

**The London School of Economics and Political Science**

*Performing Welshness in the Chubut Province  
of Patagonia, Argentina*

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A thesis submitted to the Department of Anthropology of The  
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*For my parents,*

*With love.*

## **Abstract**

In 1865, a group of 153 Welsh settlers emigrated to Argentina, following an offer from the Argentine government of 100 square miles of land on which to live, with the hope of creating a little Wales away from Wales, free from the influence of the English. The thesis explores the historical and present day implications of this emigration through an ethnographic account of how and why Welshness is created, sustained, and performed in the Chubut Province of Patagonia, Southern Argentina.

The thesis is based on eighteen months of ethnographic fieldwork in the village of Gaiman and surrounding areas with a community of Welsh Patagonians who live in the Chubut Province. It argues that individual and collective subjectivity (of both the Welsh self and the broader community as Welsh) was performatively constituted in the settler colony through the dynamics of seeing and being seen, and through the dynamics of hearing and being heard. In making this argument, it moves beyond the sole focus on linguistic and visual metaphors in work on subjectivation, to consider the possibility and implications of a musical subjectivation, seeking throughout to draw out the tensions between the personal relations of belonging created by this subjectivation and the broader political power dynamics in the performance of Welshness.

The argument unfolds through an ethnographic analysis of several different encounters: encounters between Indigenous Tehuelche (who were the original inhabitants of the land that was colonised) and the Welsh settlers as depicted in media, literature, academia, and through stories told in present-day Patagonia, encounters between tourists from Wales and local Welsh Patagonians in choir rehearsals in Gaiman Music School, encounters between the Welsh Patagonians and their own performances as Welsh as they watch films of

themselves during film-nights in Gaiman, encounters between music and community in Gaiman Music School in terms of the role of music in creating a homogenous and coherent Welsh community, encounters between the self and the ideal musical 'I' during acts of musical self-cultivation, and finally the heightened performance of these encounters in the annual Eisteddfod (a Welsh festival of the arts) which was held in the province.

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## **A note on translation and vocabulary**

All translations in the thesis between Welsh, English, and Castellano are my own. Whilst great care has been taken to maintain the original intended meaning, originality, and nuance of the words of my interlocutors, of the musical lyrics, and of authors who have written originally in Welsh or Castellano, any perceived loss of meaning between my translation and the original text, or any other errors, are my own responsibility.

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## **Chapter 1: *Introduction: Crafting the self through encounter and performance***

I sing to you my sweet colony,  
I will always greet you this way.  
I love you, like another country of my heart.  
The Camwy travels silently amongst the hills,  
Soothing the valley  
in the arms of the quiet vast prairie.

Your skies are wide and clear,  
Your fresh air brings good health,  
Whilst your sun throws life in daily shadows.  
Your houses and dignified chapels provide shelter,  
Just like in the land of song.

My sweet colony,  
All day and night I think that peace is with you,  
My sweet colony.

(‘Cân y Wladfa’: music by Alberto and lyrics by Awel)

### *Introduction: Two Welsh ladies*

On July 22 2015, I settled into a seat on the overnight flight to Buenos Aires. I tuned in to the eclectic mixture of Castellano and English being spoken around me as I watched the other passengers pushing their bags into the overhead lockers, all either ready for their visit to Argentina or on a journey home from the UK. The seats to either side of me remained empty as others began to fill, and I glanced around, trying to work out who would be sitting with me. I was excited and nervous. After what seemed like an eternity, I looked up to find a woman with short brown hair and a friendly face pushing a bulging suitcase into the overhead compartment. I recalled that I had seen her at the boarding gate, and we had exchanged a

smile – she too seemed to be travelling alone. She sat down in the aisle seat, stuck her hand out confidently and introduced herself in English with a beaming smile, “I’m Heledd.” I smiled in return and shook her hand. “Hi, I’m Lucy.” Her Welsh accent was strong and unmistakable. I asked her whether, like me, she was travelling alone. She explained excitedly that she was travelling to Welsh Patagonia “alone-ish”. She removed her shoes. “I’m travelling with Teithiau Tango, a company that organise group trips to Patagonia,” she said, cheerfully.<sup>1</sup> “Yikes,” I thought to myself silently, amazed at the coincidence. Their offices were in the centre of Aberystwyth, where I had grown up. “Fieldwork starts now.”

Heledd glanced back to the rest of the plane and waved an outstretched arm above her head. “There are nine others somewhere on the plane, but we haven’t met each other yet.” She shrugged, and laughed then – a hearty, carefree laugh, one of those infectious belly laughs, before continuing her story. She declared, “I am *so* happy to be travelling alone. I am chuffed to bits, to be honest. I have had *so* many failed holidays, you know, I’m talking *absolute disasters*, booking the all-in-ones. One friend I went with was a man-eater, another one wanted to party constantly. I can’t do it anymore. I’m *old*.” I felt the tension in my shoulders dissipate as I relaxed, laughing too as she paused to click her seatbelt into place. She shook her head before continuing, her brown short hair bouncing from side to side, “It’s time to accept my age instead of trying to pretend I’m still young.” I smiled to myself. I had a good feeling about this plane journey.

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<sup>1</sup> Teithiau Tango have their main offices in the town centre of Aberystwyth, Wales. They summarise their tours on the homepage of their website as follows: “All of our tours to Patagonia are private, small group tours of no more than 16 people. All the activities are specially organised by locals for our groups and you will have the chance to meet and socialise with the Patagonians of Welsh descent; speak, and even sing with them in Welsh!” They organise tours for Easter, for the Trevelin Eisteddfod, for the Chubut Eisteddfod and also organise skiing tours in August (the Patagonian winter) with most tours lasting 15 days. Between July and August 2019, I worked at their offices as a tour consultant (see <https://www.teithiautango.co.uk> last accessed April 26 2019).

She didn't have time to finish her tale, as the other passenger who was to occupy the window seat to my left had arrived. He was tall and well-built with dark hair. As he put his small suitcase into the overhead locker, Heledd confidently introduced herself to him, and then introduced me too. His name was Gonzalo, and he was returning from the UK to Buenos Aires, to his home on the outskirts of the city. He was wearing jeans, a red checked shirt and a black cap. His brown eyes sparkled, and I could smell the beer on his breath as he explained to us what he had been doing in the UK. He spoke with a thick Argentinian accent, "I have been in Windsor, working with horses, you know...for polo, for...*cuatro*...four months. I am going home now to Buenos Aires." He too waved to the back of the plane. "My parents...mama and papa, they are with me, they are sitting separately to me. We live normally just outside Buenos Aires, about 20 minutes away from the city, on the edges, for four months, then we go for four months in Spain, then for four in Windsor. Every year. That is our work." I smiled, and nodded, "Wow, that's a lot of travelling." Heledd laughed and exclaimed loudly, "Ooooooh, polo! The rich man's sport!" He laughed. There was a pause before he responded calmly, "I am not a rich man."

There was a period of silence between us as we listened to the muffled plane announcements from the pilot before the plane prepared to take off. I put my seatbelt on and settled back into my seat. Soon the conversation struck up again. Heledd leant over me and nudged Gonzalo, playfully, before saying, "You are extremely lucky to be sitting beside two Welsh ladies. Not many men get this opportunity." The comment diffused the tension between us as the three of us laughed. Heledd then asked him whether he spoke any Welsh. "We (referring to me) are both from Wales. We aren't travelling together, it is just a coincidence, but we both speak the language of heaven. Can you speak any Welsh?" Gonzalo murmured, "No." He was already thumbing through the film options on the small rectangular

screen in front of him and seemed uninterested, but Heledd pursued, “Well, let me know if you want to learn some. We have 12 hours on this flight, that is plenty of time to learn the basics, isn’t it Lucy!” She nudged me playfully and paused for a reaction; there was none. Another period of silence. “We play a lot of rugby in Wales; do you know what rugby is? It is a ball, shaped like this.” She drew the shape of the rugby ball on the back of the plane seat in front of her. Gonzalo nodded, “*Si*.” His eyes were fixated on the screen in front of him which was showing an English comedy film with subtitles and I replied, “Rugby is huge in Argentina.”

Night was falling. The big lights illuminating the plane were switched off and one by one the lights of the small screens in front of us flickered off too. We took this as our cue to fall into silence. I waited for the next interjection, but it didn’t come. I wouldn’t sleep yet. I pulled my headphones on and my mind drifted. Many ethnographers have written about the problematic delineation of a field-site (see, for example, Amit 1999; Candea 2007).

Anthropologists resist the implications of yet simultaneously have to, at least to some extent, give in to the construction of boundaries because the creation of a field-site, even if it is a fluid one, is a necessary task for the fieldworker. As Amit (1999: 6) puts it, “the ethnographic field cannot simply exist, awaiting discovery”. Candea (2007: 175) further argues that the multi-sited approach to fieldwork forgets the necessity of “finding a way to contain this multiplicity”. In practice, long before fieldwork begins, the act of setting boundaries around a specific group of people starts to take shape; to narrow down the scope of our studies we need to find a ‘field-site’ and a group of ‘interlocutors’. Yet at the same time, the notion of fluidity is central to the process of fieldwork, including in the pre-field planning stage, because the reality is that as fieldworkers, we cannot simply box off a ‘field-site’. The boundaries of fieldwork beginning and ending and of where it takes place are unclear. Every

related interaction – on a plane to a field-site, in a taxi to the airport, in an Argentinian restaurant in London, or a guitar concert in Aberystwyth a year, two years, even three years after fieldwork supposedly ‘ended’ becomes data.

Beyond this, little did I know that this encounter would so closely reflect the themes on which the final thesis would be based. Through a series of simple actions and utterances, including the drawing of a rugby ball on the back of a plane seat and the description of us as “two Welsh ladies”, the tensions between Argentineness and Welshness were being subtly revealed and navigated through our discussion. The tensions in this encounter were also laced with elements of desire and potential – themes which later became particularly significant in the context of tourism between Welsh Patagonia and Wales. Finally, the encounter between Heledd, Gonzalo, and myself foreshadowed some of the challenges of creating a dialogue that was sensitive to intercultural issues and differences, a sensitivity that I have strived to integrate into the thesis. I sighed and felt my eyelids grow heavy, sleep finally winning me over for the remainder of the flight.

\* \* \*

### *Fieldwork context and sociological data*

At sunrise, we parted ways in Buenos Aires, where I would spend a couple of days before travelling to The Chubut Valley (also known in Welsh as Y Wladfa).<sup>2</sup> Y Wladfa is one of five provinces in the region of Patagonia, south of Argentina, and is home to a community of around 5,000 Welsh-speaking individuals following a series of migrations from Wales to

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<sup>2</sup> The name of the Chubut Valley is derived from the Chubut River (in Welsh *Afon Camwy*) which flows through the province and for 800 kilometres across the prairie; ‘chupat’ being a Tehuelche word which means ‘transparent’ (McDonald 2001).

the area in the late 1800s after Argentina opened up its borders to immigrants. The largest group of individuals (153 men, women, and children) migrated in 1865, on a tea-clipper called the *Mimosa*. This initial migration was followed by a series of smaller migrations, which ceased in 1914 (Williams 1942, 1946, 1965; Whitfield 2011; Williams 2014). They live predominantly in the village of Gaiman, and have connections with the nearby town Trelew, as well as the surrounding areas of Puerto Madryn, Rawson, Dolavon, and the village of Trevelin near the town of Esquel in the Andes mountains (see figure 2; for images see BBC News Wales 2008).<sup>3</sup> With a population of 6,627, the village of Gaiman is small in comparison to Trelew, which has a population of 99,430 as per the 2010 census (INDEC 2012). Nearby cities include the administrative city of Rawson, the seaside town of Puerto Madryn, and the smaller seaside resort of Playa Union (Kiff 2013, 2014, 2015; Arwel 2016, 2017, 2018).

