

#SoAatHome | Industry Insider – Living in a bilingual country  
Wednesday 1 July 2026



00:00:00.000--> 00:00:04.268

[Greetings in Welsh]

00:00:04.292--> 00:00:07.828

Good evening and  
welcome to today's event,

00:00:07.852--> 00:00:09.988

which is the Industry Insider

00:00:10.012--> 00:00:14.028

Living in a bilingual  
country: writers' perspectives.

00:00:14.052--> 00:00:15.788

My name's Cath Barton

00:00:15.812--> 00:00:17.468

and I'm an English writer.

00:00:17.492--> 00:00:21.788

I've lived in Abergavenny  
in South Wales since 2005.

00:00:21.812--> 00:00:25.388

I'm the current chair of the  
Society of Authors Cymru Committee

00:00:25.412--> 00:00:28.285

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and I'm going to be chairing  
this evening's discussion

00:00:28.309--> 00:00:31.108

with two first language

Cymraeg authors,

00:00:31.132--> 00:00:34.321

Manon Steffan Ros and Mel Owen.

00:00:34.345--> 00:00:37.308

Now, we're each going to  
give an audio description.

00:00:37.332--> 00:00:40.388

I'm a white woman  
with short blondish hair,

00:00:40.412--> 00:00:44.468

wearing a green shirt and  
glasses with multicoloured frames.

00:00:44.492--> 00:00:47.108

So, please can our  
panellists just say hello

00:00:47.132--> 00:00:49.948

and give their audio  
descriptions, please?

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00:00:49.972--> 00:00:52.508

-Hi, I am Manon Steffan Ros.

00:00:52.532--> 00:00:55.988

I'm a white woman in  
her 40s with long dark hair

00:00:56.012--> 00:01:00.028

and I am against a  
white background.

00:01:00.052--> 00:01:02.108

-Hiya, I'm Mel Owen.

00:01:02.132--> 00:01:05.668

I am a Caribbean and  
white mixed woman

00:01:05.692--> 00:01:10.052

who is 31 and I am also  
against a white background.

00:01:10.052--> 00:01:12.748

And I've got long black hair.

00:01:12.772--> 00:01:15.028

Thank you, diolch yn fawr.

00:01:15.052--> 00:01:18.588

I warn you now, I'm not

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going to say much Welsh

00:01:18.612--> 00:01:21.668

because my Welsh is pretty poor.

00:01:21.692--> 00:01:26.731

But if either Manon

or Melanie wish to...

00:01:26.755--> 00:01:29.868

Mel, sorry, wish to say

anything in Welsh, please do.

00:01:29.892--> 00:01:33.908

So, I'll start by saying, when the

Society of Authors Cymru Committee

00:01:33.932--> 00:01:35.908

circulated our members in Wales

00:01:35.932--> 00:01:39.567

with a list of suggested

topics for a webinar discussion,

00:01:39.591--> 00:01:42.068

this one came in the top three.

00:01:42.092--> 00:01:45.148

We're very conscious

in the Society

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00:01:45.172--> 00:01:48.118

that our work is English  
language focused,

00:01:48.143--> 00:01:51.468

but we do recognize that  
Welsh, that's Cymraeg,

00:01:51.492--> 00:01:53.908

is an official language  
of the country

00:01:53.932--> 00:01:56.988

and that public bodies  
are required by law

00:01:57.012--> 00:01:59.938

to provide translations  
of their written material.

00:01:59.963--> 00:02:03.428

Now, we're not here for a  
political discussion today,

00:02:03.452--> 00:02:08.748

but we do have to recognize, to acknowledge  
the shadow of the shameful Welsh Not

00:02:08.772--> 00:02:12.591

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when school children were  
punished for speaking Welsh.

00:02:12.591--> 00:02:14.708

We hope that's in the past.

00:02:14.732--> 00:02:19.591

Today we want to have a positive  
discussion, but also an honest one.

00:02:19.591--> 00:02:22.548

So, some brief housekeeping.

00:02:22.572--> 00:02:26.188

Following the conversation  
between myself and our two panellists,

00:02:26.212--> 00:02:30.031

we will have our comfort break  
for five minutes at about 8 o'clock.

00:02:30.056--> 00:02:33.548

After which, we will take  
questions from the audience.

00:02:33.572--> 00:02:37.591

We do have a number of questions  
that have been sent to us in advance

00:02:37.591--> 00:02:42.092

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If you have a question or you come up with one during our conversation,

00:02:42.117--> 00:02:46.388

please post your question in the Q&A box, which is...

00:02:46.412--> 00:02:49.038

you'll find it on the bottom bar on Zoom.

00:02:49.063--> 00:02:52.988

Not, please, in the chat box, in the Q&A box,

00:02:53.012--> 00:02:56.028

because we won't pick up questions from chat.

00:02:56.052--> 00:02:59.388

What Emma Boniwell will be doing,

00:02:59.412--> 00:03:02.948

but Emma from the Society who is moderating this event,

00:03:02.972--> 00:03:05.468

[speaking in Welsh] Diolch yn fawr, Emma, thank you,

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00:03:05.492--> 00:03:08.668

Emma will pick up questions  
and we'll take a look at them

00:03:08.692--> 00:03:10.591

during our five minute break.

00:03:10.591--> 00:03:15.428

Emma will also be posting  
a number of links in the chat.

00:03:15.452--> 00:03:17.428

So do take the opportunity

00:03:17.452--> 00:03:20.591

to look at those at some  
point during the evening.

00:03:20.591--> 00:03:24.628

If you want to  
have live subtitles,

00:03:24.652--> 00:03:28.259

you can turn on the  
closed captions option.

00:03:28.284--> 00:03:30.068

And also to say

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00:03:30.092--> 00:03:33.908

that this is being recorded and  
the recording will be available

00:03:33.932--> 00:03:36.628

after the event on  
the Society's website,

00:03:36.652--> 00:03:39.668

which can be accessed by  
logging into the members area

00:03:39.692--> 00:03:41.838

and going to our resources page.

00:03:41.863--> 00:03:46.748

And also will be emailed to registered  
attendees shortly after the meeting,

00:03:46.772--> 00:03:48.988

together with the captions.

00:03:49.012--> 00:03:51.748

So I'm going to  
move to our panellists,

00:03:51.772--> 00:03:53.513

Manon Steffan Ros and Mel Owen,

00:03:53.537--> 00:03:57.073

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who are both prize-winning  
first language Cymraeg writers.

00:03:57.098--> 00:04:01.348

I'm sure you've read their brief  
biographies on the blurb for this event,

00:04:01.372--> 00:04:03.148

so I'm not going to read  
through those again,

00:04:03.172--> 00:04:05.591

but I do want to highlight  
a couple of things.

00:04:05.591--> 00:04:09.348

Manon is just back from Beijing,

00:04:09.372--> 00:04:15.508

where she's been at a book launch  
for a translation of her first book,

00:04:15.532--> 00:04:18.188

one of her books into Chinese.

00:04:18.212--> 00:04:20.404

And also, I want to say Manon

00:04:20.428--> 00:04:23.988

is shortlisted for Wales

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Book of the Year Award

00:04:24.012--> 00:04:27.908

this year in the Welsh language

Children and Young Persons category

00:04:27.932--> 00:04:31.028

for her book Y Cae Ras.

00:04:31.052--> 00:04:33.468

Winners due to be

announced next week,

00:04:33.492--> 00:04:35.708

and I'll mention

that event later on.

00:04:35.732--> 00:04:37.708

Meanwhile, I

understand that Mel,

00:04:37.732--> 00:04:40.188

who does stand-up comedy

as well as writing fiction,

00:04:40.212--> 00:04:42.908

went down a storm

in a bilingual event

00:04:42.932--> 00:04:45.245

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for young people at the  
Hay Festival this May.

00:04:45.269--> 00:04:47.558

And you can pick that  
up and watch it online.

00:04:47.583--> 00:04:51.668

So that's kind of up-to-date  
stuff about our two panellists.

00:04:51.692--> 00:04:53.868

So I'm going to move on to give

00:04:53.892--> 00:04:56.508

in turn our two  
panellists a few minutes

00:04:56.532--> 00:04:58.828

to introduce anything they  
want to say about themselves,

00:04:58.852--> 00:05:00.505

and particularly

00:05:00.529--> 00:05:03.591

focusing on their experience  
of living and working

00:05:03.591--> 00:05:05.511

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in this bilingual country.

00:05:05.535--> 00:05:07.491

I'm going to start with Manon.

00:05:08.535--> 00:05:10.588

-Hey, thank you so much, Cath,

00:05:10.612--> 00:05:15.185

and thank you all for turning up on  
this lovely evening to listen to us talk.

00:05:15.209--> 00:05:17.788

It's a really interesting  
subject, I think.

00:05:17.812--> 00:05:20.188

I am first language Welsh

00:05:20.212--> 00:05:22.348

and I have been writing books

00:05:22.372--> 00:05:25.148

through the medium of  
Welsh for 20 years now.

00:05:25.172--> 00:05:26.538

Um...

00:05:26.562--> 00:05:29.628

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In the last, I think, 10 years,

00:05:29.652--> 00:05:33.708

I've started translating my own work  
into English and publishing it in English,

00:05:33.732--> 00:05:35.788

and then that serves  
as a bridge language

00:05:35.812--> 00:05:37.868

to translate into  
other languages.

00:05:37.892--> 00:05:43.348

Now, I do think this is a really  
important conversation to be had because

00:05:43.372--> 00:05:47.148

I always thought when I was  
publishing through the medium of Welsh

00:05:47.172--> 00:05:50.588

that we didn't really need  
anything like the Society of Authors,

00:05:50.612--> 00:05:53.268

because the publishing  
industry is so small.

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00:05:53.292--> 00:05:55.736

You know, you have a handful of

00:05:55.761--> 00:05:58.148

Welsh publishing houses.

00:05:58.172--> 00:06:01.871

You have the Welsh Books

Council supporting us all.

00:06:01.895--> 00:06:06.228

You have Literature Wales who are  
very proactive in supporting authors

00:06:06.252--> 00:06:07.988

and writers.

00:06:08.012--> 00:06:09.468

Um...

00:06:09.492--> 00:06:12.908

And then I started  
publishing in English

00:06:12.932--> 00:06:15.197

and I realized that actually

00:06:15.221--> 00:06:17.268

we do need to  
have a conversation.

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00:06:17.292--> 00:06:20.982

We do need to have  
conversations as authors.

00:06:21.007--> 00:06:23.537

But they're different  
conversations to the ones

00:06:23.561--> 00:06:26.588

that you would have about  
English language publishing.

00:06:26.612--> 00:06:28.788

Those two worlds  
are very, very different.

00:06:28.812--> 00:06:31.228

And the more I publish  
in other languages,

00:06:31.252--> 00:06:36.268

the more I feel really  
thankful of the fact that...

00:06:36.292--> 00:06:39.068

that we have what  
we have here in Wales,

00:06:39.092--> 00:06:43.828

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support for... for publishing  
in Cymraeg, in Welsh.

00:06:43.852--> 00:06:47.188

But there are things

00:06:47.212--> 00:06:49.268

that we're not very  
good at talking about.

00:06:49.292--> 00:06:52.948

We're not very good  
at sharing our contracts

00:06:52.972--> 00:06:56.228

and talking about money  
and rights and things like that.

00:06:56.252--> 00:06:58.788

But, it's a subject

00:06:58.812--> 00:07:01.268

that we don't really  
touch on here in Wales,

00:07:01.292--> 00:07:02.548

in Cymraeg.

00:07:03.532--> 00:07:07.825

The other thing I wanted to touch

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on was the more creative side.

00:07:07.849--> 00:07:10.868

So as I said, I'm  
first language Welsh,

00:07:10.892--> 00:07:13.148

but I was fluent in English

00:07:13.172--> 00:07:16.148

by the time I was four or five.

00:07:16.152--> 00:07:18.152

And so,

00:07:18.152--> 00:07:22.428

I'm so grateful to my  
parents for giving me that,

00:07:22.452--> 00:07:28.152

the opportunity and  
that gift to be able to

00:07:28.152--> 00:07:31.388

speak fluently, write  
fluently in both languages.

00:07:31.412--> 00:07:32.940

But when I've translated things,

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00:07:32.964--> 00:07:35.868

it's the creative thing that's  
really interesting, is that you...

00:07:35.892--> 00:07:39.152

you fall in love with  
both languages again.

00:07:39.152--> 00:07:42.748

I think that... The thing that made  
me realize that more than anything,

00:07:42.772--> 00:07:45.108

I was translating  
my book, *Blasu*,

00:07:45.132--> 00:07:47.508

which is a novel with recipes

00:07:47.532--> 00:07:50.908

into the English  
"The Seasoning".

00:07:50.932--> 00:07:53.348

That's been out for  
quite a few years now.

00:07:53.372--> 00:07:55.548

And in the Welsh version,

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00:07:55.572--> 00:07:58.548

there was a chapter  
that started with

00:07:58.572--> 00:08:02.068

[speaking in Welsh] Mae'n pluo.

00:08:02.092--> 00:08:05.748

And I was thinking, right,  
how do I translate that?

00:08:05.772--> 00:08:09.152

And what I was  
trying to describe was,

00:08:09.152--> 00:08:13.468

you know, when it starts  
snowing and the first little

00:08:13.492--> 00:08:14.988

snow, um...

00:08:15.012--> 00:08:17.228

The first little...

00:08:17.252--> 00:08:18.816

What do we say in English?

00:08:18.841--> 00:08:19.896

-Snowflakes?

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00:08:19.921--> 00:08:21.388

-Snowflakes. There we are.

00:08:21.412--> 00:08:23.588

That's a good word  
to forget, isn't it now?

00:08:23.612--> 00:08:25.068

In the current climate.

00:08:25.092--> 00:08:28.152

The first snowflakes fall.

00:08:28.152--> 00:08:30.698

I'd written "Mae'n pluo".

00:08:30.722--> 00:08:32.628

What it actually  
means, literally,

00:08:32.652--> 00:08:34.985

is "it's feathering".

00:08:35.010--> 00:08:38.152

But we don't think of  
it as something poetic

00:08:38.152--> 00:08:41.388

or beautiful, it's

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just the way we talk.

00:08:41.412--> 00:08:45.228

And in translation, I  
feel that we always feel...

00:08:45.252--> 00:08:48.708

We always find the  
beauty in the other language,

00:08:48.732--> 00:08:52.188

that I don't think there's tension  
between the Welsh and the English,

00:08:52.212--> 00:08:53.491

but we need to have

00:08:53.516--> 00:08:57.828

conversations and  
share what's relevant,

00:08:57.852--> 00:09:01.108

but also recognize  
what's not relevant.

00:09:01.132--> 00:09:04.548

I hope that makes  
some kind of sense, Cath.

00:09:06.151--> 00:09:09.093

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Thank you so much, Manon.

00:09:09.117--> 00:09:11.886

You've raised such interesting  
points, such interesting points.

00:09:11.911--> 00:09:14.407

So I'm going to pick up  
on one of those in a while,

00:09:14.431--> 00:09:16.588

but let's move on to Mel

00:09:16.612--> 00:09:20.988

to introduce herself and speak  
about her experience, if you can.

00:09:21.012--> 00:09:22.828

-Absolutely. Hi, everybody.

00:09:22.852--> 00:09:25.028

My name is Mel Owen

00:09:25.052--> 00:09:26.868

and I am...

00:09:26.892--> 00:09:28.628

I say I'm a writer  
first and foremost

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00:09:28.652--> 00:09:31.868

because I think that  
encapsulates everything that I do.

00:09:31.892--> 00:09:33.548

So, as Cath mentioned,

00:09:33.572--> 00:09:35.788

I am a stand-up comedian,

00:09:35.812--> 00:09:38.588

but I would include that  
in writing as well because

00:09:38.612--> 00:09:40.988

I write everything  
that I perform.

00:09:41.012--> 00:09:43.308

And that can include

00:09:43.332--> 00:09:46.708

actual sitting down and writing and  
thinking about what I'm going to say,

00:09:46.732--> 00:09:48.868

or it can include

00:09:48.892--> 00:09:51.548

looking at something

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I've scribbled on a notepad

00:09:51.572--> 00:09:54.868

and trying to make sense of  
it on stage as it's happening.

00:09:54.892--> 00:09:58.268

So those, um... And I  
consider both of those writing,

00:09:58.292--> 00:10:02.428

even if one of them is a  
little bit more haphazard.

