁷⁹ The ethnic absolutism of the *Y Drych*'s position here is stark enough. The Welsh language is not one of the markers of Welshness, nor even a crucially important one, but it is the signifier of Welshness in the United States.

It is perhaps at this point that material circumstances (i. e. the readership base), and the theory of Welshness proposed by *Y Drych*'s editorial line, come into contact and influence each other. As we've previously noted, the mainstay of the paper's circulation was the first generation immigrant (this is also true of its main editors, incidentally).⁸⁰ *Y Drych* helped successive waves of these immigrants to orient themselves to their new homeland, and then banked on it that enough of them would continue to take the paper for the rest of their lives. Every new immigrant was, potentially, a new subscriber. From that constantly replenished readership base, it obtained the confidence to press upon them the desirability of holding on to the language and to use it in their new American home.

Did *Y Drych* succeed? Yes and no – a typical historian's answer, perhaps. No in the sense that the language was being lost even while it was being replenished. Yes, perhaps, in the sense that *Y Drych* may have slowed down the rate at which the language declined. In January 1912, Mrs. Ellen Jones, of Table Rock, Nebraska wrote a letter to *Y Drych* for the first time in her life. Her words are deeply revealing:

Y “Drych” yw fy unig gyfaill Cymreig ar ol marwolaeth fy mhriod, John A. Jones, 14 mlynedd yn ol. Yr oedd yn dderbyniwr o'r “Drych” cyn ymadael o Carbondale, Pa., am Nebraska yn 1858. Daethym inau yma yn 1860, a dyoddefasom lawer o galedi mewn gwlad newydd . . . Prynasom haner section o dir ac yr wyf yn byw ar un rhan o hon, a fy mab ar y llall. Go debyg ar ol fy nydd i, yr atelir y “Drych” gan nad yw fy mhlant yn

⁷⁸ *Y Drych* 10 Aug. 1893.

⁷⁹ Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (London: Routledge, 1987) 59ff.

⁸⁰ *Y Drych* did not acquire a United States-born editor until 1945, when Arthur M. Roberts took office. All subsequent editors have also been United States-born.

*medru darllen nac ysgrifenu y Gymraeg. Credaf fy mod gyda'r hynaf o dderbynwyr y "Drych", ac y mae yn ddyddanwch mawr i mi.*⁸¹

[The *Drych* is the only Welsh friend I have since my husband John A. Jones died 14 years ago. He was a subscriber to the *Drych* years before he left Carbondale Pa. to come to Nebraska in 1858. I came here in 1860 and we endured much hardship in a new country. . . . We bought half a section of land and I live on one part of this and my son on the other. I suppose when I am gone the *Drych* will be stopped as none of my children can read or write Welsh. I believe I am among the *Drych's* oldest subscribers, if not the oldest, and it is a great comfort to me.]

Her children did not read *Y Drych* that came into their home each week, and in that sense it failed to help preserve the language into the second generation. But Ellen Jones herself did. Though very much part of her private domain (she read it "silently" for 60 years), it did keep her in regular touch with her native tongue and with the activities of its other speakers.⁸² Even in her Dakota fastness, she remained part of a virtual Welsh community. Equally significant are the editorial references that, as we've already noted, were made in 1893 to the concept of dual nationality and the fear of assimilation into the "American nation." America may be a better place for the Welsh than British Wales, but the editorial discourse of this paper, as far as we can see, was anything but assimilationist. Furthermore, the transition from Welsh to English, when it finally came in the 1930s, was clearly resented by many of its older readers. Writing to the poet Carneddog in December 1934, Ifan Morus Powell of Milwaukee was scathing about the quality of its journalism: "*Nid wyf yn cael y Drych ers blwyddyn. . . . Anaml iawn y byddaf yn ei weled o gwbl. . . . Fei llyncir oll yn y man gan y Behemoth Seisnig*" [I haven't subscribed to the *Drych* for a year . . . I hardly see it at all now. . . . It will soon be swallowed by the English Behemoth.]⁸³

That transatlantic piece of correspondence typifies the dialogue that was sustained between Welsh people in America and Wales about *Y Drych* from its earliest numbers. In some respects it was not so much a Welsh American newspaper as a Welsh newspaper in America. From at least the 1860s, journalism on both sides of the Welsh Atlantic echoed each other's voices.⁸⁴ Either they fought over major issues of principle, as they did so viscerally during the Civil War, or else they collaborated. From the 1860s, *Y Drych* had established a simple but effective exchange scheme with Welsh newspaper offices where copies of the one would be sent to the other free of charge each week. Thus Welsh editors read *Y Drych* weekly, from the days of Gwilym Hiraethog and Thomas Gee to those of Beriah Gwynfe Evans and E. Morgan Humphreys. These editors openly copied stories and inserted them into their own newspapers, without the cumbersome need for translations. *Y*

⁸¹ *Y Drych* 18 Jan. 1912.

