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The Thirtieth Annual Conference of the Association for Welsh Writing in English

Friday 11 - Sunday 13 May 2018, Gregynog Hall, Newtown

Call for Papers

“‘Home’. When you say a word slowly it can seem suddenly strange. ‘Home’. Is that really how you spell it? And what does it mean? ‘Hoam’. ‘Hohm’.” – John Barnie, *Footfalls in the Silence: A Memoir* (2014)

Our thirtieth anniversary conference will ask what ‘home’ means within the context of the English-language literary traditions of Wales. In his 1977 volume *Space and Place*, Yi-Fu Tuan suggested that home is ‘the focal point of a cosmic structure’, and argued that ‘Human groups nearly everywhere tend to regard their own homeland as the center of the world.’ More recently, Michael Allen Fox has proposed that ‘Self and home are inseparable elements, with each depending on the other for its existence and properties.’ He has also emphasised concepts of familiarity and belonging: ‘In English, “home” stands for a place of residence, belonging, and attachment’ and is bound up with ideas of ‘familiarity, attraction, warmth of feeling, pride, a special sense of bonding’. The primary emotional content of home has similarly been articulated by Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling who note that home is not just a ‘site’, but is crucially ‘an idea and an imaginary imbued with feelings’.

However, cultural concepts of home are not stable. Thus, counteracting familiar associations between home and (at least) semi-permanence, Fox observes how, for the Nootka First Nations people, the notion of home is mobile and thus “‘house” is more of a verb than a noun’. Moreover, literary studies have long been interested in the potential *unfamiliarity* of home, as expressed in concepts to do with the *Unheimliche*/uncanny. What is more, in a specifically Welsh context, the notion of *hiraeth* is precisely to do with longing for the absent home-place. Home discomforts and the pains of home lost or distant are, in short, just as important to our thinking about home as notions of security, comfort, and stability.

This conference, then, invites contributions that consider expressions of ‘home’ across the English-language literatures of Wales, through a focus on issues including but not limited to:

- the physical structures of home;
- specifically Welsh architectures of home;
- homeland/s;
- home as cultural practice;
- home as ‘an imaginary imbued with feelings’;
- the geographical limits of home;
- home and family;
- home and community;
- home and language;

- the *unheimlich*;
 - home as the locus of discomfort;
 - home as lost or distant;
 - home and mobility;
 - home and the performance of gender;
 - home and the operations of power;
 - home and Wales-specific concepts such as *hiraeth* or *cynefin*.
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Proposals and Deadline

Proposals for 20-minute papers or multi-contributor panels should be sent to the organisers at awwe18@awwe.org by **Wednesday 28 February 2018**. Proposals should be no more than 300 words long and should include a short biographical note.

This year we are also inviting c. 2000-word ‘work in progress’ papers, which will be distributed to conference participants in advance and will form the basis for discussion panels rather than formal presentations. Please specify that your proposal is for a ‘work in progress’ paper if you wish to follow this route.

We welcome papers from new and emerging scholars.

Please note that the conference will not accept proposals for all-male panels.

Organisers

Professor Matthew Jarvis (UWTSD and Aberystwyth University) and Dr Jamie Harris (Aberystwyth University)