00:10:02.452--> 00:10:06.148

And I also script-write as well.

00:10:06.172--> 00:10:09.988

I've written script for sitcoms,

00:10:10.012--> 00:10:14.788

for radio dramas,  
radio comedies,

00:10:14.812--> 00:10:16.908

and factual as well,

00:10:16.932--> 00:10:20.108

which I think is one of the most  
challenging ones that I've done. So,

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00:10:20.132--> 00:10:24.152

for instance, there was a show  
called Unapologetic on Channel 4,

00:10:24.152--> 00:10:28.348

which was put up in the same  
time slot as Question Time.

00:10:28.372--> 00:10:30.948

And it was to kind  
of go against it,

00:10:30.972--> 00:10:34.348

but it would only have black  
guests and presenters on

00:10:34.372--> 00:10:37.828

to kind of prove that Black people can  
talk about more things than... than race.

00:10:37.852--> 00:10:40.058

They can also talk about  
the rest of the news as well.

00:10:40.083--> 00:10:43.428

And I would write links  
for those presenters

00:10:43.452--> 00:10:47.508

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and also write on the studio  
floor as things were happening,

00:10:47.532--> 00:10:50.948

and guests were saying things that  
were not in their research chat at all

00:10:50.972--> 00:10:55.148

and trying to kind of help the  
presenters as we were going.

00:10:55.172--> 00:10:58.152

So, all these different strands  
of writing have been really

00:10:58.152--> 00:11:00.152

interesting to me.

00:11:00.152--> 00:11:04.788

And I've published a  
book as well, which I...

00:11:04.812--> 00:11:07.868

I don't like calling  
it an autobiography,

00:11:07.892--> 00:11:09.428

because I published  
it when I was 28

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00:11:09.452--> 00:11:11.668

and I think that sounds  
incredibly cheeky.

00:11:11.692--> 00:11:15.868

But it is a memoir, I would say,

00:11:15.892--> 00:11:19.152

of, the lessons that I  
learned before turning 30.

00:11:19.152--> 00:11:22.118

And that exists in...

00:11:22.142--> 00:11:24.828

It's called Oedolyn (ish!),  
which means Adult-ish.

00:11:24.852--> 00:11:27.308

And it's really interesting

00:11:27.332--> 00:11:31.428

because I had a chat really recently  
with my publisher as to whether

00:11:31.452--> 00:11:34.428

that book should be  
translated into English.

00:11:34.452--> 00:11:37.152

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There have been a few people  
who have asked if it would be

00:11:37.152--> 00:11:40.780

And recently I adapted it

00:11:40.804--> 00:11:44.868

for the short stories scheme

00:11:44.892--> 00:11:49.228

that Literature Wales have  
put together, and so I gave it a...

00:11:49.252--> 00:11:51.548

I produced an abridged version,

00:11:51.572--> 00:11:54.148

I've produced a  
audiobook version,

00:11:54.172--> 00:11:56.991

which is due to come out,  
but there's no English version.

00:11:57.016--> 00:12:00.428

And my decision

00:12:00.452--> 00:12:02.503

has  
been to keep it in Welsh.

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00:12:02.528--> 00:12:04.868

And that's...

00:12:04.892--> 00:12:09.152

And kind of feeding off what  
Manon was talking about there,

00:12:09.152--> 00:12:14.268

it's... you fall in love with both  
languages, again, because you are writing

00:12:14.292--> 00:12:15.948

in two different ways.

00:12:15.972--> 00:12:18.468

You know, you're exploring the  
language and the way it works.

00:12:18.492--> 00:12:22.628

And for me, humour is really  
important in everything that I write.

00:12:22.652--> 00:12:24.948

And especially in my book,

00:12:24.972--> 00:12:27.152

I was... I was  
looking at some really

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00:12:27.152--> 00:12:29.828

personal and challenging themes.

00:12:29.852--> 00:12:34.268

And use humour as

a defence for me,

00:12:34.292--> 00:12:36.148

I'm sure my therapist would say,

00:12:36.172--> 00:12:38.388

but also as an access

point for an audience

00:12:38.412--> 00:12:41.152

who might otherwise find

it jarring or uncomfortable.

00:12:41.152--> 00:12:44.152

And a lot of that humour

00:12:44.152--> 00:12:48.468

was around Welsh culture,

00:12:48.492--> 00:12:50.988

Welsh language culture.

00:12:51.012--> 00:12:53.588

Those cultural references which

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00:12:53.612--> 00:12:56.028

were so inherently

important to me

00:12:56.052--> 00:12:58.628

growing up in Aberystwyth

in the early noughties.

00:12:58.652--> 00:13:02.348

And not from a

language point of view,

00:13:02.372--> 00:13:04.748

but from a cultural

point of view,

00:13:04.772--> 00:13:07.268

I feel like that book

belongs to Wales.

00:13:07.292--> 00:13:08.508

It belongs in Welsh.

00:13:08.532--> 00:13:10.152

And that it would not

00:13:10.152--> 00:13:12.152

be the same book in English

00:13:12.152--> 00:13:15.428

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And that is not to  
say that, you know,

00:13:15.452--> 00:13:17.828

translation isn't a  
worthwhile exercise.

00:13:17.852--> 00:13:20.108

I think it is an amazing  
thing and everything

00:13:20.132--> 00:13:23.788

that I work on, be it stand-up,

00:13:23.812--> 00:13:26.948

I try to write bits that I can  
always do in both languages.

00:13:26.972--> 00:13:29.588

I know some stand-ups do  
things that only work in Welsh

00:13:29.612--> 00:13:30.948

and then only work in English.

00:13:30.972--> 00:13:33.548

I always, perhaps  
out of laziness,

00:13:33.572--> 00:13:37.108

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write something that will only ever  
work in both, so I can do both sets.

00:13:37.132--> 00:13:40.948

But for my book, I came to  
the decision that it belongs

00:13:40.972--> 00:13:42.748

to the Welsh language

00:13:42.772--> 00:13:47.788

and that is a decision that I  
will consider in my next book

00:13:47.812--> 00:13:50.308

as to when I begin writing it,

00:13:50.332--> 00:13:52.548

will I want to translate it

00:13:52.572--> 00:13:54.948

and if so I will consider  
that when writing

00:13:54.972--> 00:13:56.605

the original in Welsh.

00:13:56.630--> 00:13:59.748

So yeah, I suppose coming  
from a slightly different angle,

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00:13:59.772--> 00:14:01.188

but that, um...

00:14:01.212--> 00:14:03.416

that's my experience so far.

00:14:05.152--> 00:14:07.748

-Thank you, Mel. So interesting.

00:14:07.772--> 00:14:11.152

So interesting what

you've both said about

00:14:11.152--> 00:14:12.988

falling in love with

both languages,

00:14:13.012--> 00:14:14.468

when you're working

in two languages.

00:14:14.492--> 00:14:16.708

I mean, I don't have the

experience with Welsh,

00:14:16.732--> 00:14:18.828

but I had a lot of

experience with French.

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00:14:18.852--> 00:14:20.828

And when I was living  
in France for a year,

00:14:20.852--> 00:14:22.628

I found sometimes,  
you know, you're...

00:14:22.652--> 00:14:24.948

searching for the word  
for snowflake, Manon.

00:14:24.972--> 00:14:27.505

Sometimes I couldn't think of  
the word in English or French

00:14:27.530--> 00:14:28.828

But you kind of

00:14:28.852--> 00:14:32.348

muse on it, don't you? And you  
start really playing with the language

00:14:32.372--> 00:14:36.268

in ways that you might not have done if  
you weren't working between two languages.

00:14:36.292--> 00:14:38.468

And clearly from  
what you've said,

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00:14:38.492--> 00:14:39.885

for you both in different ways,

00:14:39.909--> 00:14:41.548

that's so with...

00:14:41.572--> 00:14:43.668

with English and Cymraeg.

00:14:43.692--> 00:14:44.988

So,

00:14:45.012--> 00:14:47.625

can I just pick up, Manon, on

00:14:47.650--> 00:14:50.788

this issue of

communication between

00:14:50.812--> 00:14:52.708

the Welsh language

literary scene

00:14:52.732--> 00:14:54.388

and the English

language literary scene?

00:14:54.412--> 00:14:56.668

And you said to

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me in an email that

00:14:56.692--> 00:14:58.810

you found sometimes those...

00:14:58.835--> 00:15:01.152

There's a lack of communication.

00:15:01.152--> 00:15:06.068

Came across, perhaps, at the  
Wales Book of the Year event.

00:15:06.092--> 00:15:09.152

And I just want to say at  
this point, just a little plug,

00:15:09.152--> 00:15:13.228

the Society of Authors is  
holding a listening event

00:15:13.252--> 00:15:15.798

in Caernarfon  
on the 9th of July,

00:15:15.822--> 00:15:19.068

immediately before the Wales  
Book of the Year award ceremony.

00:15:19.092--> 00:15:23.108

And that's from 4 to 5:30pm, and

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this is going to be an in-person event

00:15:23.132--> 00:15:25.908

for members of the  
society to come and tell us,

00:15:25.932--> 00:15:29.548

not me personally, but other  
members, Emma and Anna Ganley,

00:15:29.572--> 00:15:31.148

the Chief Exec of the Society,

00:15:31.172--> 00:15:32.708

and other members  
of the committee,

00:15:32.732--> 00:15:36.148

what we should be doing,  
how we can better serve them.

00:15:36.172--> 00:15:39.348

So, Emma's going to post,  
if she hasn't already done so,

00:15:39.372--> 00:15:41.588

a link to that in the chat.

00:15:41.612--> 00:15:43.268

I don't know if you

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want to say, Manon,

00:15:43.292--> 00:15:46.152

any more about that

00:15:46.152--> 00:15:47.750

communication thing?

00:15:47.775--> 00:15:48.788

-Yeah, sure.

00:15:48.812--> 00:15:50.868

It was a couple of years ago and

00:15:50.892--> 00:15:54.838

I'd gone to Wales Book  
of the Year ceremony.

00:15:54.862--> 00:15:58.152

I can't remember where it  
was, but I think one of my books

00:15:58.152--> 00:16:00.152

was shortlisted.

00:16:00.152--> 00:16:05.268

And, of course, in the  
Wales Book of the Year event,

00:16:05.292--> 00:16:09.748

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you have your Welsh language books  
and you have your English language...

00:16:09.772--> 00:16:12.388

I'm sorry for  
the... for the siren.

00:16:12.412--> 00:16:15.345

I'm in my son's uni  
accommodation in Sheffield,

00:16:15.369--> 00:16:16.708

trying to clear out.

00:16:16.732--> 00:16:18.508

I'm not wanted or anything.

00:16:18.532--> 00:16:19.828

[laughter]

00:16:19.852--> 00:16:22.548

Yeah, I was in that ceremony,  
and of course there are the

00:16:22.572--> 00:16:26.148

Welsh language writers and the

00:16:26.172--> 00:16:29.152

English language  
writers in Wales.

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00:16:29.152--> 00:16:32.588

And as the ceremony  
was progressing

00:16:32.612--> 00:16:36.152

and people were  
giving out prizes and...

00:16:36.152--> 00:16:40.068

I was thinking, I don't  
know who these people are.

00:16:40.092--> 00:16:42.188

I've never heard  
of these writers.

00:16:42.212--> 00:16:45.028

I've never heard of,  
you know, that book.

00:16:45.052--> 00:16:47.068

And they sounded amazing,

00:16:47.092--> 00:16:49.152

and I realized that,

00:16:49.152--> 00:16:51.152

somehow, there's...

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00:16:51.152--> 00:16:54.148

there's a split there.

00:16:54.172--> 00:16:56.152

I don't think it's

as bad as it was,

00:16:56.152--> 00:16:59.628

but I do think that

we're quite bad

00:16:59.652--> 00:17:01.625

at having that

communication between us,

00:17:01.649--> 00:17:04.428

maybe because it can't

always go both ways.

00:17:04.452--> 00:17:06.868

If the English language, um...

00:17:06.892--> 00:17:12.152

writers or the publishers or the

people who are interested in the Welsh

00:17:12.152--> 00:17:15.148

English language

books, can't speak Welsh,

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00:17:15.172--> 00:17:17.148

obviously they can't  
read our books, but

00:17:17.172--> 00:17:19.028

it's the other way as well.

00:17:19.052--> 00:17:23.152

And I felt that split  
really keenly then.

00:17:23.152--> 00:17:27.948

I'd also like sort of to pick up,  
you were talking about the French,

00:17:27.972--> 00:17:29.668

the experience of  
speaking French,

00:17:29.692--> 00:17:31.748

and I think it's  
really interesting

00:17:31.772--> 00:17:33.988

because I've been thinking  
about this a lot recently

00:17:34.012--> 00:17:37.152

especially as I've been  
travelling abroad to try and

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00:17:37.152--> 00:17:41.152

do some marketing for my  
books and other languages.

00:17:41.152--> 00:17:45.428

And thinking about how Wales  
is really, really different culturally,

00:17:45.452--> 00:17:48.508

because it's a minority language

00:17:48.532--> 00:17:50.771

within a small country,

00:17:50.795--> 00:17:53.708

what happens is  
that if people decide

00:17:53.732--> 00:17:55.908

to read Welsh books,

00:17:55.932--> 00:17:59.500

listen to Welsh music,  
watch Welsh TV,

00:17:59.525--> 00:18:02.268

listen to Welsh  
Radio, we tend...

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00:18:02.292--> 00:18:05.828

You know, there aren't that many  
Welsh books that get published each year,

00:18:05.852--> 00:18:09.931

so what we tend to do is read  
everything that is published in Welsh.

00:18:09.956--> 00:18:12.748

So we don't stick to one genre.

00:18:12.772--> 00:18:15.428

We don't think, oh, I  
really like family sagas,

00:18:15.452--> 00:18:16.971

so I'll stick to family sagas.

00:18:16.995--> 00:18:18.628

Oh, I really like crime,

00:18:18.652--> 00:18:20.788

I'll stick to... We read it all.

00:18:20.812--> 00:18:23.108

So quite often

00:18:23.132--> 00:18:24.508

you'll get people who would...

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00:18:24.532--> 00:18:27.468

you wouldn't expect to read  
your books reading your books.

00:18:27.492--> 00:18:30.508

And I think the  
fact that we do that

00:18:30.532--> 00:18:32.788

and that we sort of  
listen to everything,

00:18:32.812--> 00:18:35.588

we have a really balanced

00:18:35.612--> 00:18:38.308

cultural experience.

00:18:38.332--> 00:18:41.628

And then that changes  
what we create as well,

00:18:41.652--> 00:18:43.828

because there are so  
many different influences.

00:18:43.852--> 00:18:45.548

And there's a certain  
magic about that

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00:18:45.572--> 00:18:48.152

that nobody ever really  
talks about, but I do think that

00:18:48.152--> 00:18:53.152

one of the reasons that  
Welsh language culture is so...

00:18:53.152--> 00:18:56.908

is so unique and so different

00:18:56.932--> 00:18:59.388

to the sort of  
Anglo-American trends

00:18:59.412--> 00:19:01.868

of literature and  
music is because

00:19:01.892--> 00:19:05.308

we all experience it all.

00:19:09.678--> 00:19:12.940

-That's really interesting. Mel,  
what's your perspective on that?

00:19:12.965--> 00:19:16.308

-I can relate wholeheartedly.

00:19:16.332--> 00:19:17.668

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You know, I...

00:19:17.692--> 00:19:19.668

I find it a very odd experience

00:19:19.692--> 00:19:23.548

when someone will come up to  
me and say, oh, I've read your book.

00:19:23.572--> 00:19:26.388

And I think, you know,  
my target audience

00:19:26.412--> 00:19:30.468

was, you know, young  
girlies in their late 20s

00:19:30.499--> 00:19:33.125

who might have been  
able to relate to me.

00:19:33.150--> 00:19:35.845

And so when I have a gentleman  
in his 70s saying he's read my book,

00:19:35.869--> 00:19:40.908

I think, oh my Christ, he's read about my  
escapades with young farmers behind bushes,

00:19:40.932--> 00:19:43.388

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you know? And I think  
this wasn't for you at all,

00:19:43.412--> 00:19:46.345

but, you know, when they  
say, I really enjoyed it, I think,

00:19:46.370--> 00:19:48.910

well, thank goodness  
for that, you know?

