

The Twenty-Fourth Annual Conference of the  
Association for Welsh Writing in English

# Performing Wales

Gregynog Hall  
March 30 – April 1, 2012

## ABSTRACTS

*Programme Chairs, Conference Organisers:*  
Alyce von Rothkirch, Swansea University  
Heike Roms, Aberystwyth University

  
THE ASSOCIATION FOR  
WELSH WRITING IN ENGLISH  
CYMDEITHAS LLEN SAESNEG CYMRU



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**Chair: Sarah Morse**

**Andrew Filmer (Aberystwyth University), “Purposeful assemblage”: Practising Location in National Theatre Wales’ *The Persians* and *Coriolan/us*’**

This paper explores the concept and practice of location as a means of examining the dynamic relationality engendered in two site-specific performances directed by Mike Pearson and Mike Brookes for National Theatre Wales: *The Persians*, performed at SENTA, the Sennybridge Military Training Area, in Mid Wales in August 2010, and *Coriolan/us*, currently in preparation and scheduled to be performed near Cardiff in August 2012 as part of the World Shakespeare Festival.

In this paper I contextualize both productions in relation to Mike Pearson’s previous work with Brith Gof, and his more recent collaboration with Mike Brookes as part of Pearson/Brookes, drawing on Heike Roms’ identification of a shift in concern from an investigation of Welsh nationhood to one of citizenship (2004). Paying close attention to the formal and thematic concerns of *The Persians* and *Coriolan/us*, in this paper I use the concept of location as a means of further examining the creative role and agency of the spectator as an active co-constructor of these works. Deborah Cherry and Fintan Cullen have noted that location ‘hovers’ helpfully “between the generic and the specific, it entangles particular sites and larger spaces, the imaginary and the actual, the virtual and the material, meaning and history.” (2007: 1) In so doing location offers insight into the sorts of spectatorial practices which these performances engender, practices that engage spectators in the labour of locating and relocating themselves within a range of topographies: bodily, imaginative, political. By applying a broadly phenomenological attention to the experience of *The Persians*, and drawing on Kathleen Stewart’s concept of ‘atmospheric attachment’ to attend to the affective intensities of both works, I examine how, through the creation of performance as ‘purposeful assemblage’ (Pearson 2007: 14), Pearson and Brookes create conditions in which spectators are ‘im-placed’ within processes of negotiation, contingency and emergence.

**Biography:** Andrew Filmer is a lecturer in drama, theatre and performance at Aberystwyth University. His research addresses issues of space, place, location and performance and theatre architecture and has been published in *New Theatre Quarterly*, *Theatre Research International* and *Studies in Theatre and Performance*. He is currently working on a co-authored publication exploring performance and location.

**Kirsty Sedgman (Aberystwyth University), “We are citizens of the world”: The Importance for Audiences of the ‘National’ in National Theatre Wales’**

This paper explores some of the issues raised by my research into National Theatre Wales (NTW), which brings audience research perspectives to the study of theatre. The paper will present a discussion of my findings, focussing primarily on *The Persians*, which was performed on an army range in the Brecons in August 2010. From its inception, Welsh theatre discourse has been infused with and directed by a number of tensions around what such a theatre should be; where, how and with whom it should work; and what it should *seek to do*. Using Prys Morgan’s historiographical framework, this paper explains how the national theatre project in Wales grew out of and was shaped by specific successive challenges to national identity leading back to the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. This paper therefore argues that Welsh theatre discourse has been bound up with an ongoing series of debates around *what it means to be Welsh*. It is this discourse that National Theatre Wales (NTW) have been utilizing in the creation and dissemination of their first year of work.

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The paper begins by tracing these historical discourses down into the Welsh performance practice of the 1970s and 80s. Some saw this theatrical 'ecology' as being the true national theatre of Wales, able through its diversity to engage with Wales' dispersed identities. While responses to *The Persians* were overwhelmingly positive, there were interesting differences in the way audience members saw the meaning and importance of 'national identity' as operating in NTW's work. The paper concludes by discussing how NTW have drawn on pre-existing discourses in their rhetoric about 'performing location'; how individual practitioners have translated this into practice; and how audiences have responded to these performances, specifically in relation to NTW's remit as the *national* theatre of Wales.