Whilst there is limited data on the demography of Gaiman village specifically, out of a total of 11,141 inhabitants in the department of Gaiman (which accounts for the village of Gaiman and the immediate surrounding settlements, including Dolavon, Veintiocho de Julio, Las Chapas, Bryn Gwyn and Villa Dique Florentino), 542 are recorded as being from other countries. Out of these, 471 are recorded as being born in neighbouring countries (with 292 being from Bolivia), 60 are recorded as being born in Europe, and 11 as from another country (INDEC 2010). At the time of the research, there were estimated to be a total of 50,000 Patagonians of Welsh descent living in Patagonia, and 5000 Welsh speakers and learners in Chubut, many of whom were living in Gaiman, Trelew, and Trevelin (Arwel 2019).

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<sup>3</sup> Whilst it is difficult to establish exact numbers for migration from Wales, it is interesting to note that the 2010 Argentinian census accounts for individuals from elsewhere who now live in Chubut. The percentage for individuals born in 'rest of Europe' (not including France, Germany, Italy or Spain) before 1991 was 89.1%, which dropped to 6.2% between 1991 and 2002, and further again to 4.6% between 2002 and 2010 (INDEC 2012).

Establishing a concrete figure of Welsh descendants in Gaiman during fieldwork was challenging, given that in the census, these inhabitants would be all recorded as Argentinian due to their place of birth, given that some Welsh speakers did not necessarily socialise within the Welsh-Patagonian community, and given that some members of the Welsh Patagonian community who were fluent Welsh speakers did not have ‘Welsh descent’ or identifiable Welsh surnames (such as Williams, Davies, Jones, James, or Thomas, which were common in Chubut), making them harder to trace. Ultimately, however, Welsh Patagonians were a minority in relation to other inhabitants of the village, with approximately 1000-1100 individuals active in Welsh Patagonian culture during the time of fieldwork (regularly attending Welsh lessons, traditional Welsh dancing classes, choir, and so on). Despite Argentinians making up the majority of the demography of Gaiman, it is important to note that this category of ‘Argentinian’ as per the census would include Argentinians of Spanish, French, Italian, and other European descent. It would also include indigenous populations, with Mapuche being the dominant indigenous population in Chubut, accounting for 73% of a total of 43,279 individuals of indigenous descent in the province (INDEC 2010). Beyond this, there were two significant other demographic categories in Gaiman village – Chinese migrants who owned and ran local supermarkets, and Bolivian migrants who owned farms on the outskirts of Gaiman and who owned fruit and vegetable stores in the village.

Despite Welsh Patagonians being a minority in a demographic sense, they were nevertheless an economically and socially powerful group in Chubut, where out of a total population of 420,137, 28.5% have been defined as living in poverty (INDEC 2010). The standard of living, education, and cultural capital (gained, for example, by travelling to Europe or the UK) was relatively high amongst Welsh Patagonians, and many were educated to undergraduate degree level. The Welsh Patagonian presence was also dominant in the

village in the Welsh-medium road/cafe signs, and with Welsh flags adorning the nurseries and schools (see further Lublin 2009). Additionally, the Welsh Patagonian community received financial support from the Welsh Government in Wales – who according to BBC News (2015f) invest approximately £56,000 p/a in Welsh Patagonia – and from the local Chubut Government, who funded various projects, such as the conversion of a large wool barn to accommodate the visit of a Welsh Orchestra and the extensive renovations of Welsh Chapels in Chubut (Lublin 2009), and who were often physically present at concerts hosted by the Welsh Patagonian community.

At the time of the research, the dominant economic activities in Chubut were oil and gas exploitation, trade, sheep farming and slaughter, wool production, fishing, aluminium production and tourism, among others (Chubut Gobierno 2015; Dirección Nacional de Asuntos Provinciales 2013). In Gaiman more specifically, sheep farming/slaughter and wool production were particularly significant. The farms, shops, and supermarkets in the village were largely run by Argentinians, Chinese migrants and Bolivian migrants. Contrastingly, many of the Welsh Patagonians with whom I lived were largely involved – or had been, prior to retirement – either in the education sector (as nursery, primary, or secondary teachers) or the tourism industry (running their own businesses, such as guest houses, restaurants, tea-houses, or museums). The tourism industry in Chubut was particularly significant, with the Argentine Ministry of Tourism and Sports noting that on average, Chubut receives 754,064 tourists annually, 112,987 of whom travel from outside of Argentina (see also Dirección Nacional de Asuntos Provinciales 2013). The majority of the tourists who visited Gaiman during the period of fieldwork (2015-2017) were from Wales, with a minority travelling from the US, and some from other parts of Argentina. As discussed in Chapter 3, tourism and the subsequent development of relationships between Welsh tourists and Welsh Patagonians was

also the basis of new – often economically significant – opportunities for the Welsh Patagonian community.

At the time of the research, Christianity was the predominant religion in Argentina and the official religion of the state, with the majority of the population identifying as Roman Catholic, though fewer than this figure were actively practicing (Mallimaci 2015). Other religious affiliations in Argentina included Evangelism, Protestantism and Judeism (amongst others). In Gaiman, there were a number of Welsh Nonconformist Chapels (with the most significant being Bethel Chapel) and Roman Catholic Churches. The majority of my Welsh Patagonian interlocutors attended Bethel Chapel every Sunday, whilst others attended the local Catholic Church. Those who attended Nonconformist Chapels or Catholic Churches regularly attended hymn singing sessions together in the Welsh Nonconformist Chapels. A minority of my Argentinian interlocutors attended Catholic Church, but a large majority – though they identified with Catholicism ideologically – were not actively practicing. Many of my younger Argentinian interlocutors identified as atheist.

Whilst the Welsh Patagonian community lived alongside – and interacted with - other demographic, economic, and religious groups – for example in the supermarkets or vegetable stores or at local events, those who were active participants in the Welsh Patagonian community tended to socialise separately, by attending hymn singing sessions, Welsh lessons, Welsh medium choirs, festivals, and other Welsh medium events. Furthermore, whilst the Welsh medium schools were open to other demographic groups, some of these schools (such as Ysgol yr Hendre in Trelew) were private schools, and were thus unaffordable to many demographic groups in Gaiman and the surrounding areas. Ultimately,

then, despite being fully integrated to Argentinian society, the Welsh Patagonian community did maintain a degree of separateness in their day-to-day lives.

My interlocutors were mainly Welsh Patagonians and local Argentinians from Gaiman, but also included some individuals from Trelew and Trevelin (in the Andes). Given the prevalence of tourism in the village and its fundamental impact on my field-site, I also made a conscious effort to include as my interlocutors Welsh tourists visiting Patagonia, visitors from Wales who were staying on a long-term basis (for example, to volunteer or to work), and people living in Wales who had (or had not) visited Patagonia. A large percentage of my local interlocutors (both Welsh Patagonians and Argentinians) were retired. Others were either working as music or Welsh teachers (variously in the local music school, nursery, and at other secondary schools), were involved in the tourism industry, were un-employed or between employments, were working as full-time musicians, were stay-at-home-mothers, or were studying at school or at university (either locally or elsewhere in Argentina). Though some of my younger interlocutors from Trelew went out regularly to bars, clubs, and restaurants, for the majority of my older interlocutors, most socialising was family orientated and took place within their homes, in addition to the socialising that took place during cultural activities and in musical events.

Daily life was generally quiet in the village of Gaiman (my main research location), largely because many of the individuals who lived in the village worked elsewhere, such as in the nearby towns of Trelew or Rawson. Of those who worked locally, most worked either on their family farms, in the schools and nurseries, or in the few shops in the centre of the village. During the early winter mornings, the wide streets would be silent and deserted, with the only signs of life being the lights of the buses and the rumbling noises of a few cars of

people travelling to work. Summer was different, with locals making the most of the cooler morning sun to exercise or socialise by the river before retreating back to their homes for the hottest part of the day. Each day, between around 13:00 and 16:00, everything would close for the ‘siesta’ (afternoon nap), and as a consequence of this break, social life would go on quite late, with most of my interlocutors eating their evening meal between 21:00 and 22:00 and sleeping at around 1:00.

Despite the generally quiet atmosphere of the village, at the time of the research, much time was dedicated throughout the year by many members of the Welsh Patagonian community to maintaining and performing Welsh culture in the valley (see further Murray 1990).<sup>4</sup> This largely involved organising, rehearsing for, and taking part in Welsh cultural activities such as arts festivals, exhibitions, film nights, and music events. It also involved welcoming tourists who visited from Wales, running the Welsh teahouses, welcoming new teachers annually from the Menter Patagonia and British Council Welsh language teaching projects, attending and advertising Welsh lessons, organising and attending Welsh language chapel services on Sundays, and participating in various projects such as documentary films or other research projects (see further Berg 2018; Williams 2014; Lublin 2009; Johnson 2009, 2013).<sup>5</sup> Gaiman Music School was a central hub of activity in this respect, and was one of the key sites where my interlocutors gathered and socialised (aside from in their own homes), and so the majority of the data underpinning the thesis comes from time spent playing music in Gaiman Music School, free time spent with my interlocutors, and from

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<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to note that Murray (1990: 101), in her work with Welsh Americans in Philadelphia, points out a similar focus on the “musicality that is prominent in maintaining their ethnicity”.

<sup>5</sup> Menter Patagonia is a teaching project which started in 2008. It works alongside the teaching project of the British Council which is funded by the Welsh Government, the Wales Argentina Society and the British Council Wales. Its broad aim is to promote and develop the Welsh language in Chubut. Three teachers are sent from March to December to teach in Patagonia. They are involved both in formal teaching and in running more informal social activities. There is also a permanent teaching co-ordinator from Wales based in Patagonia (Kiff 2013, 2014, 2015; Arwel 2016, 2017, 2018).

representing Gaiman Music School individually or with groups at concerts and other festivals.

