

Irresolutions: Dylan Huw and Iman Osman In Conversation

Iman: Okay. So, hello everyone. My name's Iman Osman. I am one of the visual arts assistants for Jerwood Arts. Today we're going to be talking to our Writer in Residence, Dylan Huw, about his most recent published work called, "At at at", which is part of his collaborative and collective project entitled, "Mwnwgl." This work is a visual, takes the form of a PDF on our website and it was written during some travel between Dylan and two other collaborators of his and it's written entirely in Welsh and it will not be translated.

We're going to talk today about why and how that manifests in Dylan's practice. I'm going to be asking some questions and we'll have a bit of a discussion about what that means in Dylan's work. Okay. So Dylan, let's kick off with... If you can just speak a little bit on yourself as our Writer in Residence and your practice in general and how it's been doing your residency with us, which is coming to a close with this piece of work.

Dylan: Yeah. Thank you. I'm Dylan, I am a writer based in Cardiff. Grew up just north of Aberystwyth in Mid Wales. I've been in Cardiff for four years and I write bilingually across critical writing and essays and fiction as well. And I'm really interested in using both of the languages that I speak, they're both my first language, I guess, and finding ways of doing that in ways that reflect my relationship to both languages. People always ask me, or ask Welsh speakers in general, "What language do you dream in or what language do you think in?" And I don't think there's an answer to that question, for me personally anyway, because they're so intertwined.

So, I've been the Writer in Residence since January of this year and it's been an incredibly valuable and rich experience, in terms of discovering who I am as a writer and it's given me a real space to... We talked about this the other day, Iman, but to be quite indulgent, almost, in terms of questioning and dissecting, what is my relationship to writing and to language and to putting thoughts into sentences and then putting the sentences out into the world. And even from the first interview, my ambition for the residency was very much about me wanting to see my writing as a practice, to live my writing as a practice, as opposed to a never ending series of tasks, or deadlines, or finished texts and to feel it much more as a research and process-led thing and to be much more comfortable trusting my own intuition, when it comes to ideas that are a bit more experimental or untested.

Irresolutions: Dylan Huw and Iman Osman In Conversation

And, I think up until very recently, before I was the Writer in Residence, I had always either studied full time or worked day jobs alongside my writing. And I think shaking off that... Is it imposter syndrome? I don't know. But allowing myself to trust that I can have that space to experiment and put stuff out in the world that isn't to someone else's agenda, but just my ideas. But then collaboration is also very important. So I think that the dialogue that we've had and that I've had with various people through the Jerwood experience has been invaluable and as with the *Mwnwgl* project, I'm always interested in finding interesting ways of collaborating and researching alongside other people and sharing work and correspondence and working with and alongside artists.

Iman: And just for people to know, I've been directly supporting Dylan's process as he's published five in total texts for Writer in Residence alongside our program, between January and now, which included Jerwood Art Fund Makers Open at the beginning of the year and then into the springtime transitioned into Jerwood/FVU Awards, with two moving image commissions. So throughout that time, Dylan and I have been working on a more process based approach to practice, and considering writing as a practice and not just, as you say, outcomes, which is interesting, because in a way the residency is set up to produce outcomes in a certain framework. But I think, as an artist myself, and learning about, Dylan, your writing, as I've gotten to know you, there was this space created for giving yourself more permission to be a bit more indulgent with your ideas and a bit more... I don't know. You need to give yourself permission to experiment a lot of the time and the ways that you can do that can yield really great experiments or really restricted and strained experiments. And I think we've tried to open up a space to let the writing breathe and be very inconclusive a lot of the time, which personally for me, my association with writing can be so finite and final and sealed, as somebody who doesn't really use writing in that way.

