

Translating Tourism seeks to explore and deepen our understanding of the unpredictable, continuous dialogue between tourism and linguistics by creating a network of different academic perspectives within the field of English studies. Its aim is to raise awareness of the conceptual, disciplinary and procedural complexity of translation, with specific reference to its connection to tourism. This complexity is not solved but purposely enhanced, first of all, through the *mixing* of two highly-problematic notions (i.e. that of 'translation' and that of 'tourism') and then through the vital, mutual *questioning* of tourism through translation and of translation through tourism.

Translating Tourism is a collection of essays by M. Gotti, O. Palusci, S. Francesconi, M. Maffi, S. Hornstein, S. Bertacco, E. Federici, A. Lazzari, G. Poncini, C. Riley and M. M. Coppola.

ISBN-10: 88-8443-127-1
ISBN-13: 978-88-8443-127-1

€ 15,00 i.c.

TRANSLATING TOURISM
LINGUISTIC/CULTURAL REPRESENTATIONS

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© Editrice Università degli Studi di Trento
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Dipartimento di Studi Letterari, Linguistici e Filologici
Trento 2006

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INTRODUCTION

Hospitalité langagière donc,
où le plaisir d'habiter la langue de l'autre
est compensé par le plaisir de recevoir chez soi,
dans sa propre demeure d'accueil, la parole de l'étranger.

P. Ricoeur¹

Translating Tourism: avoiding a definition

This collection of essays – *Translating Tourism* – is neither a set of useful translation-aids to be used within a tourist professional field, nor is it a comfortable glossary on 'English for Tourism Professionals'. It is neither a diachronic nor a synchronic overview on the various theoretical approaches to the practice of translation. Far from that, this volume seeks to explore and deepen our understanding of the unpredictably continuous dialogue between tourism and linguistics by creating a network of different academic perspectives within the field of English studies. Its aim is to raise awareness of the conceptual, disciplinary and procedural complexity of translation, with specific reference to its connection to tourism. This complexity is not solved but purposely enhanced, first of all, through the *mixing* of two highly-problematic notions (i.e. that of 'translation' and that of 'tourism') and then through the vital, mutual *questioning* of tourism through translation and of translation through tourism. It is not by chance that, as Paul Ricoeur highlights in the passage we used as the opening

¹ P. Ricoeur, *Sur la traduction*, Bayard, Paris 2004, p. 20.

ELEONORA FEDERICI

SWANSEA AND DYLAN THOMAS: THE CITY TEXT
AND THE TOURIST READER

Never *was* there such a town (I thought)
For the smell of fish and chips on Saturday nights,
for the Sunday afternoon cinema matinées
where we shouted and hissed our threepences away,
for the crowds in the streets, with leeks in their
pockets,
on international nights, for the singing
that gushed from the smoking doorways of the pubs.¹

Dylan Thomas's words well anticipate the image of Swansea the traveller meets when he enters the tourist information office in the city centre. There are many brochures on the shelves, various leaflets that present the cultural and natural sites of tourist interest in this area, Swansea bay and the beautiful Gower peninsula with green hills, rugged limestone cliffs, secluded sandy bays and the Victorian seaside resort of Mumbles. There are many gadgets and souvenirs recalling the Welshness of Swansea, red dragons and postcards with the Welsh language alphabet and various books referring to the Welsh Celtic heritage, guides to sacred Celtic power sites to visit nearby and even leaflets of workshops on earth energies and Celtic mythology, but above all, there is Dylan Thomas, his image and work echoing everywhere in this Southern Welsh town.

¹ D. Thomas, *Reminiscences of a Childhood*, in *Quite Early One Morning*, Dent, London 1954, p. 5.