### *Research locations*

*This map [Figure 1. Map of Argentina], has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.*

*This map [Figure 2. Map of the Chubut Province. Gaiman and Trelew were my main research locations, though I visited the town of Trevelin, near Esquel, the home of many other Argentiniains of Welsh descent] has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.*

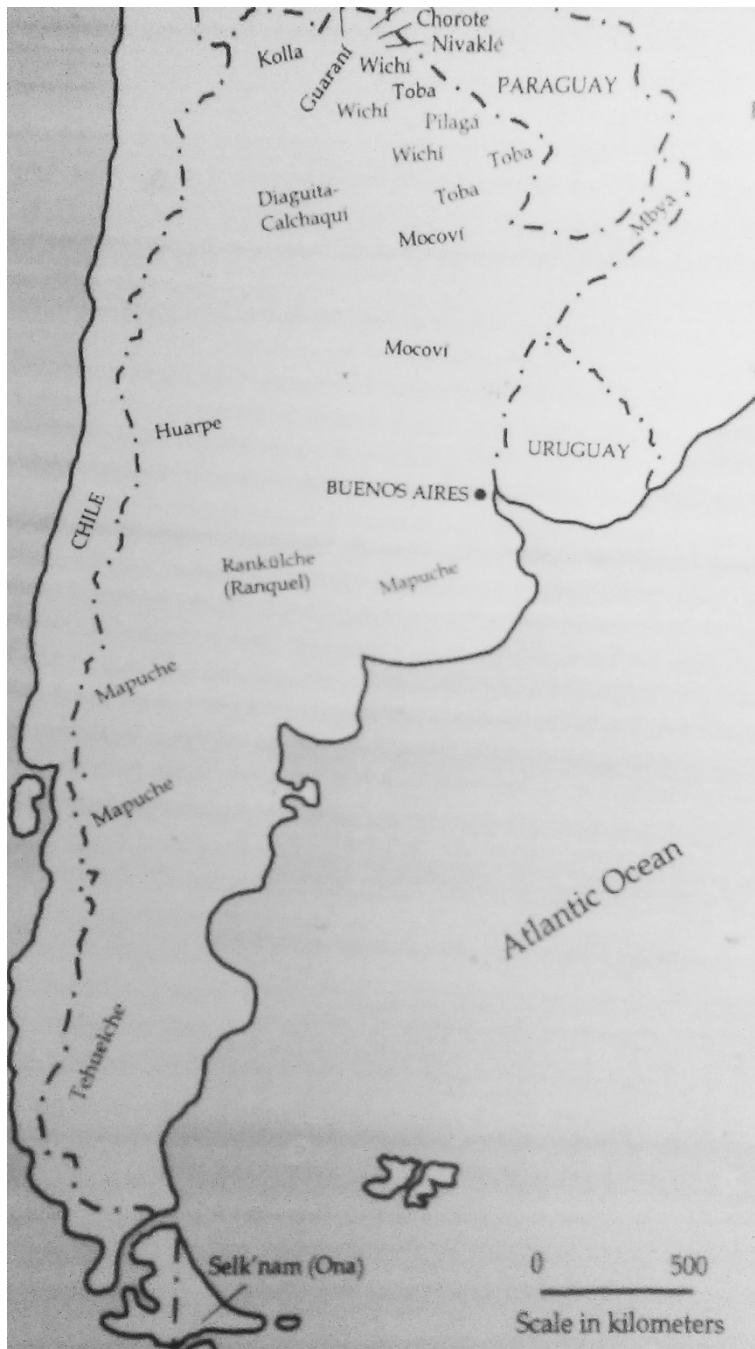


Figure 3.

Map of Indigenous populations in Argentina (Gordillo & Hirsch 2003: 7)

## *Methodology*

The thesis is based on eighteen months of ethnographic fieldwork between 2015 and 2017, with some evidence also drawn from fieldwork that took place between July and August 2013. Gaiman was my main research location, and at the time of my fieldwork was a small but rapidly expanding village. I would travel regularly by bus to Trelew to teach English and to meet with friends. I also had the opportunity to visit Trevelin in Esquel for a brief fieldwork stint in November 2015, when I travelled with friends from both Wales and Welsh Patagonia to celebrate the anniversary of the founding of the village. To complement the fieldwork conducted in the Eisteddfodau (Welsh festivals of the arts) in Patagonia, I also conducted fieldwork at the Cardiff National Eisteddfod in August 2018.<sup>6</sup> The majority of the data which informs the thesis was obtained from in-depth participant observation, interviews ranging from formal to informal, and focus groups with my interlocutors. Finally, I conducted archival research at the National Library of Wales in January 2018.

In terms of my methodological approach to writing the thesis, readers might wonder why I am so present in the dialogues and encounters presented throughout the chapters that follow. I acknowledge that this might be a somewhat unusual approach, even in a context where anthropologists have long moved away from the idea of an objective ethnography. However, my reasons for this approach are twofold.

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<sup>6</sup> An Eisteddfod is a traditional Welsh cultural festival of the arts which originated in Wales in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century, where participants take part in musical, recital, art, translation and literary competitions amongst others. Eisteddfodau of various sizes are held annually in both Wales and Patagonia. The first Eisteddfod in Patagonia was held on Christmas day 1865, and after a lull period, was made into an official institution in 1965 (Brooks & Lublin 2007).

Firstly, I believe that not shying away from including our own interactions is key to an ethnography of encounters in that it foregrounds the dialogical nature of fieldwork in the analysis, situating us in relation to our interlocutors, and ultimately enabling us, in addition to our interlocutors, to be open to the interpretation and analysis of readers. Closely connected to this, as anthropologists, we are always embedded within the power relations in the field and as such our presence cannot be denied (see also Fetterman 1998). In my fieldwork situation this was also made more complex by my background as Welsh (see further Covington-Ward 2016). As Funder (2005) further elaborates, we should open up the space that we occupy in the field to critical analysis by making power explicit and open to interpretation. He argues that we can do this through exposing “efforts to engage other actor’s perceptions of the researcher’s biases and interpretations” and by paying “attention to the role and implications of the power relations and associated world views and epistemologies of which the researcher forms part at home and in the field” (Funder 2005: 7). Ultimately, in addition to discussions of both my interlocutors’ perceptions of me as a researcher and the role of my own bias in shaping the research, the thesis includes my own comments and emotions in conversations or situations with others, presented here as an “interplay of voices” (Clifford 1986: 12).

Secondly, Clifford (1986: 11) describes “the predominant metaphors in anthropological research [as being] participant-observation, data collection, and cultural description, all of which presuppose a standpoint outside – looking at, objectifying, or, somewhat closer, ‘reading’ a given reality”. One of the key arguments of the thesis is that there has been an over-reliance on visual tropes in theorising the subject, which has obscured the specific means by which subjectivation through music occurs. In Gaiman, alternatively, becoming a subject occurred in some contexts through processes of gazing or looking, but

was also about music and sound. Following Clifford (1986: 12), my intention here is to embed a personal narrative within the description to present an ethnography that is more in line with the personalisation of sound, whereby “once cultures are no longer prefigured visually – as objects, theatres, texts – it becomes possible to think of a cultural poetics that is an interplay of voices, of positioned utterances”. Ultimately, to write an objective and detached ethnography which is based – however subtly so – on visual metaphors of research, writing, and data presentation would go against the very argument of the thesis.

Finally, many scholars working on Welsh Patagonia have chosen to theorise the group as a diasporic community. Whilst some scholars using the term ‘diaspora’ have attempted to acknowledge the historical inequalities between the Welsh settlers and the local Indigenous people (for the most recent example, see Berg 2018), the term ‘diaspora’ cannot fully account for the colonial element of the settler colony. The thesis moves away from the term ‘diaspora’ to refer to Welsh Patagonia as a ‘settler colony’ throughout, defined by Veracini (2013: 313) as “circumstances where colonisers ‘come to stay’ and to establish new political orders for themselves, rather than to exploit native labour” (see further Johnston & Lawson 2005). Lublin (2017: 27) further notes that the use of ‘settler colony’ also helps to navigate the issues of translation:<sup>7</sup>

The view of Y Wladfa as a settler colony is also particularly helpful in settling the dispute as to whether it should be referred to as a colony or a settlement. In Welsh, the term *gwladfa* is a bit of a riddle: the first translation suggested is ‘colony’ (*trefedigaeth*), followed by the equivalent of ‘settlement’ (*gwladychfa*), before a third entry explaining that, when preceded by the definite article, the word is used to denote ‘part of a province in South America with the name of Patagonia that was colonised by the Welsh in 1865’. The lack of a specific term in English has meant

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<sup>7</sup> Geraldine Lublin is an Argentinian researcher who has done much work in Welsh Patagonia (see, for example, Lublin 2001, 2009) and who, at the time of writing, is working in Swansea University.

that those who sympathise with Y Wladfa tend to call it a ‘settlement’ and those who do not refer to it as a ‘colony’.

Ultimately, the thesis follows these authors in their aim to point out that the displacement of Indigenous occupants can take various forms and does not necessarily have to be physical. In other words, it pushes for a broadening of our concept of colonisation beyond a focus on overt control towards the realisation that settlement is a negotiation and a relationship, which can be enacted in symbolic, spiritual, or cultural terms (Veracini 2013; Lublin 2017).



Figure 4. The main street in Gaiman

## *On being Welsh and white in Argentina*

As Fetterman (1998: 1) puts it, anthropologists “enter the field with an open mind, not an empty head”. My subjectivity and unconscious biases influenced the data collected and therefore the argument that is presented in the thesis. Firstly, I already had my own political views (which emerged to be quite different to those of many of my interlocutors) in addition to my own ideas and opinions about what later emerged to be quite controversial themes in the field, such as the debates on the legalisation of abortion, gender dynamics, or the power differences between the Welsh Patagonians and local Argentinians. Secondly, due to the fact that I grew up in Wales, am white, and am a fluent Welsh speaker, I had an unconscious affinity bias with my Welsh Patagonian interlocutors. We had fairly similar interests, looked relatively similar, and shared similar experiences and (to a certain extent) backgrounds, which meant that my entrance into their lives was somewhat smoother than with my local Argentinian interlocutors.

That I grew up in Wales and was a fluent Welsh speaker was both an asset and a hinderance to this project. It was an asset in the sense that I was readily welcomed into the community, and my presence was not deemed threatening in any way in a context where the community were familiar with receiving (white) tourists from Wales. The mutual language (Welsh) was a great help during the early months of fieldwork whilst I learnt Castellano.<sup>8</sup> However, it was also a hinderance in that it was more challenging to connect with my local Argentinian interlocutors, who were perhaps slightly more suspicious of my intentions. The conflation of me with a Welsh tourist generated another logistical challenge which was how

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<sup>8</sup> I use ‘Castellano’ throughout the thesis to refer to the local Argentinian dialect. My reason for using ‘Castellano’ rather than ‘Spanish’ is because it reflects the preference of my interlocutors, who viewed this term as distinguishing their language and dialect from what they called “the Spanish of Spain”.

to clearly demonstrate to my interlocutors the concrete differences between tourism and anthropology. This was especially significant given that the majority of what my interlocutors would consider to be visible ‘work’ took place behind closed doors – my fieldnotes were written up from scratch-notes late at night, when the days’ activities were over.

Additionally, as a cellist and singer from Wales, my place within Gaiman Music School was established within days of my first trip to the field in 2013, and I slotted back into this role fairly easily upon my return in 2015. I was involved in many activities related to the music school during fieldwork. I participated in the mixed choir and the girls’ choir, sung in various groups for the Eisteddfod, played cello in the string ensemble, accompanied choirs on cello, played in smaller ensembles for several concerts in various chapels, performed solo cello concerts, and received a term of violin lessons. I also attended and participated in three end-of-year music school concerts. However, in the musical context, I was often perceived as fitting into a certain category which drew me into the very categories and power structures that I wanted to deconstruct (see Chapters 2, 6, and 7 especially). To take one example, the description of me by one of my interlocutors as “an amazing cellist from Wales” and the ease with which I was welcomed into the Welsh Patagonian community had less to do with my cello playing skills, and more to do with the colour of my skin and my background, factors which therefore not only influenced my own unconscious biases, but which also sometimes meant that my interlocutors saw me from their own perspectives of what Welsh people were like. Ultimately, the impact of these musical skills highlighted the subjective nature of qualitative research. Without these musical skills, I would have been unable to fully participate in the activities, and the thesis would have looked very different.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Chapters 5 and 6 provide a more in-depth critical analysis and exploration of the implications of this musical involvement.