00:19:48.934--> 00:19:51.478

But I think that that  
is, like Manon said,

00:19:51.502--> 00:19:54.668

the magic of it being  
a minority language

00:19:54.692--> 00:19:56.628

is that we do stretch ourselves

00:19:56.652--> 00:20:00.148

to read outside of genres that  
we normally would choose to.

00:20:00.172--> 00:20:03.668

And that's definitely something that  
has benefited me as a writer, I would say,

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00:20:03.692--> 00:20:07.508

because I never want to write  
more than what I'm reading

00:20:07.532--> 00:20:10.152

and I never want to read  
more than what I'm writing.

00:20:10.152--> 00:20:13.698

And when I am reading in Welsh,

00:20:13.723--> 00:20:15.188

I do...

00:20:15.212--> 00:20:19.152

I do stretch out genres that I  
wouldn't normally pick up off the shelf.

00:20:19.152--> 00:20:23.388

I went, at the end of last year,

00:20:23.412--> 00:20:27.468

to the Black British Authors  
Convention in London,

00:20:27.492--> 00:20:33.188

and I went along and  
hadn't expected, at all,

00:20:33.212--> 00:20:37.668

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for there to be so much interest  
in myself as a Welsh author.

00:20:37.692--> 00:20:41.428

You know, it was  
in East London and

00:20:41.452--> 00:20:43.828

I am as guilty as anybody.

00:20:43.852--> 00:20:46.868

I've internalized this feeling  
that, oh, it's just a Welsh book

00:20:46.892--> 00:20:49.028

and like, oh, you won't  
even have heard of Wales,

00:20:49.052--> 00:20:50.108

and it's, you know.

00:20:50.132--> 00:20:53.038

Which is something that I need to  
work on, because that is so incorrect.

00:20:53.063--> 00:20:55.148

But people were so excited

00:20:55.172--> 00:20:58.268

because we forget Welsh is

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not the only minority language

00:20:58.292--> 00:21:00.668

spoken in the UK.

00:21:00.692--> 00:21:04.788

You know, I was speaking to  
Nigerian authors, South African authors,

00:21:04.812--> 00:21:08.068

people of all different  
origins, French authors.

00:21:08.092--> 00:21:11.548

And yes, we were  
all of Black origin,

00:21:11.572--> 00:21:14.152

but very few of us  
were monolingual.

00:21:14.152--> 00:21:16.948

Everybody was interested in how...

00:21:16.972--> 00:21:19.028

And there was a talk  
there on translation as well,

00:21:19.052--> 00:21:21.678

and I really felt like

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my voice was heard

00:21:21.702--> 00:21:23.588

as a Welsh speaker.

00:21:23.612--> 00:21:26.268

So I thought that was really  
interesting and something we...

00:21:26.292--> 00:21:30.725

We sometimes think that we're the only  
people fighting against it, but actually

00:21:30.750--> 00:21:35.148

there are whole communities elsewhere in  
the UK too who are sharing this experience.

00:21:35.172--> 00:21:36.868

And it's great that in Wales,

00:21:36.892--> 00:21:39.748

we actually do have the support  
of people like Literature Wales

00:21:39.772--> 00:21:42.228

and yourselves  
as well, to kind of,

00:21:42.252--> 00:21:44.871

you know, support the other

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minority languages don't get.

00:21:46.492--> 00:21:47.660

-Thank you.

00:21:47.684--> 00:21:50.548

Gosh, it's such a  
fascinating discussion.

00:21:50.572--> 00:21:51.788

Um...

00:21:51.812--> 00:21:56.468

Gosh, where do we go? Oh, can  
I come back to your comedy, Mel?

00:21:56.492--> 00:21:58.188

I just wonder

00:21:58.212--> 00:22:00.588

if you find comedy  
a medium in which

00:22:00.612--> 00:22:05.152

you can challenge people about  
their attitudes to speaking Welsh?

00:22:05.152--> 00:22:09.828

Attitudes to the place of Cymraeg  
in the Welsh literary scene?

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00:22:09.852--> 00:22:13.152

Does comedy enable you to say  
things you might not be able to say

00:22:13.152--> 00:22:15.584

in a straight conversation?

00:22:15.608--> 00:22:17.948

-100%. It allows me

00:22:17.972--> 00:22:20.348

to be a bit cheekier,  
I would suppose.

00:22:20.372--> 00:22:23.748

It allows me-- And it, you know, it  
definitely depends where I am as well.

00:22:23.772--> 00:22:25.788

I had one...

00:22:25.812--> 00:22:28.588

I promise I will keep  
this anecdote brief,

00:22:28.612--> 00:22:32.152

but I had a gig in  
Covent Garden in London

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00:22:32.152--> 00:22:33.696

on a Friday night,

00:22:33.721--> 00:22:36.361

and everyone was saying, what  
other gigs have you got this weekend?

00:22:36.385--> 00:22:37.908

And I said, well, I've got one

00:22:37.932--> 00:22:41.868

in a place called Pontsian in  
south Ceredigion on tomorrow night.

00:22:41.892--> 00:22:44.908

They'd never heard of it, and they  
said, oh, a Welsh gig's different.

00:22:44.932--> 00:22:47.668

And I was like, well, no, obviously  
not, they're just a gig in Welsh.

00:22:47.692--> 00:22:49.505

Like, it's exactly like this one.

00:22:49.530--> 00:22:51.708

And I got to the gig in Pontsian

00:22:51.732--> 00:22:53.268

and there was a raffle,

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00:22:53.292--> 00:22:55.268

there was a  
limerick competition,

00:22:55.292--> 00:22:57.038

there was a meat sale,

00:22:57.063--> 00:22:59.033

and I thought, oh, we  
don't help ourselves at all.

00:22:59.057--> 00:23:01.268

It was completely different  
to the one in London.

00:23:01.292--> 00:23:03.588

But I...

00:23:03.612--> 00:23:08.948

Being in that community that was very  
agricultural and very like where I grew up,

00:23:08.972--> 00:23:12.868

there were things I  
could poke fun at there

00:23:12.892--> 00:23:15.188

that would make no  
sense in East London.

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00:23:15.212--> 00:23:18.152

So, when I'm in that Welsh  
speaking environment,

00:23:18.152--> 00:23:22.188

it's lovely to be able to  
provoke them in that way.

00:23:22.212--> 00:23:26.388

But I feel like, especially with  
the first hour of comedy I did,

00:23:26.412--> 00:23:28.628

I took my show to Edinburgh

00:23:28.652--> 00:23:30.388

and it was called Chunky Monkey,

00:23:30.412--> 00:23:32.548

and I talked a lot  
about the dichotomy

00:23:32.572--> 00:23:35.152

of being a young brown  
girl growing up on a farm

00:23:35.152--> 00:23:36.691

in Mid Wales

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00:23:36.716--> 00:23:39.308

and how those two don't often...

00:23:39.332--> 00:23:42.305

The Venn diagram is quite brief,  
and it kind of feels like it's me.

00:23:42.330--> 00:23:44.108

And

00:23:44.132--> 00:23:46.152

I did use it to...

00:23:46.152--> 00:23:48.668

Educate feels too grand,

00:23:48.692--> 00:23:51.651

but to allow people into my  
world to know that that is a thing.

00:23:51.676--> 00:23:54.468

And, you know, at the time,

00:23:54.492--> 00:23:59.152

there were... I was... When I was  
up at Fringe, it did allow me to

00:23:59.152--> 00:24:02.308

promote people's  
thoughts as well, politically.

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00:24:02.332--> 00:24:05.388

You know, because what people  
think of Wales, unfortunately,

00:24:05.412--> 00:24:09.228

we all know kind of people's  
assumptions and this, that, and the other.

00:24:09.252--> 00:24:11.628

And, you know, for instance,  
at the time, there were riots,

00:24:11.652--> 00:24:14.548

which unfortunately still  
feels very prevalent now,

00:24:14.572--> 00:24:16.152

but there were riots happening

00:24:16.152--> 00:24:17.788

across England.

00:24:17.812--> 00:24:19.908

And I had a joke that  
usually would say, you know,

00:24:19.932--> 00:24:22.876

most people in this country  
really don't want to look racist.

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00:24:22.901--> 00:24:24.991

And then I'd say, well,  
actually, let me change that.

00:24:25.015--> 00:24:28.188

Most people in Wales and Scotland  
really don't want to look racist.

00:24:28.212--> 00:24:31.108

And even the English  
people in that room

00:24:31.132--> 00:24:32.938

could recognize what I was saying.

00:24:32.963--> 00:24:36.748

You know, that's different to going,  
you need to sort your culture out.

00:24:36.772--> 00:24:38.228

That's a way of saying

00:24:38.252--> 00:24:42.548

we can all see you and your hands are  
up and even they could acknowledge it.

00:24:42.572--> 00:24:44.668

So I definitely think it's  
a medium from which

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00:24:44.692--> 00:24:47.348

you can give people  
access to topics

00:24:47.372--> 00:24:48.835

that otherwise they'd feel like,

00:24:48.859--> 00:24:51.023

oh, I don't want to touch  
that, I feel too scared.

00:24:51.530--> 00:24:53.028

-That's really great.

00:24:53.052--> 00:24:55.108

I think it's really good  
you're working in comedy.

00:24:55.132--> 00:24:57.268

There's not enough,  
in my opinion.

00:24:57.292--> 00:24:59.988

This is a broader subject, not  
enough comedy and writing anyway.

00:25:00.012--> 00:25:04.628

And I can see how it opens  
up doors, opens up access.

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00:25:04.652--> 00:25:05.828

That's really great.

00:25:05.852--> 00:25:08.948

Anyway, I'd like to move  
the conversation on.

00:25:08.972--> 00:25:11.028

Thank you for both  
your contributions so far,

00:25:11.052--> 00:25:13.152

but I'd like to move it on.

00:25:13.152--> 00:25:17.588

Talk a bit about what the Society  
of Authors is and isn't doing,

00:25:17.612--> 00:25:19.668

and what we might  
be doing better.

00:25:19.692--> 00:25:21.148

So let's be honest,

00:25:21.172--> 00:25:24.152

we don't attract Cymraeg writers

00:25:24.152--> 00:25:26.068

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into the Society.

00:25:26.092--> 00:25:29.152

I've already said we're  
very English-focused.

00:25:29.152--> 00:25:32.988

Now, one of the things  
that English language writers

00:25:33.012--> 00:25:37.068

often report as being a major  
benefit of membership of the Society

00:25:37.092--> 00:25:40.628

is advice on contracts  
and financial issues.

00:25:40.652--> 00:25:42.828

It's what people said to  
me before I was a member.

00:25:42.852--> 00:25:44.438

You've got to join  
because you'll get...

00:25:44.463--> 00:25:45.868

You'll get that advice.

00:25:45.892--> 00:25:49.798

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Now Manon, you mentioned that

00:25:49.823--> 00:25:54.668

Cymraeg writers perhaps shy  
away from talking about money a bit,

00:25:54.692--> 00:25:57.388

but where do they get...  
where do you get advice

00:25:57.412--> 00:26:00.152

on contracts if you want it?

00:26:00.152--> 00:26:02.508

-I don't, really.

00:26:02.532--> 00:26:03.748

That's the honest truth.

00:26:03.772--> 00:26:06.868

And I think I... I only

00:26:06.892--> 00:26:09.828

got an agent eight years ago.

00:26:09.852--> 00:26:11.668

And before then, you know,

00:26:11.692--> 00:26:15.308

I really wouldn't even read

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the contract before. And I think,

00:26:15.332--> 00:26:17.891

you know, there's something  
about writing in general,

00:26:17.915--> 00:26:19.418

about publishing books that

00:26:19.443--> 00:26:21.628

there's a tendency that we feel

00:26:21.652--> 00:26:24.308

honoured that anyone  
wants to publish us.

00:26:24.332--> 00:26:26.308

And so, you know,

00:26:26.332--> 00:26:29.028

if it doesn't look like  
a very good deal,

00:26:29.052--> 00:26:30.505

well, at least we're  
being published.

00:26:30.529--> 00:26:31.708

You know, the excitement

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00:26:31.732--> 00:26:34.152

of being published is a  
very real thing, isn't it?

00:26:34.152--> 00:26:36.348

I think...

00:26:36.372--> 00:26:38.152

[sighs]

00:26:38.152--> 00:26:41.068

Welsh language writers

00:26:41.092--> 00:26:45.348

have the experience  
over and over again

00:26:45.372--> 00:26:47.921

of joining

00:26:47.946--> 00:26:52.028

societies, unions

00:26:52.052--> 00:26:53.674

that exist

00:26:53.699--> 00:26:56.788

primarily through  
the medium of English

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00:26:56.812--> 00:27:01.148

and then realizing that  
it's not really relevant to us.

00:27:01.172--> 00:27:03.028

It happens so often.

00:27:03.052--> 00:27:07.525

So, you know, most, almost  
all Welsh language books

00:27:07.550--> 00:27:10.388

published through  
a grant through the

00:27:10.412--> 00:27:12.727

Welsh Books Council...

00:27:12.752--> 00:27:16.828

That grant system can be  
really complicated to understand.

00:27:16.852--> 00:27:19.560

Things like, you  
know, there are sort of

00:27:19.584--> 00:27:22.565

different grades of  
grants that you can get.

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00:27:22.590--> 00:27:25.508

But publishers as well,  
there's nobody to sort of

00:27:25.532--> 00:27:29.152

talk about which publishers  
would be right for you.

00:27:29.152--> 00:27:30.948

All of those things,

00:27:30.972--> 00:27:32.828

but they are really,

00:27:32.852--> 00:27:35.828

you know, particular

00:27:35.852--> 00:27:40.548

to the Welsh language, and I think  
it will be really difficult for anyone

00:27:40.572--> 00:27:44.668

that isn't sort of based in Wales,  
based in the Welsh language

00:27:44.692--> 00:27:46.908

to offer advice on this.

00:27:46.932--> 00:27:50.753

I remember when

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I first got my agent

00:27:50.777--> 00:27:53.668

and he looked through the contracts  
that I'd signed, and he said, well,

00:27:53.692--> 00:27:56.068

I have never read  
anything like this before,

00:27:56.092--> 00:27:57.631

because this is...

00:27:57.655--> 00:27:59.268

this is a Welsh  
language contract.

00:27:59.292--> 00:28:01.271

All the rules are  
completely different.

00:28:01.295--> 00:28:03.268

And they are, they are.

00:28:03.292--> 00:28:06.068

The market is  
completely different.

00:28:06.092--> 00:28:07.428

Um...

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00:28:07.452--> 00:28:11.708

The numbers... The numbers  
are vastly, vastly different.

00:28:11.732--> 00:28:14.152

But saying that, I do have to say,

00:28:14.152--> 00:28:16.152

you know, I think...

00:28:16.152--> 00:28:21.148

I remember when I published  
my first translation into English

00:28:21.172--> 00:28:24.152

and thinking, well,  
I am now made.

00:28:24.152--> 00:28:27.228

I am going to be minted now.

00:28:27.252--> 00:28:29.548

And the truth is I  
sell far more books

00:28:29.572--> 00:28:31.908

through the medium  
of Welsh than I do

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00:28:31.932--> 00:28:33.812

in English.

00:28:33.836--> 00:28:35.152

Um...

00:28:35.152--> 00:28:37.868

The other languages

sell better, but

00:28:37.892--> 00:28:42.068

English readers and

English publishers

00:28:42.092--> 00:28:43.788

are very, very, very bad

00:28:43.812--> 00:28:47.028

at publishing translations

and reading translations.

00:28:47.052--> 00:28:49.588

They are known for it

throughout the globe.

00:28:49.612--> 00:28:51.152

If you go to other countries,

00:28:51.152--> 00:28:54.152

for example China,

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where I was last week

00:28:54.152--> 00:28:56.588

they read lots and  
lots of translation

00:28:56.612--> 00:28:59.228

and they get all those  
different perspectives

00:28:59.252--> 00:29:02.607

through the fiction and  
the non-fiction that they read.

00:29:02.632--> 00:29:04.468

But in English,

00:29:04.492--> 00:29:08.428

it's very different, especially  
when it comes to Welsh. There is

00:29:08.452--> 00:29:13.148

a definite attitude with the

00:29:13.172--> 00:29:15.028

bigger British publishers

00:29:15.052--> 00:29:18.152

that people really don't want  
to read about Welsh and Wales.