And learning about the way that you write, it's very airy and ethereal and I think that's just the natural progression of what came out. The residency maybe, is leaning into that a lot and enjoying it. And when we came to this final outcome, we just wanted to really give full rein to that space and openness, because this is the only response in the entire residency where it's not directly speaking about an artwork that is in the Jerwood Arts gallery. And that's been a really interesting place to be, especially towards the end of the residency. So Dylan, if you can

Irresolutions: Dylan Huw and Iman Osman In Conversation

describe what *Mwnwgl* is to you. I know you can't fully. Just *Mwnwgl* as an overall concept, what it means and where it's placed within your practice.

Dylan: This is the perennial question with *Mwnwgl*, which I think is we're leaning into as what it is. It's like that question of what it is. So it basically originated in a lot of conversations between myself and Elin Meredydd, who's an artist and cultural producer based in Cardiff, who's from Anglesey and works mostly with performance, like time-based work, and she's part of this collective in Cardiff called Rat Trap, which is an art and music collective. And Esyllt Angharad Lewis, who has been a close friend and collaborator of mine on a lot of different projects, and who is a visual artist. She's finishing her MFA at Glasgow now, but she's also a professional translator. And the three of us came together. We're all first language Welsh speakers and pretty much grew up inside of Welsh language culture. It's an innate part of our entire experience of the world and how we view our practices and how we do everything, is through the prism of that language.

And we came together out of the shared interest in the relationship between the Welsh language, but also... When I say the Welsh language, I'm also talking about the way that language operates in Wales, and the way that different languages especially interact or overlap and visual culture, or contemporary art settings in the most expanded sense. And I think that interest and those conversations there, are two parallel things underpinning all of it.

First is the very subjective, embodied thing of what it feels like when you are a Welsh speaker or someone who's thinking about language, because you have to, every day be constantly aware of how language is operating around you, how it feels to... Well, the image I always come back to is walk to a gallery and to read English and Welsh wall text side by side, when the Welsh language text is so clearly translated text and often not translated in a very creative or sensitive way. But what that does to how we engage with that writing, it really places you at a remove, because it's either unreadable or nonsensical, which means you tend to the English language text or something that is more interesting, which is a real layer that is then added to the experience of engaging with the work.

Irresolutions: Dylan Huw and Iman Osman In Conversation

The other thing that underpins *Mwnwgl* is the political or historically situated position of language now, where I think it's really under-acknowledged in Wales how vastly different our generation's relationship to language, and especially to multilingualism and the coexistence and overlaps of different languages in Wales, is to previous generations. Because when I say our generation, I'm talking about people whose entire lived understanding of Wales and of language doesn't really have a framework that predates the '90s devolution, the Welsh Language Acts, bilingual, everything. So everything that's publicly funded in Wales has to be in both languages and we've very much grown up in that environment. And obviously politically, I think that's a great thing, this, at least surface level parity between the languages. But I think because that's the world we've grown up in, there's almost a pushback against how strict and limiting that can be.

I know of artists who have really wanted to use Welsh as part of artwork, but in working with public institutions have really struggled to be able to do that because they've been told that it would have to be directly translated into English. So this needing everything to be the same in both languages can also be a real barrier to a creative use of language. And when I say creative use of language, I'm also talking about an honest use of language, an honest articulation of how different languages work in this, in some ways, uniquely bilingual country.

So that's the thinking and then we wanted to create a publishing and writing project. Basically, the idea was to support artists to create new work that was text or writing or page-based but obviously we didn't have funding or anything. But then in summer of 2020, it was this round of lockdown or COVID-time commissions that G39 gallery in Cardiff did, which was an open call, and we went for that to get going with making *Mwnwgl* a thing that existed beyond our brains and our conversations. And I think the initial idea was to use that funding to really hone and develop Welsh-led but linguistically fluid art writing publication, and artist publication as well. We weren't really interested in creating this glossy regular structured magazine or anything. I think it was from the start going to be an irregular thing. Basically because we had this money, we were just really hungry to reach out to some artists and invite them to create work, so that's what we did.