**Biography:** Kirsty Sedgman is a postgraduate Doctoral research student at Aberystwyth University, within the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies, researching theatre and performance within the field of audience and reception studies. She has been working with NTW to investigate three of their first-year shows. Please see her website: <http://www.ntw-research.org.uk>

**Saturday, 31 March 2012 12.00-1.00pm: Panel 2**

**Chair: Tony Brown (Bangor University)**

**Liza Penn-Thomas (Swansea University), 'Pasts, Presents and Futures – The Mari Lwyd performing as Prophetic Voice in the Work of Vernon Watkins and Sean Vicary'**

Looking at Vernon Watkins's verse dramas for theatre and radio, *Ballad of the Mari Lwyd* and *Ballad of the Outer Dark*, in comparison with the 2011 short film *Re-Tolled* by Sean Vicary, this paper examines the way that Welsh folkloric tradition has been re-appropriated by writers as a means of critiquing society. It draws upon the theoretical work of Raymond Williams and asks whether these pieces can be seen as examples of an emergent culture employing residual culture in its challenge to a dominant one, specifically considering the *Mari Lwyd* as a resurrected embodiment of the past speaking prophetically into the present, not through the preservational re-enactment of ritual, but in the connecting process of re-envisioning for contemporaneous performance conditions.

**Andrew Webb (Bangor University), 'Edward Thomas and the Welsh Folk Tradition'**

My proposed paper takes as its starting point Pascale Casanova's suggestion that the *littérisation* of folk material (its collation into anthologies, translation into poetry and performance as drama) mark the first stage in the cultural rebirth of a hitherto 'dominated' nation. Through the paradigm offered by Casanova's theory of transnational literary relations, I investigate the early twentieth-century work of the Anglophone Welsh writer Edward Thomas, a figure whose Welshness has not yet been properly explored. I argue that Thomas was inspired by the Irish example set by J.M. Synge and W.B. Yeats (as well as other Irish writers whose work he reviewed in the London papers), and that of the Belgian Symbolist Maurice Maeterlinck (whose work he reviewed more than any other writer). I contend that Thomas reworks Welsh folk material (with which he was familiar through Welsh-language friends and family in Carmarthenshire, his friendship with O.M. Edwards and Gwili, as well as his reading of Charlotte Guest's translation of *The Mabinogi*) into his own literary and journalistic writing as part of a conscious effort to develop an English-language Welsh tradition along the lines then being established by other 'dominated' nations.

**Biography:** Andy Webb started at Bangor University in January 2012 as a Lecturer in Welsh Writing in English, having taught at Birmingham and Swansea universities, as well as Warwick, where he completed his PhD in 2010. His book is forthcoming with the University of Wales Press.

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**Chair: Diana Wallace (University of Glamorgan)**

**Jasmine Donahaye (Swansea University), “‘What comics we are!’ Caradoc Evans and Ethnic Performance’**

Caradoc Evans wrote two novels in the 1930s that have stayed out of sight and below the critical radar since they went out of print: *Mother’s Marvel* (published posthumously in 1949) and *This Way to Heaven*. Both contain a full cast of Jewish characters, including many actors, and *Mother’s Marvel* in particular is situated in the London world of cheap film-production of the 1920s and 1930s.

Evans’s caricatured depiction of Jews in these novels provokes difficult critical and creative questions about the author and his intentions, but it also touches on much wider Welsh ethnogenic and semitic discourse. Most compelling, both in its deliberate absurdity and its potential offensiveness, is the way in which Evans’s stage Jews perform their Jewishness, and the ways in which this Jewishness maps onto his depictions, elsewhere, of Welshness.

It’s no accident that Hywel Teifi Edwards accused Evans of ‘playing the part of a racist’ for English delectation: in these novels, too, Evans is staging a deliberately provocative performance of ethnicity that has, I propose, little to do with Jews and a great deal to do with Wales.

In this paper, therefore, I will situate the material of these novels within Welsh semitic and ethnogenic discourse, and within the context of the film world that Evans depicts, particularly with respect to the suppressed *Life Story of David Lloyd George*, and I will propose ways in which Evans’s semitic depictions might most usefully be approached and understood.