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00:29:18.152--> 00:29:20.388

-It's very disappointing.

00:29:20.412--> 00:29:21.948

It's disappointing that we...

00:29:21.972--> 00:29:23.148

I include myself,

00:29:23.172--> 00:29:24.668

don't read enough

in translation.

00:29:24.692--> 00:29:26.423

I try to read, I try to read.

00:29:26.448--> 00:29:28.528

But how many books have I

read translated from Welsh?

00:29:28.552--> 00:29:30.152

I don't know.

00:29:30.152--> 00:29:31.505

Not very many

00:29:31.530--> 00:29:35.152

Now, what's your

perspective on... on this?

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00:29:35.152--> 00:29:36.748

-Yeah, I'm...

00:29:36.772--> 00:29:40.268

I agree with what Manon  
said in terms of the contract.

00:29:40.292--> 00:29:41.525

There was a...

00:29:41.550--> 00:29:46.308

There's a tendency to just be  
grateful that we've got published.

00:29:46.332--> 00:29:50.308

And one thing that I've really  
had to teach myself is that,

00:29:50.332--> 00:29:55.498

you know, you can pay yourself  
in exposure and money, right?

00:29:55.522--> 00:29:59.588

But... And there is a point in your career  
where the exposure is worth the investment,

00:29:59.612--> 00:30:02.868

but ultimately exposure isn't  
going to pay my mortgage either.

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00:30:02.892--> 00:30:06.508

And I have to take my

00:30:06.532--> 00:30:10.908

creative hat off and

become a business owner.

00:30:10.932--> 00:30:13.828

You know, I have to run

my career as a business,

00:30:13.852--> 00:30:16.308

because otherwise I'm not

going to make any money.

00:30:16.332--> 00:30:19.152

And I think what

00:30:19.152--> 00:30:21.028

is, um...

00:30:21.052--> 00:30:23.108

what is maybe not

talked about enough

00:30:23.132--> 00:30:27.428

is the way that you can be a writer

first and foremost, you can be a novelist,

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00:30:27.452--> 00:30:31.828

but then there are other pathways  
to make money off of that as well.

00:30:31.852--> 00:30:37.788

And also I think those other pathways  
are going to become increasingly important

00:30:37.812--> 00:30:40.152

when it comes to  
marketing books.

00:30:40.152--> 00:30:43.828

There's a real... If you'll allow me to  
talk about comedy just for a second,

00:30:43.852--> 00:30:47.508

there is a real shift in  
the comedy industry.

00:30:47.532--> 00:30:50.028

And if anything, I think  
the shift has happened,

00:30:50.052--> 00:30:52.508

and some people are playing catch-up now,  
where

00:30:52.532--> 00:30:55.152

before the big goal

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was to be on TV.

00:30:55.152--> 00:30:59.978

And, you know, if you made it into  
Live at the Apollo, you were made.

00:31:00.002--> 00:31:01.828

You would sell out your tour.

00:31:01.852--> 00:31:06.708

I was speaking to a New  
Zealand comic a few months ago

00:31:06.732--> 00:31:09.348

and he said he'd been on  
the British Live at the Apollo

00:31:09.372--> 00:31:11.152

and he sold 20 extra tickets

00:31:11.152--> 00:31:12.828

to his UK tour.

00:31:12.852--> 00:31:16.152

He went on a podcast and  
he sold out his whole run.

00:31:16.152--> 00:31:18.508

The landscape has changed.

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00:31:18.532--> 00:31:20.508

And that is, I think, still...

00:31:20.532--> 00:31:24.152

I think that is prevalent to  
authors and writing as well.

00:31:24.152--> 00:31:29.108

And one thing that  
I personally, like,

00:31:29.132--> 00:31:30.588

I'm working on in the pipeline

00:31:30.612--> 00:31:33.548

in order to build myself to a  
point where it makes sense

00:31:33.572--> 00:31:36.548

for an English language  
publisher to publish me,

00:31:36.572--> 00:31:39.198

is to put, like, almost blogs.

00:31:39.222--> 00:31:40.425

I know, what a maverick.

00:31:40.450--> 00:31:42.591

But like to put a

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blog out almost

00:31:42.615--> 00:31:45.428

of just to show that I

have a readership base

00:31:45.452--> 00:31:48.508

of people who will read

my work every month,

00:31:48.532--> 00:31:50.471

and that I'm not a risk.

00:31:50.496--> 00:31:54.068

And whilst that won't make

me money in the first instance,

00:31:54.092--> 00:31:56.348

you never know what

could come off the back of it.

00:31:56.372--> 00:31:58.068

So, for instance, I...

00:31:58.092--> 00:31:59.988

My first TV writing job,

00:32:00.012--> 00:32:03.548

I got off the back of a

column I did for The National.

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00:32:03.572--> 00:32:06.988

As in, like, that was, like, a  
Welsh independent newspaper.

00:32:07.012--> 00:32:09.152

And that landed  
me a Channel 4 job.

00:32:09.152--> 00:32:11.148

And so,

00:32:11.172--> 00:32:14.878

you know, there are other avenues in  
which to make money off of being a writer.

00:32:14.902--> 00:32:15.905

You can,

00:32:15.929--> 00:32:18.628

you know, pour your heart  
and soul into writing a novel

00:32:18.652--> 00:32:20.948

and hope that  
that pays the bills,

00:32:20.972--> 00:32:25.056

but there are other ways to do  
it, and I think more support in that,

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00:32:25.081--> 00:32:27.068

it's something that the  
industry is going to need,

00:32:27.092--> 00:32:29.748

you know, within the  
Society and elsewhere as well.

00:32:31.152--> 00:32:33.268

-Pretty interesting, yeah.

00:32:33.292--> 00:32:36.953

I mean, the point you both made  
about being grateful to be published,

00:32:36.977--> 00:32:39.754

I don't think any of us should  
feel grateful to be published.

00:32:39.778--> 00:32:42.152

We've got rights as authors, and

00:32:42.152--> 00:32:44.908

I think it's really important

00:32:44.932--> 00:32:47.748

that we can get somebody  
to look at contracts.

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00:32:47.772--> 00:32:51.588

Do you think... Do you  
think the Society of Authors

00:32:51.612--> 00:32:54.268

could, should be doing  
more in this respect

00:32:54.292--> 00:32:58.668

to serve you in the Welsh  
language first language community?

00:33:00.152--> 00:33:01.978

-I think...

00:33:02.003--> 00:33:03.028

[sighs]

00:33:03.052--> 00:33:06.152

I think in order to do that,

00:33:06.152--> 00:33:09.428

we would need to be having  
those conversations in Welsh.

00:33:09.452--> 00:33:14.152

And you'd need to have someone who's  
really knowledgeable and experienced

00:33:14.152--> 00:33:16.668

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in the Welsh  
publishing industry.

00:33:16.692--> 00:33:19.152

Because, you know,  
I've had conversations

00:33:19.152--> 00:33:22.653

with really well-meaning  
people who work in Wales,

00:33:22.677--> 00:33:24.760

but not through the  
medium of Welsh.

00:33:24.784--> 00:33:26.152

And...

00:33:26.152--> 00:33:27.988

Yeah, as I was saying earlier,

00:33:28.012--> 00:33:31.152

there's so many conversations  
where I'm thinking this is really...

00:33:31.152--> 00:33:35.788

great, but it's not really  
relevant to my career

00:33:35.812--> 00:33:37.308

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through the Welsh language.

00:33:37.332--> 00:33:40.108

So it would take  
time and a lot of effort,

00:33:40.132--> 00:33:44.548

but actually it would be great to be able  
to have those conversations with someone.

00:33:44.572--> 00:33:47.565

We tend to just talk about  
it with other authors now.

00:33:47.590--> 00:33:50.628

And I think it would be  
great to have someone.

00:33:50.652--> 00:33:54.148

Especially, I do a lot of tutoring  
as well for young authors.

00:33:54.172--> 00:33:56.998

And they often ask me, you know,

00:33:57.022--> 00:33:59.918

what about this in my  
contract? Is this okay?

00:33:59.942--> 00:34:02.948

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And I just think I'd love  
to be able to defer them

00:34:02.972--> 00:34:04.905

to someone who  
could give them advice.

00:34:06.127--> 00:34:09.148

-Thank you. Mel,  
what's your view?

00:34:09.172--> 00:34:13.908

Yeah, I... And, you know, just... I'll keep  
it quick to add to what Manon has said.

00:34:13.932--> 00:34:16.388

I think that there's  
a lot of goodwill

00:34:16.412--> 00:34:19.828

within the Welsh  
language industry, where...

00:34:19.852--> 00:34:22.445

I hate the stereotype that  
we all know each other,

00:34:22.469--> 00:34:24.925

but, you know,  
unfortunately or fortunately,

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00:34:24.949--> 00:34:28.371

I think it's a blessing  
that, you know, we are

00:34:28.396--> 00:34:30.308

a tight-knit community,

00:34:30.332--> 00:34:34.068

but unfortunately, that can make  
conversations about finances

00:34:34.092--> 00:34:35.828

tricky as well.

00:34:35.852--> 00:34:39.388

But I think there's also a lot of trust and  
I think that trust is really well placed,

00:34:39.412--> 00:34:43.108

but it does mean that sometimes we can get  
a bit blasé about things like contracts,

00:34:43.132--> 00:34:45.703

as we think, well, they're  
not going to do me over,

00:34:45.728--> 00:34:47.228

so I don't need to  
read the fine print

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00:34:47.252--> 00:34:48.628

in the same way  
that I would with

00:34:48.652--> 00:34:51.152

a big scary English  
corporate one.

00:34:51.152--> 00:34:53.748

So I think that...

00:34:53.772--> 00:34:57.628

I think getting into the  
habit of discussing contracts,

00:34:57.652--> 00:35:00.988

it's not an icky thing to do.  
It is an important thing to do.

00:35:01.012--> 00:35:03.708

Having those conversations,  
but like Manon said,

00:35:03.732--> 00:35:06.085

having those  
conversations in Welsh.

00:35:07.152--> 00:35:09.748

-Understood, understood.

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00:35:09.772--> 00:35:12.268

That takes me to my  
next point. I know that

00:35:12.292--> 00:35:15.152

in the Society, we are woeful

00:35:15.152--> 00:35:18.228

in terms of provision  
of material in Welsh.

00:35:18.252--> 00:35:20.148

We have...

00:35:20.172--> 00:35:23.388

We're just doing  
our basic leaflet.

00:35:23.412--> 00:35:25.713

And that's an improvement  
on what we have at the moment,

00:35:25.737--> 00:35:27.028

which is more or less nothing.

00:35:27.052--> 00:35:29.108

The trouble is,

00:35:29.132--> 00:35:32.330

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within the Society, we  
don't have the budget

00:35:32.355--> 00:35:33.948

to translate much now.

00:35:33.972--> 00:35:36.705

We should work on that from the  
committee. We need to look at that.

00:35:36.730--> 00:35:41.211

There are other things we can do.  
Yeah, I take the point about doing...

00:35:41.235--> 00:35:44.108

Working in... through  
the medium of Welsh,

00:35:44.132--> 00:35:46.348

but are there other  
things that we can do

00:35:46.372--> 00:35:48.148

to make

00:35:48.172--> 00:35:51.788

Cymraeg writers feel  
welcome in the society?

00:35:53.152--> 00:35:55.068

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-I think it's a hard one

00:35:55.092--> 00:35:57.468

because in a way,

00:35:57.492--> 00:35:59.348

and this is a good

problem to have,

00:35:59.372--> 00:36:02.268

there is a lot of support in

the Welsh language industry.

00:36:02.292--> 00:36:05.548

You know, there are grants. There is,

you know, there are workshops that are run

00:36:05.572--> 00:36:08.152

by Literature Wales and so on.

00:36:08.152--> 00:36:11.578

But I think a gap

that possibly could be

00:36:11.602--> 00:36:13.988

filled by the Society

of Authors is that

00:36:14.012--> 00:36:16.748

there are people who feel,

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00:36:16.772--> 00:36:19.028

as I need to word  
this very carefully,

00:36:19.052--> 00:36:22.152

there are some people  
who feel as though

00:36:22.152--> 00:36:25.068

the same people are often  
chosen for those schemes

00:36:25.092--> 00:36:27.348

that are put on offer, or that,

00:36:27.372--> 00:36:30.152

you know, in order to...

00:36:30.152--> 00:36:33.188

to fit certain requirements,

00:36:33.212--> 00:36:37.548

that similar people are always chosen and  
that some people feel like they never have

00:36:37.572--> 00:36:41.068

an opportunity, a break, a leg  
up to be given those kind of...

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00:36:41.092--> 00:36:42.758

that kind of support.

00:36:42.782--> 00:36:46.148

And I think for those people,  
there could be more broad

00:36:46.172--> 00:36:48.868

introductions to the  
industry and so on

00:36:48.892--> 00:36:51.628

provided by the  
Society, only as an idea.

00:36:51.652--> 00:36:54.388

I wouldn't know the logistics,  
but if possible, I think that could...

00:36:54.412--> 00:36:56.152

that could work.

00:36:56.152--> 00:36:59.187

I completely agree with Mel.

00:36:59.211--> 00:37:01.108

I'd add

00:37:01.132--> 00:37:04.228

I completely understand

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and sympathise

00:37:04.252--> 00:37:06.628

that getting things translated

00:37:06.652--> 00:37:08.788

is really expensive.

00:37:08.812--> 00:37:13.508

And sometimes I think it  
can be difficult to think, well,

00:37:13.532--> 00:37:16.028

if we translate all of this,

00:37:16.052--> 00:37:18.788

but no one comes, who is it for?

00:37:18.812--> 00:37:20.496

But...

00:37:21.476--> 00:37:25.152

You know, as a Welsh, as a first language

00:37:25.152--> 00:37:27.152

Welsh speaker,

00:37:27.152--> 00:37:29.868

my entire life

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00:37:29.892--> 00:37:32.152

I've been told that my

00:37:32.152--> 00:37:34.908

language is too expensive

00:37:34.932--> 00:37:37.348

or that it's visual clutter

00:37:37.372--> 00:37:40.828

or I can understand English

anyway, so why wouldn't I?

00:37:40.852--> 00:37:42.152

And I think that

00:37:42.152--> 00:37:44.040

there's a sort of...

00:37:44.064--> 00:37:45.948

there's an emotional

barrier there.

00:37:45.972--> 00:37:48.713

If something's not

available in Welsh...

00:37:48.738--> 00:37:51.268

And I... I say this with,

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00:37:51.292--> 00:37:54.788

you know, I do really  
understand that it is expensive to

00:37:54.812--> 00:37:57.428

print things in Welsh  
and get translators,

00:37:57.452--> 00:38:01.058

but I think that I and a lot of

00:38:01.082--> 00:38:03.908

Welsh language  
authors would think if

00:38:03.932--> 00:38:07.548

the material is not  
available to me in Welsh,

00:38:07.572--> 00:38:10.731

it shows me that  
whoever this is,

00:38:10.756--> 00:38:15.152

whatever society or  
whatever union or whatever,

00:38:15.152--> 00:38:18.348

it's not for me because they  
haven't made the effort for me.

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00:38:18.372--> 00:38:21.028

My language is too  
expensive for them. So,

00:38:21.052--> 00:38:25.152

yeah, I... it's a really  
complicated one.

00:38:25.176--> 00:38:28.171

But I think that's  
my honest answer.

00:38:28.196--> 00:38:30.308

-Thank you. I appreciate  
you being honest.

00:38:30.332--> 00:38:32.152

I think you're...

00:38:32.152--> 00:38:33.152

You know...

00:38:33.152--> 00:38:36.948

I'd totally... I totally  
empathize, you know, to be told

00:38:36.972--> 00:38:39.228

your language is too  
expensive, that is...

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00:38:39.252--> 00:38:40.948

that is gutting...

Gutting.

00:38:40.972--> 00:38:44.468

-Yeah, but these are the  
conversations we need to have.

00:38:44.492--> 00:38:48.028

We need to have Welsh language  
speakers speaking honestly

00:38:48.052--> 00:38:52.108

and then English language  
only speakers speaking honestly

00:38:52.132--> 00:38:55.348

and having these conversations  
because it's a... There's a...

00:38:55.372--> 00:38:58.188

bit of a [inaudible] of it,  
everyone feels a little bit awkward.