And so summer of 2021, that came out and we finished it, and created this quite lo-fi, ziney publication, which has some really amazing work by graphic artists, Catrin Menai, Umulkhayr Mohamed, Joanna Wright, Bob

Irresolutions: Dylan Huw and Iman Osman In Conversation

Gelsthorpe, Sarah Roberts and Radha Patel, and not all of them are Welsh speakers or even interested in language in terms of the way they approached their work, but they're all working with ideas that felt very relevant to what we were thinking about, and theme, the word that we used as a prompt for those invitations was Anghyfiaith which is an old Welsh word, not a very commonly used Welsh word, for alien tongue or foreign or unknowable language. So I think we were really proud of the work that came out of that publication.

But then we're all very busy people, and in the constant struggle that a lot of, if not all collaborations experience, especially when it's not a funded project, that strain of trying to meet up and trying to move things forward, as I think increasingly came to feel at the forefront of the project. And I think the way that we're thinking about language as this complex thing that you're constantly having to navigate and adapt your understanding of, is maybe find some kind of parallel in the act of collaboration or trying to work collectively. I don't know if that makes sense.

Iman: Yeah. There's so much there that is... When you were talking about the way that speaking bilingually and your first language being Welsh and how that characterises your experience and your approach to your own writing and thinking, and reflecting on this duality of a very subjective, embodied, personal, individualistic experience, and the wider frustration of this generational gap and the way that... Correct me if I'm misunderstanding, but the way that you feel that your generation is using the language is very young, in some ways, if the framework of it is from the '90s onwards.

And when you discuss collaboration, and we've discussed this just between ourselves as well, when you're trying to push a project forward, either in something that you're doing alone or something that you're doing with people, oftentimes the problems that you're faced with are not really creative problems. They're more conditioning of how can we create a situation where something creative can occur? And I think you face that individually, but also collaboratively. We've discussed this a lot, the pushing that needs to be done to move something into fruition, and it's not necessarily dictating what that thing will be. It's more, making it exist where it didn't before, which I know is what the project of

Irresolutions: Dylan Huw and Iman Osman In Conversation

Mwnwgl in and of itself was born out of, is there's an empty space here and what can we do to use it?

Across the board, maybe always in your practice, there'll be this duality going on where there's two things happening on either end, whether it's working on something alone or working on something collaboratively, or working on something in Welsh and working on something in English, like I think you're writing, and all of Dylan's responses can be read on our website and I think if you read a few of them, there's this real sense that, especially in the Jerwood Arts/FVU Awards text, you really occupied that medium space that really isn't characterised one way or the other by either polarity of whatever you're discussing or not discussing. It really exists within this empty core that is honestly, in my opinion, the more interesting place to exist and actually maybe a harder place to find and remain still and to occupy that with any sense of steadiness. I think it's really a fine line, particularly with the texts that were in response to the moving image commissions, because they both in their own ways, but they almost exist as polarities in and of themselves, those films, because one of them is done by the artist, Michael. and it's called, *cleave to the Black.*, and it's this very slow film, occupies a lot of empty space, there's not a narrative. It's this very fluid, drifting dream-like, sleep-like, strange, ethereal, long, quiet space.

And the other film, *BXBY*, by Soojin Chang is the total opposite. There isn't really a moment of rest in that film and there's so much dynamism and so much energy and it's just so much. It's so multidirectional all at once. The experience of watching both is so different and occupies these very different spaces and I think in response to those texts, you shared something that I think a lot of visitors did where it's a shock to the system to go from one to the other. And what does that feeling entail when you've occupied both polarities and you end up existing somewhere in the middle? I think that medium space, whether it's within collaboration or within language or within actual material and subject matter, it seems to have been... I don't know if this was something that you were aware of before this experience, but I think with this final text, the sweet spot of your work is really that medium nondescript fluid, and I think we use the word queer at some point as well. That place of, it's neither one or the other and actually it's both and neither all at the same time.

