unity which the existing system is now fighting to maintain. Division, as I said, is someone else's name for independence. Once you are not controlled, in advance and systematically, by others, you soon discover the kinds of co-operation, between nations, between regions, between communities, on which any full life depends. But it is then your willing and not your enforced co-operation. That is why I, with many others, now want and work to divide, as a way of declaring our own interests certainly, but also as a way of finding new and willing forms of co-operation: the only kind of co-operation that any free people can call unity.

The Culture of Nations (1983)[1]

There was this Englishman who worked in the London office of a multinational corporation based in the United States. He drove home one evening in his Japanese car. His wife, who worked in a firm which imported German kitchen equipment, was already at home. Her small Italian car was often quicker through the traffic. After a meal which included New Zealand lamb, Californian carrots, Mexican honey, French cheese and Spanish wine, they settled down to watch a programme on their television set, which had been made in Finland. The programme was a retrospective celebration of the war to recapture the Falkland Islands. As they watched it they felt warmly patriotic, and very proud to be British . . .

* * *

'Nation', as a term, is radically connected with 'native'. We are born into relationships, which are typically settled in a place. This form of primary and 'placeable' bonding is of quite fundamental human and natural importance. Yet the jump from that to anything like the modern nation-state is entirely artificial. What begins as a significant and necessary way of saying 'we' and 'our' (as so much more than 'I' and 'mine') slides by teaching or habit into bland or obscuring generalities of identity. The strongest forms of placeable bonding are always much more local: a village or town or city; particular valleys or mountains. Still today in societies as different as Wales and Italy people say where they come from, where they were formed or belong, in these insistently local ways. It is of course possible to extend these real feelings into wider areas: what are often spoken of now as 'regional' identities and loyalties. But that term, 'region', illuminates a very different process. A 'region' was once a realm, a distinct society. In its modern sense, by contrast, it is from the beginning a subordinate part of a larger unity, typically now a part of a 'nation'. What has then happened is that the real and powerful feelings of a native place and a native formation have been pressed and incorporated into an essentially political and administrative organization, which has grown from quite

different roots. 'Local' and 'regional' identities and loyalties are still allowed, even at a certain level encouraged, but they are presumed to exist within, and where necessary to be overridden by, the identities and the loyalties of this much larger society.

It is of course true that some of these wider identities and loyalties have been effectively achieved through real relationships. Even where, as in the great majority of cases, the larger society was originally formed by violent conquest, by repression, by economic domination or by arbitrary alliances between ruling families, there are usually generations of experience of living within these imposed forms, and then of becoming used or even attached to them. What is still in question, however, is the projection of those original 'native' and 'placeable' feelings to the forms of a modern state. Nothing is now more striking, for example, than the images of 'England' which are culturally predominant. Many urban children, when asked what is really 'England', reply with images of the monarchy, of the flag, of the Palace of Westminster and, most interestingly, of 'the countryside', the 'green and pleasant land'. It is here that the element of artifice is most obvious, when the terms of identity flow downwards from a political centre, and yet when the very different feelings of being 'native' and being 'loyal' are invoked and in this way combined.

In nations with long and complex histories the procedures of invocation and combination are deeply embedded in the whole social process. Yet it is an evident historical fact that the processes of political combination and definition are initiated by a ruling class: indeed to say so is virtually tautologous. The building of states, at whatever level, is intrinsically a ruling-class operation. The powerful processes that then ensue, in the complex transitions from conquest and subjection to more embedded formations, necessarily take place, however, over much wider social areas. War stands out as one of the fundamentally unifying and generalizing experiences: the identification of an alien enemy, and with it of what is often real danger, powerfully promotes and often in effect completes a 'national' identity. It is not accidental that talk of patriotism so quickly involves, and can even be limited to, memories and symbols of war. Meanwhile the assembly of armies, from diverse actual communities into this single and overriding organization, is one of the most notable processes of actual generalization and unification.