As John Ackerman has rightly emphasised, «undoubtedly it was elements in his Welsh background that helped forge Dylan Thomas's resounding resurgent pantheism, with its unfadingly lyrical intimations of mortality and immortality, those waves of affirmation that sang in their chains like the sea».² Certainly, Dylan Thomas is a symbol of 'Welshness', of Welsh culture and identity in the world. The poet himself often acknowledged the importance of the Welsh background in his writing and life and in one of his sharp humorous replies he affirmed: «One: I am a Welshman; two: I am a drunkard; three: I am a lover of the human race, especially of women».³ Even if the poet claimed that Wales was «the land of my fathers. My fathers can keep it»⁴ he also admitted he could write and work peacefully only in small rooms in Wales, only there he could find his inspiration showing his «progress from dragon's tooth to druid in his own land».⁵

The image of Swansea offered to the tourist is Dylan Thomas's Swansea, the sea-town that impressed his poetic imagination, the place that permeates his creative work, «his own world» as he affirmed in *Reminiscences of Childhood*, part of the early radio broadcasts now considered as an important section of his biography and where he offers his account of the lost world of childhood in Swansea. He described Swansea as «a large Welsh industrial town [...] an ugly lovely town [...], crawling, sprawling, slummed, unplanned, jerryvilla'd, and smug-suburbed by the side of a long and splendid-curving shore».⁶ Mirroring Thomas's representation of his birthplace, the Cultural Development office has decided to recreate for the tourist getting to Swansea a urban text to read and various cultural programmes to follow on the footstep of his major writer [Fig. 7.1].

The town itself has become a palimpsest for the tourist, a map where s/he can read and write a story, walking in intersecting

² J. Ackerman, *A Dylan Thomas Companion*, Macmillan, London 1991, p. 4.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 4.

⁴ D. Thomas quoted in Ackerman, *A Dylan Thomas Companion...*, p. 21.

⁵ Ackerman, *A Dylan Thomas Companion...*, p. 21.

⁶ Thomas, *Reminiscences of a Childhood...*, p. 1.

streets that form a textual urban tapestry. The city-space is not presented as a place where the tourist follows random trails to discover the beauties of the geographical space, but as a real text that engages with the walker in its streets. The city acts as an 'active subject' offering some routes such as brochures, road signs, landmarks indicating a literary tourist route to follow that clearly forms what we may call 'narrative programmes'. The tourist is first of all a reader, previously a reader struggling with Thomas's texts and then a reader of the city map reconstructed through the poet's words and world. Thus the tourist-reader is not deciphering and choosing a city route following his own desire and curiosity, but he is forced to an interaction with the city-text which is offering him a specific trail to discover.

Why is it possible to think about the city as a text? From a semiotic point of view we can read three levels of relationship between text and space:⁷ 1. the text itself possesses its own spatiality, its chapters, its development from beginning to the end; 2. the text represents space in its narrative development (descriptions of landscapes and characters); 3. also the external space can be considered as a text.⁸ As a matter of fact, from a literary and cultural point of view it is possible to reorganise and rewrite the external geographical space. The city space is rewritten following specific narrative programmes that can have useful aims – that is to say going to a specific place, a shop, a museum etc., or they can create personal or collective cultural routes as in the example of the city of Swansea. The streets of the city become the sites of cultural representations. For example, narrative texts or poetry can become the key for narrative programmes that rewrite the space of the town. Chosen narrative texts disclose the cultural and literary imaginary of the place, in this specific case, of Welsh literature and consequently, Welsh identity.

So, if we consider Swansea as a text, the territory becomes a narration, a text interwoven with references to Welsh history,

⁷ See the entry 'Spazio' in A. J. Greimas, J. Courtés (a cura di), *Semiotica. Dizionario ragionato della teoria del linguaggio*, Usher, Firenze 1986, pp. 342-43. See also S. Cavicchioli, *Spazialità e semiotica: percorsi per una mappa*, special issue of «VS Quaderni di studi semiotici», 73-74 (gennaio/agosto 1996).

