‘One Foot in Wales and My Vowels in England’: Double-Consciousness in the work of Dylan Thomas

Karl Powell
University of Notre Dame Australia

Follow this and additional works at: http://researchonline.nd.edu.au/theses
Part of the Arts and Humanities Commons

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
Copyright Regulations 1969

WARNING
The material in this communication may be subject to copyright under the Act. Any further copying or communication of this material by you may be the subject of copyright protection under the Act.
Do not remove this notice.

Publication Details

This dissertation/thesis is brought to you by ResearchOnline@ND. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses by an authorized administrator of ResearchOnline@ND. For more information, please contact researchonline@nd.edu.au.
‘One Foot in Wales and My Vowels in England’:
Double-Consciousness in the work of Dylan Thomas

Honours Dissertation
Bachelor of Arts (Honours)

of
Karl Powell

Supervised by
Professor Chris Wortham

Presented 27th October 2011
## Contents

Acknowledgement and Declaration ii

Abstract iii

Introduction 1

Chapter One: ‘To Begin at the Beginning’ 10

Chapter Two: Bardic Echoes 18

Chapter Three: A Burr of Modernity 38

Chapter Four: A Copernican Revolution Near Milk Wood 57

Conclusion 79

Appendices 83

Bibliography 87
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Chris Wortham, for all his patience, support and encouragement during this research program, and for all the enjoyment I have had working with him. I also wish to acknowledge Angeline O’Neill and Dawn Darlaston-Jones for all their kindness and selfless work dedicated to the Honours Program at Notre Dame University.

I would also like to thank Jo Furber (Dylan Thomas Centre, Swansea) and Kirsti Bohata (Centre for Research into the English Literature and Language of Wales, Swansea University) for their time and help in my research of Dylan Thomas.

Finally, I wish to thank my family, especially my parents, Jeff and Jill Powell, for their unending love, support and belief in me. Diolch o galon.

Declaration:

I declare that this Research Project is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

Signed: ……………………………………………… Date: ………………………..

Karl Powell

Abstract
Dylan Thomas once made a throwaway observation that he was a border case: regarded in England as Welsh and living in Wales as an Englishman. He claimed he was living with one foot in Wales and his vowels in England. The aim of this dissertation is to examine the phenomenon of double-consciousness arising in the work and life of Thomas. Based on W.E.B. du Bois’ theory of Double-Consciousness, it is argued that due to being raised to speak only English by Welsh-speaking parents, Thomas developed a cultural awareness to both cultures and found himself caught between identifying himself as either Welsh or English. To measure this a tripartite method of research is undertaken. First a double investigation into his mimicry of the two cultural traditions to which he felt aligned and in binary opposition to: the Welsh traditions of his upbringing, and the English traditions of his mother tongue. This will conducted using a selection of illustrative poems, drawn from his five volumes of published poetry. In this structural dichotomy it is hoped to witness his mimicry of the two literary traditions he had an awareness of, through his own literary output. The study concludes with an examination of Under Milk Wood seeking to discover the possible resolutions Thomas negotiated through his own fashioning of hybridity and anticipation of Homi K. Bhabha’s ‘third space of enunciation’ between such binary opposites.

Introduction