In modern societies, engaged in the transition from a subject people to a civil society, education of every kind, in churches and then mainly in schools, exerts more regular pressures. When children start going to school they often learn for the first time that they are English or British

or what may be. The pleasure of learning is attached to the song of a monarch or a flag The sense of friends and neighbours is attached to a distant and commanding organization: in Britain, now, that which ought to be spelled as it so barbarously sounds – the United Kingdom, the 'Yookay'. Selective versions of the history underlying this impressed identity are regularly presented, at every level from simple images and anecdotes to apparently serious textbook histories. The powerful feelings of wanting to belong to a society are then in a majority of cases bonded to these large definitions.

It is often the case that this bonding moves at once from the smallest social entity, within the family, to the available largest, in the nationized as levels, the personal and the social. Indeed they are rationalized as levels, the personal and the social. Many other kinds of bonding may then occur: distinction by streets or by parts of a town or village; distinction by gender and age-group; distinction by city or region. Many kinds of active 'local' or 'regional' groups, and of more passive groups of fans or supporters, grow up around these and carry powerful feelings. But typically they are unproblematically contained within the initial bonding between 'family-individual' and 'nation', which in all important and central cases is felt either to be an extension from them (as in particularized army regiments) or to override them.

It is a matter of great political significance that in the old nation-states, and especially the imperial states, scepticism and criticism of such bonding has come almost exclusively from radicals. They have seen, correctly, that this form of bonding operates to mobilize people for wars or to embellish and disguise forms of social and political control and obedience. It is true that opposition comes also from incompletely assimilated or still actively hostile minority peoples who have been incorporated within the nation-state, but this characteristically takes the form of an alternative (Irish or Scots or Welsh or Breton or Basque) nationalism, relying on the same apparent bonding though within a political subordination. The complex interactions between such nationalisms and more general radicalisms have been evident and remarkable, though in general it is true that unique forms of national-radical bonding, unavailable by definition in the larger nation-state, come through and have powerful effects. It is sadly also true that not only the majority people, with 'their own' nation-state, but also many among the minority peoples, regard this kind of nationalism as disruptive or backward-looking, and are even confident enough to urge 'internationalism' against it, as a superior political ideal. It is as if a really secure nationalism, already in possession of its

nation-state, can fail to see itself as 'nationalist' at all. Its own distinctive bonding is perceived as natural and obvious by contrast with the mere projections of any nationalism which is still in active progress and thus incomplete. At this point radicals and minority nationalists emphasize the artificialities of the settled 'common sense' nation-state and to their own satisfaction shoot them to pieces from history and from social theory.

The political significance is then that radicalism becomes associated, even in principle, with opposition to 'the nation'. In the old nation-states this has been profoundly damaging, yet it can be understood only by reference to the history and formation of actual social orders. For what has been most remarkable in the twentieth century has been the successful fusion of nationalism and political revolution, including armed struggles, in many other parts of the world, from Cuba to Vietnam. The conditions of such fusion evidently derive from a pre-existing colonial or semi-colonial status, in which relatively direct and powerful bonds of identity and aspiration are formed as against both foreigners and exploiters. There are then usually major problems, at a later stage, in relations with other national-revolutionary states, and the elements fused in the struggle enter a new stage in which the bonding can no longer be taken for granted. Meanwhile the political problem, for radicals back in the old nation-states, who are quick to identify with the national-liberation struggles of the ex-colonial peoples, lies in their fundamental attitudes to their own nation. For again and again, hurling themselves at the mystification of social reality by the ruling definitions of the nation and patriotism, they have found themselves opposed not only by the existing rulers and guardians but by actual majorities of the people in whose more fundamental needs and interests they are offering to speak.

There are many false ways out of this basic problem. All of them depend on subjection to the existing terms of the definitions. Contemporary social democrats, in particular, do their calculations and emerge with an amazing and implausible mix of patriotism, internationalism and social justice, drawing on each principle as occasion serves, or rhetorically proclaiming their compatibility or even identity. All this shows is their profound subordination to the forms of existing interests. The increasing irrelevance of social-democratic politics, in the old nation-states – indeed the transformation of social democracy itself, under a merely confusing retention of an old name, which in different conditions had more significance and coherence – is a direct result of this basic subordination.

