

<p>Institution: Aberystwyth University</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 28B: Modern Languages and Linguistics (Celtic Studies)</p>
<p>Title of case study: Rewriting the Welsh literary landscape: Welsh literary postmodernism in the poetry and fiction of Mihangel Morgan</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact This case study considers the impact since 1 January 2008 of Mihangel Morgan's creative writing outputs. It concentrates on the way in which Morgan's work has shaped the content of the Welsh A Level syllabus delivered by the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC) as well as the teaching of another HEI in Wales. By focusing on Morgan's broad ranging readership, the case study also demonstrates the impact of his experimental approach to fiction and literary practice on cultural life and public discourse, not only in Wales but also amongst the Welsh diaspora in Patagonia.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research When Mihangel Morgan published his first work, Welsh fiction was invariably written in the realist mode: its agenda was nationalist and its range domestic. Heralded 'the most intriguing newcomer on the literary scene' by the critic John Rowlands, he has since then, not only increased the corpus of self-consciously postmodern Welsh-language fiction, but has also enriched its texture. Through the practice of postmodern literary techniques in his writing he has significantly changed the landscape of Welsh literature and literary criticism. The underpinning research in works cited in section 3 comprises experimentation with postmodernist techniques (including deliberate fictionality, parody and playfulness), the subversion of narrative and moral expectation, and proposing alternatives to the accepted narratives and canonical readings of Welsh literary history. These works also explore the possibilities of intertextuality (largely drawn from Classic cinema, as well as Welsh and European literature) and investigate challenging themes of otherness and difference, mainly in terms of sexuality, mental health and social exclusion. As a result, Morgan has been compared to the Argentine experimental novelist Jorge Luis Borges and the Irish novelist Brian O'Nolan (Flann O'Brien). Furthermore, the outputs listed in section 3 have made a considerable contribution to an emerging canon of Welsh – and Welsh-language – gay literature. Morgan's work has also proved groundbreaking in the prominence that it affords the neglected regional dialect of Glamorgan and Gwent (<i>Gwenhwyseg</i>). By eschewing the abstruse conceptual vocabulary associated with theoretical exegesis and instead illustrating the revisionist agenda of his research through fictional characters, scenarios and possibilities, Morgan affords readers of his work a more nuanced understanding of the Welsh postmodernist and postcolonial condition.</p> <p>Morgan was granted study leave during the academic year 2008–09 to write <i>Pantglas</i> [3.8].</p>
<p>3. References to the research Morgan's research since 1993 comprises a substantial body of work listed on copac.ac.uk. The case study cites the following outputs:</p> <p>[3.1] Mihangel Morgan, <i>Saith Pechod Marwol</i> (Talybont, 1993) ISBN 0862433045. [3.2] Mihangel Morgan, <i>Te Gyda'r Frenhines</i> (Llandysul, 1994) ISBN 1859020941 [3.3] Mihangel Morgan, <i>Dan Gadarn Goncrit</i> (Talybont, 1999) ISBN 0862434947. [3.4] Mihangel Morgan, <i>Croniclau Pentre Simon</i> (Talybont, 2003) ISBN 086243680. [3.5] Mihangel Morgan, <i>Digon o Fwydod</i> (Talybont, 2005) ISBN 9781900437707. [3.6] Mihangel Morgan, <i>Melog</i> (Talybont, 2005) ISBN 9781854113931 [3.7] Mihangel Morgan, <i>Cestyll yn y Cymylau</i> (Talybont, 2007) ISBN 9780862439798 [3.8] Mihangel Morgan, <i>Pantglas</i> (Talybont, 2011) ISBN 9781847713186). [REF2] [3.9] Mihangel Morgan, <i>Kate Roberts a'r Ystlum</i> (Talybont, 2012) ISBN 9781847714411. [REF2].</p> <p>Evidence for the quality of Morgan's work can be gleaned from both Welsh-language and Anglophone cultural platforms. Online reviews by non-specialists addressed the literary significance, for example Dafydd Morgan Lewis for gwales.com, and Janice Jones for BBC Radio Cymru (http://www.bbc.co.uk/cymru/cylichgrawn/llyfrau/adolygiadau/pantglas.shtml). Morgan's work received national acclaim when <i>Pantglas</i> was shortlisted for the widely advertised Literature Wales Book of the Year prize in 2012 (http://llyfryflwyddyn.co.uk/archif/; http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6WVOSH1dWY). Further evidence of the quality of his work and its potential for impact-generation is witnessed by the fact that his fiction has been translated. The eponymous story of <i>Te Gyda'r Frenhines</i> (TGF) [3.2] was translated into</p>

German in a collection edited by Frank Meyer and Angharad Price, *Tee mit der Königin: Kurzgeschichten aus Wales* (1996). Seren Press published Christopher Meredith's English translation of *Melog* [3.6] in 2005 and a partial translation of *Croniclau Pentre Simon* [3.4] was published online at 'transcript: Europe's online review of international writing', 'Transcript 22: Identity Revolutions: <http://www.transcript-review.org/en/issue/transcript-22-identity-revolutions/there-she-blows--new-welsh-writing>.