**Biography:** Jasmine Donahaye’s monograph *Whose People? Wales, Israel, Palestine* is published by University of Wales Press in 2012. Other recent work includes ‘Public, like a frog’ in Richard Marggraf Turley (ed.), *The Writer in the Academy: Creative Interfrictions* (Boydell and Brewer, 2011), and ‘“By whom shall she arise? For she is small”: the Wales-Israel tradition in the Edwardian period’, in N. Valman and E. Bar Yosef (eds), *The Jew in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture* (Palgrave, 2009). She is also author of two poetry collections, *Self-Portrait as Ruth* (Salt, 2009) and *Misappropriations* (Parthian, 2006).

**Steve Greer (Aberystwyth University), ‘Queer/Welsh and Welsh/Queer: Performing Hybrid Identity’**

Focussing on Dafydd James’ recent Welsh-language production *Llwyth* (produced for Sherman Cymru) and James and Lewis’ *The Village Social* (for National Theatre Wales), this paper examines the relationships between non-heterosexual identity and Welsh national identity that are articulated or made possible through performance. Drawing on the discourses of translation and recognition, I want to suggest where queer theory’s account of plural and potentially fluid identifications as the basis for subjectivity may find parallel in the hybrid Welsh-English register of ‘Wenglish’. In doing so, this discussion proposes an understanding of queerness which offers an alternative to oppositional logics of identity: straight *or* gay, Welsh *or* not. That exploration of performance, then, involves a recognition of the kinds of constraint through which identification as Welsh and/or queer may operate – that is to say, the material, historical and geographical contexts which make certain kinds of identity possible, while foreclosing others. Part of that account is an exploration of Dee Heddon’s notion of ‘autotopography’ (an understanding of self with reciprocal implications for location) in the varied rural and/or urban contexts of Wales, considering how individual biographies may speak to and be defined by communal claims on recognition and belonging that are themselves contingent and open to revision. Furthermore, and rather than claiming queerness as an always preferred or optimal identity, this paper suggests the ways in which performance may enact a working through of the challenges of marginal and/or marginalised identities in Wales. If a queer Welsh / Welsh queer performance practice offers an alternative cultural history of Wales, whom does it presume to represent? On what terms might such a gesture of inclusion operate?

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**Biography:** Dr Steve Greer is Lecturer in Drama, Theatre and Performance at Aberystwyth University. His research focuses on queer theory and contemporary gay and lesbian performance, with a second interest in digital and interactive works. He is an associate producer for theatre and comedy group The Penny Dreadfuls, and author of the forthcoming *Contemporary British Queer Performance*.

**Katie Gramich (Cardiff University), 'Gendered Performance in Jack Jones's *Black Parade* (1935)'**

Saran, the illiterate brickyard girl at the centre of Jack Jones's carnivalesque novel, *Black Parade*, is addicted to what she calls the 'threatre'. She and other women workers of the Merthyr community go to see all the performances on offer, from the Christy Minstrels in the Drill Hall to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *The Octoroon* in a temporary 'wooden O' and *The Moor of Venice* with the 'big people' in the Temperance Hall. As these titles suggest, the performances that the women are drawn to often focus upon racial difference; their responses to them are naively emotional and empathetic, indicating that they read the black performers as representations of themselves and their own plight within a brutal patriarchal society. Meanwhile, Saran's partner, Glyn, 'doesn't like old plays, gel...none of the chaps ever go there.' Instead, Glyn and the other 'chaps' are drawn to other forms of public performance: bare-knuckle fighting, preaching, singing, recitation, and drinking, displays which serve to reinforce their status within the patriarchy. As the 'parade' in the novel's title suggests, these working-class characters' lives seem to constitute an exaggerated public performance, a vigorous display of vitality defiantly mounted in opposition to their actual economic and social status as slaves of the capitalist machine. This paper will present an analysis of the novel's pervasive theatrical imagery and will argue that it contains unexpected political resonances.

**Biography:** Katie Gramich is a Reader in English Literature at Cardiff University. She specialises in twentieth-century and contemporary Welsh writing.