For what they will not challenge, except in selected marginal ways, is capitalism itself. Yet it is capitalism, especially in its most developed stages, which is the main source of all the contemporary confusions about peoples and nations and their necessary loyalties and bonds. Moreover it is, in the modern epoch, capitalism which has disrupted and overridden natural communities, and imposed artificial orders . . .

* * *

It is an evil system, by all fully human standards. But what has then to be asked is why 'it' still has need of nations, of loyalty and patriotism, of an exaltation of flags and frontiers when the frontiers are only there to be economically dismantled and the flags, if the calculations come out that way, are quickly exchanged for flags of convenience? Why, in sum, in a modern free-trade capitalist international economy, have 'nations' at all?

* * *

The most dedicated consumer can only ingest so much. For other human needs, beyond consumption, other relationships and concept-ions of other people are necessary. Similarly the market, great god as it is, can only exchange so much. It can produce and sell weapons, but it cannot, in any generally effective way, protect people. It can move and regulate producers and consumers, but it cannot meet all the essentially non-profitable human needs of nurture and care, support and comfort, love and fidelity, membership and belonging.

Where then will these needs be met? The current orthodoxy rules off many of them as private, not public matters at all. Yet it is surely a public matter that there are now in materially rich societies so many neglected, deprived, emotionally dissatisfied and emotionally disabled people; so many problems of loneliness and of unbearable while undrugged depressions, tensions, despairs. Leave all that to the market? But the decision-makers know, even if some of them keep working to forget, that this would be unacceptable and dangerous. It is a matter then of where the lines are drawn. A welfare state, a health service, an education system: the mainstream political parties move through these with differences of degree. It is where something national – 'national assistance' – is still necessary but at levels to be negotiated, subject always to the needs of 'the economy'. Protection? Now that is another matter. Even the market itself, to say nothing of its luckiest beneficiaries, cannot stand unprotected among so many random and unpredictable individual wills. Thus 'law and order'; armed forces

called a 'defence force' even when some of their weapons are obviously aggressive: these, unambiguously, are the real functions of a state. And then the basis of a state is a nation, and the circle is squared.

It can be seen either way: as a cynical retention of just those nation-state powers which defend the existing social and economic order and head off, at minimum cost, movements of discontent which its enemies might exploit; or as a more generous if still limited recognition that there are social purposes which must still be sustained, if necessary by protection from the market. It matters very much which of these interpretations is at any particular time more true – for indeed, as purposes and methods, they vary and fluctuate. But it matters even more to see that on either interpretation there is a nation-state which does not even claim to be a full society. What it actually is, whether cynically or generously, is a deliberately partial system: not a whole lived order but a willed and selected superstructure.

This is the functional significance of its artifices. It is significant that the aggressive radical Right who are now in power in so many countries combine a pro-State rhetoric and practice, in military forces and a heavily policed law-and-order, with an anti-State rhetoric and practice in social welfare and the domestic economy, and in international monetary and trading exchange. This can be said, in a comforting way, to be a 'contradiction', but it is better seen as an open and class-based division of powers which is a genuine adjustment to an intensely competitive and profoundly unstable late capitalist world.

The national statism is to preserve a coherent domestic social order, both for general purposes and as a way of meeting the consequences of its commitment to open 'international' competition. It permits the ruin of certain 'national' industries by exposure to full transnational competition, but it does this as a way of enforcing transnational efficiency in what remains: the efficiency, indeed, of 'the Yookay', no longer a society but a market sector. At the same time it permits and even encourages the outflow of socially gathered capital (in pension funds and insurance and in the more general money market) to investment in whatever area of the global economy brings the highest money returns. So far as it can, against the established interests of communities and workers who are still its political electorate, it withdraws what it sees as distorting or enervating support for its own 'national' enterprises.