Irresolutions: Dylan Huw and Iman Osman In Conversation

Dylan: I think that maybe gets at what the main journey I've been on through the Jerwood residency has been, which is, I've discovered that I'm much, much, much more excited by the idea of critically responding to work that I don't fully understand or don't know how to engage with on a literal level.

Iman: Yeah.

Dylan: And I think I'm actually not that interested in trying to really describe or analyse what ... does. I'm much more interested in finding a way of articulating what it feels like to sit with it. I think both of the Jerwood/FVU Award films are so different, but are both, in a way, they're as companion pieces, which I can't help but feel because they share this action. They're both first and foremost, intense experiences, I would say, and in different ways. And this is also to do with me not having a lot of time to sit and consider and having quite a visceral response, an intellectual response to both of them. So I think during that first viewing at the preview in May, the thoughts that were coming to my head while I was watching, ended up being what was expressed in these texts. And I think this is maybe a much bigger conversation, but I think part of that not knowing how to respond to those films in particular is about the lived experiences and politics of the artists and me feeling very... I don't know.

I think the way I respond to work is by making myself vulnerable and letting stuff wash over me. And if something isn't my area to speak about, I would much rather not try. So I think that was also part of why I approached those two texts in the way I did. So just for context, the Michael. text, I just set myself this constraint of it existing of, I think 35 sentences, which is one for every minute of the film. And I wrote it during my viewings and re-viewings of the film, which I watched several times, so I was just completely spontaneously, just spewing stuff onto a page. But seeing what would happen in this almost pure, if that makes sense, way of responding to a film.

Iman: Instinctual.

Irresolutions: Dylan Huw and Iman Osman In Conversation

Dylan: Instinctual, yeah. And I think I described it in the text. It was an attempt to write it from being inside of the film. Cause it's also a three channel film and quite hypnotic and immersive in terms of how it presents its images. So the Michael. text, definitely it has a Welsh title and I go into the relationship of this Welsh language phrase to what the film is potentially doing. Whereas the Soojin Chang text is almost me collapsing, end of the wait of needing to respond critically to something. Well, not needing to, wanting to, but seeing that collapse as a...

Iman: Such a good word for that film.

Dylan: Yeah, a transparent way of expressing what it felt like to watch it for me. And I think a lot of my research and thinking over the last few months, which is partly to do with the Jerwood residency, partly other projects has been about fatigue and exhaustion and how to find strategies of working with and through that exhaustion and working from specific conditions and being explicit about what the conditions that I'm working from are, and I think which is also to do with centering research and reading and writing just for me and not for other people. That's going to another project and that's another can of worms I'd totally get into it, I think.

Iman: Yeah. I think in order to occupy that, to me, it feels an empty space. Like when you describe that fatigue and that collapse and a real lack of energy, an inertia, it's so difficult to move through that at any point or to do anything with that.

Dylan: Like the world makes it really hard to imagine everything and work.

Iman: And I think...

Irresolutions: Dylan Huw and Iman Osman In Conversation

Dylan: It's draining, trying to exist in this world.

Iman: Yeah. And that's on a day-to-day and then to create something out of nothing, majestically, it brings up so much thought of acceleration and force and, "I'm going to push through this and I'm going to use my hands and I'm going to..." it asks so much of your energy to create something of nothing and actually most of the time, that's not how you feel. You feel maybe that comes along in a project 70% of the way through and it comes along for only a certain number of weeks or days and that's you finishing the thing. I can relate to that completely and that it's a very stark question of, "How do I use this lack of energy to produce?"

Yeah. I think there's something occupying this emptiness. The only reason you were able to do that is because you had these conditions that either we came up with or you came up with for example, the 35 sentence structure of, "Okay, I'm going to write a sentence for every minute of the film." That in and of itself seems like a very arbitrary rule to make up because it could be any rule, but it's the only way that might make you able to approach a very otherwise vast and maybe daunting thing, especially when, as you describe the films are so intense and you leave them and you have a sense already that it doesn't matter how many times I watch this or that thing, there is a gap in being able to approach artworks. And I think that everybody experiences that and it's one of the most contentious and frustrating things about the field, is that there's so much imposter syndrome in everyone of like, "I don't know what I'm talking about", "I don't know what I'm doing", "I don't know why I did any of this."