⁸² *Y Drych* 1 Feb. 1912.

⁸³ Carneddog Papers, G1331, Ifan Morris Powell to Carneddog, 11 Dec. 1934, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

⁸⁴ For journalism and the press in Wales during this period see Aled Gruffydd Jones, *Press, Politics and Society: A History of Journalism in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1913).

Drych reciprocated in kind.⁸⁵ They used each other's papers like news agencies, as the contents of the one found its way into the other, regularly, for about sixty or seventy years. Essentially, they formed part of the one transatlantic Welsh newspaper economy. Yet, in another sense, *Y Drych* increasingly came to belong to a very different world, with its own pressures and its own agendas. Its news content progressively became more American in origin and orientation. Whereas in 1856, 34% of its news coverage, calculated in terms of column inches, originated in Wales, by 1950 the proportion had fallen to 2%. Conversely, the ratio of news coverage of Welsh activity in the United States increased from 15% in 1851 to 98% in 1950.

To conclude, this necessarily general and partial overview of the work now being done on *Y Drych* has, we hope, raised three sets of issues. First, *Y Drych* is a valuable and under-used historical source. It provides us with a long, and with some frustrating exceptions, a virtually unbroken, narrative of one particular immigrant group into the United States. It suggests what Welsh migrant experiences may have had in common with those of other migrant groups, and what may have been specific and peculiar.

Second, *Y Drych* was also a medium that made interventions into the lives of the Welsh in America, and offered its own thoughts on how they should see themselves and the country in which they had settled. Its pages projected an ethnically defined geography, an America of Welsh individuals, societies and celebrations, of Welsh Days, the eisteddfod and the *gymanfa ganu*, linked to other news and features from the rest of the United States and beyond. What effect it had on the minds of its readers is, of course, open to question. As Rudolph Vecoli argues in relation to the Italian immigrant press in the United States, readers' minds were not "simply a tabula rasa upon which print culture impressed its definitions of social reality. Rather, they filtered media messages through the sieve of their own experience".⁸⁶ That must have been equally true of the Welsh.

Finally, we need to be reminded that *Y Drych* was an important medium of communication for the Welsh internationally. As was alluded to in G. T. Matthews's paean of praise to the paper in 1929, it frequently carried reports and comment from Welsh people in Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, Patagonia and South Africa as well as a host of other destinations where the Welsh could be found. It also had subscribers from all over the world.⁸⁷ In its time, it was a Welsh language CNN.

Its history belongs to us all, whichever languages we speak, and wherever we happen to live. Our research will, we trust, make this fascinating, infuriating newspaper more accessible to all. But we suspect we'll still be left with a puzzle, an enigma whose solution continues to elude us. The one remaining question that gnaws at the back of the mind is this: why, of all the minority ethnic groups of the United States, was it the Welsh, and

⁸⁵ Jones, *Press, Politics and Society*, 24, 101. Among the newspapers from which *Y Drych* compiled its news of Wales columns in 1884 were *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, *Yr Herald Cymraeg*, *Y Goleuad*, *Y Tyst a'r Dydd*, *Seren Gymru*, *Cambrian News*, *Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald*, *Liverpool Mercury*, *Cardiff Times* and the *Weekly Mail*. *Y Drych* 2 Feb. 1884.

⁸⁶ Vecoli, "Italian Immigrant Press": 28.

⁸⁷ E. g. *Y Drych* was taken by Ross, New Zealand, town library in the 1880s, and in the early decades of the twentieth century the Welsh missionary Harriet Davies in Sylhet, India also subscribed to the paper. *Y Drych* 30 Apr. 1885, 5 Sept. 1935.

perhaps only the Welsh, who succeeded in running a newspaper, without a break, for one hundred and fifty years?