Thus an ideal condition is relentlessly pursued. First, the economic efficiency of a global system of production and trade, to include a re-organized and efficient 'national' sector within an open and inter-penetrating market flow. But at the same time a socially organized and

socially disciplined population, one from which effort can be mobilized and taxes collected along the residual but still effective national lines; there are still no effective political competitors in that. It is to this model of 'a people' that the rhetoric of an increasingly superficial and frenetic nationalism is applied, as a way of overriding all the real and increasing divisions and conflicts of interest within what might be the true nation, the actual and diverse people.

I repeat that this is a genuine adjustment to late twentieth-century conditions. It is a conscious programme to regulate and contain what would otherwise be intolerable divisions and confusions. Moreover, there is no way back from it to some simple and coherent nationalism. Some alternative programmes are now being offered, combining a recovery of full political and military sovereignty with a national economic recovery plan, including heavy domestic investment and controls on the export of capital and on selected imports. It is at first sight very surprising that this fails to strike any resonant 'national' chord. But this is the real complication, that this kind of emphasis on the nation-state taking control of a national political and economic life contradicts very openly the practices and ideals of market mobility and free consumer choice. To substantiate 'nationality' at the necessary depth, for alternative policies, means drawing on resources in active social relations which both mobile privatization and consumerism and the most superficial and alienated versions of nationalism and patriotism have seriously weakened.

Thus 'nationalization' is not perceived as connected to 'nationalism'. It is widely seen as an alien intrusion, from the other side of the statist coin. Meanwhile 'patriotism' has been so displaced to its functional images – the monarchy, the heritage, the armed forces, the flag – that alternative policies not only do not connect with them but by talking about other emphases and priorities often literally contradict them. Thus a 'nationalizing' programme can be perceived as 'unpatriotic' – 'unBritish', 'unAmerican' – while a transnational strategy, pursued even to the point where a national economy loses heavily within unrestricted competition, is by its structural retention of the most artificial national images perceived as the 'patriotic' course.

* * *

What headway can be made against such intolerable confusions? Little or none, I judge, by the familiar intellectual jump to this or that universality. It is not in the mere negation of existing social perceptions

that different forces can be generated. It is in two positive and connected initiatives: first, the cultural struggle for actual social identities; and second, the political definition of effective self-governing societies. I will first consider these separately.

What is most intolerable and unreal in existing projections of 'England' or 'Britain' is their historical and cultural ignorance. 'The Yookay', of course, is neither historical nor cultural; it is a jargon term of commercial and military planning. I remember a leader of the Labour Party, opposing British entry to the European Community, asserting that it would be the end of 'a thousand years of history'. Why a thousand, I wondered. The only meaningful date by that reckoning would be somewhere around 1066, when a Norman-French replaced a Norse-Saxon monarchy. What then of the English? That would be some fifteen hundred years. The British? Some two thousand five hundred. But the real history of the peoples of these islands goes back very much further than that: at least six thousand years to the remarkable societies of the Neolithic shepherds and farmers, and back beyond them to the hunting peoples who did not simply disappear but are also among our ancestors. Thus the leader of a nominally popular party could not in practice think about the realities of his own people. He could not think about their history except in the alienated forms of a centralized nation-state. And that he deployed these petty projections as a self-evident argument against attempts at a wider European identity would be incomprehensible, in all its actual and approved former-European reorganisations, if the cultural and historical realities had not been so systematically repressed by a functional and domineering selective 'patriotism'.