⁸ G. F. Marrone, *Corpi sociali*, Einaudi, Torino 2000.

culture and literature. Thomas's poems and literary works together with biographical elements of the author born in this city-space give a key to read the place itself and at the same time a map for the tourist to follow. The tourist acts as a detective following traces and hints in order to put together the life-story of a writer and, at the same time, of the historical and cultural period in which he lived and wrote. A challenge between the text – Swansea – and the tourist – the reader of the text – takes place. The town is not a passive object under the tourist's eyes, it is not an object to digest, to use and abuse, but an active agent, a town that proposes itself as a text to decode, that creates a play with the tourist-reader. Among the many traces of the past the writer of the city-text (Cultural Development Office, the City Council) chooses one path to indicate to the tourist. In Swansea it is Dylan Thomas's path, the recovery of his life, the houses where he lived, the places he visited, the spaces he presents in his poems, that is to say Dylan Thomas's Swansea.

Dylan Thomas's poetry works as the code to decipher a literary and cultural Swansea hidden under its urban contemporary shape, a sort of red line to follow in order to perceive the true 'spirit' of the town. The poet's words build a bridge between the past and the present, between memories of a past Swansea and the actual, contemporary town. His words, recuperating an historical perspective of the place, translate the wish of its inhabitants to remember, the act of nostalgic reverie towards a past that is visible only if reconstructed. It is an hereditary Swansea, an imaginary place built on its literary, historical and cultural traces. Following this trail the tourist not only breathes the air of the contemporary industrial city but also the image of the past, of this city at the beginning of the twentieth century.

If as Robinson and Andersen outline, in the introduction to the volume *Literature and Tourism*, «The British have long celebrated their authors as national heroes. The existence of the so-called 'Poet's Corner' in London's Westminster Abbey is evidence in itself»,⁹ the example of Swansea goes further. This is not only a celebration of the dead author but, as previously said,

⁹ M. Robinson, H. C. Andersen (eds.), *Literature and Tourism: Explorations of Tourism, Writers and Writing*, Continuum, London 2002, p. xvii.

a narrative programme the city offers to the tourist who is asked to play a game of hints and discoveries. In this search he not only discovers literary and cultural sites but also the history of the town itself, its changes during the last century, a period of many architectural, urbanistic but also social and economical transformations. Especially after the bombing of the Second World War, Swansea has been reconstructed and has undergone many town planning metamorphoses. The demolition and the rebuilding of the city over the twentieth century has probably coincided with a growing interest in its 'disappearing' material and architectural heritage, an interest organised in retracing the old Swansea. The search for an historic Swansea has overlapped with the creation of a literary Swansea, the houses and places linked to the life of the Swansea poet Dylan Thomas have become integral to the historic character of the town.

It is certainly not a chance that the brochure of the Dylan Thomas exhibition in Somerset Place, which opened to the public on 2 January 2002 defines the area as Swansea's Maritime Cultural Quarter, that is to say a site that unites the two faces of the town, the harbour and the museum, the economical and cultural sides of the city still existing today with its industries and its University [Fig. 7.2].

The brochure starts with the following words: «After Shakespeare, Dylan Thomas is the most commonly quoted writer in the world». ¹⁰ The reference to Shakespeare alludes here to a connection of the Welsh poet, become so famous outside Wales, with the English literary canon and the Bard, symbol of literary fame. In this way, the importance of the writer in an international panorama is underlined together with his greatness as a poet compared to the major English playwright and symbol of English literature. After all, as the tourist is informed, Thomas is the most quoted writer in the world after Shakespeare. In this way, Thomas's fame is affirmed and so his role as heir of Welsh literature, culture and identity.

Moreover, from the very beginning, another similarity with the canonical writer is clear, the interconnection between the importance of the poet in the literary field together with his value as a cultural icon, 'the man and myth'. The second

¹⁰ *The Dylan Thomas Exhibition – Swansea, City and County of Swansea*, 2003.

brochure opens with the following words: «the exhibition appeals to all ages, from those with a passing interest through to those already fascinated by the man and myth».¹¹ The man and his myth, this is the combination the tourist can discover walking the streets of Swansea. Thomas was a character himself, a 'poète maudit', a heavy drinker engaged in public debates, flamboyantly theatrical and capable of reading his work aloud with deep feelings. His life abruptly ended at thirty-nine for a mix of alcohol and drugs when he was in New York for a series of poetry readings.