And as audiences we approach work and maybe you feel like, "I don't get this," "I don't know what this is," "I'm not trained enough," or, "I'm not intelligent enough." And none of it is really about that at all. And actually most of the experience of making and engaging with work is this middle zone of space and emptiness and a quiet frustration, a lack of resolution. And I think, those texts where you really lean into that experience are my favorite ones.

And maybe there's something to be said about that being reflected majestically as well in your experience of Welsh English dialogue, or lack of dialogue or translation or lack of translation, that there's these two

Irresolutions: Dylan Huw and Iman Osman In Conversation

really formalised structures. Because language is a set of rules and when you describe an exhibition text being written in both Welsh and English and the Welsh just being not really text at all. Within your relationship to the two languages that you occupy the real zone of fruitfulness is actually in neither one and it's in the absolute gap and collapse and space between the two that creates all of this, lost in translation emptiness. And it does sound very fatiguing to contend with that all the time.

And I think *Mwnwgl* as a project is trying to make some meaning out of that and that's what makes it extremely interesting of the thing, because it's not... It's been born out of what feels quite a barren space and that is exactly what making is. It's like there was nothing before and now there is something and that doesn't really matter what that something is saying or doing or not saying or not doing. It's just that there's life and movement where there maybe couldn't have been before.

Dylan: Yeah. I think that's an amazing way of articulating a lot of really knotty stuff that I've been trying to work through in terms of all this thinking around the in-between spaces. The spaces in between and beyond specific languages as a method of trying to think new things and new ways. Working through things and all this stuff around fatigue and inertia. Cause I think if there's something that unites everything I've worked on or been thinking about in the last maybe year or so, I think it is this moving away from any desire for resolution and completion. Cause I don't think it's honest for me. That's how my brain works. I don't think I know anything, but I think my most successful or interesting writing and not even just writing, but collaborative products that I've worked on, is when you've foregrounded that not knowing and played with it as a space where new ways of understanding could be generated, if that doesn't sound too grand.

Iman: I think as a reader as well, it's such a relief to read, because in the image of a writer writing quote, unquote, about an artwork, as somebody engaging with both of those things, it seems to ask you to have an understanding of the artwork and of yourself and then compare that with the experience of the writer who's formulated their own other

Irresolutions: Dylan Huw and Iman Osman In Conversation

understanding of what that artwork is. It is these seemingly attempts to resolve or to add to a dialogue or a discourse or a discussion and in reading your text and for example, I feel it particularly with Soojin Chang's... Watching that film and then reading your text, it was a relief to me because I really was like, "I really don't know what he's going to write because I don't know how I feel about that film." And I think so many people feel the same as this and it is mirrored in Michael.'s film as well, but maybe in a more quiet way. But it was such a relief to read your text and see that you made no attempt whatsoever to explain or...

Dylan: Define.

Iman: ...resolve anything about that film. And I was, "Oh my God, that's the best way that you could have gone about that because there is literally no point," and that's not really what anybody wants from, "How boring," to be like, "Oh, this writer's understood this film completely and is laid out all of the ideas for me and now I can just consume that." That doesn't add to the experience of the film. And there's something so much more universal about having an unresolved feeling about an artwork that is shared among so many people who maybe individually go away and think, "Oh, that's beyond me. I don't understand."

Dylan: Yeah.

Iman: I think we all have instincts and I think the audio visual has a way of really speaking to those instincts and that's why it can be so visceral to experience films like these two.

Dylan: Yeah. That's an interesting slant actually, because I hadn't really thought about the specific capacity of moving image work for that kind of response. Cause I think film and that sort of image has always been where my main area lies. I majored in film studies and started off, published writing, writing about films. But I think, my increasing interest

Irresolutions: Dylan Huw and Iman Osman In Conversation

in critical writing as a rejection or a refusal of trying to define or reduce what the work is doing and almost the opposite.