## *“You must grow a ‘cara de culo’”: Gendered spheres*

Another key factor influencing my interactions in the field and therefore the data presented in the thesis was my gender as a woman. My female friends made it very clear to me early on in fieldwork that to avoid sexual harassment and catcalling on the streets, I would have to develop a ‘cara de culo’ (the literal translation of this is ‘arse face’) whilst out. One close friend, early on in fieldwork, gave me the advice with a wicked grin:

“You are too nice. The problem is that you smile, and they think you are ready for marriage. You must grow a *cara de culo*. You look straight ahead. You keep walking. If that fails, you swear back. If you don’t do this, you are going to be treated like meat. Shall I teach you some words you can use?”

She stood up then, making an exaggerated impression of how I did walk on the streets, waving and smiling to imaginary passers-by, and contrasted that with an example of how I should walk, which looked like a military march in its formality. We were howling with laughter by then but underlying this was a real issue. Gender inequality was omnipresent in Argentina, in the sense of subtle, everyday sexism,<sup>10</sup> but also in a broader political sense. 255 women were murdered in 2018, which accounted for around 15% of all homicides in Argentina (Registro Nacional De Femicidios De La Justicia Argentina 2018). These figures demonstrate a similar rate of femicide per 100,000 women in relation to neighbouring countries in Latin America (Observatorio de Igualdad de Genero 2018). What is particularly striking about these figures is that whilst homicide in Argentina has been decreasing

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<sup>10</sup> I use the term everyday sexism in the same way that Laura Bates, founder of The Everyday Sexism project uses it, that is to refer to the “instances of sexism experienced on a day to day basis. They might be serious or minor, outrageously offensive or so niggling and normalised that you don’t even feel able to protest” (<https://everydaysexism.com>, last accessed September 27 2020).

relatively steadily since 2014, the numbers of female victims are rising. Beyond this, 163 of these women – almost 2 in 3 – were murdered at the hands of a partner or former partner (Registro Nacional De Femicidios De La Justicia Argentina 2018). As UNODC (2019: 9) state in a report on global homicide, “while the majority of intentional homicide victims are male, the majority of the victims of intimate partner/family-related homicide are women”. At the time of writing, abortion also remains illegal, with figures estimating up to 500,000 illegal abortions being performed annually, meaning that more than 5% of women of childbearing age will undergo an illegal abortion each year, further implying that most will have at least one during their lifetime (Garcia 2019; Alcoba 2019; BBC News 2019). The maternal mortality rate is high, with 52 women dying of pregnancy related causes out of 100,000 live births (see Figure 2; Human Development Report 2019; World Health Organisation 2019).<sup>11</sup>

**Table E: Argentina’s GII for 2018 relative to selected countries and groups**

|                                 | GII value | GII Rank | Maternal mortality ratio | Adolescent birth rate | Female seats in parliament (%) | Population with at least some secondary education (%) |      | Labour force participation rate (%) |      |
|---------------------------------|-----------|----------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|---|------|-------------------------------------|------|
|                                 |           |          |                          |                       |                                | Female  | Male | Female                              | Male |
| Argentina                       | 0.354     | 77       | 52.0                     | 62.8                  | 39.5                           | 66.5  | 63.3 | 49.0                                | 72.8 |
| Chile                           | 0.288     | 62       | 22.0                     | 41.1                  | 22.7                           | 79.0  | 80.9 | 51.0                                | 74.2 |
| Peru                            | 0.381     | 87       | 68.0                     | 56.9                  | 27.7                           | 57.4  | 68.5 | 69.9                                | 84.7 |
| Latin America and the Caribbean | 0.383     | —        | 68.0                     | 63.2                  | 31.0                           | 59.7  | 59.3 | 51.8                                | 77.2 |
| Very high HDI                   | 0.175     | —        | 15.0                     | 16.7                  | 27.2                           | 87.0  | 88.7 | 52.1                                | 69.0 |

Maternal mortality ratio is expressed in number of deaths per 100,000 live births and adolescent birth rate is expressed in number of births per 1,000 women ages 15-19.

Figure 5. Argentina’s Gender Inequality Index relative to selected countries and groups

(Human Development Report 2019: 6)

There was, at the time of my research, an increasingly visible feminist agenda in Argentina. In June 2015, a month before my fieldwork began, an Argentinian feminist collective called *Ni Una Menos* (‘Not One More’) organised and mobilised a large-scale protest to condemn the killing of a pregnant 14 year old girl, Chiara Paez, by her boyfriend

<sup>11</sup> This is striking in relation to the relative figures for the UK, where 9 women out of every 100,000 live births die from pregnancy related causes (World Health Organisation 2019).

(Feliti & Prieto 2018). 200,000 people attended this protest, and since then *Ni Una Menos* have organised several other protests and strikes (some of which took place in Trelew, but which also spread more broadly across Latin America) and have “tirelessly campaigned and advocated for justice”, focusing specifically on the issues of femicide and the legalisation of abortion (Langlais 2020; The Guardian 2020). Many individuals attending the protests wore a green handkerchief wrapped around the bottom half of their faces or around their necks – the symbol of a different but closely connected campaign to legalise abortion (Feliti & Prieto 2018).<sup>12</sup> Beyond the protests, the green handkerchiefs quickly became a symbol of a broader daily feminist resistance, and I often saw them tied to schoolbags, worn as hair-ties, or worn around the wrists of my interlocutors. As one of my younger interlocutors from Trelew said:

“It’s not enough to only wear them to the protest. When we wear the *pañuela verde* [green handkerchief] on our faces at the protest, everyone is wearing one anyway, but when we wear it outside of the protests...to school...on the bus...you see other people and you know you’re fighting for the same thing, *viste*?<sup>13</sup> It makes people ask you about it, especially people who don’t agree with it. We post a lot on Facebook too...Instagram...photos with it [the green handkerchief] on. Lots of people leading the movement say that this is when the real change can happen.”

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<sup>12</sup> The movement is formally known as the ‘National Campaign for the right to Legal, Safe, and Free abortions’ (Campaña Nacional por el Derecho al Aborto Legal Seguro y Gratuito). Blue handkerchiefs, by contrast, are worn by those who are against the legalisation of abortion and who are part of the campaign to ‘Save Both Lives’ (Salvemos Las Dos Vidas).

<sup>13</sup> ‘Viste’ is a Castellano word that is regularly added to the ends of sentences in Argentina. It means something akin to ‘you get me’ or ‘you see’ but has no direct equivalent in English. In Patagonia, this is translated by locals to the Welsh ‘welaist di’ and added to the ends of sentences.



Figure 6. The green handkerchief, a symbol of the movement to legalise abortion in Argentina

Despite the increasing awareness and campaigning for the improvement of the position of women in Argentina in a broader political sense, everyday micro-pressures on women to fit the culturally constructed definition of beauty remained prominent. These pressures were aptly summarised by one of my Argentinian interlocutors during a focus group:

“It is very important that you look good...with makeup on, with good hair...the clothes like that, tight...thin...but for me...well I think for everyone to a certain extent...men want you to look like that in the house. In the street, I really think that most men prefer you to look like a cow...then other men don’t look at you and don’t bother you. And you know what is worse? The men go chubby with age, they look like shit, and nothing happens...they have the power.”

Whilst I could do little to escape the daily cat-calling on the streets, with a male friend stating the reason for this as being “you look different, you wear those boots [Dr Martens], that is why” (see also Carnes 2017 for a description of her similar experience visiting Buenos Aires), it should be noted that living alone, renting a *quincho*, working as an

English teacher in Trelew, and owning my own bicycle offered me a higher level of independence in relation to many of the young women of my age whom I met during fieldwork.<sup>14</sup> I maintained this independence throughout the duration of fieldwork, which limits my capacity to comment fully on the experience of being a woman in Argentina. However, despite my best attempts at encouraging the more fluid gender boundaries that I had read of anthropologists experiencing during fieldwork (Warren & Hackney 2011), this was challenging due to the very nature of qualitative research as a woman, and so the name “la chica Galesa” stuck. As Moreno (1995: 246-247) argues, “In the field, it is not possible to maintain the fiction of a genderless self. In the field, one is marked” (see further Kloß 2017). It remained the case throughout fieldwork that many spheres that I would have so loved to research (and which I remain convinced will be connected to performance and politics in some way), such as rugby, poker nights, and especially football (Rollason 2011; Walker 2013; Diz 2016), were inaccessible to me. Ultimately, however, my identity as a white female smoothed access to certain spheres of social life, and my independence meant that I was allowed into women’s worlds without being entirely confined to them.

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<sup>14</sup> It was typical for houses to have a small building, commonly known as a ‘quincho’, in the back of their gardens. Several people had these small houses to use for parties or celebrations, and often children would move out of the family home and into the quincho to live as they became older (as a cheaper alternative to renting separate accommodation). They generally had a basic kitchen including a gas oven/hob and a fridge, a bathroom (with a shower and WC), and a bedroom.

## *Welsh Patagonia: an ethnographic puzzle*

The establishment of the Welsh settler colony in 1865 and the continued presence of Welsh culture in the Chubut Province today raises many questions – What kind of place is it today? Who are these people and what does it mean to call them ‘Welsh’? How is Welshness reproduced and maintained over time? Do they really *feel* Welsh or is this a cynical performance of Welshness for the eyes of tourists? In any case, is there a meaningful difference between a ‘real feeling’ of Welshness and the ‘performance’ of Welshness? In other words, what does it mean to be Welsh in the Chubut Province?

In exploring what it means to be Welsh in the Chubut Province of Patagonia, Argentina, the thesis will analyse a series of performative encounters, in doing so considering the usefulness and limitations of concepts that have been developed to theorise the self, such as subjectivity, subjectivation, performance, performativity, and self-cultivation. When we consider the context of the Welsh Patagonian settler colony, these concepts do remain useful for the ways that they draw attention to the role of power in shaping who people are and how they see themselves. However, the Welsh Patagonian context highlights a lack of attention in existing approaches to encounters with concrete others, alongside a reliance on visual tropes. The thesis argues that in Gaiman, alternatively, Welshness was all about music, and more specifically, the creation of Welshness was explicitly foregrounded in performances for tourists under both an imagined Welsh gaze and a Welsh ear, performances which had different implications in terms of our understandings of subjectivation and the subject. It argues that whereas the element of recognition was key to subjectivation under the gaze, sonic interpellation worked best when my interlocutors were fully immersed in, and engaged in, the music or sound, therefore enabling an attention to the kind of self that was formed in

multisensory contexts of encounter and to the particular power dynamics involved in that formation.