Dylan Thomas is presented as Wales' greatest writer and the exhibition contains archive material, manuscripts, books and original sound recordings of the poet reading his poems. The exhibition maps the writer's major biographical events and artistic success, starting with his death in New York and going back to his childhood, friends, the places he loved in his town, his travels, his love affairs, all the major events in his life. The tourist's gaze is captured by the many pictures of the poet and his acquaintances, his wife, some moments of poetry reading, but his attention is also caught by the 'sounds cones' recalling interviews and poetry readings by Thomas.

The exhibition is located in 'The Dylan Thomas Centre' advertised as the «home to a permanent exhibition celebrating Swansea's famous son» and thus recalling the poet's own words, «This sea-town was my world».¹² If the poet portrayed in his poetic world the town where he was born, today this town presents itself through Thomas's words and literary world. The tourist is offered a path to follow made of Thomas's words, characters and biographical sites. Swansea's Maritime Cultural Quarter is almost totally built around Thomas's creative world, the tourist is welcomed by the statue of Captain Cat, the famous character from Thomas's *Under Milk Wood*, «an extravagant play [...] about a day's life in a small town in a never-never Wales».¹³ He then walks across Dylan Thomas Square looking at the Dylan Thomas Theatre which opens only for performances. Not far from here the tourist finds *The Evening Post*, a reconstruction

¹¹ *The Man and Myth Exhibition*, Dylan Thomas Centre, 2003.

¹² Thomas, *Reminiscences of a Childhood...*, p. 1.

¹³ P. Ferris (ed.), *The Collected Letters of Dylan Thomas*, Dent, London 1986, p. 848.

of the Welsh newspaper building where Thomas had worked as a reporter for a year and a half from July 1931. At walking distance, in the curiously named Salubrious Passage, the walker can see what has become known as 'Dylan's Bookstore', a shop whose owner since the 1970s has been scouring the country and the places visited by Thomas for memorabilia. The area is full of Dylan Thomas landmarks.

Generally speaking South West Wales has certainly constructed its tourist image through its authors. In connection with the different City Councils and tourist offices, the visitor to these areas can find an interesting website that presents the area as a site of inspiration «for its unique landscape, culture and traditions combining to produce writers who are celebrated for their place [...] some are born here, some came and stayed, some visited and found their inspiration».¹⁴ A series of tours in Swansea, Pembrokeshire, Camarthenshire and Ceredigion are dedicated to Thomas and linked to his life and works.

Analysing the connection between literature and tourism, Robinson and Andersen have coined the term 'literary tourism' and described the literary tourist as an individual who chooses literary routes and engages «in aesthetic cultural tourism based on the wonderful, lazy, imprecise world of fact and fiction we inhabit»,¹⁵ but Swansea cannot be reduced to a site of literary tourism. As previously said, Swansea is a city-space presenting itself as a literary and cultural map to decipher. Probably not all tourists visit Swansea to look for Thomas's house and memorabilia, but as soon as they arrive they cannot escape the invitation to discover the city-text through this specific thread.

Added to this recreation of Thomas's life – biographical details of 'the man' and references to his creative world, of his myth – the Centre also offers different Dylan Thomas Guided Tours, various routes which invite the tourist to read the city text. The first tour is a sightseeing of Swansea city centre where looking at places associated with the poet's life the tourist can also discover historical and cultural landmarks of the town. The second tour begins at 5 Cwmdonkin Drive where Thomas was born on October 27, 1914. The house is located in the Uplands area, the residential town zone which spreads up the hills and

¹⁴ www.writersroutes.co.uk. [visited 10 February 2004].