00:38:58.212--> 00:39:00.468

No one wants to offend  
anyone or hurt anyone,

00:39:00.492--> 00:39:03.548

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but somewhere in the  
middle, that's where we find...

00:39:03.572--> 00:39:05.748

Ah, that's where we  
could work together,

00:39:05.772--> 00:39:08.028

be helpful to one  
another, all of that.

00:39:08.052--> 00:39:11.708

-I hope that we'll be able to move from  
this conversation, which is really good,

00:39:11.732--> 00:39:15.588

to do more because we are,  
you know, we all love language.

00:39:15.612--> 00:39:17.908

We're writers because  
we love language.

00:39:17.932--> 00:39:20.748

And it's not just  
English, English is...

00:39:20.772--> 00:39:21.908

just one.

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00:39:21.932--> 00:39:24.948

And as you've said Mel, you know  
in Wales we've got many other people

00:39:24.972--> 00:39:27.668

speaking many other  
languages, the global majority

00:39:27.692--> 00:39:31.668

are speaking, I don't know how  
many languages in Wales, but

00:39:31.692--> 00:39:33.152

over 20, I'm sure.

00:39:33.152--> 00:39:37.668

Now, just another point I'd like to  
move on to, because we are okay for time.

00:39:37.692--> 00:39:39.828

We tend to think...

00:39:39.852--> 00:39:44.028

I tend to think, that we have a problem,  
we have a geographical problem.

00:39:44.052--> 00:39:45.658

Um...

00:39:45.683--> 00:39:49.028

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There's a division between  
South Wales, where

00:39:49.052--> 00:39:50.588  
most people speak English,

00:39:50.612--> 00:39:52.931  
and North and West Wales,

00:39:52.955--> 00:39:55.738  
where Welsh is spoken

00:39:55.763--> 00:39:57.991  
on the streets if  
you like. Welsh is...

00:39:58.015--> 00:39:59.628  
So where I live in Abergavenny,

00:39:59.652--> 00:40:03.268  
the only place I'm going to hear  
Welsh spoken is if I go to a group

00:40:03.292--> 00:40:06.152  
where people are speaking...  
for Welsh learners, probably.

00:40:06.152--> 00:40:08.868  
So there is no way

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00:40:08.892--> 00:40:12.988

that I'm going to hear Welsh, which is  
for me personally a barrier, but that's...

00:40:13.012--> 00:40:14.108

that's my own problem.

00:40:14.132--> 00:40:16.068

So do you feel that...

00:40:16.092--> 00:40:18.428

What do you feel  
about the geographical?

00:40:18.452--> 00:40:23.152

Is there a geographical  
division or is that a fallacy?

00:40:23.152--> 00:40:25.788

-I think that, um...

00:40:25.812--> 00:40:27.508

It is definitely factually true.

00:40:27.532--> 00:40:29.748

I think if you look at  
the stats, you know, the

00:40:29.772--> 00:40:33.508

density of the population

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that speak Welsh is deeper in...

00:40:33.532--> 00:40:37.188

is more concentrated in North  
Wales than it is in South Wales.

00:40:37.212--> 00:40:39.748

As somebody who grew  
up in Aberystwyth, I feel

00:40:39.772--> 00:40:41.372

geographically, we're  
bang in the middle,

00:40:41.396--> 00:40:44.496

and when it comes to language, it feels  
like we're bang in the middle as well.

00:40:44.520--> 00:40:46.388

I could confidently  
walk into a shop

00:40:46.412--> 00:40:49.348

and expect that the person  
will be able to speak Welsh.

00:40:49.372--> 00:40:52.228

But due to a myriad  
of great things,

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00:40:52.252--> 00:40:54.868

like our hospital  
and our university,

00:40:54.892--> 00:40:57.332

it also means that it brings  
people in from all over the world

00:40:57.356--> 00:40:59.428

who don't speak Welsh yet.

00:40:59.452--> 00:41:02.868

You know, I often find that there  
are a lot of people, especially

00:41:02.892--> 00:41:06.588

who come from the university or come  
to work at the university or the hospital,

00:41:06.612--> 00:41:10.788

who feel a bit more ready to throw  
themselves into the Welsh language

00:41:10.812--> 00:41:12.336

than some others  
might be as well,

00:41:12.360--> 00:41:14.788

but I think that's a  
conversation for a different day.

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00:41:14.812--> 00:41:19.028

I do... So I moved to  
Cardiff when I was 18

00:41:19.052--> 00:41:23.348

for university and I don't think  
I spoke Welsh the whole time

00:41:23.372--> 00:41:24.818

I was at university.

00:41:24.842--> 00:41:26.628

I'd come home and, you know,

00:41:26.652--> 00:41:30.068

bearing in mind I speak in a... I  
live in a Welsh speaking household.

00:41:30.092--> 00:41:34.188

My father's Welsh speaking,  
my mum understands everything,

00:41:34.212--> 00:41:36.152

which makes talking  
about her very difficult.

00:41:36.152--> 00:41:40.428

But, you know, doesn't necessarily  
feel confident enough to speak it.

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00:41:40.452--> 00:41:42.988

But I didn't speak  
it at all at university.

00:41:43.012--> 00:41:47.028

I didn't necessarily go to the  
Welsh societies and stuff like that,

00:41:47.052--> 00:41:49.028

but my day-to-day life

00:41:49.052--> 00:41:51.722

didn't involve any  
Welsh language at all.

00:41:51.747--> 00:41:55.308

I used to live in Cardiff now  
and I've moved about a bit, but I'm

00:41:55.332--> 00:41:58.548

permanently in Cardiff  
now where I'm 31 and

00:41:58.572--> 00:42:01.548

I feel like the Welsh  
language is very

00:42:01.572--> 00:42:03.948

prevalent on the

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streets of Cardiff now.

00:42:03.972--> 00:42:05.228

That is my feeling.

00:42:05.252--> 00:42:07.818

I know Cardiff does not  
represent the whole of South Wales

00:42:07.843--> 00:42:10.891

and I think it is different  
in different patches.

00:42:10.915--> 00:42:13.468

But even in the valleys,

00:42:13.492--> 00:42:17.308

I think the incredible work

00:42:17.332--> 00:42:20.028

that the Eisteddfod did in Ponty

00:42:20.052--> 00:42:22.348

can still be felt now.

00:42:22.372--> 00:42:25.268

It feels like a Welsh  
language area now

00:42:25.292--> 00:42:27.908

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and I think that we have to  
acknowledge how well the...

00:42:27.932--> 00:42:31.068

I'm the first one to criticize the  
Eisteddfod for things that it gets wrong,

00:42:31.092--> 00:42:32.152

but I think that

00:42:32.152--> 00:42:35.068

it absolutely played  
a blinder there.

00:42:35.092--> 00:42:37.428

And there's been a  
brilliant ripple effect

00:42:37.452--> 00:42:39.908

being felt across  
the Valley's areas.

00:42:39.932--> 00:42:42.668

I think, into Newport  
as well, it is being felt.

00:42:42.692--> 00:42:45.348

Welsh language is being  
normalised in schools.

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00:42:45.372--> 00:42:49.108

And even if you have pupils  
from English-speaking households

00:42:49.132--> 00:42:54.068

who leave school with an ability  
to have a conversation in Welsh

00:42:54.092--> 00:42:57.565

and a want to go  
to things like Tafwyl,

00:42:57.589--> 00:43:01.152

to go to things like the Eisteddfod,  
where they might not speak Welsh for

00:43:01.152--> 00:43:04.188

300 days of the year.  
Before, here and there,

00:43:04.212--> 00:43:05.828

they might use it.

00:43:05.852--> 00:43:08.228

That to me is Welsh  
language thriving

00:43:08.252--> 00:43:09.788

and I think...

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00:43:09.812--> 00:43:12.788

I don't want to be naive,  
but I think it's getting better.

00:43:16.152--> 00:43:17.152

-Manon?

00:43:17.152--> 00:43:19.548

-Yeah, it's an  
interesting one for me.

00:43:19.572--> 00:43:22.548

I've very recently moved from

00:43:22.572--> 00:43:25.868

South Gwynedd,

00:43:25.892--> 00:43:28.152

which is in the north west

00:43:28.152--> 00:43:29.428

of Wales

00:43:29.452--> 00:43:31.188

to, uh...

00:43:31.212--> 00:43:34.152

Yr Wyddfa, Snowdonia,  
which is in North Gwynedd.

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00:43:34.152--> 00:43:37.708

So it's within a really  
small patch, really.

00:43:37.732--> 00:43:41.908

It's about an hour and a half drive  
and completely different linguistically.

00:43:41.932--> 00:43:44.028

I think we tend to  
think that Gwynedd

00:43:44.052--> 00:43:48.068

is Welsh speaking heartland,

00:43:48.092--> 00:43:50.868

and I think it's part of  
what Mel was saying.

00:43:50.892--> 00:43:53.108

You get pockets...

00:43:53.132--> 00:43:56.348

Not only pockets of Cymraeg,

00:43:56.372--> 00:44:00.628

Welsh language, but  
also pockets of Saesneg.

00:44:00.652--> 00:44:03.152

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I was living in Tywyn, which  
is a town that doesn't have

00:44:03.152--> 00:44:04.948  
much Welsh at all.

00:44:04.972--> 00:44:08.428  
And in fact, my own children,

00:44:08.452--> 00:44:11.428  
my son went to school in Tywyn

00:44:11.452--> 00:44:14.788  
and then he went to  
college in Dolgellau,

00:44:14.812--> 00:44:16.628  
which is half an  
hour up the road.

00:44:16.652--> 00:44:19.868  
But a lot more Welsh speakers.

00:44:19.892--> 00:44:22.152  
And he came home  
and he said, "Mum,

00:44:22.152--> 00:44:26.348  
"do you know there are  
actually young people my age

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00:44:26.372--> 00:44:29.152

"who choose to listen  
to Welsh music?"

00:44:29.152--> 00:44:33.548

And I'd taken him to  
every Eisteddfod there was.

00:44:33.572--> 00:44:36.508

I'd tried to sort of  
force-feed him Welsh culture,

00:44:36.532--> 00:44:38.188

and he'd never come across

00:44:38.212--> 00:44:41.868

people his age who  
were interested in it before.

00:44:41.892--> 00:44:43.152

Um...

00:44:43.152--> 00:44:45.588

And so, yeah, I think

00:44:45.612--> 00:44:48.028

there is a north-south divide.

00:44:48.052--> 00:44:49.908

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I think it's smaller  
than we think it is.

00:44:49.932--> 00:44:52.268

I think the divide is  
more between sort of

00:44:52.292--> 00:44:55.388

small... smaller  
pockets of areas.

00:44:55.412--> 00:44:57.531

And I will say, you know,

00:44:57.556--> 00:45:01.108

I'm in Sheffield now,  
as I was saying before.

00:45:01.132--> 00:45:05.268

My son says he speaks  
loads of Welsh here,

00:45:05.292--> 00:45:07.948

because people, you know,  
they leave Wales and they...

00:45:07.972--> 00:45:09.348

they seek each other out

00:45:09.372--> 00:45:11.348

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and they find the joy in

00:45:11.372--> 00:45:13.908

their own language

and heritage, I guess.

00:45:15.152--> 00:45:17.908

-Yeah, so it's more complex

00:45:17.932--> 00:45:21.108

than that strict division

between North and South.

00:45:21.132--> 00:45:23.148

And Mel, you're absolutely right

00:45:23.172--> 00:45:26.908

because a colleague

referred me to a report

00:45:26.932--> 00:45:29.548

in Nation Cymru just

a couple of weeks ago.

00:45:29.572--> 00:45:31.788

Cardiff now has

more Welsh speakers

00:45:31.812--> 00:45:33.996

than any other part of Wales.

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00:45:34.021--> 00:45:35.038

-Brilliant.

00:45:35.063--> 00:45:36.748

-Cardiff is now home

to more Welsh speakers

00:45:36.772--> 00:45:38.788

than any other local authority in Wales,

00:45:38.812--> 00:45:42.508

with new figures showing

almost 97,000 people in the city

00:45:42.532--> 00:45:43.948

can speak the language.

00:45:43.972--> 00:45:47.152

They had a discussion at

Cardiff Council's cabinet.

00:45:47.152--> 00:45:52.152

So 26.4% of the population

can speak some Welsh.

00:45:52.152--> 00:45:55.308

Um... And...

00:45:55.332--> 00:45:58.988

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The growth in Welsh language  
use also being reflected in schools

00:45:59.012--> 00:46:00.868

with almost one in five children

00:46:00.892--> 00:46:03.708

starting Welsh medium  
primary education in Cardiff

00:46:03.732--> 00:46:05.071

last year.

00:46:05.095--> 00:46:06.868

So the picture is shifting

00:46:06.892--> 00:46:08.028

and you're absolutely right.

00:46:08.052--> 00:46:10.668

There's evidence that

00:46:10.692--> 00:46:14.908

it's not as simple and  
it's a... a, you know,

00:46:14.932--> 00:46:17.152

shifting picture that  
will continue to shift.

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00:46:17.152--> 00:46:19.828

So that's all good.

00:46:19.852--> 00:46:21.108

I think that's all good.

00:46:21.132--> 00:46:24.228

We hope... Two of the  
members of our committee

00:46:24.252--> 00:46:28.548

are hoping to set up a  
Society local group in Cardiff,

00:46:28.572--> 00:46:30.428

which there hasn't  
been up to yet

00:46:30.452--> 00:46:32.908

because I think there  
are lots of other groups

00:46:32.932--> 00:46:34.668

serving writers.

00:46:34.692--> 00:46:37.548

But, you know, I think the  
more we can do face-to-face,

00:46:37.572--> 00:46:41.228

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the more opportunity there is  
for speaking of Cymraeg as well,

00:46:41.252--> 00:46:42.738

and that will be good.

00:46:42.763--> 00:46:45.428

So that's all positive.

00:46:45.452--> 00:46:47.788

Now, we've got about 10  
minutes before we break

00:46:47.812--> 00:46:50.152

and I just wonder what  
you think about this.

00:46:50.152--> 00:46:53.708

Whether we can learn  
something from other countries

00:46:53.732--> 00:46:56.152

about how we bridge  
the gap between

00:46:56.152--> 00:46:59.868

to writers working in one  
language and another.

00:46:59.892--> 00:47:02.028

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And I was looking  
at some material

00:47:02.052--> 00:47:05.152

that somebody sent me from  
the Government of Canada,

00:47:05.152--> 00:47:10.108

which deals with  
not just translation,

00:47:10.132--> 00:47:12.228

but the issue of respect

00:47:12.252--> 00:47:15.152

for different languages  
and different cultures.

00:47:15.152--> 00:47:18.011

And they use the expression,

00:47:18.036--> 00:47:20.588

"Celebration of being Canadian.

00:47:20.612--> 00:47:24.308

"Identifying rights, freedoms  
and responsibilities."

00:47:24.332--> 00:47:27.268

So do you think,

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00:47:27.292--> 00:47:29.108

Manon and Mel,

00:47:29.132--> 00:47:31.152

do you think that  
we could do more...

00:47:31.152--> 00:47:32.628

I want to say we,

00:47:32.652--> 00:47:35.152

not just the Society of  
Authors, but in our country,

00:47:35.152--> 00:47:38.588

do more to celebrate  
what it is to be Welsh?

00:47:38.612--> 00:47:42.152

And look at what unites us  
more than what divides us?

00:47:43.172--> 00:47:45.588

Yes, I would say

00:47:45.612--> 00:47:48.785

in Wales, I think we're  
humble to our detriment.

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00:47:48.809--> 00:47:53.152

I think we could do a lot more shouting  
about our culture, but I don't think that's

00:47:53.152--> 00:47:56.588

just in terms of literature.

00:47:56.612--> 00:47:58.948

I think, as a country,  
you know, when...

00:47:58.972--> 00:48:02.391

Like, I mentioned, I go up  
to Edinburgh a lot for the...

00:48:02.415--> 00:48:04.188

for comedy purposes,

00:48:04.212--> 00:48:08.148

and the first thing you hear when you  
get off the train or you get off the plane,

00:48:08.172--> 00:48:09.868

you hear bagpipes, right?

00:48:09.892--> 00:48:11.388

And I don't think,  
"Oh, a bit much".

00:48:11.412--> 00:48:15.148

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I'm like, amazing! I'm in Scotland. I  
feel like I'm in Scotland, this is great.

00:48:15.172--> 00:48:16.172

We should have that.