In making this argument, it is important to clarify the significance of certain recurring themes. The concepts of descent, place, Welsh language use, and cultural performance had different meanings to different individuals in terms of their significance in establishing Welshness. As explored in Chapter 6, many of my interlocutors placed an emphasis on Welsh descent, which was defined as being related to the original Welsh settlers through blood. However, a minority disagreed with this definition, arguing that whilst they did not have Welsh descent, they felt that they were able to establish Welshness through their cultural performance or Welsh language skills, suggesting a more fluid category of Welshness. It is important to note that my interlocutors who were able to enter into this more fluid category of Welshness tended to be more privileged in terms of class, or were married to individuals with Welsh descent (see Chapter 6). Place was significant, both in terms of living in Gaiman (which in turn enabled an active participation in Welsh Patagonian activities), and in terms of having visited Wales, especially when the latter led to the establishment of connections in Wales (see Chapter 3). There was a general consensus that descent, Welsh language use, and cultural performance were three of the most important factors in creating Welshness. Having Welsh descent was a token to participation in Welsh cultural activities (such as attending Welsh choir rehearsals), and speaking Welsh to – or in front of – Welsh visitors was seen by Welsh Patagonians and by Welsh tourists as being central to creating the image of Welshness. Ultimately, however, the relative importance of these factors differed based on both individual opinion and based on context, with informal day-to-day conversations, for example, tending to slip into Castellano.

## *Encounters*

The concept of ‘encounter’ is central to the thesis, and my use of it draws largely on the work of Sartre (1958), Lacan (1966), and Althusser (1971), who each, in their own ways, emphasise the interaction – albeit a metaphorical interaction – between the self and an ‘other’. What these scholars achieve, with their allegories of the gaze, the mirror, and the police officer, is a highlighting of the power relations embodied in subjectivation. Levinas (1982), though he is not often considered alongside these scholars also developed a theory of a face-to-face encounter, which he theorised as a relationship that helps us to escape the “solitude of being” (Levinas 1982: 53; see also Harasym 1998 for an analysis of Levinas in relation to Lacan). Morgan (2011b: 59) explains that for Levinas, “the face-to-face encounter between the self and the other person...is concrete and particular. It is not an idea or concept, nor a type of action or event. It is a concrete reality, an event; it occurs. Furthermore, it occurs as utterly particular: the self is a particular person, and the face-of-the-other is a particular revelation of a particular person”. Levinas’s primary focus is on the ethical dimensions of this encounter, something that becomes clear in his argument that “every encounter between one person and another, is always *already* such a nexus of plea, command, and inescapable responsibility, *before* it is anything else – which it always is” (Morgan 2011b: 66). Whilst his account has been criticised for its extreme view of ethics, what is valuable to retain from this analysis of encounters is the focus on engagement of particular, concrete individuals with one another, and the implications of these encounters in terms of responsibility, not only to each other, but also to the broader community (see also Goffman 1956; Morgan 2011a).

Faier and Rofel (2014: 364) argue that within anthropology, “ethnographies of encounter...consider how culture making occurs through everyday encounters among members of two or more groups with different cultural backgrounds and unequally positioned stakes in their relationships”. The thesis, following this definition, is made up of a series of encounters in Welsh Patagonia, and these are analysed from the perspective of their performative potential in terms of how they constitute subjectivity, considered here as both an individual and a collective concept (Ortner 2005). These encounters are multisensory, with subjectivity being constituted differently through the power dynamics of seeing and being seen, and of hearing and being heard. The key concrete encounters focused on here are those which occurred historically between the Indigenous Tehuelche and Mapuche communities and the Welsh settlers (Chapter 2), between Welsh tourists and local Welsh Patagonians (Chapter 3), between performers and their performance on film (Chapter 4), between music and the community (Chapter 5), and between the self and the ideal musical ‘I’ (Chapter 6). Chapter 7 analyses the annual festival of the Eisteddfod – the culmination of the encounters explored in previous chapters – in terms of what Keane (1997: 18) termed a “ritual performance”. Three theoretical strands underpin the thesis, and it is important to clarify these in terms of their historical and academic trajectory, in terms of how they specifically relate to the context of Welsh Patagonia, but also in terms of the ways in which they are pushed forward in the thesis to provide insights into the concept of encounter.

### *Performance and performativity*

In Welsh Patagonia, two key elements were central to the creation and continuation of Welshness. Firstly, there were a series of large, formally staged performances of Welshness. These consisted of concerts with choirs singing in Welsh, performances of traditional Welsh

dancing, dressing in Welsh traditional costumes, hosting Welsh teas, celebrations of various cultural holidays such as the ‘Day of Gaiman’ and the ‘Festival of the Landing’, theatre performances of the establishment of the settler colony, concerts performed by orchestras or choirs from Wales, and the type of performances that made up the annual Eisteddfod (a festival of the arts which celebrated Welsh culture). These performances closely reflected what Turner (1987: 124) termed “cultural performance[s]”, under which he included “numerous genres...ranging from ritual, to theatre, the novel, folk-drama, art exhibitions, ballet, modern dance, poetry readings, to film and television [...] games and sports, as well as festivals” (see also St John 2008; Lewis 2008, 2013). Turner (1987) argued that cultural performances develop from and reflect the framework of social dramas, which he took to describe “periodic social upheavals, such as political conflict, illness, war, or virtually any disturbance to the normative order” (Lewis 2013: 6). Others following him have pointed out that space must be maintained in analysis for performances as exercises in enjoyment (Lewis 2008). The perspective that became clear in Welsh Patagonia was that performance and enjoyment were two complementary elements, with the performance being more effective when it was enjoyable.

Secondly, existing alongside the more dramatic spectacles of “parades, festivals, and other such events” (Beeman 1993: 380), were a series of everyday acts, referred to by Kapchan (1995: 479) as the “patterns of behaviour, ways of speaking, manners of bodily comportment...whose repetitions situate actors in time and space, structuring individual and group identities” (see further Lewis 2013: 68; Trosset 1993, 2001). In Welsh Patagonia, these everyday acts consisted of speaking Welsh, hosting tourists from Wales, attending Welsh choir rehearsals, Welsh traditional dancing rehearsals, music rehearsals, and Welsh lessons, taking part in other regular events such as film nights or meals organised in the valley, attending the Welsh and Castellano bilingual schools, baking and eating traditional Welsh

food (such as Welshcakes or Bara Brith),<sup>15</sup> and listening to Welsh language radio or music at home. Alongside these daily performative acts were several other displays of Welshness which could be considered to be more “banal” in Billig’s (1995) sense of the word, such as the presence of Welsh road signs, Welsh flags, wearing Wales rugby tops, and the red and green school uniform of the pupils of Ysgol yr Hendre (a bilingual Welsh and Castellano primary school in Trelew).<sup>16</sup> These elements were key to setting the scene for the more explicit performative acts. As one of my interlocutors said to me, early on in fieldwork, “I remember feeling at home in Wales because of the Welsh street signs, I wonder if that is why the tourists feel at home here too.”

My use of the term ‘performativity’ throughout the thesis comes from Goffman (1956) and Butler (1988, 1990, 1997a, 1997b). In the Goffman (1956) model of “homo performans” (Turner 1987: 81), the coherent organisation of everyday habits forms a social role whereby individuals adopt different social roles in different contexts (Goffman 1956: 9; see further Pedelty 2001: 246; Beeman 1993: 373). Goffman’s (1956) focus, fundamentally, was on encounters, and more specifically, on the performances of everyday normal interactions (Covington-Ward 2016). However, Goffman’s (1956: 150-151) argument remains grounded in the idea that there is such a thing as a core self which remains stable throughout in spite of apparent changes. Contrastingly, Butler (1988) aims to move beyond the idea that acts are expressive of an identifiable essence. Building on Austin’s (1962) concept of speech act theory, in which he argued that certain utterances bring about the very contexts which they invoke, Butler (1988) argues that gendered identity is created via the stylised repetition of acts which fabricates the appearance of a substance (see also Butler

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<sup>15</sup> Welshcakes are simple, sweet, flat cakes made with flour, butter, currants, and egg. Bara Brith is a rich fruit loaf.

<sup>16</sup> Ysgol yr Hendre is a Castellano-Welsh medium school. It was opened in 2006, initially to teach children between 3-5 years of age. In 2006 it had 22 pupils, and it now has 104 pupils (Arwel 2018; fieldwork interviews 2015).

1990, 1997a, 1997b; see further Ebron 2007). As Rollason (2011: 43) notes, “subjects appear in particular ways because the ways in which they are subjects can be reproduced continually by them, constituting their identities”. In other words, we become who we are because of how we act.

This model of identity as a social construct can account for flexibility, change, and power in a way that Goffman’s (1956) cannot, as it opens up the possibility of identity being constructed *differently* through encounters (rather than revealing a fixed essence). Butler’s (1988) argument, when considered in the context of Welshness, implies that to view an individual as having an identifiable ‘Welsh’ essence is itself a construction; there is no self as ‘Welsh’ who adopts various social roles of ‘traditional Welsh dancer’ or ‘choir singer’. It is the repetition of habitual activities, such as attending rehearsals, and regularly performing as part of a Welsh choir that creates the *appearance* of a stable Welsh identity.

The thesis considers performance and performativity as two separate yet interrelated concepts. This is a useful approach in the context of Welsh Patagonia, because the daily performative acts were inextricably connected to the performances, with the performances often being the culmination of the daily activities, such as choir rehearsals. Furthermore, the distinction between performance and performativity is itself a construct, as Ebron (2007: 177) notes:

The distinction between performance and performativity is important only because of particularly positioned theories of subject-making. Eighteenth-century European philosophy established that conscious minds are different from unselfconscious bodies and that freedom is that which is not nature. It is within this set of distinctions that performance and performativity appear so different; they repeat the distinctions between body and mind, nature, and freedom.

The approach taken in the thesis ultimately builds on the work of Keane (1997), who argues that any performance has with it an element of performativity even if the very intention of the performance is to conceal the element of creation. In other words, performance is not taken here to be reflective of everyday performative actions, but rather is seen to have its own creative potential (Covington-Ward 2016). Keane (1997: 18) argues that “when most successful, ritual performance works by a circular logic in which it creatively brings about a context and set of identities that it portrays as already existing”. In Welsh Patagonia, this concealment of the element of creation was key to understanding the efficacy of large cultural performances and to understanding the relevance of viewing performance and performativity as two sides of the same coin. The concealment of creation meant that many of the performances presented a polished version of Welshness, of a cultural context (in other words, they presented a particular version of Gaiman as a place) and of a community (of Welsh Patagonians), even whilst in practice also being constitutive of those exact elements which were by their very nature, constructed. Finally, by focusing on the daily performative activities which revealed the element of creation underlying the performances, quite literally so in the context of music rehearsals, and by considering how these created the social context in which they appeared embedded, a more nuanced picture can be drawn whereby it becomes possible to tease out not only the ways in which performances were formalised representation of daily performative acts, but also the ways in which they were connected to broader power structures.

This approach to performance and performativity as two complementary elements is valuable in the context of encounters. Firstly, it enables a consideration of performativity and performance that takes into account the importance of specific others in creating Welshness, and vice versa, it leaves room in the analysis of encounters for a consideration of their

creative potential alongside the power relations implicated in that creation. As Covington-Ward (2016: 9-10) argues, “doing something is doing something more...performative encounters are transformative – they change the existing social relationship in a manner that did not exist before [and] some social interactions have much larger consequences than others”. Further, it is an approach that moves away from the key criticism of studies of performance, which is that they have viewed the performances as somewhat disconnected from their social context (Covington-Ward 2016). In the context of Welsh Patagonia, choir rehearsals, when considered as an encounter between different individuals in the field, had the capacity to performatively create Welshness as an image, along with feelings of unity and belonging, a process that was inevitably related to power structures in the community. In sum, a focus on what Rosello (2005) and Covington-Ward (2016: 9) have termed “performative encounters” enables an analysis which takes into account the ways in which interactions with others were *constitutive* of identities, subjectivities, and relationships rather than reflective of a stable pre-existing essence.