¹⁵ Robinson, Andersen (eds.), *Literature and Tourism...*, p. xiv.

gives a beautiful view on the bay. From there it is possible to see on the left the industrial and dockside area and on the right the Mumbles and its pier, the beach resort. From the house the tour moves to Cwmdonkin Park, a place familiar to Thomas as he himself asserts, «And the park itself was a world within the world of the sea town [...] that park grew up with me»¹⁶ in *Reminiscences of Childhood*, the broadcast talk the poet gave for the BBC in 1953. If the park was a place of mystery for the poet, «a country somewhere at the end of the sea»¹⁷ a world permeated by his imagination, for the tourist it becomes a literary site full of references of the poet's life, once again a text to read. And actually, walking in the park the tourist finds signs of Thomas's poetry, memorial stones carved with quotations from his poems.

The third tour moves from Swansea to Laugharne in South West Wales where Thomas wrote *Under Milk Wood*. During the journey the tourist is entertained with a recording of Thomas reading his short story 'The Outing'. While listening to the poet's voice and presentation of the landscape, the tourist can gaze at the countryside around him. Thomas is well-known for his rhetorical art: his experience as an actor helped him to learn to read his own work and he was called, as Charles Dickens one hundred years before, to read in the United States; he was a great orator. The tourist can listen to the poet's powerful voice and at the same time look at the places he so well portrayed in his writings. The natural landscape merges with the imaginary landscapes of the author and his readers.

In a letter to Princess Caetani about the poetic nature of *Under Milk Wood*, Thomas explained that his idea to write a play was to create:

[...] an impression for voices, an entertainment out of the darkness of the town I live in, and to write it simply and warmly and comically with lots of movement and moods, so that, at many levels, through sight and speech, description and dialogue, evocation and parody, you come to know the town as an inhabitant of it.¹⁸

¹⁶ Ackerman, *A Dylan Thomas Companion...*, p. 218.

¹⁷ Thomas, *Reminiscences of Childhood...*, p. 9.

¹⁸ Ferris (ed.), *The Collected Letters of Dylan Thomas...*, p. 813.

The play is about a small sea-town, an inhabitant of the Welsh landscape representing the ordinary and the familiar for the poet. Laugharne is for Thomas a «timeless, beautiful, barmy (both spellings) town, in this far, forgetful important place of herons, cormorans [...] castle, churchyard, gulls, ghosts, geese, feuds, scares, scandals».¹⁹

The remoteness and far away existence of Laugharne is preserved for the tourist, directed to enjoy the place as the poet has presented it. Here the tourist can visit the poet's house, the famous Writing Shed, the boathouse where he has lived from 1949 «flanked on one side by the trees and bushes growing out of the cliff-face» where the sea laps against the mountain wall, «a buttress against the sea [...] with tides murmuring below».²⁰ The house is presented through the poet's words:

In my seashaken house
 On a breakneck of rocks
 Tangled with chirrup and fruit,
 Froth, flute, fin and quill
 At a wood's dancing hoof,
 By scummed, starfish sands
 With their fishwife cross
 Gulls, pipers, cockles, and sails
 [...]
 For my sawn, splay sounds,
 Out of these seathumbed leaves
 That will fly and fall
 [...]
 And the dumb swans drub blue
 My dabbed bay's dusk, as I hack
 This rumpus of shapes
 For you to know
 How I, a spinning man.
 Glory also this star,
 [...]
 To Wales in my arms.²¹

¹⁹ Thomas, *Laugharne*, in *Quite Early One Morning...*, p. 70.

²⁰ Ackerman, *A Dylan Thomas Companion...*, p. 36.

²¹ D. Thomas, *Author's Prologue in Dylan Thomas Poesie*, a cura di R. Crivelli, Einaudi, Torino 2002, pp. 5-7.

Another place to visit in this tour is Brown's Hotel, a pub where Thomas was a regular, a place where he could proclaim his ideas. Then the tour ends at St. Martin's Churchyard where Thomas and his wife Caitlin are buried.