All the varied peoples who have lived on this island are in a substantial physical sense still here. What is from time to time projected as an 'island race' is in reality a long process of successive conquests and repressions but also of successive supersessions and relative integrations. All the real processes have been cultural and historical, and all the artificial processes have been political, in one after another dominative proclamation of a state and an identity. It is obvious that there can now be no simple return to any of what may be seen as layers of this long social and physical process. But it should be equally obvious that this long and unfinished process cannot reasonably be repressed by versions of a national history and a patriotic heritage which deliberately exlude its complexities and in doing so reject its many surviving and diverse identities. Thus the real inheritance of these hundreds of diverse and unevenly connecting generations cannot be reduced to a recent and

originally alien monarchy or to a flag which in its very form records their enforced political unification. The consequences of the long attempts to suppress or override a surviving and remade Irish identity ought to show, clearly enough, the bloody stupidity of the prevailing versions of patriotism. Yet characteristically the consequences are functionally projected to the Irish themselves, butts of hatred or of complacent jokes. Again, it is a common ruling-class cultural habit, carefully extended by most schools, to identify with the Roman imperial invaders of Britain against what are called the mere 'native tribes'. Can such people monopolize 'patriotism'? In practice yes, since many of those whose actual ancestors were slaughtered and enslaved have reconstructed them in the images dispensed by their conquerors: savages in skins; even, in comic-strip culture, cavemen.

I do not know how far any real knowledge of the physical and cultural history of the peoples of this island might prevail against the stupidities of this narrow orthodox perspective. I cannot believe that it would make no difference, and I am encouraged by the growing positive interest in these misrepresented and obscured pasts. But at any time what has also to be faced is the effective stage of their current integration. It is here that there is now a major problem in the most recent immigrations of more visibly different peoples. When these interact with the most recent selective forms of identity – 'the true-born Englishman' who apart from an occasional afterthought is made to stand for the whole complex of settled native and earlier-immigrant peoples; or the imperial 'British', who in a new common identity used economic and military advantages to rule a hundred peoples across the world and to assume an inborn superiority to them – the angry confusions and prejudices are obvious.

At the same time many generations of formerly diverse peoples have experienced and adapted to a differently rooted though over-lapping social identity, and as at all earlier stages of relative integration are at best deeply uncertain of, at worst openly hostile to, newcoming other peoples. This is the phenomenon now crudely interpreted as 'racism'. It is not that there is no actual racism: it flows without difficulty from the most recent selective forms, as it flowed also, in modern times, against the Irish and the Jews. But it is a profound misunderstanding to refer all the social and cultural tensions of the arrival of new peoples to these ideological forms. The real working of ideology, both ways, can be seen in that most significant of current exchanges, when an English working man (English in the terms of the sustained modern integration) protests at the arrival or presence of 'foreigners' or 'aliens', and now

goes on to specify them as 'blacks', to be met by the standard liberal reply that 'they are as British as you are'. Many people notice the ideological components of the protest: the rapid movement, where no other terms are available, from resentment of unfamiliar neighbours to the ideological specifications of 'race' and 'superiority'. But what of the ideology of the reply? It is employing, very plainly, a merely legal definition of what it is to be 'British'. At this strict level it is necessary and important, correctly asserting the need for equality and protection within the laws. Similarly, the most active legal (and communal) defence of dislocated and exposed groups and minorities is essential. But it is a serious misunderstanding, when full social relations are in question, to suppose that the problems of social identity are resolved by formal definitions. For unevenly and at times precariously, but always through long experience substantially, an effective awareness of social identity depends on actual and sustained social relationships. To reduce social identity to formal legal definitions, at the level of the state, is to collude with the alienated superficialities of 'the nation' which are the limited functional terms of the modern ruling class.

That even some socialists should reply in such terms – socialists who should entirely depend on deeply grounded and active social identities – is another sign of the prepotence of market and exchange relations. One reason is that many minority liberals and socialists, and especially those who by the nature of their work or formation are themselves nationally and internationally mobile, have little experience of those rooted settlements from which, though now under exceptionally severe complications and pressures, most people still derive their communal identities. Many socialists are influenced by universalist propositions of an ideal kind, such as the international proletariat overcoming its national divisions. Many liberals are influenced by North American thought, where for historical reasons a massively diverse mobility was primarily integrated at legal and functional levels. There can then be a rapid intellectual supersession of all the complex actualities of settled but then dislocated and relocated communities, to the point where some vanguard has a clear set of general 'social' positions only to find that the majority of its nominally connected people have declined to follow it. When this turns, as sometimes, to abusing them, there is a certain finality of defeat.