### *Subjectivity and subjectivation*

The thesis argues that performative encounters are a vital element in the construction of subjectivity. The encounters explored here created Welshness, which appeared as an identifiable Welsh essence. The concepts of subjectivity and subjectivation are therefore key to this analysis, and similarly to the concepts of performance and performativity, they are treated in the thesis as two distinct yet closely interrelated concepts. Subjectivation is used throughout to refer to the process by which subjectivity is constituted. The latter is defined by Ortnner (2005: 37) as “the ensemble modes of perception, affect, thought, desire, fear and so forth that animate acting subjects...[in addition to] the cultural and social formations that

shape, organise, and provoke those modes of affect, thought, etc”. This definition focuses on understanding the interactions between culture and what Ortner (2005: 37) calls the “inner states of acting subjects” which also includes an element of “collective sensibility” (Ortner 2005: 42; see further Covington-Ward 2016: 10).

For Althusser (1971), the process of becoming a subject is closely related to ideology. More specifically, the ideology of the ruling class is embodied in systems (in his case, education systems in particular) which in turn produce docile, compliant subjects (see also Bourdieu 1984; Foley 2010; Collins 2009). Althusser’s (1971) classic metaphor which he used to demonstrate how this works in practice is that of a police officer hailing an individual at the street. The police officer shouts, “Hey, you!” and at the very moment in which the individual turns around in recognition of and in response to the police officer’s shouting, he or she is brought into being as a subject of state ideology, and more critically, as a *subordinate* subject in relation to the power structures of the state. Althusser (1971) argues that this “Hey, you!” requires repetition to ensure ideological consolidation – to ensure a lasting rather than a fleeting encounter. An effective interpellation might therefore involve being hailed by the same ideological apparatus in different contexts.

Two elements are particularly useful to consider from Althusser’s (1971) analysis in the context of Welsh Patagonia: that of the importance of the encounter, and the recognition of the inherent power dynamics embedded within this. His work also enables a more specific theorisation of the element of creation involved in performative encounters. Many of the encounters explored in the thesis (such as those that occurred between Welsh tourists and Welsh Patagonians, or between local Argentinians and Welsh Patagonians) were based on unequal power relations. However, Althusser’s (1971) model implies a certain level of

compliance with the process of subjectivation. With this perspective, it becomes difficult to account for resistance or for the ways in which people do, to some extent, fashion themselves. In Welsh Patagonia, for example, it is possible that people feel or become Welsh by participating in Welsh cultural performances or by attending choir rehearsals a few times a week, or might there be a diverse body of other reasons as to why these individuals attend choir rehearsals – reasons which do not necessarily include Welshness? When Welsh tourists visit Patagonia with a particular image of what the Welsh community will – and should – look like, do Welsh Patagonians accept the subjectivation by Welsh tourists without protest? As Ortner (2005: 46) suggests:

There are forms of cultural analysis today, mostly inspired by Foucault or other lines of post-structuralist thought, that emphasise the ways in which discourses construct subjects and subject positions...but the subjects in question in those kinds of analysis are largely defined in terms of political (usually subordinate) locations (“subject positions”) and political (usually subordinate) identities – subaltern (in the British/historical sense), woman, radicalised other, etc.

Theorists moving beyond Althusser (1971) have sought to question the lack of agency and desire in his thesis, by asking what we are to make of a subject who recognises that she or he is being hailed and refuses to turn around, who turns in the other direction, or who wants to be hailed. In doing so, it has been argued that subjectivity cannot be said to be characterised by docile compliancy (Lazar 2010; Levinson 1999; Anderson-Levitt 2003, 2011; Collins 2009; Benei 2008; Gellner 2015). Lazar (2010: 20), for example, suggests in her work in a school in El Alto, Bolivia, that “the ‘messing about’ that so frustrated [her] as a teacher is not necessarily an indication of lack of interest or motivation [but rather] may be a response to the hierarchical relationship”. Benei (2008) takes a similar approach to argue that school children are not passive recipients of school knowledge, taking as evidence their acts

of resistance, such as arriving late to school or mumbling the national anthem (see further Anyon 1981: 11; Willis 1977). However, this work remains largely grounded in a definition of agency as resistance to dominance, and moving beyond this has meant making analytical space for other forms of agency, such as the “socio-culturally mediated capacity to act” (Jassal 2012: 15; Collins 2009; Davies 2006; Mahmood 2001, 2003, 2004; see Laidlaw 2002 for criticisms).

Butler (1995) develops Althusser’s (1971) ideas to introduce the element of desire, arguing that “turning around is an act that is, as it were, conditioned both by the ‘voice’ of the law, and by the responsiveness of the one hailed by the law” (Butler 1995: 7). In other words, we possess some inherent vulnerability to dominant structures, and moreover, we *desire* to be hailed insofar as we want to be constituted as subjects. We want identification, and we performatively pursue it. Consider, for example, the encounter with which this chapter opened, whereby Heledd was, through a series of performative acts, actively seeking to define herself, Gonzalo, and I in terms of being ‘Welsh’ or ‘Argentinian’. Butler (1997a: 9) further points out that submission is a form of mastery and agency in its own right, whereby “to desire the conditions of one’s own subordination is...required to persist as oneself” (see further Butler 1995). To take two examples from the Welsh Patagonian context, to submit to an education system by attending weekly Welsh lessons is to gain eventual mastery of the language (see also Davies 2006; Youdell 2006), and to attend a women’s boxing class in Trelew, whilst the class still exists within dominant Argentinian gender structures, can be a means to foster female empowerment (see further Holland 2010).

In accounting for the element of desire in subjectivation, the thesis takes into consideration what Ortner (2005: 46) describes as the “complex structures of thought,

feeling, reflection, and the like, that make social beings always more than the occupants of particular positions and the holders of particular identities” (see further Luhmann 2006). These concepts also became highly relevant to performance and performativity, as Welshness was often performed to outsiders, with the encounter between the gaze of the Welsh other and the performers serving to constitute the very subjectivity that was being performed. What became clear during fieldwork was that performance and performativity could invoke feelings of Welshness even whilst there was an awareness of the performative element of this. Indeed, the *recognition* or self-awareness of visual subjectivation was key to its success. Covington-Ward (2016: 5) argues that this is central to performance, stating that “another component of performance is heightened awareness, which demonstrates that performance is reflexive and involves manipulation of behaviour, based on the awareness of being observed”. Beyond this, the context of Welsh Patagonia also helps to push these concepts forward because many of the encounters of subjectivation that occurred in the field did not fit easily into a linguistic or visual metaphor. The focus on rehearsing and performing Welsh music in the province meant that much of the work of constituting subjectivity occurred in a musical context. That music was key to invoking feelings of belonging emphasises the necessity of allowing space in our analysis for a multisensory theory of subjectivation and subjectivity in which the power of music and sound can be acknowledged (see further Clifford 1986).

Much like Butler’s (1995) argument that submitting to dominant structures can be a form of mastery, in Welsh Patagonia, several individuals used what they saw as being the powerful effects of music to their own advantage, to practice what I have termed a ‘self-induced musical therapy’. Some of my interlocutors focused on manipulating the powerful qualities of music to improve their mental wellbeing – in other words, they played music as

an integral part of ‘living well’. Foucault’s (1984a; 1984b) concept of ethical self-cultivation emerged to be particularly useful in the context of this type of musical practice in that he discusses the ways in which individuals can modify elements of themselves whilst still existing largely within dominant structures. He theorises a human being who is continuously involved in self-cultivation through caring for the self. This is less about self-cultivation in order to conform with abstract moral rules, and more to do with working towards *self-mastery*. White (2014: 499) argues that “significantly, for Foucault the care of the self as self-formation is also a space of freedom in which we gather ourselves to live and act according to our own will. [However], Foucault is not saying that we are free to choose anything we want to”. This self-mastery allows individuals a certain level of freedom, even if it has its limitations, which are defined by the society, culture, or social group in which individuals find themselves.

The concepts of performativity and subjectivation speak directly to two of the key flaws that have been identified in Foucault’s (1984a; 1984b) concept of self-cultivation. Firstly, much like the early models of performance, the concept of self-cultivation assumes the existence of a core ‘self’, that is an object to be ‘worked upon’ and ‘improved’ (White 2014). Secondly, “the ethical subject described in Foucault’s later writings is too self-concerned: Foucault’s ethics does not sufficiently acknowledge the authority of ‘the other’ in our ethical interactions” (Cordner 2008: 593). Alternatively, the concept of performativity does not presume a body to be worked on but rather the body itself is constituted through performative actions, and subjectivation necessarily indicates an ‘other’.

Ultimately, then, the most appropriate approach taken to subjectivation in the context of Welsh Patagonia is one which takes the concept of encounters with others as foundational.

Following Althusser (1971), the approach taken here acknowledges the strength and influence of power structures, ideology, and interpellation, but it also takes into account a more Butlerian (1995) and Foucauldian (1984a; 1984b) approach to consider the elements of agency and desire, which can enable us to account for the capacity of individuals to take advantage of the powerful qualities of media of interpellation through self-cultivation. The thesis pushes these thinkers forward through the emphasis on concrete encounters as key to subjectivation, whilst also seeking to address the over reliance on visual and linguistic metaphors in theories of subjectivation, in doing so drawing attention to other factors such as subjectivation through non-linguistic sound and music that theorists like Althusser (1971) did not consider.

### *The senses in subjectivity studies*

The thesis, in addressing the issues outlined above, is specifically concerned with the way in which the senses have been theorised within subjectivity studies, whilst acknowledging the work that has already been done in terms of theorising sound in the anthropology of the senses, ethnomusicology, and with the concept of soundscape (see, especially Clifford 1986; Samuels et al 2010; Pink 2010; Erlmann 2004; for criticisms see Ingold 2011). Within subjectivity studies, work has primarily been concerned with an emphasis on interpellation, subjectivation, and the navigation of boundaries between self and other as occurring either linguistically or through visual means (Althusser 1971; Sartre 1958; Foucault 1991; Lacan 1966). In other words, much of the work focusing on the constitution of subjectivity in relation to power structures has focused on the power dynamics of seeing and being seen, and in doing so has drawn primarily on visual metaphors to consider the ways in which gazing, looking, or imagining the look of another plays a role in subject

formation. The approach taken in the thesis is that the concept of seeing and being seen is useful to understand *some* encounters in Welsh Patagonia, but it cannot fully account for subjectivation in relation to music. The thesis will argue that this analysis has further implications for how we view the processes of subjectivation and the subject in that the tendency of visual metaphors is to imply a more discrete, bounded, and objectified subject, whereas sound, being more obscure, tends to imply a more permeable subject, similar to the type of subject implied by Ortner's (2005) definition.

In analysing the encounters in Welsh Patagonia which are centred on looking, seeing, and gazing, four key metaphors and allegories are fundamental to the argument of the thesis. Each of these examples implies that subjectivation occurs when subjects are interpellated by the power of the gaze or an imagined gaze. They are especially significant to understanding the encounters that occurred between tourists and Welsh Patagonians (whereby tourists would watch choir rehearsals) and during film nights organised in the village (whereby my interlocutors would watch their own performances in documentary films on screen).