4. Details of the impact

Education: Influence on A Level and HE curricula

WJEC: Both *Dan Gadarn Goncrit* (*DGG*) [3.3] and *Saith Pechod Marwol* (*SPM*) [3.1] have been taught on WJEC curricula since 2000 and have continued to feature in WJEC teaching materials since 2008. *DGG* is one of three novels included in Unit CY4 of the Welsh A Level (First Language) qualification studied by 100–120 candidates *per annum*. Many candidates also choose to read the text in preparation for the synoptic element of Unit CY4. *SPM* is also a popular choice in this element and is also a set text for Welsh A Level (Second Language): it has been studied by between 450 and 570 students during the past three years. Many candidates for AS and GCSE Welsh Literature also choose to study stories from *SPM* [5.1]. The WJEC's subject officer for Welsh explains the context for selecting *DGG*. Candidates in south Wales found the northern regional dialect of *Un Nos Ola Leuad* alienating, and so Morgan's text was selected to fulfil the demand amongst candidates for an accessible modern text written in a regional dialect of south Wales. *SPM* was likewise selected for its newness and for the accessibility of its linguistic register [5.1]. WJEC handbooks for its Welsh A Level qualifications set out the general criteria for the inclusion of texts and authors:

'...Welsh is a subject which requires candidates to consider spiritual, moral, ethical, social and cultural issues while reading, studying and discussing a wide range of Welsh literature ... By encompassing a wide range of contemporary poetry (CA3, CA6), the work of the dramatist Saunders Lewis (CA4), the authors Mihangel Morgan and Ioan Kidd (CA5) and the film *Hedd Wyn* (CA1) ... a work programme is presented which will strengthen and enhance candidates' awareness of the Welsh language's role ... in an European context.' [5.2]

The success with which candidates achieve these aims in relation to Morgan's work can be heard on two CDs provided by the WJEC that exemplify best practice for Unit CY4. Students demonstrate a sophisticated level of understanding of the following concepts, as a result of reading *DGG*: social decline, morality, Anglicisation of Welsh culture, realism and postmodernism [5.3].

Teaching in another HEI in Wales: Morgan's work has influenced the form and content of HEI curricula in Wales, specifically for its value as a pedagogic tool for exploring postmodernism in Welsh literature. At the School of Welsh, Cardiff University, *Digon o Fwydod*, has been part of an undergraduate module on literary theory and criticism (CY3321; 2012–13) [5.4], and *Dirgel Ddyn* and *TGF* were taught on a module on contemporary prose in 2008–09 (CY3951) [5.5]. The coordinator of learning and teaching explains the rationale for including Morgan's work:

'Mihangel Morgan's work was selected as he is acknowledged as one of the main prose writers of the present century. His poetry is studied on the module CY3321 partly because of the use he makes of postmodern techniques. His work is studied on the Contemporary Prose module CY3410 [2013–14] in order to discuss his use of narrative techniques, including those associated with postmodernism' (translated from Welsh) [5.4]

Morgan's work is also on the lifelong learning course for adult learners (January 2013) [5.6].

Cultural Life and Public Discourse

Morgan's transition from 'intriguing newcomer' to a recognized 'Classic' writer and 'Welsh icon' are attested in a radio programme ('Clasuron – Straeon Mihangel Morgan' BBC Radio Cymru 2008-08-17) and also online [5.7]. In terms of creativity, the novelist Owen Martell (tutored by Morgan on the Creative Writing module in the Department of Welsh) has recognised his debt to Morgan in a feature in *The Telegraph* (11/01/2013) [5.8]. The impact of Morgan's work can also be measured in terms of book sales in Wales: most of his titles are commercially successful for his publisher, Y Lolfa. A representative of Y Lolfa states that 'Mihangel's sales are higher than is usual for books of their kind' and 'Mihangel's short stories also sell much more than volumes of stories by other authors' (translated from Welsh) [5.9].