Iman: Yeah, Reinforcing it.

Dylan: Yeah. It's offering possibilities for reader slash everywhere and to feel different ways or evoke different ways of looking at something I think.

Iman: Paint a picture just from your exclusive position as the artist on what this new text written in collaboration with... How that manifested for you and if you've processed it any more at this point. There was this window of time where you could write your final text with us and by that point you'd responded to all of the exhibition material because I think Soojin's was the last one you'd responded to before that. And it was really at this moment of, "Oh yeah, this lack of resolution is actually a really fruitful place. And can we lean into that even more drastically just for the last one?" Can you speak a little bit on what that was like and how that materialised for you guys?

Dylan: Yeah. So I mean with the Writer in Residence obviously, there's a production budget, which I needed to use for something. And it became clear quite early on for me, that it could be an opportunity to pick up some of these dialogues around *Mwnwgl* and working with those collaborators. Cause when we got the G59 commission, which is two years ago now, which is crazy, I think they knew all our practices individually and they were interested in us having a space to research together and have more targeted dialogues to really develop what this thing is, what it could be, cause we always speak about *Mwnwgl* as a thing that doesn't exist yet, maybe staying in that space of it being something that we look forward to and that exists as a future object.

But as I said earlier, we opted instead to just use that budget to commission a bunch of people to make it work. So we never really had that time to really think through together in a supported public-ish way, what this thing is and even what our collaborative relationship to each

Irresolutions: Dylan Huw and Iman Osman In Conversation

other as artists is. So initially we wanted to create a small zine publication that we would co-write so not commission any of the artists, but just write as a trio. And we were trying to find a date to come together in, I think April, May, cause the three of us lived in Cardiff at that point, but it just felt incredibly difficult to find a time that worked for all of us and we all balance different kinds of work, whether it's work with organisations or community facing work or what personal practices, studio practices. Lots of different registers of work.

And it just felt like a really interesting thing that we're basically failing, even though we were all in this entity, basically failing this seemingly straightforward task of coming together for one day to make something. So we wanted to use that tension and difficulty, which is basically everything to do with fatigue and the strain that's beyond our control on wanting to come together and create something. And I had plan. I knew I was going to be away for a lot of June, take a break from work for the first time since pre-COVID and Esyllt was moving back to Glasgow to finish her MFA. So we were all going to be in different parts of the world and it almost felt easier trying to find a structure for us to work together because of that.

And we were all quite interested in this idea of collaborating on something from very different positions. Cause I was on holiday on a beach, Esyllt was going back into a studio practice, a university environment for the first time in years was, Elin was working full time and wanting a space to really be able to think about a practice. So we came up with this format of almost a correspondence based text that would be collaborative in the sense that we're all responding to each other but not so much co-writing something and treating it very much as a research text. So we created this schedule where I would just write something, telling them what I was doing, what I was thinking about. Not even necessarily about *Mwnwgl* or about ... *Mwnwgl*, but about where I was, what I was doing.

And so for, I think 11 consecutive days, we all did that and wrote about where we were, in a very spontaneous an unaffected way. It was just us writing for each other but with this background of knowing that this was going to be a text that was going to be published by Jerwood.

So inevitably this stuff that comes up around performativity and the tone of voice that we're writing to each other in, and it led to some quite raw stuff as well around finding it difficult to write, and finding it difficult

Irresolutions: Dylan Huw and Iman Osman In Conversation

to cut out even 10 minutes in a day to sit down and write something to people who are your friends when you have this pressure in a way, but different kind of pressure to having to make something that's finished. Cause it was always going to be about this idea of a resolution and figuring out what it is as we go.

