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

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME
A U S T R A L I A

School of Arts and Sciences, Fremantle

**'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

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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 be 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