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**Chair: Matthew Jarvis (Lampeter University)**

**Kieron Smith (Swansea University), 'Performing Culture on Television: John Ormond's Cultural Documentaries'**

The purpose of national broadcasting in Britain has, from its beginnings in the 1920s, been educative. John Reith's vision for the BBC was famously to 'inform, educate and entertain', with a healthy emphasis on 'education'. Naturally, given the Arnoldian overtones of such a project, a major aspect of this educative vision was cultural. Indeed, Britain's airwaves were from the outset filled with poetry, plays, and cultural discussion. Yet distinguishing a *Welsh* national culture within this decidedly British institution has been a recurrent problem. The Welsh output of the BBC in the twentieth century was pretty scant, and even on those occasions when Welsh poetry, for instance, was discussed, it would typically be framed within a British context, with the emphasis on the 'Englishness' of its language paramount. Take Dylan Thomas's broadcast, 'Welsh Poetry', from 1946. Here the national context of Welsh poetry is overridden in favour of its 'English' flavour: 'All I can say', says Dylan, 'is that Welshmen have written, from time to time, exceedingly good poetry in English'. When studying Wales's relationship with the BBC, Gwyn Alf Williams's assertion that the Welsh '[make] themselves [...] within a British context' carries particular significance.

However, with the emergence of regional broadcasting in the 1950s, and the subsequent advent of an autonomous BBC Wales in 1964, Wales was able to begin broadcasting its national culture to its citizens on an unprecedented scale. Moreover, the arrival of BBC Wales television gave rise to the possibility of visually transmitting Welsh national culture in a way never before possible. Indeed, BBC Wales immediately took the opportunity of establishing a Welsh documentary unit, one of the major purposes of which was to educate Wales on its national culture. This paper will examine some of the cultural documentaries directed by John Ormond, the head of this unit, in the 1960s and 1970s. Ormond, himself a poet, was dedicated to Welsh culture and made a number of documentaries profiling Welsh writers, artists and musicians throughout his career at BBC Wales. Indeed, as this paper will show, these documentaries serve not only to profile but to *perform* the works of these artists in order to broadcast their meanings to a national audience. This paper, then, will make close readings of Ormond's films. It will examine the ways in which they attempt to mediate culture for a national audience, and will raise the question of whether a distinct 'Welsh' national culture is possible in the context of 'British' broadcasting.

**Biography:** Kieron Smith is a PhD student within CREW at Swansea University. His research is focussing on the films of John Ormond within the context of national broadcasting.

**Rebecca Edwards (Aberystwyth University), 'Cerys, Kelly & Cool Cymru: Wales, Pop and Performance'**

In 1997, during the run-up to the devolution referendum, Peter Hain (then Secretary of State for Wales) announced that common stereotypes of Wales had changed, from those of 'women in shawls and rain sodden valleys' to a more modern image, with an apparently revived music industry leading the way. This development was given the moniker 'Cool Cymru' by the press and other cultural commentators. In turn, the devolution proposal was endorsed and supported by a number of high-profile bands – Cerys Mathews appeared in the press wearing a 'Yes' t-shirt, Stereophonics gave out stickers in Cardiff's Queen Street, Manic Street Preachers voiced their support during interviews, and Gruff Rhys of Super Furry Animals debated the merits of devolution on Newsnight.

This paper will explore the performance of Welsh identities by bands and musicians through the medium of English during this period through to the establishment of the Welsh Assembly Government in 1999; it will examine the various mediums used in articulating this, and the type of Wales – the particular artefact – that these musicians were producing.

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**Biography:** Dr Rebecca Edwards works at the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies at Aberystwyth University. She was awarded a PhD from Swansea University, and subsequently worked on the AHRC-funded project 'It was forty years ago today', uncovering the history of performance art in Wales, with Dr Heike Roms at Aberystwyth University.

**Jason Benson (Swansea Metropolitan University), 'Identity in Flux: Volcano Theatre Company as Social Practice'**

Volcano Theatre Company have been producing work for nearly twenty five years, yet defining their work is not easy because the nature of their practice is to remain oppositional, resisting reproduction and definition.

What defines the spatial, social and political practice of Volcano Theatre Company? How does this operate on the level of political discourse, as a continual rejection of stability? Is their identity Welsh, British, European? This paper explores how Volcano's work has created a political language of constant flux and renewal, as part of a process of continual opposition, even to their own practices. Drawing on analysis of Volcano's theatre practice and in-depth interviews with the company I will demonstrate that:

- Volcano's social practice is bound up with a tension towards the established conservative spatial practices of the performance spaces they inhabit
- They seek to question the authenticity of the individual experience in a public space, and present the body itself as a location of political and social conflict
- They have sought to interrogate the constructs of theatrical discourse in relation to author, authenticity, director, text, actor.