And I think as a research process and a testing way of working as a collective, I don't know to what extent we're thinking of *Mwnwgl* as our collective collaborative practice or as this object that is a publication that exists in the world, but also is maybe... I don't know where that balance lies between. Is this our practice or is it a public object? I think actually working in this way, we feel it has maybe concrete-ized some of that into a collective understanding of what *Mwnwgl* is and what it might be. And I think we really want to continue this form of corresponding, maybe in a slightly more formalised way than just Whats-Apping each other when we're free in the next four weeks or on Zoom or whatever, which is exciting. Cause I think that's a form of collaboration that really allows for everyone to work on their own terms and from their own conditions.

But it's funny. It's interesting. I haven't really spoken about the role of language or Welsh language in all of this cause for us, even though we had this awareness that this was going to be hosted by Jerwood as part of my residency, which is obviously an organisation that is mainly operating in English and for an English language audience. I think maybe we subconsciously didn't want to engage with that side of it because we speak to each other in Welsh. We collaborate in Welsh. Most natural thing in the world for us. And I think that's also part of what *Mwnwgl* is. Almost in foregrounding these questions around language, I think maybe the ambition is to not think about language. Cause you know, in my practice and things, I'm thinking about language, but my brain, can't not because it's such a part of me and where our entire every day is.

Iman: Yeah.

Dylan: Yeah. We're made to engage with these questions I guess.

Irresolutions: Dylan Huw and Iman Osman In Conversation

Iman: I think with this response, there's such a thing that I've felt from it, which, I don't speak Welsh, so I can't read or understand the text, but what I've taken from it and the way that you've just described your experience of it, it seems to be this real thing of writing around something rather than writing about something. And I think correspondence is such a great tool for that because there's the structure of, I'm writing to you and you are writing to this person and this person's writing to me. That is a shape in and of itself even if it's, again, an arbitrary rule.

And I love that you guys didn't formalise like, "Okay, we're going to focus on this subject matter. We're going to focus on this thing to write about to each other." You were just writing to each other at a certain time in Welsh and with the anticipation that it would be platformed somewhere at some point to audiences that didn't speak Welsh primarily. And I think, if the ever-evolving entity that is *Mwnwgl* has had some opportunity to exist in some type of form in this one instance, I think my experience of it from the outside is that, I know you've said that it's given you the opportunity to concrete-ize some things. But I think, as we've already said, the great space for you to create in it is very spacious and you can't have space without having a structure to frame it in the first place. But I think *Mwnwgl*, maybe the only definition of it could be a very slight one, which is just that it is a shape for things to exist in or around.

And I think it was very instinctual on my end to know and, I did confirm it with you, but I was very sure that they didn't feel a need or a desire really at all, to translate this text. Because as you say, you think about language all the time, but you're not really trying to resolve anything about it or find an answer about it. I think you just exist in this gap between one language and another language, which is a really beautiful paradox because of how structural language is.

And I think what I really liked about this text and this breaking of rules and normally when we do text with artists, there's a formalising of situating it in some way within our program or within something for them to make some meaning of it in that sense and to make that be approachable, to be engaged with by public audiences. But in this instance, it just wasn't. I felt really strongly that you guys had what feels like maybe a bit of a protected space in the fact that it's written in Welsh and that most people approaching this text, unless they're coming directly from your audiences will not be able to understand it. And that

Irresolutions: Dylan Huw and Iman Osman In Conversation

is partly the point and it wasn't written to not be understood, but just that, like for your collaborative dialogue, you said, it's the most natural thing in the world to all of you, because it's the first way that you go to articulate yourself and I think it almost feels you have this preserving layer of this text that makes it feel really special, even as someone that really can't understand one word of it.

Dylan: Yeah. And I think for people who are able to read the text, that thing of how intimate it feels to the extent of almost potentially feeling uncomfortable maybe, in terms of, it's essentially one step removed from publishing of our WhatsApp conversations.

Iman: Yeah.