00:48:16.196--> 00:48:19.188

I'm not saying we should have male  
voice choirs waiting at Cardiff Airport,

00:48:19.212--> 00:48:20.748

but something like that.

00:48:20.772--> 00:48:23.868

You know, I think we can  
take Wales to the world. I think

00:48:23.892--> 00:48:26.588

we've started, I think  
the seed is there,

00:48:26.612--> 00:48:30.152

but I think we could do more  
and not be humble about it.

00:48:30.152--> 00:48:33.548

Absolutely, and I think literature  
is a great vehicle for that, though.

00:48:33.572--> 00:48:36.988

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I think literature can be a  
really good vehicle for that.

00:48:37.012--> 00:48:39.668

I'm going... and there's

00:48:39.692--> 00:48:41.864

no way that this doesn't  
sound pretentious

00:48:41.888--> 00:48:44.268

to people who aren't  
authors and avid readers,

00:48:44.292--> 00:48:47.028

but I'm in a real, like... I love  
Japanese literature at the moment.

00:48:47.052--> 00:48:48.544

I'm a real hole  
for it. I went...

00:48:48.569--> 00:48:52.148

But I was 17, I was really fortunate  
to go for a few weeks, and...

00:48:52.172--> 00:48:55.548

ever since, I've been obsessed  
with the culture, and I feel like

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00:48:55.572--> 00:49:00.348

translated Japanese literature is  
having a real boom at the moment.

00:49:00.372--> 00:49:02.108

It's having an absolute moment,

00:49:02.132--> 00:49:04.152

and I think that's  
down to, you know,

00:49:04.152--> 00:49:09.068

authors like Asako Yuzuki,  
who had Butter, now has Hooked,

00:49:09.092--> 00:49:11.908

and has really demonstrated that

00:49:11.932--> 00:49:14.733

the traditional Japan  
that you're thinking of

00:49:14.758--> 00:49:17.487

is not... You know, it  
might exist somewhere,

00:49:17.511--> 00:49:20.468

but actually, this is a  
very modern culture

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00:49:20.492--> 00:49:22.468

that has a lot of  
relatable themes

00:49:22.492--> 00:49:24.748

that me as a 31-year-old

00:49:24.772--> 00:49:27.068

in Cardiff can also relate to.

00:49:27.092--> 00:49:30.708

And it does, you know, it  
does prove that there is more

00:49:30.732--> 00:49:34.868

that we share with the rest of  
the world, and I think that can only..

00:49:34.892--> 00:49:36.268

that can only help. And I...

00:49:36.292--> 00:49:39.908

I think through, you know, Manon,  
I'm a big fan and I hate to do this,

00:49:39.932--> 00:49:42.148

it feels very eggy seeing  
as you're here, but through

00:49:42.172--> 00:49:44.468

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authors like yourself who  
are taking Wales to the world,

00:49:44.492--> 00:49:47.411

I think that is the way that we're  
going to do it, and I hope that more

00:49:47.436--> 00:49:49.585

people following your path

00:49:49.610--> 00:49:51.318

Excuse me, I'm  
going to put my light on

00:49:51.342--> 00:49:54.152

because I feel like I'm getting  
darker and darker by the second.

00:49:55.152--> 00:49:56.668

-Thank you. Diolch, Mel.

00:49:56.692--> 00:49:58.028

-Thanks, Mel. Thanks, Mel.

00:49:58.052--> 00:49:59.707

-I think...

00:49:59.731--> 00:50:01.228

I think there's a...

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00:50:01.252--> 00:50:07.152

a global, maybe a Western...

00:50:07.152--> 00:50:12.152

We're in crisis in the

West at the moment in that

00:50:12.152--> 00:50:17.268

people feel threatened

by any language,

00:50:17.292--> 00:50:19.188

any culture

00:50:19.212--> 00:50:21.588

that is not the majority

00:50:21.612--> 00:50:23.628

language or culture.

00:50:23.652--> 00:50:25.508

Anything that's different.

00:50:25.532--> 00:50:27.152

And I think that,

00:50:27.152--> 00:50:29.788

because we...

00:50:29.812--> 00:50:31.588

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You know, we're writers.

00:50:31.612--> 00:50:34.152

We tend to be a little bit...

00:50:34.152--> 00:50:36.628

We think that we're

immune from that,

00:50:36.652--> 00:50:39.028

but actually that

culture does infiltrate

00:50:39.052--> 00:50:41.148

into what we write

and what we see,

00:50:41.172--> 00:50:44.188

and what we read, and what

we watch, and what we listen to.

00:50:44.212--> 00:50:47.828

And we think that we're still the

same as we were 5 years ago,

00:50:47.852--> 00:50:51.228

but actually we're being

fed all of this stuff all the time.

00:50:51.252--> 00:50:55.152

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And I think that  
that is reflected in...

00:50:55.152--> 00:50:58.348  
in the publishing industry.

00:50:58.372--> 00:50:59.372  
Um...

00:50:59.396--> 00:51:02.268  
I wrote

00:51:02.292--> 00:51:04.228  
a Welsh language book,

00:51:04.252--> 00:51:06.388  
Llyfr Glas Nebo.

00:51:06.412--> 00:51:08.388  
It was published in 2018.

00:51:08.412--> 00:51:09.687  
And...

00:51:09.712--> 00:51:13.308  
there's a lot in it about  
Welsh literature, Welsh culture.

00:51:13.332--> 00:51:16.108  
And I thought there is

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nothing... there is no one...

00:51:16.132--> 00:51:18.948

I don't know if even Welsh  
people want to read about this.

00:51:18.972--> 00:51:20.791

It's far too Welsh.

00:51:20.816--> 00:51:21.816

Um...

00:51:21.840--> 00:51:26.348

But happens to be now, it's, you  
know, it's been my biggest success.

00:51:26.372--> 00:51:29.228

It's been translated  
into 15 languages,

00:51:29.252--> 00:51:31.388

but the most difficult language

00:51:31.412--> 00:51:34.308

to find a publisher  
for was English

00:51:34.332--> 00:51:37.908

here in Britain,  
but also in the USA.

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00:51:37.932--> 00:51:40.152

And... [sighs]

00:51:40.152--> 00:51:44.428

I think we need to have  
conversations about this.

00:51:44.452--> 00:51:49.188

I think we need to have conversations  
about what translation gives us.

00:51:49.212--> 00:51:51.152

Um...

00:51:51.152--> 00:51:55.152

And the fact that if  
you're writing in Welsh,

00:51:55.152--> 00:51:58.311

and if you're creating  
anything culturally

00:51:58.335--> 00:52:00.152

through the medium of Welsh,

00:52:00.152--> 00:52:04.828

you feel that you're always  
representing your Welshness.

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00:52:04.852--> 00:52:06.152

And...

00:52:06.152--> 00:52:11.468

I had a revelation speaking  
to an English author,

00:52:11.492--> 00:52:15.588

a wonderful English author when I was  
in the book fair in Beijing and realizing,

00:52:15.612--> 00:52:18.588

oh gosh, not all  
writers feel like this.

00:52:18.612--> 00:52:21.428

And so they can just write  
whatever they want to write.

00:52:21.452--> 00:52:24.152

And I write whatever I want  
to write, but wherever I go,

00:52:24.152--> 00:52:27.108

I feel I am the  
representative of Welshness,

00:52:27.132--> 00:52:28.830

because in lots of places I go,

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00:52:28.855--> 00:52:30.495

they've never heard  
of the Welsh language.

00:52:30.519--> 00:52:34.152

They've never heard of  
Wales, they don't know we exist.

00:52:34.152--> 00:52:36.152

And I think that

00:52:36.152--> 00:52:41.668

to be able to read and experience  
literature from different cultures,

00:52:41.692--> 00:52:43.148

as Mel was saying,

00:52:43.172--> 00:52:46.948

it gives you so much more  
than you think it gives you.

00:52:46.972--> 00:52:51.152

You know, the empathy there, you know,  
reading is the best way to develop empathy.

00:52:51.152--> 00:52:53.152

But to really realize that

00:52:53.152--> 00:52:57.152

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there are people  
from different cultures

00:52:57.152--> 00:52:59.428

who...

00:52:59.452--> 00:53:03.148

are creating, they have whole  
other languages and cultures

00:53:03.172--> 00:53:07.152

we know nothing about, and  
yet we have so much in common.

00:53:07.152--> 00:53:09.788

We need to work on...

00:53:09.812--> 00:53:12.948

on translation  
in English, I think.

00:53:14.152--> 00:53:16.152

-Yes.

00:53:16.152--> 00:53:19.748

It's interesting what you say about  
people feeling threatened by difference.

00:53:19.772--> 00:53:24.152

You see that so much in

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every sphere, don't you? In...

00:53:24.152--> 00:53:26.748

English language media,

00:53:26.772--> 00:53:28.508

you know, we're pretty divided.

00:53:28.532--> 00:53:32.628

That way, that somehow there are  
people who get really entrenched.

00:53:32.652--> 00:53:36.152

Oh, this is going far beyond  
what we're here to discuss, but...

00:53:36.152--> 00:53:38.148

you're right, Manon.

00:53:38.172--> 00:53:40.788

We do need to have conversations  
about what translation gives us.

00:53:40.812--> 00:53:43.152

And it just makes me think,

00:53:43.152--> 00:53:46.152

there's a lot to  
be explored there.

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00:53:46.152--> 00:53:49.505

So thank you for raising  
everything you have.

00:53:49.529--> 00:53:52.548

We're going to pause  
in a few minutes.

00:53:52.572--> 00:53:55.148

Is there anything that  
either of you would like to

00:53:55.172--> 00:53:58.152

say that you haven't had  
a chance to say so far

00:53:58.152--> 00:54:00.865

before we have our break?

00:54:00.889--> 00:54:03.108

-I just wanted to quickly, um...

00:54:03.132--> 00:54:06.388

just kind of reiterate what Manon  
said in terms of the exhaustion

00:54:06.412--> 00:54:07.948

of always being an ambassador

00:54:07.972--> 00:54:10.388

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and the privilege

that I don't think some

00:54:10.412--> 00:54:14.758

"majority" authors

realize that they have

00:54:14.783--> 00:54:18.948

to not have to represent

any group, nation, language,

00:54:18.972--> 00:54:21.045

demographic whatsoever.

00:54:21.069--> 00:54:23.152

And I think that

can be really hard

00:54:23.152--> 00:54:26.152

seeing, um...

00:54:26.152--> 00:54:31.268

substandard work being

published from a majority

00:54:31.292--> 00:54:33.428

demographic author.

00:54:33.452--> 00:54:34.788

Um...

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00:54:34.812--> 00:54:38.108

And realizing the sheer  
exhaustion that comes with

00:54:38.132--> 00:54:40.152

constantly having to advocate.

00:54:40.152--> 00:54:42.985

And I think that it is okay

00:54:43.009--> 00:54:45.690

to say, I'm not  
representing anybody in this.

00:54:45.715--> 00:54:48.308

This is my work, and  
I speak for myself,

00:54:48.332--> 00:54:51.348

and I don't represent Wales,  
I don't represent women,

00:54:51.372--> 00:54:54.068

I don't represent people  
of colour. I represent me.

00:54:54.092--> 00:54:55.748

And, um...

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00:54:55.772--> 00:54:57.308

I think there's a  
strength in that

00:54:57.332--> 00:55:00.028

and I hope that we can  
shift towards that and

00:55:00.052--> 00:55:02.668

not put that pressure  
on ourselves sometimes.

00:55:05.152--> 00:55:08.428

Thank you. Yeah,  
good point. Manon?

00:55:10.356--> 00:55:12.748

-Just amen to all of that.

00:55:12.772--> 00:55:15.548

I want to have a chat  
with Mel afterwards

00:55:15.572--> 00:55:17.508

about how she does that

00:55:17.532--> 00:55:20.508

because I feel it keenly.

00:55:27.152--> 00:55:28.908

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All right, stop muting myself.

00:55:28.932--> 00:55:31.228

Thank you. Well, you  
know, I think we'll just

00:55:31.252--> 00:55:34.518

pause at that point. I know it's  
not quite 8 o'clock, but let's take...

00:55:34.543--> 00:55:37.388

Let's take our full five  
minutes, if not a few minutes.

00:55:37.412--> 00:55:41.152

You know, we've all been  
talking. I need a drink of water and

00:55:41.152--> 00:55:46.108

a comfort break and then we'll see what  
questions people are coming up with for us.

00:55:46.132--> 00:55:48.428

So, um, thank you.

00:55:48.452--> 00:55:51.068

Thank you. It's all been  
incredibly stimulating, I hope

00:55:51.092--> 00:55:53.152

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the audience feel that too.

00:55:53.152--> 00:55:56.948

Others, a lot more in this  
than I had appreciated, actually.

00:55:56.972--> 00:55:59.188

I thought I did know about  
it, but there's a lot more.

00:55:59.212--> 00:56:00.908

So, thank you both.

00:56:23.152--> 00:56:26.388

Okay, I think we're back.

00:56:26.412--> 00:56:28.388

Just been looking at...

00:56:28.412--> 00:56:31.108

looking at some questions

00:56:31.132--> 00:56:33.268

and I saw a couple  
of points which are not,

00:56:33.292--> 00:56:35.188

which despite what  
I said about the chat,

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00:56:35.212--> 00:56:38.468

are relevant to bring  
up in discussion.

00:56:38.492--> 00:56:40.152

Uh, so...

00:56:40.152--> 00:56:44.228

Thank you, Manon and Mel.

00:56:44.252--> 00:56:45.948

I'm going to give you a question

00:56:45.972--> 00:56:47.948

from Bonnie Hawkins

00:56:47.972--> 00:56:50.152

which is actually for you, Mel.

00:56:50.152--> 00:56:55.348

She says, "You took your decision  
not to publish your biography in English,

00:56:55.372--> 00:56:57.191

but don't you think that people

00:56:57.215--> 00:57:00.251

who don't speak the language  
might be missing out?"

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00:57:00.276--> 00:57:02.225

Speaking for herself,

00:57:02.249--> 00:57:05.668

she says she didn't have the  
opportunity to learn Welsh at school.

00:57:05.692--> 00:57:09.108

She's dyslexic, so English  
is her only language,

00:57:09.132--> 00:57:11.308

but she feels... She  
didn't use this word,

00:57:11.332--> 00:57:13.108

but I think she  
feels frustrated.

00:57:13.132--> 00:57:15.108

She feels she might  
share experiences,

00:57:15.132--> 00:57:16.731

but she can't read your book.

00:57:16.756--> 00:57:19.846

Do you think you might  
ever change your mind?

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00:57:19.871--> 00:57:23.028

-I... Thank you for the question,

00:57:23.052--> 00:57:24.668

and, um...

00:57:24.692--> 00:57:28.348

it is something that I

really grappled with,

00:57:28.372--> 00:57:31.188

you know, because

I think there's some...

00:57:31.212--> 00:57:32.828

We talked about

geographical divides.

00:57:32.852--> 00:57:35.148

I think sometimes there can

be more of a cultural divide

00:57:35.172--> 00:57:37.725

between people who speak Welsh

in Wales and people who don't.

00:57:37.750--> 00:57:40.152

I think that's where the

bigger divide actually is.

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00:57:40.152--> 00:57:42.548

And...

00:57:42.572--> 00:57:44.828

I think that there can be

00:57:44.852--> 00:57:46.468

frustrations on both sides

00:57:46.492--> 00:57:48.152

in terms of that.

00:57:48.152--> 00:57:49.228

Um...

00:57:49.252--> 00:57:52.468

The decision ultimately  
came down to the fact

00:57:52.492--> 00:57:55.508

that there were certain  
Welsh language references.

00:57:55.532--> 00:57:57.708

You know, that people who

00:57:57.732--> 00:58:01.592

could walk down the street in Birmingham  
and nobody would know who they are,

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00:58:01.617--> 00:58:03.537

but if they walked down  
the street in Caernarfon,

00:58:03.561--> 00:58:05.227

everybody would  
be losing their minds

00:58:05.252--> 00:58:08.388

You know, things like that  
that you perhaps wouldn't

00:58:08.412--> 00:58:11.788

be a shared experience with  
somebody who doesn't exist

00:58:11.812--> 00:58:14.152

within the Welsh  
language community.