Firstly, Foucault (1991), in *Governmentality*, draws on Bentham's idea of the panopticon to discuss the ways in which the discipline of the prisoners is controlled through the possibility that they are being watched (see further Foucault 1981, 1990). According to this theory, prisoners in cells in a circular room cannot be sure when the guard in a tower in the centre of the room is actually looking at them, and therefore the possibility that they could be being watched at any time serves to discipline them (Foucault 1991). Secondly, Sartre (1958), in *Being and Nothingness*, discusses in his passage on 'the look' the way in which when an individual is caught engaging in a socially unacceptable activity (in this instance, peering through a keyhole), he or she becomes aware of him or herself as a subject under the

gaze of the other. Sartre (1958) focuses specifically on the feelings of shame involved in this – the individual caught looking through the keyhole is ashamed, knowing how he or she must appear to the onlooker. Thirdly, Althusser's (1971) allegory of the police officer hailing an individual on the street depends on the individual being hailed turning around, *seeing* the police officer and recognising his or her uniform as a visual symbol of state authority. Finally, Lacan (1966), though he is not often considered along with Foucault (1991), Sartre (1958), or Althusser (1971) also develops a theory of subjectivation which implicates looking as a central component. In his mirror stage theory, he argues that an infant, at around the age of 18 months, develops a sense of self through seeing his or her body and actions in a mirror or reflected in a caregiver (see further Gallop 1993). The infant recognises the gap between the self as experienced and the ideal 'I' reflected in the mirror, viewing the ideal 'I' as something to work towards (Lacan 1966). Lacan's (1966) work pushes Sartre's (1958) ideas forward in that he enables us to account for the element of desire involved in becoming a subject (as opposed to a sole focus on shame). As Butler (1995) similarly argues, we strive for identification as subjects.

However, these theories, with their focus on visual and linguistic metaphors of subjectivation, and with their focus on the element of recognition in subjectivation, cannot account for the particularity of music and sound in constituting Welshness in the Chubut Province, or what Weidman (2014: 43) has termed "the poetics and politics of spoken and sung forms". For Althusser (1971), looking remains central to his analysis (the individual on the street must turn around and *see* the police officer, wearing, no doubt, a uniform which acts as a visual symbol of power and social position), but interpellation is also mediated through language, as made clear in the example of the police officer shouting, "Hey, you!" (see further Benei 2008; Hirschkind 2001, 2004). For Foucault (1991) and Sartre (1958), the

gaze, or the imagined gaze of the other is largely a silent subjectivation. Lacan's (1966) mirror theory depends on an infant *looking* at his or her own mirrored image rather than hearing his or her own voice. Further, for each of these theorists, the element of recognition is paramount, though in different ways. For Sartre (1958), the individual peering through a keyhole becomes a subject precisely at the moment in which he or she encounters the other. For Althusser (1971) and Lacan (1966), although they both argued (in different ways) that subjectivation is not momentary but rather permanent, the moments of recognition, interpellation, and encounter are still significant, whereby subjects turn around, look up, or see themselves in a mirror to continually reaffirm themselves as subjects.

Other scholars have pointed to non-linguistic sound, music, music lessons, and musical structure as contributing towards subject formation (see, for example, Feld & Brennis 2004; Rice 2003). Rice (2003: 4), in his ethnography of Edinburgh hospital, argues that the formation of the "patient-self" takes place in response to being interpellated by hospital sounds which structure the patient's experience of time and space in the hospital. McClary (1991) discusses the way in which gendered subjects are created through 19<sup>th</sup> century operatic discourse, and Mills (2005) discusses the ways in which pupils in schools are discursively constituted through the labelling of them by teachers as either 'musical' or as 'non-musical' (see further Turino 2008b). Others have focused more broadly on music and its relation to power, relating musical practice or structure to gendered ideology or class structures (Jassal 2012; Doubleday 2008; Fox 2004; Feld 1988).

In Welsh Patagonia, many of the encounters were musical encounters in that they that occurred during choir, orchestra, or string group rehearsals, in addition to during concerts, performances, and festivals. These encounters between music and the community and

between music and the self means that understanding what it means to be Welsh in Welsh Patagonia necessitated a consideration not only of the ways in which performativity and subjectivation were central to self-cultivation, but critically, how this was *musically* realised. For my interlocutors in Welsh Patagonia, key to subjectivation through music was the moment of ‘flow’ – an experience of complete absorption, engagement with, and immersion in the act of listening to or playing music. The suggestion here is that, in contrast to interpellation through the gaze, for which an element of recognition or self-awareness was necessary to subjectivation, in the context of music, interpellation was at its most successful during this moment of flow. The distinctive contribution of the thesis is therefore in the foregrounding of the importance of the specific ‘others’ in relation to which subjectivation occurs, and in the attention to the multisensory nature of performative encounters. Ultimately, the thesis explores how performing Welshness for a Welsh ear rather than a Welsh gaze changes our understanding of the power dynamics involved in these encounters, pointing toward a self that is more relational, more porous, more permeable than is implied in visual and discursive theories.

### *Chapter outlines*

In making this argument, the remaining Chapters of the thesis are structured as follows:

Chapter 2, *Contextualising a little Wales away from Wales*, provides an historical and geographical contextualisation of the Welsh settler colony in the lower valleys of Chubut and the Andes mountains from the landing in 1865 to the end of my fieldwork in 2017. It does so through an exploration of the ways in which the encounters between the Welsh settlers and

the Indigenous Tehuelche have been portrayed in the media, in popular literature, academia, historical sources, and in local stories. The chapter explores the political and interpellative significance of the descriptions by focusing specifically on two local stories that were told to me by my interlocutors during fieldwork, that of the *Plebiscito* and that of the *Malacara*. Both these stories reproduced historical imagery that was key to the discursive construction of Welsh Patagonia, including the idea of the Welsh settlers arriving to and navigating an ‘empty land’, and the idea of being Welsh or Indigenous mapping onto a dichotomy of civilisation and barbarism, respectively. These ideas were strengthened through a discourse of Latin American multiculturalism which further obscured the place of Indigenous people. Ultimately, the chapter argues that the construction of Welsh Patagonia as a tangible ‘thing’ and the telling and retelling of stories which supported the dominant narrative and silenced Indigenous people implied each other. These performative acts of telling and re-telling had two interconnected outcomes. They created and reinforced the narrative of arrival at an empty land, difficulty managing the terrain, and eventual peaceful settlement, and in doing so created a particular image of what it meant to be Welsh, Indigenous, or Argentinian in Welsh Patagonia.

Chapter 3, *Performing Patagonia under the gaze of the Welsh other*, is about tourism and encounters between tourists and Welsh Patagonians. Ethnographically, the chapter focuses on Gaiman Music School, especially on encounters that occurred during choir rehearsals and performances. It discusses the ways in which Welsh Patagonia as a tangible concept was created through the dynamics of seeing and being seen by others, analysing the roles of the imagination of place and the “tourist gaze” in this creation (Urry 1990; Sartre 1958). The chapter argues that Welsh Patagonia was created as a concrete entity when it was performed to, imagined by, and watched by outsiders (specifically Welsh visitors and

officials), in daily encounters and in more formal events such as the annual celebrations marking the arrival of the original settlers to Patagonia (Golwg 360 2015). It discusses the power relations involved in this process of subjectivation under the gaze of the Welsh other and further argues that joking was used by my interlocutors as one method to navigate the boundaries between themselves and outsiders.

Chapter 4, *Mirror mirror on the wall, who is the most Welsh of them all?: Film as mirror*, is about film nights that were held in the Casa de Cultura (Arts Centre) in Gaiman, events at which my interlocutors gathered for social evenings to watch themselves in a metaphorical mirror, by viewing their own performance as Welsh Patagonians in films that have been created in and about the settler colony. Theoretically, the chapter builds on Sartre's (1958) allegory of the gaze discussed in the previous chapter to argue that Lacan's (1966) work, and specifically his concept of the mirror stage, which has been foundational to film theory, is useful in understanding more deeply the concepts of desire, self-awareness, the mutual gaze of tourists and locals, and the role of documentary films in the valley in the process of subjectivation. In making this argument, the chapter is an exploration of the 'gap' that emerged in the encounter between the concept of the self as experienced (that is, in day-to-day life) and the viewing of the self as reflected in the film (the performed self). In exploring this gap as revealed in film nights, it also discusses the role of dressing in traditional Welsh costumes, arguing that in some contexts, friends became mirrors whereby individuals provided a critical commentary of their own performance reflected in others. Ultimately, the chapter argues that the encounter between two selves, mediated by seeing and being seen, produced critical moments of self-reflection. In this, it addresses the key issue with Sartre's (1958) work on the look and Urry's (1990) work on the "tourist gaze", which is that they do not allow enough room for the agency of the individuals being observed.

The remaining chapters move from discussing the dynamics of seeing and being seen to a consideration of a sonic subjectivation or creation of self and community which occurred through music, to consider the implications of this for theorising the subject.

Chapter 5, “*The community is a family and the choir is the glue*”: *music and belonging*, is about the specific role of music in creating Welshness in Welsh Patagonia. The chapter argues that in contrast to the theories of subjectivation developed by theorists like Sartre (1958) and Althusser (1971), for whom an element of recognition, or rupture, is key to the moment of – or consolidation of – subjectivation, in the case of musical interpellation, subjectivation was most effective during moments of what Diaz (2011: 42) has termed “flow” – otherwise understood as a state of complete immersion in an activity. Through an ethnographic exploration of choir rehearsals in Gaiman Music School and the creation of music by tourists or visitors, the chapter argues that the act of participating in and the enjoyment of music generated feelings of belonging amongst my interlocutors, which emphasised the positive (and powerful) effects of musical interpellation in terms of its uplifting and cohesive power to bring people together. It argues that whilst the mechanisms of subjectivation through sight and sound are different, they do co-exist and speak to each other. In this context, playing, rehearsing, and performing music in Welsh Patagonia also served to performatively constitute a coherent, harmonious Welsh Patagonia alongside the narratives and images explored in the previous chapters. In much of the music sung by choirs in the valley, and in the music created by Welsh visitors during or following their visit to Patagonia, the emphasis, both lyrically and harmonically, was on a positive depiction of the encounters between local Indigenous people and the Welsh settlers (similarly to the portrayal discussed in Chapter 2).

Chapter 6, “*Music helps you to live*”: *musical self-cultivation in Welsh Patagonia*, explores more closely the relationship between music, flow, belonging, desire, community, and power in the Welsh Patagonian context, seeking to understand the element of agency in this musical subjectivation. It argues that the state of flow explored in the previous chapter was not unproblematic, and neither was it a passive act. Flow was not always reachable, but much like Lacan’s (1966) infant looking in the mirror, there was an element of desire in this act of subjectivation in that the state of flow was seen as being the ideal state to be in for optimal musical performance (see also Butler 1995). The chapter further argues that music was used as a tool for individuals who manipulated its powerful qualities to utilise it as a form of self-cultivation through self-administering ‘musical therapy’. In making this argument, the chapter draws on Foucault’s (1984a; 1984b) concept of self-cultivation of an ethical subject, especially on his focus on ‘self-mastery’ within dominant structures to argue that this musical self-cultivation took place within two overarching structures. Firstly, it took place within a cultural context in which therapy, and more specifically, Lacanian psychoanalysis was a central component. Secondly, it took place within a socially constructed hierarchy of musical value, whereby Welsh music was viewed by some of my interlocutors as being of a higher standard than traditional Argentinian music. In its discussion of the subtle power dynamics in musical contexts, this chapter addresses the other side of music and belonging discussed in the previous chapter (Chapter 5).