Dylan: So I found it really interesting, this space that opens up when you're not thinking about Welsh language writing or ideas expressed through a Welsh language medium as things that need to inherently exist within Welsh language platforms or environments. And I think no Welsh language publication would, publish something that's as researchy or unedited or loose as the *Mwnwgl* text that we did for Jerwood. But I'm really glad you said you got something from it. And I hope that there are Welsh language audiences as well that found it, whether that's now or years down the line and find something interesting from it.

And that thing of understanding across languages, including languages that you don't necessarily speak, is something that's been a big part of my more curatorial project work. So for Peak Cymru, which is an arts organisation that I've worked with on a freelance basis for almost two years now, they work mainly with young people. They have spaces in Abergavenny and Crickhowell, which are quite rural spaces close to the Welsh English border. And the work I do there is a project called *Pegwn*, which is all about creating artist-led multilingual spaces for artists to come together and explore how language might exist beyond the confines of strict bilingualism or strict monolingual spaces and to share work and seed new work and just have conversations which are really open and free-flowing and loosely structured and not everyone in those spaces is a fluent Welsh speaker. And so seeing what happens to that

Irresolutions: Dylan Huw and Iman Osman In Conversation

question of understanding when you're not understanding everything on a literal level, what happens on a musical or physical level and what other kinds of communication can be generated when you're not just relying on a shared language.

And that's something that I would hope to see a lot more of in Wales in terms of spaces that aren't defined by the language and that can be open to people from any languages, obviously not just English and Welsh. And I think artist-led spaces or very exploratory artistic research spaces can be an amazing way of seeding or exploring, testing some ways of doing that, and needs to happen in Wales. It's imperative, I think, for a culture to be meaningfully multilingual, where language isn't reduced to policy decisions essentially.

Iman: I think when we were talking earlier about creating something where there was nothing and occupying that spacious space, I think it's not necessarily creating something specific, like *Mwnwgl* is a constantly changing entity in some ways. I think maybe it's more, when you're talking about situated in Wales, it's maybe more creating space within space to have a stillness and steadiness in that lack of resolution and that looseness and that inclusivity.

Dylan: Yeah. And for me, the entire way I think of the Welsh language is that it is an international language and it's the language of urban spaces because that's spaces that I've mostly inhabited. And I think that maybe often isn't much room when you're working in... There's a lot of people thinking around these ideas and creating work around these ideas, but I think, being able to express that in a way that isn't confined to a geography feels really exciting for me as well. And I'm really thankful for Jerwood as well, for letting us do this and for hosting the digital publication on the Jerwood website.

Iman: Yeah. There's something that you said to me recently that I think really characterised the whole time that I've spent getting to know your work, and you said that when you think conceptually about language, what do you say? And with this entire time, reading your stuff and getting to know your work, it's been really amazing to see someone occupy that

Irresolutions: Dylan Huw and Iman Osman In Conversation

space with so much command, but not in a way that is, you're holding onto some kind of rein, it's just that you seem very comfortable in that place and there's something very naturalistic about it when I read the text, but that there's this disconnectedness between the tool that you're using and what you're trying to do with it. But that's exactly what makes it so interesting and that's exactly where all of the really great stuff is yielded from. And maybe it's less about language and the disparity between two languages or any languages and more about language being considered as a less linguistic thing.

Dylan: As a medium, as a project. Building things with languages is what I do.

Iman: If there's anything else that you want to add, otherwise we can wrap up because it's been a really, really amazing insight into *Mwnwgl* and your residency and your consideration of language and your practice in general. It's been really good.

Dylan: Yeah. Thank you so much. And no, I feel you've been a really big part of this experience and allowing me to understand some things that I'm doing that I didn't even know I was doing and thank you. I really enjoyed this discussion.

Iman: Thank you. And it's been amazing to work with you and if anyone is interested, all of Dylan's responses are on our website and they will remain there. And there's audio readings and downloadables and lots of material and there's definitely a movement as the residency continues with the text, which is really interesting. I'm really looking forward to seeing further iterations of your collaborative work as well cause I think there's something really exciting there. Thank you, Dylan.