Impact case study (REF3b)

Morgan's work has elicited responses from a varied readership. Individual reviewers attest the subjective effect of his fiction upon them. One reviewer recognised the newness of the subject matter of *Pantglas* in the contemporary Welsh literary canon: 'Without a doubt, here is a unique novel that deals with a difficult and sensitive subject with respect and imagination. Once again, Mihangel Morgan has managed to fill a void in our literature, and to widen the horizons of the Welsh novel' (translated from Welsh) [5.10]. A student at Poznan University, reviewing *Kate Roberts a'r Ystlum* for *Golwg360* in 2012, demonstrates an enhanced understanding of the intertextual dimension of Morgan's work and the depth of the research underpinning his fiction [5.11]. Similarly, a blogger noted the personal literary echoes that she perceived in Morgan's work whilst reviewing Christopher Meredith's English translation of *Melog* [5.12]. One reviewer also understood the impact of *Pantglas* in generating awareness of the forgotten history of Llanwddyn: he is quoted on the Welsh Book Council's website: 'As far as I know, this is the first time ever that the history of drowning the valley has been used as the basis of a Welsh novel. But the novel is so much more than that too. It testifies to the way in which Welsh communities were exploded and exploited during the past century and a half (translated from Welsh) [5.14]. Blog Glyn Adda (7/05/2012) stresses the newness of information in *Kate Roberts a'r Ystlum* and how its alternative readings force readers to reconsider their received opinion of familiar characters and events [5.14]. The editorial team underwent this very experience during the production process of *Kate Roberts a'r Ystlum*: 'several of Mihangel's inspiring and different portraits of some of the big names in Welsh literature had changed our image of them' (translated from Welsh) [5.9].

Morgan's fiction has been popular with a variety of reading groups throughout Wales. *Pantglas* featured on reading lists in Wales, London and Patagonia. The blog of a London reading group attests its impact on their understanding of the Victorian dam-building project and also the later, more politically sensitive project at Tryweryn in 1965; they compared the novel with books on Tryweryn and discussed the different mindset of the novels' Victorian setting [5.15]. Further afield, two reading groups in Patagonia read *Pantglas*: Gaiman (6 members) and Trelew (4 members). The coordinator notes that the novel gave readers 'a different view' of the history of Welsh reservoirs that extended beyond the familiar political narratives of Tryweryn and Cwm Celyn: 'as we read the novel our understanding of the situation was deepened' (translated from Welsh) [5.16]. The related blog also reveals that the Gwentian dialect was a challenging new experience for members of these reading groups [5.17].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- [5.1] Questionnaire answered by WJEC subject officer for Welsh.
- [5.2] *AS GCE Welsh: WJEC Second Language/A Level GCE: WJEC Second Language 2009 & 2010* (WJEC Handbook), p. 6.
- [5.3] Two CDs provided by WJEC subject officer for Welsh. Available on request.
- [5.4] Statement from teaching and learning coordinator, School of Welsh, Cardiff University.
- [5.5] Module Handbook 2008–09, School of Welsh, Cardiff University, p. 40: http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/welsh/resources/LlawlyfrCofrestru2008_cywir.pdf (Welsh)
- [5.6] <http://welshforadults.cardiff.ac.uk/sites/default/files/resources/%3Cem%3Eedit%20Basic%20page%3C/em%3E%20Dysgu%20Anffurfiol/RhaglenProgramme2013.pdf> (Welsh/English)
- [5.7] http://www.welshicons.org.uk/html/mihangel_morgan.php
- [5.8] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/bookreviews/9792782/Five-young-novelists-for-2013.html>.
- [5.9] Answer to a questionnaire by Y Lolfa, Morgan's publisher.
- [5.10] *Taliesin*, 142 (Gwanwyn 2011), 170.
- [5.11] <http://www.golwg360.com/blog/adolygiadau/80092-adolygiad-kate-roberts-a-r-ystlum-a-dirgelion-erail> (Welsh)
- [5.12] http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1293839.Melog#other_reviews.
- [5.13] <http://www.gwales.com/goto/biblio/cy/9781847713186/> (Welsh)
- [5.14] <http://glynadda.wordpress.com/2012/05/> (Welsh)
- [5.15] <http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=15864> (Welsh)
- [5.16] <http://aildysgu.blogspot.co.uk/2012/10/pantglas-gan-mihangel-morgan.html> (Welsh)
- [5.17] Answers to a questionnaire regarding the activity of reading groups in Patagonia.
- [5.18] http://loisdafydd.blogspot.co.uk/2011_06_01_archive.html (Welsh)