A socialist position on social identity certainly rejects, absolutely, the divisive ideologies of 'race' and 'nation', as a ruling class functionally employs them. But it rejects them in favour of lived and formed identities either of a settled kind, if available, or of a possible kind, where

dislocation and relocation require new formation. It happens that I grew up in an old frontier area, the Welsh border country, where for centuries there was bitter fighting and raiding and repression and discrimination, and where, within twenty miles of where I was born, there were in those turbulent centuries as many as four different every-day spoken languages. It is with this history in mind that I believe in the practical formation of social identity – it is now very marked there – and know that necessarily it has to be lived. Not far away there are the Welsh mining valleys, into which in the nineteenth century there was massive and diverse immigration, but in which, after two generations, there were some of the most remarkably solid and mutually loyal communities of which we have record. These are the real grounds of hope. It is by working and living together, with some real place and common interest to identify with, and as free as may be from external ideological definitions, whether divisive or universalist, that real social identities are formed. What would have seemed impossible, at the most difficult stages, either in that border country or in those mining valleys, has indeed been achieved, though this does not mean that it happens naturally; there are other cases, as in the north of Ireland, where history and external ideologies still divide people and tear them apart.

This connects with the second emphasis: on the redefinition of effective self-governing societies. It is now very apparent, in the development of modern industrial societies, that the nation-state, in its classical European forms, is at once too large and too small for the range of real social purposes. It is too large, even in the old nation-states such as Britain, to develop full social identities in their real diversity. This is not only a problem of the minority peoples – Scots or Welsh or Irish or West Indian – but of the still significantly different cultures which are arbitrarily relegated to 'regions'. In this situation, imposed artificial definitions of 'Britishness', of 'the United Kingdom' and 'The Yookay', of the 'national interest' and of 'nationwide' lines of communication, are in practice ways of ratifying or overriding unequal social and economic development, and of containing the protests and resentments of neglected and marginalized regions and minorities within an imposed general 'patriotism'. The major economic and political divergence of the North and the South-East of even the supposedly unified and clamorous 'England' is an obvious current example.

It is clear that if people are to defend and promote their real interests, on the basis of lived and worked and placeable social identities, a large part of the now alienated and centralized powers and resources must be actively regained, by new actual societies which in

'their own terms, and nobody else's, define themselves. All effective socialist policies, over the coming generations, must be directed towards this practice, for it is only in the re-emphasis or formation of these full, active social identities that socialism itself – which depends absolutely on authentic ideas of a society – can develop. In particular, it is only in these ways, as identifiable communities and regions are broken by movements of the national or international market, that there is the possibility of overcoming those reductive identities as mobile consumers which positively depend on advantage and affluence.

At the same time it is obvious that for many purposes not only these more real societies but also the existing nation-states are too small. The trading, monetary and military problems which now show this to be true, and which have so heavily encroached on the supposed 'sovereignty' of the nation-states, would not disappear in any movement to placeable communal self-management. It is not necessarily true that they would become more difficult. Many of the toughest trading and monetary problems flow directly from the system of international capitalist competition, and quite new forms of planned external trade would be possible in societies which genuinely began from the interests of their own people rather than from the interests of a 'national' ruling class integrated in and serving the international economy. The military problems are also very difficult, but it can now be seen that it is the arbitrary formation of generalized hostile blocs, overriding the diversities of real popular interests, which increasingly endangers rather than assures our necessary defence and security.

We cannot say, at any level, that these placeable self-managing societies could be 'sovereign'. Even to say that they could be 'autonomous' is taking a very limited sense. What has really to be said is different: that we have to explore new forms of *variable* societies, in which over the whole range of social purposes different sizes of society are defined for different kinds of issue and decision. In practice some of this now happens, as in the supposed 'division of powers' between local, regional, national and international bodies. But this is a false kind of division. The local and regional are in practice, as their names indicate, essentially subordinate to and dependent on the national. What goes through to an international level is first centralized or simply substituted by this national system ('it is felt *in London*'; '*Britain* has refused to ratify the Law of the Sea'). Meanwhile many of the most effective international forms – not only the multinational corporations but also the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund – are in effect

wholly irresponsible to any full actual societies; indeed it is often their specific business to override them.