Also tour number four is presented with a quotation from Thomas's 'A Child's Christmas in Wales': «Looking through my bedroom window, out into the moonlight and the unending smoke-coloured snow, I could see the lights in the windows of all the other houses on our hill and hear the music rising from them up the long, steadily falling night».²² The tourist is given a guided tour of the house in Cwmdonkin Drive where, the brochure outlines, he has lived for over half his life and has written two thirds of his poetry.

All these trails are narrative structures, texts based on other texts,

[...] the author's home is laid out and explained so that it, in itself, becomes a narrative about the author [...] In literary tourism, as in literature itself, we find the same principle at work: the desire to tell stories, to give significance to an apparently random reality by selecting and ordering elements of reality in a way that makes sense in a specific cultural context.²³

The writer's home has become a tourist resource for 'literary pilgrims',²⁴ who can walk around the rooms where the poet lived and wrote, his desk, his objects and look outside the windows to see the landscape which inspired him. The literary tourist feels in these rooms the sense of mystique of the act of writing, of the genius of the author, «here, in the writer's home, we are in the surroundings where that private process took place».²⁵

The writer's house is a narrative programme in itself; it is reconstructed recreating the atmosphere of the period when the author lived there, the furnishing and every detail of ordinary life is reinvented and presented to the tourist as near to the

²² D. Thomas quoted in *Dylan Thomas Guided Tours*, City and County of Swansea, 2003.

²³ Robinson, Andersen (eds.), *Literature and Tourism...*, p. 9.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 15.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 16.

original, similar to what it was when the writer was living there. The rooms are full of memorabilia, letters, personal objects of the writer, photographs and old copies of his works, all symbols of his creative imagination. Often there are objects which refer to his literary worlds, his characters, his stories that the reader should recognise at first sight. The rooms are like the pages of the books the tourist reader has enjoyed and still remembers. Not only Thomas's birthplace is a museum but it is becoming nowadays a regular poet's corner, a popular venue for poetry reading. The writer's house is thus transformed into a poetry hall, as if the physical space, the 'imprint' of the famous poet could become an inspiration site for the new generation of writers.

Moreover, in 2003 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Wales' greatest poet, The Dylan Thomas Centre offered the tourists a street entertainment with actors playing a tableaux of characters from Thomas's *Under Milk Wood*. The performers also presented a miscellany from Dylan Thomas's works and a selection of Welsh music. The city became for the summer a stage, a text within a text within another text. The urban text – the city – became the stage of a third text, the play based on another text, the poet's work and life. Annually, the Centre organises a 'Dylan Thomas Festival' with exhibitions, theatrical representations, film performances and conferences.

Dylan Thomas's heritage is so strongly felt that also other Welsh areas offer tourist trails in the footsteps of the famous poet. The area of Ceredigion presents a 'Dylan Thomas Ceredigion' which wants to be a guide to the places that inspired the poet and his best writing in the area [Fig. 7.3]. To strengthen the importance of these places with Thomas's life the brochure reveals that «The beautiful countryside of Ceredigion was in Dylan's blood – his great-uncle, Gwilym Marles, had been a Unitarian minister in the county, and a poet of some distinction as well».²⁶ Furthermore, Thomas went to visit his relatives in the 1930s and then stayed in a bungalow in New Quay in 1944. The tourist is invited to follow Dylan Thomas's footsteps through 'The Dylan Thomas Trail' and thus discover this part of Wales once again through a narrative programme

²⁶ *Dylan Thomas' Ceredigion. A Guide to the Places that Inspired Dylan Thomas in Ceredigion*, Ceredigion Tourism, 2002.