This academic paper sets out to prove that Volcano's work can also be regarded as inhabiting three states of cultural dynamic in a cyclical succession of emergent, dominant and residual discourse which defines their social practice as an Identity in Flux.

**Biography:** Jason Benson is a Senior Lecturer in Performing Arts at Swansea Metropolitan University. For his PhD thesis, Jason is currently investigating the work of the internationally renowned Volcano Theatre Company. When completed, Jason's research will provide a detailed documentation and analysis of the practice of this unique and acclaimed theatre company.



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***Land of My Fathers***

**by David Ian Rabey:**

**A reading and q&a/discussion, reflecting on practice**

With: Russell Gomer, Aneirin Hughes, Richard Lynch

The dramatist introduces the first reading of his recently drafted play, *Land of my Fathers*.

*Land of my Fathers* takes as its springboard Karl Francis's acclaimed 1986 film *Milwr Bychan (Boy Soldier)*, but does not require a prior knowledge of that work; it speculates on the recent and current exploits of two characters from the film – Private Wil Thomas and Corporal Wright – since their service with the British Army in Northern Ireland, which resulted in the dishonourable discharge of the former, as depicted in Francis's film.

*Land of my Fathers* asks 'how we got from there to here?', and 'to what are we loyal, and why?'. Thomas and Wright have since been recruited via the "back door" of official military discourse and embroiled in various counter-terrorist measures, infiltrations and "black ops" at home and abroad. Now posing as international security contractors, they appear to have the ideal "cover" to carry out undercover objectives whilst being absolved from the national laws of the occupied countries in which they operate. However, when suspicions accrue concerning Thomas's ultimate loyalties and potential defection to Al-Qaeda, a third agent is assigned to become part of the team and investigate the situation in the fields of operation.

*Land of my Fathers* follows the odyssey of its three protagonists, from Belfast's back streets in the 80s, to operations in present-day Huddersfield, Afghanistan and Iraq. Their journeys involve unsettling events involving black humour, inventive camaraderie and ruthless determination under fire, and perspectives on war, drugs and security as ingredients in the new "gold rush" of globalised commerce, until a lethal shoot-out in the hills of Iraq leads them to glimpse the secret of the world. *Land of my Fathers* is a loud, breakneck roller-coaster ride through quietly sanctioned extremity, fuelled by the verbal inventiveness found at the edge of desperation (reminiscent of the plays of Ed Thomas and Mark O'Rowe), opening into a hallucinatory landscape at once timely and timeless (reminiscent of the terrain P. J. Harvey's cd *Let England Shake*) and heading straight for the shattering experiences of murderous love.

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**Chair: Jeni Williams (University of Wales Trinity Saint David)**

**Margaret Ames (Aberystwyth University), “‘It’s a ghost”: The Uncanny and Rural Welsh Identity’**

Cyrff Ystwyth, based at Aberystwyth University has produced work by the Learning Disabled dance author Adrian Jones over several years. Jones’ work is a persistent attempt to reveal himself, as shaped by the realities of rural agricultural life, and an assertion of identity.

This paper will be a response to material emerging through a devising process with Cyrff Ystwyth. This current work is examining responses to location and home. Jones’ title ‘Capel: The Lights are On’ is in its early stages and has been concerned with expressionist imagery of home and family. In a recent rehearsal a new and urgent theme appeared from within the developing choreography; Jones announced the presence of a ghost.

As a practitioner working with the company to shape this work I propose to explore how this sudden announcement connects with ideas of Welsh identity. I will propose that in this work Jones produces a particular and personal sense of identity that is grounded in the material experiences of life in rural Wales. Concrete, daily minutiae fuse in Jones’ imagination and are re-routed as charged activity, delivered through an expressionist mode of physical performance. The palpable sense of uncanny presence that Jones and other performers have created through the devising process can be considered through the lens of Freud’s exploration of the ‘unheimlich’. Anthony Vidler’s account of Hoffman’s stories suggests that, ‘...from the homely house to the haunted house there is a single passage, where what is contained and safe is therefore secret, obscure, and inaccessible, dangerous and full of terrors...’ (1992, 32) Jones’ interest in the haunted co-incides with a particular construct of Welshness that is inscribed with a heady mix of history, myth, religion and radicalism. These ingredients rather than de-stablisng the homely, are revealed as the construction materials for an identity.