00:58:14.152--> 00:58:15.468

And,

00:58:15.492--> 00:58:17.948

in a selfish possible way,

00:58:17.972--> 00:58:22.108

I felt like I wanted this book to  
belong to the Welsh language.

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00:58:22.132--> 00:58:23.191

I think that was...

00:58:23.215--> 00:58:25.228

I think that is ultimately  
what it came down to.

00:58:25.252--> 00:58:27.138

It would have stretched  
me as an author

00:58:27.163--> 00:58:30.788

to have translated it  
in a way that still kept

00:58:30.812--> 00:58:33.228

the zing of it, that  
still kept the feeling.

00:58:33.252--> 00:58:36.308

And who's to say I  
might not in the future?

00:58:36.332--> 00:58:38.468

But, you know,

00:58:38.492--> 00:58:41.844

abridging it was an  
exercise in terms of,

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00:58:41.868--> 00:58:43.308

you know,

00:58:43.332--> 00:58:45.948

really working out what does  
and doesn't need to be in there.

00:58:45.972--> 00:58:47.348

Abridging a piece  
of your own work

00:58:47.372--> 00:58:49.908

is a really humbling experience,

00:58:49.932--> 00:58:54.388

when you have to cut it down to a quarter  
and realize how much of it is irrelevant.

00:58:54.412--> 00:58:58.548

But, you know, to keep the same tone,  
to keep the same references and so on.

00:58:58.572--> 00:59:00.788

So, I'm not saying  
never, but that...

00:59:00.812--> 00:59:03.868

that was where it came  
from on this occasion.

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00:59:03.868--> 00:59:05.508

-Totally understood.

00:59:05.532--> 00:59:09.228

Thank you for reiterating that  
because I think you did tell us.

00:59:09.252--> 00:59:10.468

Thank you, Mel.

00:59:10.492--> 00:59:12.508

So we have another question.

00:59:12.532--> 00:59:15.005

Well, I think it might  
be more of a comment.

00:59:15.029--> 00:59:16.029

[laughs]

00:59:16.053--> 00:59:18.388

This is from Margot  
Gorman, she says,

00:59:18.412--> 00:59:22.428

"The reference to translation brought  
the question of AI translation to mind,

00:59:22.452--> 00:59:25.668

"especially with figurative

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language, idiom, and empathy.

00:59:25.692--> 00:59:30.108

"Would AI translation get  
snowflakes feathering down?"

00:59:31.868--> 00:59:34.028

-That's a really great point.

00:59:34.052--> 00:59:37.868

I think, yeah, translation is

00:59:37.868--> 00:59:41.965

what I worry about most when  
it comes to AI as an author.

00:59:41.989--> 00:59:44.348

I don't worry as much,

00:59:44.372--> 00:59:46.188

maybe being naive,

00:59:46.212--> 00:59:49.868

but I don't worry as much  
about AI actually creating

00:59:49.868--> 00:59:51.828

original work.

00:59:51.852--> 00:59:54.948

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But I think the  
translation work, yeah,

00:59:54.972--> 00:59:58.868

it could go there, and I'm  
sure it does. I'm sure it does.

00:59:58.868--> 01:00:00.628

But it loses so much.

01:00:00.652--> 01:00:03.068

I think every Welsh speaker

01:00:03.092--> 01:00:07.308

has a tale to tell about  
really awful translation

01:00:07.332--> 01:00:09.388

that we've had to endure

01:00:09.412--> 01:00:12.148

because of Google Translate.

01:00:12.172--> 01:00:13.391

Um...

01:00:13.416--> 01:00:14.988

It doesn't work.

01:00:15.012--> 01:00:17.868

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It doesn't hold the...

01:00:17.868--> 01:00:21.188

the same subtleties, it just...

01:00:21.212--> 01:00:24.748

There's something in  
the process of translation.

01:00:24.772--> 01:00:27.388

You know, I've translated books,

01:00:27.412--> 01:00:31.868

my own, but also  
books by other authors,

01:00:31.868--> 01:00:35.868

and it's so much more  
difficult than writing a book,

01:00:35.868--> 01:00:37.628

an original novel,

01:00:37.652--> 01:00:41.068

because you have  
to not only translate

01:00:41.092--> 01:00:42.438

the words on the page,

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01:00:42.462--> 01:00:44.428

but you have to  
translate the tone.

01:00:44.452--> 01:00:47.868

You know, if I'm... I have  
translated lots of Enid Blyton books.

01:00:47.868--> 01:00:50.348

It's really important  
that the readers hear

01:00:50.372--> 01:00:53.868

Enid Blyton's voice and not  
Manon Stefan Ros's voice.

01:00:53.868--> 01:00:55.788

AI can't do that.

01:00:55.812--> 01:00:57.708

AI can't tell the subtlety,

01:00:57.732--> 01:01:00.748

and hopefully we'll all  
cop onto that pretty soon

01:01:00.772--> 01:01:03.748

and chuck it in  
the bin, but it's just

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01:01:03.772--> 01:01:05.868

very, very cheap,  
isn't it? That's the...

01:01:05.868--> 01:01:06.868

Yeah.

01:01:06.868--> 01:01:09.668

-I think as well, the people

01:01:09.692--> 01:01:13.868

go to literature for  
a human connection.

01:01:13.868--> 01:01:16.028

And I was speaking...  
Slightly different,

01:01:16.052--> 01:01:18.628

but I was speaking  
to a doctor yesterday

01:01:18.652--> 01:01:21.508

who was saying, you know, there's  
obviously the introduction of, like,

01:01:21.532--> 01:01:24.305

basically robots who  
can perform surgery.

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01:01:24.330--> 01:01:27.228

And the ethics of that, and  
how some people say, well,

01:01:27.252--> 01:01:29.868

the precision that  
a robot can have

01:01:29.868--> 01:01:33.348

is proven to be more  
effective than a human doctor.

01:01:33.372--> 01:01:34.818

But from my point of view,

01:01:34.842--> 01:01:37.988

I would want somebody  
who is about to cut me open

01:01:38.012--> 01:01:40.868

to understand the  
meaning of my life.

01:01:40.868--> 01:01:43.908

And be able to comprehend that.

01:01:43.932--> 01:01:47.340

And that, to me, is  
better than the precision

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01:01:47.364--> 01:01:50.228

that a robot could...

could provide.

01:01:50.252--> 01:01:53.348

I think the same

goes with translation.

01:01:53.372--> 01:01:55.188

I think, like Manon said,

01:01:55.212--> 01:01:57.508

translators do so much more

than translate words

01:01:57.532--> 01:02:01.068

into the literal definition in a

different language. They understand

01:02:01.092--> 01:02:04.868

the cultural references,

the tone, the feeling behind it.

01:02:04.868--> 01:02:08.948

Where we are at the moment,

AI cannot do it, and I hope

01:02:08.972--> 01:02:11.588

that that is recognized

and I hope that

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01:02:11.612--> 01:02:15.908

readers recognize it and turn  
away from it where it is used.

01:02:17.376--> 01:02:20.548

-Yeah, I was talking with  
somebody today about how...

01:02:20.572--> 01:02:22.608

reading that AI can  
it's getting to the point

01:02:22.632--> 01:02:24.948

where it can make decisions  
separate from humans.

01:02:24.972--> 01:02:26.868

That's really scary.

01:02:26.868--> 01:02:29.028

So there are things that...

01:02:29.052--> 01:02:32.868

And I firmly believe AI has many  
benefits, but not in the creative sphere

01:02:32.868--> 01:02:35.468

where, you know, we  
need to own our work.

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01:02:35.492--> 01:02:37.868

It doesn't belong to robots.

01:02:37.868--> 01:02:40.228

So, another question.

01:02:40.252--> 01:02:41.868

Actually, this is  
something really...

01:02:41.892--> 01:02:43.868

It's a contribution

01:02:43.868--> 01:02:46.908

from Abigail Ardelle Zammit.

01:02:46.932--> 01:02:49.228

"Just wanted to say I  
appreciate all your points,

01:02:49.252--> 01:02:51.988

"particularly because  
I'm also bilingual, Malta.

01:02:52.012--> 01:02:54.228

"I work as a  
translation editor for..."

01:02:54.252--> 01:02:57.228

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I don't know if this is how to  
pronounce it, "Tupelo Press US."

01:02:57.252--> 01:02:59.753

"They would be very  
interested in publishing

01:02:59.777--> 01:03:01.868

"translations from  
Welsh to English.

01:03:01.868--> 01:03:05.868

"Do not hesitate to submit  
poetry fiction and hybrid forms."

01:03:05.868--> 01:03:09.108

So that will be in the chat,

01:03:09.132--> 01:03:13.388

the place to submit. So that's  
lovely. Thank you, Abigail.

01:03:13.412--> 01:03:14.948

It's fantastic to hear.

01:03:14.972--> 01:03:16.868

Um...

01:03:16.868--> 01:03:19.828

Now, there's a point that's

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been raised in the chat.

01:03:19.852--> 01:03:24.817

Not a question, but I don't know  
if you've got perspectives on this.

01:03:24.842--> 01:03:28.268

Somebody was saying that  
we're allied in speaking and writing,

01:03:28.292--> 01:03:31.868

and that there might be people  
who are fluent speakers in Welsh,

01:03:31.868--> 01:03:34.468

but can't read it.

01:03:34.492--> 01:03:36.868

Um...

01:03:36.868--> 01:03:40.588

So, what do you feel  
about that, in terms of...

01:03:40.612--> 01:03:41.868

literature.

01:03:41.868--> 01:03:43.588

-My father is one.

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01:03:43.612--> 01:03:47.668

My dad, my father was  
brought up in Northeast Wales,

01:03:47.692--> 01:03:49.868

first language speaker.

01:03:49.868--> 01:03:51.868

But because of the time,

01:03:51.892--> 01:03:54.188

he, you know, the  
education that was available

01:03:54.212--> 01:03:56.508

was at a school called  
Dinas Bran, which was

01:03:56.532--> 01:04:00.628

an English-speaking school,  
and he can't read or write Welsh.

01:04:00.652--> 01:04:01.788

You know, he can't...

01:04:01.812--> 01:04:04.868

I don't think he'd mind me saying,  
he can't write a birthday card in Welsh.

01:04:04.868--> 01:04:07.388

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But I speak Welsh to  
my father every day.

01:04:07.412--> 01:04:09.388

He couldn't read my book.

01:04:09.412--> 01:04:10.948

I had to read it to him.

01:04:10.972--> 01:04:14.468

You know, awkward, horrible.

01:04:14.492--> 01:04:16.068

But,

01:04:16.092--> 01:04:18.268

that is... that is  
real, but you know,

01:04:18.292--> 01:04:21.548

I'm of the persuasion that I don't  
think audiobooks are cheating.

01:04:21.572--> 01:04:23.908

I'm counting my  
audiobooks on Goodreads.

01:04:23.932--> 01:04:25.428

I'm tolling them in.

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01:04:25.452--> 01:04:28.308

It's a good way, especially if  
you're somebody, you know,

01:04:28.332--> 01:04:30.428

I spend the majority  
of my life in my car

01:04:30.452--> 01:04:34.188

and it's a way that I  
get to enjoy literature

01:04:34.212--> 01:04:37.668

in... that I'm, you know,  
it's a good use of my time

01:04:37.692--> 01:04:40.328

with something that I love while  
I'm doing something I have to do.

01:04:40.352--> 01:04:44.588

So I think hopefully more  
Welsh language audio books

01:04:44.612--> 01:04:47.698

could possibly could  
be a good answer to that.

01:04:50.148--> 01:04:51.188

-Good point.

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01:04:51.212--> 01:04:52.212

Manon?

01:04:52.868--> 01:04:55.948

-Yeah, I mean, it's not uncommon,

01:04:55.972--> 01:04:59.908

I think, for people to

be far more comfortable

01:04:59.932--> 01:05:03.308

speaking Welsh than they

are reading or writing in Welsh.

01:05:03.332--> 01:05:06.468

I think that might be

changing a little bit now.

01:05:06.492--> 01:05:09.468

There's a lot more Welsh

language education than there was.

01:05:09.492--> 01:05:11.268

Um... But

01:05:11.292--> 01:05:15.868

yeah, I think you certainly have to

take that into account when we're...

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01:05:15.868--> 01:05:19.788

when we're writing books  
and also I think that's...

01:05:19.812--> 01:05:22.268

that publishers  
have a role there

01:05:22.292--> 01:05:26.868

about creating  
books that are, um...

01:05:26.868--> 01:05:29.428

I guess this is true in  
every language, right?

01:05:29.452--> 01:05:31.868

But, books that are

01:05:31.868--> 01:05:33.868

easy to read,

01:05:33.868--> 01:05:36.628

easy to understand, but also

01:05:36.652--> 01:05:39.068

not patronizing thematically.

01:05:39.092--> 01:05:41.868

I think that's quite a tricky

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01:05:41.868--> 01:05:43.068

balance.

01:05:43.092--> 01:05:46.508

But yeah, yeah, I do know  
that it's quite common.

01:05:46.532--> 01:05:49.748

-Could I take this  
opportunity to plug

01:05:49.772--> 01:05:55.548

the Arwain scheme which has just kind  
of launched for this year, which has taken

01:05:55.572--> 01:05:59.948

books that have been abridged, but not just  
abridged, it has simplified the language.

01:05:59.972--> 01:06:02.588

I'll be honest with  
you, in my case,

01:06:02.612--> 01:06:05.212

it didn't need simplifying much,  
it was pretty much already there.

01:06:05.236--> 01:06:07.948

But they have been

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adapted not just in length,

01:06:07.972--> 01:06:11.628

but for people with much  
younger Welsh reading ages,

01:06:11.652--> 01:06:15.828

for new speakers, for  
younger people as well.

01:06:15.852--> 01:06:19.628

So, you know, if you  
are a new speaker,

01:06:19.652--> 01:06:22.868

or you're finding your way with Welsh  
literature and just starting to read it,

01:06:22.868--> 01:06:25.428

those are really good  
options. They don't look like

01:06:25.452--> 01:06:27.748

big, scary tones  
of books either.

01:06:29.868--> 01:06:30.948

-Thank you.

01:06:30.972--> 01:06:32.868

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That's useful to  
know, Mel, thank you.

01:06:32.868--> 01:06:37.868

Okay, another question that  
we had before the session.

01:06:37.868--> 01:06:39.988

How often are,

01:06:40.012--> 01:06:43.868

in your experience, are  
dual text works published?

01:06:43.868--> 01:06:46.828

So you've got, in this  
case, Welsh and English.

01:06:46.852--> 01:06:49.988

And do they really  
satisfy anybody?

01:06:52.332--> 01:06:57.108

-I think they're mostly  
written for young children,

01:06:57.132--> 01:06:59.468

so that parents who

01:06:59.492--> 01:07:02.548

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might not be so confident reading  
in Welsh

01:07:02.572--> 01:07:03.868

or who can't read in Welsh,

01:07:03.868--> 01:07:08.868

they can understand

what's going on.

01:07:08.868--> 01:07:11.868

I think...

01:07:11.868--> 01:07:15.028

I don't think I'm the right

person to answer that question

01:07:15.052--> 01:07:18.988

because I'm not qualified

as a bilingual parent.

01:07:19.012--> 01:07:20.868

But yeah, my daughter has

01:07:20.868--> 01:07:22.028

many of those books.

01:07:22.052--> 01:07:24.668

She's three and a

half and yeah, they're...

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01:07:24.692--> 01:07:27.668

It's funny, I've heard  
so many times that

01:07:27.692--> 01:07:31.588

the Welsh... including  
Welsh translation

01:07:31.612--> 01:07:35.868

with English text  
is visual clutter.

01:07:35.868--> 01:07:40.151

But I've never found that to be  
a problem with children's books.

01:07:40.175--> 01:07:43.868

I've never found my children to  
have any kind of problem with it.

01:07:45.868--> 01:07:49.428

-I think anything  
that gives access

01:07:49.452--> 01:07:50.738

is only a good thing.

01:07:50.762--> 01:07:52.508

It might not work for everybody,

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01:07:52.532--> 01:07:54.438

you know, but I think...

01:07:54.462--> 01:07:57.788

And apologies if

I've misunderstood

01:07:57.812--> 01:07:59.428

the term kind of, but

01:07:59.452--> 01:08:02.628

especially in books where, you

know, it does use both languages

01:08:02.652--> 01:08:04.868

kind of in and out and so on,

01:08:04.868--> 01:08:07.668

I think that can

add the characters,

01:08:07.692--> 01:08:11.748

I think that can add

richness in that regard,

01:08:11.772--> 01:08:13.868

but it's, um...