A variable socialism – the making of many socialisms – could be very different. There would be an absolute refusal of overriding national and international bodies which do not derive their specified powers directly from the participation and negotiation of actual self-governing societies. At a different level, there would be a necessary openness to all the indispensable means of mutual support and encouragement, directly and often diversely (bilaterally as well as in variable multilateral groupings) negotiated from real bases. Moreover, much of this negotiation would be at least in part direct, rather than through the necessarily alienating procedures of 'all-purpose representatives'. The true advantages of equal exchange, and of rooted contacts and mobilities, would be more fully realised in this variable socialism than in the current arbitrary mobilities, or in any merely defensive reversion to smaller societies and sovereignties.

To bring together these two emphases – on the cultural struggle for actual social identities, and on the political redefinition of effective self-governing societies – is, I believe, to indicate a new and substantial kind of socialism which is capable both of dealing with the complexities of modern societies and also of re-engaging effective and practical popular interests.

Very much remains to be done by way of detailed discussions and proposals, but we cannot in any case live much longer under the confusions of the existing 'international' economy and the existing 'nation-state'. If we cannot find and communicate social forms of more substance than these, we shall be condemned to endure the accelerating pace of false and frenetic nationalisms and of reckless and uncontrollable global transnationalism. Moreover, even endurance is then an optimistic estimate. These are political forms that now limit, subordinate and destroy people. We have to begin again with people and build new political forms.

Bydd dyn wedi troi'r hanner-cant yn gweld yn lled glir
Y bobl a'r cynefin a foldiodd ei fywyd e'.

*(Having turned fifty, a man sees pretty clearly
The people and places that have moulded his life.)*

D. Gwenallt Jones, 'Y Meirwon'

Das Vorleben des Emigranten wird bekanntlich annulliert.

(The past life of the émigré is, as we know, annulled.)

Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia*

Contents

LITERATURE

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Acknowledgements

The stimulus for assembling this collection was the wish to resist the 'danger of withdrawn and resentful enclosure and submission' that Raymond Williams identified as a possible response to the persistent 'cultural indifference' towards Wales and Welsh literature in the Anglo-American academic world. Part of the problem of course, as Williams noted, is that any attempt at following the internal arguments within a specific culture results in 'the reader from elsewhere' wishing 'that he or she had come in at the beginning, to get the shape of the discourse and to understand all the references back'. The explanatory notes at the back of this volume were initially intended as a means for that 'reader from elsewhere' to gain a sense of the Welsh context. It became clear in the process of teaching Williams at Swansea, however, that there was also a case for including some information on figures such as Hoggart, Leavis and Konni Zilliacus, as well as Aneirin, Carnhuanawc and Saunders Lewis. Williams rarely documented the influences and sources of his ideas, but where he included footnotes in the original they appear at the bottom of the page, while my explanatory notes – intended primarily for readers unfamiliar with this cultural and political terrain – appear at the end of the book.

James Baldwin once noted that you 'never get the book you wanted, you settle for the book you get', and some omissions had to be made in order for this volume to appear at a reasonable price. This collection spans the years from 1971 when Raymond Williams turned fifty and began engaging self-consciously with the meaning of his Welshness, to his untimely death in 1988. Williams's writings on Wales were presaged by his first two novels, *Border Country* (1960) and *Second Generation* (1964), and by two – widely available – pieces from the 1950s, which I discuss in the introduction but have not included in this volume:

'Culture is Ordinary', first published in Norman Mackenzie (ed.), *Convictions* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1958), 74–92. Collected in Raymond Williams, *Resources of Hope* (London: Verso, 1989), 3–18, and John Higgins (ed.), *The Raymond Williams Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 10–24.