**Biography:** Margaret Ames worked with Dawns Dyfed for 20 years. She has performance experience particularly with Brith Gof as well as her own work. She is a Senior Registered Dance Movement Therapist currently non practising and Lecturer at Aberystwyth University. Her research focuses on issues of disability, performance and rural Wales.

**Matthew Jones (Aberystwyth University), ‘Young People’s Welsh Identities in the Theatre of Arad Goch’**

Helen Nicholson states that Drama is a ‘way for people to extend their horizons of experience, recognising how their own identities have been shaped and formulated’ and that by ‘inhabiting different subject positions [and] finding different points of identification with others.’ For young people in today’s multi-platform, multi-culture, multi-lingual Wales, it can be ever difficult for young people to navigate a sense of identity and self. Theatre, in this instance, as stated by Nicholson, can be used as a tool to establish and explore one’s own definition of identity.

This has, for more than 20 years, been at the root of Arad Goch Theatre Company’s work. The Aberystwyth based children and young people’s company has used Theatre as a means to reflect experience of Welsh identity in its young audience.

In my presentation, I will navigate through aspects of these identities and determine how Arad Goch has attempted to gage the same issue through examples of key productions. I will do this by examining how the uses of Welsh texts, mythology and traditions have established a Welsh performance practice in the company. Amongst the selected productions will be those which I feel have successfully performed ideas of ‘Welshness’ in ‘regular’ theatre spaces and mediated performance spaces, and evaluate the proposed effect on the young audiences. I will also establish that the company works day-to-day through the medium of Welsh, which I feel is of immense importance as to how they develop their output. I will elaborate on this point and examine how the

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company has catered in the past for bilingual audiences and for communities differing in Welsh cultural experience. My argument will cover the necessity of theatre for young people in Wales which is reflective of their own identity and experience.

**Biography:** Matthew Jones is a second year PhD Student at Aberystwyth University studying theatre for young people in a digital culture, in the context of bilingual Wales. As part of his PhD, Matthew is working with and studying the work practices of Arad Goch Theatre Company, investigating how young people relate to theatre and how they interact in ‘the digital age’.

**David Haylock (Aberystwyth University), ‘The Role of Technology in the Work of Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru’**

In the 2009/10 Annual Report of Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru’s practice, the Arts Council of Wales stated that Theatr Genedlaethol should continue their practice of touring productions around Wales with the aim of building theatre audiences for the future. However, the report highlights the need for a change in both the methods of creation and distribution of Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru’s work. Whilst the report did not specify how best to approach this change, it did indicate that Theatr Genedlaethol have begun to utilize old and new technology within their performances. Through, for example, projected imagery and English surtitles, Genedlaethol aim to make their performances more accessible to non-Welsh speakers and thereby to extend the exploration of national identity beyond previous boundaries criticised by some for being exclusionary. This paper discusses the extent to which Genedlaethol, in their practices and in their rhetoric, have actually opened up their performances and discourses on identity to English-language audiences, and what effect the incursion of technology has had on their performance aesthetic.

The recent collaboration between Theatre Genedlaethol Cymru and Sherman Theatre on Dafydd James’s *Llwyth*, utilized technology with a utilitarian perspective as an aid to linguistic interpretation. Whilst *Llwyth* was approached with a more modern treatment of technology, the production demonstrates only one aspect of the role and relationship that has formed between Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru and technology. However, within the archives of Theatr Genedlaethol there are past productions which explore the relationship further.

Using three specific case studies, this paper will explore the role of digital technologies in the creation and production of Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru’s more recent work. By analyzing the technological content in *Dau.un.un.dim*, *Yn y Tren* and *Gwlad yr Addewid*, this paper will explore the traditional, indulgent, illusionary and realistic uses of technology in Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru’s work. It will also consider what aspects of Theatr Genedlaethol’s ontology and mode of displaying national identity have altered since the recommendation by the Arts Council of Wales to seek a new method of production.