based on the life and work of the famous Welsh poet. The tourist is invited to stop at pubs where the poet met his friends and to look around at the landscape through a literary text made up of biographical events and references to the poet's works. He is even asked to recognise in the houses and buildings around him the houses and buildings portrayed in Thomas's writings. Each village is presented as a place of poetic inspiration together with the idea of visiting a site where the poet loved to walk and to write. If the locality Tal-sarn is described as the place where «Dylan and Caitlin's daughter, Aeron, was conceived and named after the river»²⁷ another village, Felin-fach is remembered as a place where famous poets came, like for example, T. S. Eliot in the 1930s and also as the «countryside that inspired some of Dylan's most haunting poems such as *A Winter's Tale* and *In Country Slee*».²⁸

The tourist reading this brochure cannot avoid noticing the colloquial register used in-between the lines; the famous poet is here called Dylan and is presented as a sort of friend, a familiar and ordinary figure for the tourist reader: «The Dylan Thomas Trail passes the villages, farms and mansions where Dylan lived and wrote, and introduces you to many of the pubs where he enjoyed a pint [...] Dylan came to the pubs here with his friend, Tommy Herbert the vet».²⁹ Every place on the map is a text constructed through the narrative of the poet's life and works, but it is a poet presented as a man, an ordinary inhabitant of these places. This presentation is quite different from the commemorative and celebratory image of the poet in the Exhibition brochure of the Centre in Swansea.

In both brochures, however, the place (city or village) and the tourist are constructed as 'active subjects': the city as a map to decipher, as a place to discover following precise hints, the many traces/narrative programmes and the tourist reader as the detective who plays this cultural game engaging with the city text. In so doing the tourist reader feels like the many travellers of the previous centuries who discovered untouched places and entered mysterious and unknown worlds. As James Buzard has outlined analysing the differences between the 'traveller' and the

²⁷ *Ibidem.*

²⁸ *Ibidem.*

²⁹ *Ibidem.*

'tourist' starting from an etymological definition, «while this neutral equation of the two terms is still current most English speakers also recognise a distinct negative connotation for 'tourist'».³⁰ The British have always been travellers and explorers and as Evelyn Waugh once affirmed, «every Englishman abroad, until it is proved the contrary, likes to consider himself a traveller and not a tourist».³¹ While thinking about the relationship between tourists and travellers Paul Fussell stated that:

Tourism simulates travel, sometimes quite closely [...] But it is different in crucial ways. It is not self-directed but externally directed. You go not where you want to go but where the industry has decreed you shall go. Tourism soothes you by comfort and familiarity and shields you from the shocks of novelty and oddity. It confirms your prior view of the world instead of shaking it up. Tourism requires that you see conventional things, and that you see them in a conventional way.³²

Putting together the traces of signs the city invites to and read which the reader tries to decipher, all these touristic narrative programmes based on the myth Dylan Thomas created by the Swansea City Council offer exactly an opposite experience to the one described by Fussell. The Ceredigion guide suggests to the reader: «You can follow in Dylan's footsteps through Ceredigion by using the guide. It will help you walk from Llanon to Ral-Sarn, and then onto Llangreannog. You can do it in one go, or just sections at a time».³³ The guide is only an hypothetical map, a textual suggestion the tourist reader can, or not, follow, stopping at some destinations, choosing to go in one place and not to another and also filling the gaps of the map/text in order to find new routes.

The tourist reader plays with the many texts/narrative programmes that wait for him and engages in a

³⁰ J. Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to Culture 1800-1918*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1993, p. 1.

³¹ E. Waugh, *Labels: a Mediterranean Journal*, Duckworth, London 1930, p. 44.

³² P. Fussell (ed.), *The Norton Book of Travel*, Norton, New York 1987, p. 651.

³³ *Dylan Thomas' Ceredigion.*

reading/deciphering game looking for an authentic, individual experience of the place he is visiting. He accepts the rules of the game the city-text has prepared for him. On the one hand the city text forces the tourist reader to an interaction showing the routes to follow, on the other the tourist accepts to follow the narrative programmes displayed for him but wants to read these texts from his own perspective, taking his own time, pausing and enjoying the immersion in a historical and cultural world constructed for him through the traces of the past, of an old Wales to be rediscovered.