01:08:13.868--> 01:08:15.868

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I think done well,

01:08:15.868--> 01:08:17.388

if it gives access,  
then brilliant.

01:08:17.412--> 01:08:19.468

I don't think it's  
particularly a bad thing.

01:08:20.868--> 01:08:22.788

-Thank you.

01:08:22.812--> 01:08:24.868

Okay, another

01:08:24.868--> 01:08:26.868

publishing question.

01:08:26.868--> 01:08:28.308

How often...

01:08:28.332--> 01:08:30.748

Well, this is something I'm  
going to go to you first, Manon,

01:08:30.772--> 01:08:32.828

because I know that  
you, we said earlier,

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01:08:32.852--> 01:08:36.148

you've translated some of  
your work from Welsh to English.

01:08:36.172--> 01:08:38.948

Does the same  
publisher, in your case,

01:08:38.972--> 01:08:40.868

publish both?

01:08:40.868--> 01:08:42.508

-No.

01:08:42.532--> 01:08:45.628

-Is that an issue?

Is it good? Is it bad?

01:08:45.652--> 01:08:47.188

-It's great, actually.

01:08:47.212--> 01:08:52.348

So I've published most of  
my Welsh books with Y Lolfa.

01:08:52.372--> 01:08:57.668

And the most  
successful book I've had,

01:08:57.692--> 01:09:00.868

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which is The Blue Book  
of Nebo, was published by

01:09:00.868--> 01:09:03.428

Welsh Press Firefly Press,

01:09:03.452--> 01:09:05.428

based down in Caerphilly.

01:09:05.452--> 01:09:06.868

Um...

01:09:06.868--> 01:09:10.708

And I've published a novel for adults

01:09:10.732--> 01:09:13.025

with Honno, based

in Aberystwyth.

01:09:13.050--> 01:09:15.548

So, no, they're not

the same publishers

01:09:15.572--> 01:09:17.508

and there's never any

kind of issue with that.

01:09:17.532--> 01:09:20.348

There's something really

lovely about it, actually,

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01:09:20.372--> 01:09:21.868

especially when I'm

01:09:21.868--> 01:09:24.668

sort of travelling abroad

01:09:24.692--> 01:09:28.388

and seeing how different

publishers work in different countries

01:09:28.412--> 01:09:31.868

and seeing how they react

really differently to the same text.

01:09:31.868--> 01:09:33.668

I always...

01:09:33.692--> 01:09:36.628

I find Blue Book of

Nebo really interesting,

01:09:36.652--> 01:09:40.228

particularly because it

seems like in every language,

01:09:40.252--> 01:09:43.708

they pick up on different

themes that maybe I can't see.

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01:09:43.732--> 01:09:46.528

But it's sort of reflective  
of their own culture

01:09:46.552--> 01:09:49.348

and what's going on in  
their culture at that time.

01:09:49.372--> 01:09:52.468

So yeah, it's never  
an issue, I have to say.

01:09:53.868--> 01:09:55.308

-Thank you.

01:09:55.332--> 01:09:56.868

Thank you.

01:09:56.868--> 01:09:59.548

Mel, did you have  
anything to add to that?

01:09:59.572--> 01:10:02.508

-No, I don't think it's  
my field of expertise.

01:10:02.532--> 01:10:04.268

I can only really  
speak anecdotally from

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01:10:04.292--> 01:10:07.718

hearing what other people have done. In all occasions, it's been two different ones.

01:10:07.743--> 01:10:09.388

-Yeah, yeah.

01:10:09.412--> 01:10:11.388

Thank you.

01:10:11.412--> 01:10:14.468

Now, there's a comment that came up.

01:10:14.492--> 01:10:16.518

I just want to

01:10:16.543--> 01:10:18.028

highlight it.

01:10:18.052--> 01:10:19.828

So it's from Susan Walton who says

01:10:19.852--> 01:10:21.908

she's a translator from Welsh to English

01:10:21.932--> 01:10:24.148

and she did say at some

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point earlier in the chat,

01:10:24.172--> 01:10:25.828

we need to recognise...

01:10:25.852--> 01:10:29.868

thank you for pointing

this out, Susan, that

01:10:29.868--> 01:10:33.868

this is part of the field that

01:10:33.868--> 01:10:38.163

translation-- translators are

part of the whole discussion

01:10:38.188--> 01:10:39.948

and need to be part

of the whole discussion.

01:10:39.972--> 01:10:42.348

She's translated

several bilingual books,

01:10:42.372--> 01:10:44.508

but she says they're

all coffee table books.

01:10:44.532--> 01:10:46.388

Just to note,

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01:10:46.412--> 01:10:49.108

we're just really noting that  
we need to recognise that,

01:10:49.132--> 01:10:52.868

unless there's anything... I mean, if  
you want to add anything, either of you?

01:10:52.868--> 01:10:54.548

-No, it's a good point.

01:10:54.572--> 01:10:56.428

-Yeah, it's a good point.

01:10:56.452--> 01:10:57.868

So thank you, Susan.

01:10:57.868--> 01:11:02.028

So I think we haven't got  
any more questions in the chat,

01:11:02.052--> 01:11:03.308

but...

01:11:03.332--> 01:11:04.788

Um...

01:11:05.868--> 01:11:08.143

A question that came up before,

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01:11:08.168--> 01:11:10.268

what can be done

01:11:10.292--> 01:11:12.868

to encourage people to  
learn another language?

01:11:12.868--> 01:11:17.588

And for that  
language to be Welsh.

01:11:19.471--> 01:11:21.628

-I think, um...

01:11:21.652--> 01:11:23.988

You know, I think I said it  
previously before the break,

01:11:24.012--> 01:11:27.308

I feel like Cymraeg  
is getting very cool.

01:11:27.332--> 01:11:30.828

Again, I think the Cymru Cool  
movement is back and thriving,

01:11:30.852--> 01:11:32.348

and I think that is brilliant.

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01:11:32.372--> 01:11:33.843

And I think

01:11:33.868--> 01:11:37.308

being open

01:11:37.332--> 01:11:41.068

to speakers of all levels

01:11:41.092--> 01:11:42.948

is fundamental.

01:11:42.972--> 01:11:46.148

I 100% respect

01:11:46.172--> 01:11:49.508

the need to conserve

our language, protect it,

01:11:49.532--> 01:11:51.868

and be correct where necessary.

01:11:51.868--> 01:11:53.868

I think it is also

01:11:53.868--> 01:11:56.468

fundamental that we recognize

01:11:56.492--> 01:12:00.228

that in order to encourage people to

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learn, it needs to be a welcoming space.

01:12:00.252--> 01:12:02.668

And I think we're  
getting a lot better at that.

01:12:02.692--> 01:12:04.468

I think a lot, lot better.

01:12:04.492--> 01:12:06.185

You know, I will...

01:12:06.210--> 01:12:09.468

I'll go to Welsh language  
gigs, where there'll be

01:12:09.492--> 01:12:15.988

a new speaker doing a gig, a set, a  
stand-up set in the Welsh language,

01:12:16.012--> 01:12:18.988

and, like, I think, like, Cath, like  
you, I lived in France for a year.

01:12:19.012--> 01:12:21.188

You would never catch  
me doing a set in French.

01:12:21.212--> 01:12:24.068

I would not be brave enough

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in any way, shape, or form,

01:12:24.092--> 01:12:26.948

and I take my hat off to  
these people as new speakers

01:12:26.972--> 01:12:28.708

wanting to do comedy in Welsh.

01:12:28.732--> 01:12:29.868

And

01:12:29.868--> 01:12:32.988

they do it so well,

01:12:33.012--> 01:12:35.508

and the audiences  
are so open to it and

01:12:35.532--> 01:12:38.868

willing them on and wanting  
the best for them. And I think,

01:12:38.892--> 01:12:42.988

obviously, having spaces for  
learners or new speakers is great,

01:12:43.012--> 01:12:46.028

but integrating them  
into just everyday Welsh

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01:12:46.052--> 01:12:49.908

is as important and I think we're  
getting really good at that as well. So...

01:12:49.932--> 01:12:52.188

And continuing that,  
continuing to have

01:12:52.212--> 01:12:54.188

amazing events

01:12:54.212--> 01:12:58.468

like The Eisteddfod,  
Tafwyl, and Sesiwn Fawr,

01:12:58.492--> 01:13:01.468

places where you can  
go, revel in the Welshness,

01:13:01.492--> 01:13:03.628

listen to Welsh language music,

01:13:03.652--> 01:13:06.388

realize that it exists  
outside the classroom,

01:13:06.412--> 01:13:08.868

I think as long as  
we continue that,

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01:13:08.868--> 01:13:10.268

we're going to get there.

01:13:11.868--> 01:13:14.908

-I agree completely with  
what Mel was saying.

01:13:14.932--> 01:13:17.628

And I think what  
we need to do is to

01:13:17.652--> 01:13:20.868

really spread the  
message that...

01:13:20.868--> 01:13:21.868

You know,

01:13:21.868--> 01:13:25.508

if you learn how to speak Welsh,

01:13:25.532--> 01:13:28.988

you have a whole new culture

01:13:29.012--> 01:13:30.868

that's open to you.

01:13:30.868--> 01:13:32.868

And...

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01:13:32.868--> 01:13:36.108

I think sometimes that we  
kind of forget that message and

01:13:36.132--> 01:13:40.828

we can get a little bit stuck in the  
fact that it is a minority language,

01:13:40.852--> 01:13:42.073

and there are lots of kind of...

01:13:42.097--> 01:13:44.468

there are lots of people  
against the Welsh language still,

01:13:44.492--> 01:13:46.188

and that we have  
to sort of justify.

01:13:46.212--> 01:13:49.868

You can get stuck in that  
and forget, but actually

01:13:49.868--> 01:13:51.868

speaking the Welsh language

01:13:51.892--> 01:13:55.068

brings so much joy.

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01:13:55.092--> 01:13:56.636

And...

01:13:56.661--> 01:14:00.188

if anyone learns  
how to speak Welsh,

01:14:00.212--> 01:14:02.388

they can read these  
wonderful books

01:14:02.412--> 01:14:04.348

that will probably  
never be translated

01:14:04.372--> 01:14:07.668

and they will be able to  
enjoy this amazing music,

01:14:07.692--> 01:14:10.548

the stand up that's only  
available in Welsh, you know?

01:14:10.572--> 01:14:13.068

All of this wonderful things.

01:14:13.092--> 01:14:16.628

Your world will  
get so much bigger

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01:14:16.652--> 01:14:18.948

by speaking this language.

01:14:18.972--> 01:14:20.668

My father

01:14:20.692--> 01:14:23.588

is originally from

Stoke-on-Trent

01:14:23.612--> 01:14:26.428

and he didn't learn Welsh

until he was in his 20s.

01:14:26.452--> 01:14:27.868

And now,

01:14:27.868--> 01:14:31.468

he's the Welsh-est

person I have ever met.

01:14:31.492--> 01:14:34.548

And he basically lives his life

01:14:34.572--> 01:14:36.588

through the medium of Welsh.

01:14:36.612--> 01:14:37.868

You know,

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01:14:37.868--> 01:14:40.588

he's a Welsh language singer.

01:14:40.612--> 01:14:42.425

It just... It's

01:14:42.450--> 01:14:45.868

absolutely transformed his life.

01:14:45.868--> 01:14:48.468

But there are many people

that would have told him

01:14:48.492--> 01:14:51.468

it would have been more useful  
to him... for him to learn Spanish,

01:14:51.492--> 01:14:52.788

you know?

01:14:52.812--> 01:14:55.388

So yeah, we have  
to spread the word

01:14:55.412--> 01:14:57.188

that actually it's a  
really joyful thing

01:14:57.212--> 01:14:59.245

to be able to be

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part of this culture.

01:14:59.270--> 01:15:02.108

-Yeah, I also, if I

could just add quickly,

01:15:02.132--> 01:15:04.388

I think it's, like, I know

it's icky to talk about

01:15:04.412--> 01:15:08.828

money and jobs and I think about

it in a really corporate way, but, like,

01:15:08.852--> 01:15:10.142

I wouldn't have any of...

01:15:10.166--> 01:15:13.748

have had any of the opportunities

I've had if I had not spoken Welsh.

01:15:13.772--> 01:15:16.628

I wouldn't be an author

because it would have been so...

01:15:16.652--> 01:15:18.868

I still wouldn't broken

through in England

01:15:18.868--> 01:15:21.788

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if I didn't speak Welsh  
and I've had that support.

01:15:21.812--> 01:15:23.188

I wouldn't be a presenter.

01:15:23.212--> 01:15:27.508

Like, I... I was in second... I went to  
an English language secondary school,

01:15:27.532--> 01:15:30.308

and I had those lessons of

01:15:30.332--> 01:15:32.748

learn Mandarin, learn Spanish.

01:15:32.772--> 01:15:34.868

I did French at  
university, you know, I do

01:15:34.868--> 01:15:37.348

those languages, because  
they'll be of more use to you.

01:15:37.372--> 01:15:40.228

And I was given Latin  
lessons at A level,

01:15:40.252--> 01:15:42.788

which, like, talk about

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minority language,

01:15:42.812--> 01:15:44.868

you know, that is...

01:15:44.868--> 01:15:46.988

I understand the  
importance of those

01:15:47.012--> 01:15:49.708

and I'm not downplaying. Two  
things can be true at the same time,

01:15:49.732--> 01:15:52.388

but telling somebody that

01:15:52.412--> 01:15:54.108

Welsh is unimportant, like,

01:15:54.132--> 01:15:57.348

I haven't spoke Latin  
since I left Year 13.

01:15:57.372--> 01:15:58.868

I speak Welsh every day now.

01:15:58.868--> 01:16:01.988

So I think two things can  
be true at the same time.

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01:16:02.868--> 01:16:04.388

-Fantastic.

01:16:04.412--> 01:16:07.108

We're nearly time to

have closed. Just want to...

01:16:07.132--> 01:16:10.548

He's put it in the questions, but

it's actually a comment from John.

01:16:10.572--> 01:16:11.868

I know who this is.

01:16:11.868--> 01:16:13.028

He says,

01:16:13.052--> 01:16:15.588

"I feel very much supported

as a returning [inaudible]

01:16:15.612--> 01:16:18.828

"and the simplified books, including

by Manon, have been brilliant.

01:16:18.852--> 01:16:20.668

The Eisteddfod in Pontypridd

01:16:20.692--> 01:16:22.308

"was the biggest eye-opener.

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01:16:22.332--> 01:16:24.508

"A big diolch for me."

01:16:25.868--> 01:16:27.628

So...

01:16:27.652--> 01:16:29.628

I think it's time

to close. I think

01:16:29.652--> 01:16:32.028

it's been absolutely brilliant.

01:16:32.052--> 01:16:33.508

Thank you so much.

01:16:33.532--> 01:16:38.148

Diolch yn fawr to Manon,

diolch yn fawr to Mel,

01:16:38.172--> 01:16:42.308

diolch yn fawr to everybody who has

been here listening and contributing.

01:16:42.332--> 01:16:46.868

And I'm sure you've had exchanges

in the chat that you found useful.

01:16:46.868--> 01:16:51.628

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Thank you to Emma Boniwell  
for moderating today's event.

01:16:51.652--> 01:16:53.311

Couldn't have  
done it without her.

01:16:53.336--> 01:16:55.256

And if you've enjoyed this event

01:16:55.281--> 01:16:57.445

and you're not yet a member  
of the Society of Authors,

01:16:57.470--> 01:17:00.908

please consider joining  
with our special offer,

01:17:00.932--> 01:17:04.563

which is "SOAATHOME20"

01:17:04.588--> 01:17:07.628

and you get 20% off for  
the first year of membership.

01:17:07.652--> 01:17:12.108

Code "SOAATHOME20",  
capital letters.

01:17:12.132--> 01:17:15.148

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So that is the advert.

01:17:15.172--> 01:17:16.428

Um...

01:17:16.452--> 01:17:17.868

And...

01:17:17.868--> 01:17:19.708

Thank you again and

01:17:19.732--> 01:17:21.590

hwyl fawr i bawb.

01:17:21.615--> 01:17:22.868

Goodbye, everybody.

01:17:22.868--> 01:17:25.433

-Diolch.

-Diolch.