**Biography:** David Haylock’s research is a collaboration between Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru and Aberystwyth University, funded by the European Social Fund and coordinated by the Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarship Scheme. It investigates the affect of new media technologies upon theatrical performance: What are the ways in which interactive and responsive media environments, developed in the visual arts, might be adapted to the context of theatrical performance?

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**Chair: Kirsti Bohata (Swansea University)**

**Liz Jones (Glamorgan University/ Aberystwyth University), 'Ghostly Propaganda: the 'Welsh question' and *The Halfway House* (1944)**

It is 1944, when even a charming and chilly bit of filmic hokum about an unlikely group of strangers in a ghostly inn, had to convey a message that would support the war effort. Although essentially a ghost story, *The Halfway House* (1944) also represents a dissemination (albeit it an engaging one) of Ministry of Information propaganda which addresses areas of anxiety such as the black market, bereavement, spiritualism, marital breakdown, doubts about the value of fighting the enemy and, above all, the 'Welsh question' and the effects of Irish neutrality upon Wales.

The film's use of Welsh actors (especially the much-loved father and daughter team of Mervyn and Glynis Johns), its specific referencing of Welsh locations (Cardiff, Carmarthen, Llandeilo), the authentic Welsh accents, the occasional use of the Welsh language, along with a bundle of patriotic Welsh tropes: the singing of *Calon Lan* and *Sosban Fach*, a Romanticised Welsh landscape and even Welsh cakes, all signal the makers' intention to reach and influence Welsh audiences and to elicit and reinforce loyalty to the British state. This paper will examine how *The Halfway House* constructs a Wales that is in part a response to the British Government's anxiety concerning the perceived threat of Welsh nationalism, particularly in the context of Irish neutrality.

**Hywel Dix (Bournemouth University), '*Cymbeline* and the Display of Empire, 1536-1649'**

Two of the major developments in British cultural theory over the last twenty-five years have been the advent of New Historicism and of Cultural Materialism. Each approach focuses analytic attention on the historical, cultural and political contexts in which literary works were produced, especially during the renaissance. These kind of analyses directed attention onto different subject positions, notably those of race, gender, class, dissident sexuality and alternative nationalisms in Scotland and Wales, which placed the imagined unity of the British state in symbolic jeopardy.

It is no co-incidence that these approaches have coincided with the period since Tom Nairn published *The Break-Up of Britain* in 1974, a period which has been characterised by the break-up of consensus in Britain's public cultural and political affairs. That contemporary environment inevitably impacts on the nature of work produced within the literary academy, so that questions of state, nationhood and citizenship have been retroactively applied to readings of canonical texts such as Shakespeare's *Henry V*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth* (Loomba 1998; Hadfield 2005).

Less successfully analysed in critical work of this kind is *Cymbeline*, a play in which Celtic difference poses a symbolic threat to the ideal unity of the British monarchic state. *Cymbeline* is composed in the form of a tableau, where the drama overcomes the threat posed by Celtic otherness to an idealised British whole, and drives towards the final presentation where the flags of Rome are displayed conspicuously alongside those of the nascent British Empire. In other words, the play cultivates a strong imaginative association between imperial Rome and the new British Empire at the very historical moment of the latter's inception. It does this specifically by subsuming Welsh difference. To read alterity back into this display of power is to refuse the appeal to emotional loyalty and unity demanded by the play's conclusion and hence to open up the very questions of empire, state and citizenship that appear to be foreclosed by the play's conclusion. In this sense, the proposed analysis of *Cymbeline* will add to current New Historicist and Cultural Materialist scholarship by exploring how questions of burgeoning imperial ideology impact upon our understanding of how the nation state interpolates between the individual subject and society.

Panel 1 Sat 10:30-11:30	Panel 2 Sat 12:00-13:00	Panel 3 Sat 14:00-15:30	Panel 4 Sat 16:00-17:30	Reading Sat 20:30-21:30	Panel 5 Sun 9:30-11:00	Panel 6 Sun 11:30-13:00
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**Biography:** Hywel Dix is Lecturer in English and Communication at Bournemouth University. He completed a doctorate on Raymond Williams and the break-up of British consensual identity at the University of Glamorgan. He is the author of *After Raymond Williams: Cultural Materialism and the Break-Up of Britain* and *Postmodern Fiction and the Break-Up of Britain*. His paper is part of a larger research project entitled 'Reading, Writing and Republicanism in Britain.'