Chapter 7, ‘*Eisteddfodamos*’: *The Eisteddfod as ritual performance*, explores the culmination of the rehearsals and performances discussed in previous chapters, and the most significant event of the musical year in the Chubut Province: the Eisteddfod. The chapter draws on Keane’s (1997: 18) concept of “ritual performance” to consider the Eisteddfod as the scene of creation of new relations of belonging. The Eisteddfod was central in creating

the very encounters and relationships that it presented as already existing between Welsh tourists, between local Welsh Patagonians and Welsh Patagonians from Trevelin and Esquel, and between local Argentinians and Indigenous people. Key to Keane's (1997: 18) analysis of ritual performance is his focus on risk and "slippages" (which he defines as moments in which things go wrong during ritual performance). The chapter argues that the Eisteddfod demonstrates that beyond a focus on the slippages that occur during the actual performance, we should pay attention to 'moments of disgruntlement' expressed by our interlocutors. In making this argument, the chapter provides an historical contextualisation of the Eisteddfod in both Wales and Patagonia, before discussing the potential and real slippages that occurred in the ceremony of the chairing. It then discusses the ways in which the themes of enjoyment, belonging, flow, and power intertwined musically at the Eisteddfod. Analogously to the context of music explored in previous chapters, enjoyment of the music at the Eisteddfod was key to its efficacy as a performance. However, a focus on the moments in which my interlocutors were unable to enjoy themselves, unable to "relax into the music", or in which they expressed disgruntlement – moments which could occur long before the Eisteddfod began, during the Eisteddfod, or in its aftermath – revealed different power dynamics, which in this case were largely related to the financing and organising of the Eisteddfod.

## Chapter 2: *Contextualising a little Wales away from Wales*

Between Trelew and Esquel travelling across the prairie [the ‘paith’] on a bright sunny day with a stark blue sky, the rows of tall plane trees and black legged willows cast their defined shadows on to the dirt tracks, creating rhythms of patterns disappearing to the vanishing point. The shadows of the manmade fences suspended along the boundaries of the farms, cutting into the round shapes of the rows of hay bales, also add to the shadow patterns cast onto the dry soil by the bright sun.

(Cefyn Burgess: ‘Shadows of the Pairie’)<sup>17</sup>

### *Introduction: #Paithlife*

“Look, do you see to the left? Nothing! Nothing! It is like this between Gaiman and Trelew and Madryn...empty. So different to Wales. Those big green hills – we have a shock arriving in Wales. We have...become used to it, the flat land...viste?<sup>18</sup> We have become so used to the difficult land, dry land. We love it! That is the land that the original settlers arrived on, so it is in our blood. That is why there aren’t loads of animals or plants there; they can’t *live*, viste...no...it’s impossible. But in the middle of the prairie there are some big spiders, pumas and snakes. Sometimes they come down to Gaiman in the summer to look for shade. Be careful!”

I gulped. Rosario glanced at me in the passenger seat, and she proceeded to howl with laughter as we drove to Trelew in her car. “Are you enjoying the guided tour?” she asked, bursting into laughter again. Rosario was great fun – an intelligent, quick-witted, down-to-earth woman who became a close friend during the course of fieldwork. Her great-great

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<sup>17</sup> This description of the prairie was written by Burgess, a textile artist from Bethesda, North Wales, who visited Patagonia in 2016 on a research trip as part of a larger project of creating Patagonian-inspired blankets (see [www.cefyburgess.co.uk](http://www.cefyburgess.co.uk), last accessed September 27 2020). He created four blankets – the ‘Patagonia Blanket’ and two versions of ‘Cysgodion y Paith’ (‘Shadows of the Prairie’), and the Cynhenid (‘Indigenous’) blanket. All the blankets were designed inspired by the shadows and patterns that he saw in Patagonia.

<sup>18</sup> ‘Viste’ is a Castellano word that is regularly added to the ends of sentences in Argentina. It means something akin to ‘you get me’ or ‘you see’ but has no direct equivalent in English. In Patagonia, this is translated by locals to the Welsh ‘welaist di’ and added to the ends of sentences.

grandfather was one of the first settlers to arrive in Chubut on the Mimosa tea-clipper, but she tended to distance herself socially from the Welsh Patagonian community, preferring to spend time with her Argentinian friends outside of work hours. We first met in 2013, when she worked as an English teacher in Ysgol yr Hendre, the bilingual Castellano and Welsh primary school in Trelew. Since meeting her she had become a mother, and at the time of my fieldwork, was taking a break from work to look after her two year old son before later beginning a new job at Ysgol Gymraeg y Gaiman (the Welsh medium primary school) in Gaiman. We soon stopped at a traffic light and glancing at me again she opted for a more reassuring tone, “Don’t worry, you can come to my house and we will drink mate if a big spider...especially a tarantula...goes in your house.” I laughed too, “I think I might have to!” She shook her head, laughing, and a long wisp of dark hair fell across her face as she turned the local radio on.

The light turned to green. We continued. Rosario looked ahead, humming along to a tune on the radio, which was barely audible beneath the crackle, and I turned my attention to the right to the residential area between Gaiman and Trelew. I could see rows of houses, closely spaced together and made from tin, wood, stones, and pieces of cloth. There were people cycling, children walking, large stray dogs running free,<sup>19</sup> and run-down cars parked outside some of the homes. “Who lives there?” I asked Rosario. Her response was quick. “It is a *barrio* for poor people. Why do you ask? Don’t say you want to live or work there? *Estás loca*. For a clever girl you are sometimes *muy pelotuda*.<sup>20</sup> *Por favor*. You’ll get robbed in two...three minutes, or worse.” I took her word for it. Yet, in the days, weeks, and months that were to follow, whilst travelling past, I would gaze from the windows of buses and cars

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<sup>19</sup> This was quite typical in Patagonia.

<sup>20</sup> A typical Argentinian insult meaning ‘idiot’.

at glimpses of life in this other barrio. As I watched mothers hanging their children's washing up, neighbours talking amongst themselves, and children playing football in the streets, I would often wonder who lived there.

A few months later, I found myself on a bus from Gaiman to Puerto Madryn with Amy, an English-speaking Welsh tourist who was visiting Gaiman for a couple of days. We had met at the beginning of her visit and were going to spend the afternoon at the beach before she travelled on to the Andes. Using her mobile, she quickly snapped a photo out of the window of the open Paith and showed it to me. "Do you like it? I might upload it to Instagram." The photo showed the bus curtain, the slightly dirty window, and beyond that, the enormity and vastness of the Paith. The flatness of the land and clarity of the blue sky were perhaps what made it characteristically Patagonian. I shrugged, and responded, "I like it, it is a good photo." She smiled, "Great, glad you like it, I'm uploading it now. What hashtag shall I use? Hashtag Patagonia...hashtag Paith...hashtag goingtothebeach. Oh my gosh, I've just thought of a really good one. What about hashtag paithlife? Let's get it *trending*."

Both these encounters, despite being a few months apart, embodied several themes that emerged as consistently present throughout fieldwork. Amy's photo of the empty landscape, which she considered to be the perfect representation of Patagonia to upload to social media, and Rosario's comment about the neighbourhood between Gaiman and Trelew, both served to obscure the present-day diversity of Chubut by focusing, however subtly, on the Welsh descendants as being the only meaningful inhabitants. Ultimately, the photo and the comment both reproduced the dominant historical narrative of the arrival of the Welsh settlers to the settler colony (which largely focused on arrival to an empty, barren terrain

which they transformed into a fruitful agricultural Province) whilst also touching on more current themes of visual representation and social media, which were key elements in portraying Patagonia to potential tourists and therefore fundamental in the present day construction of Welsh Patagonia.

\* \* \*

This chapter seeks to provide a geographical and historical contextualisation of Welsh Patagonia, in doing so arguing that the establishment of Welsh Patagonia as a tangible ‘thing’ rested on, and relied on, the silencing of Indigenous people. In making this argument, the chapter seeks to demonstrate how these two elements implied each other. Following an historical contextualisation of the landing, it discusses the dominant narrative of the establishment of Welsh Patagonia, and the ways in which it was reinforced during fieldwork through the retelling of the local story of the *Plebiscito*. It then considers an alternative narrative which focuses on the position of the Welsh in the Conquest of the Desert, arguing that during this time, the labels of Welsh and Indigenous became mapped onto a dichotomy of civilisation and barbarism respectively. This dichotomy and the associated stereotypes were reinforced through the retelling of the story of the Malacara. As the chapter will demonstrate, each story, in its own way, focuses on narratives of arrival, difficulty managing the terrain, and eventual peaceful settlement, painting the Welsh as heroic and the Indigenous as either absent or savage. Finally, the chapter turns to an historical overview of the 1890s to the time of the research (between 2015 and 2017) to discuss the changing political position of the Welsh and the Welsh language in Patagonia in relation to the current position of Indigenous groups. Ultimately, one of the dominant discursive tropes at the time of the research was that of multiculturalism. The emphasis on ‘mestizaje’ (meaning of mixed

descent, usually a mixture of European and Latin American) was another means, alongside the two stories, by which the settler colony was depoliticised.

In contextualising the chapter in relation to the remainder of the thesis, it is important to draw attention to what will perhaps become one of the most obvious limitations of the thesis. Despite the focus on the encounter between the Welsh settlers and the Tehuelche in this chapter, with the argument here being that they have largely been made absent in both the historical and present day representations of the establishment of the colony, they remain relatively absent for the remainder of the thesis too, and readers will also note that much of the data underpinning the chapter comes from historical sources. The reason for this absence and for the partial reliance on secondary sources, is that, as Berg (2018) has previously argued, there was a complete silence and occasional outbursts of anger around even informal discussions of the Indigenous Tehuelche and Mapuche, which made it impossible to collect data on the present day perception of the Tehuelche or Mapuche, or on the Mapuche-Tehuelche communities in Gaiman and Trelew. This silence became apparent both in everyday discussions and in the depiction of the establishment of the settler colony in the museums of the valley, which both prioritised the place of the Welsh settlers in the historical narrative.

Ultimately, the chapter explores the political significance of the way in which Welsh Patagonia as a place has been discursively constructed through representations and omissions of the relationship between the Welsh settlers and the local Indigenous people through various media: the press, popular literature including children's books, the Welsh curriculum, museums in Patagonia, and local oral stories. It demonstrates how the dominant popular construction of the historical encounters between the Welsh settlers and local Indigenous

people (specifically the Tehuelche and Mapuche) remained central to the idea of the present-day continuous construction of the subjectivity of the colony as a separate and pure place of Welshness, as illustrated in the fieldwork vignette with which the chapter opened. The key argument of the chapter is that the establishment of Welsh Patagonia as a tangible ‘thing’ rested on, and relied on, the silencing of Indigenous people, with the chapter ultimately demonstrating how the two elements implied each other. In sum, the chapter argues that these longstanding narratives obscured the violence that enabled the construction of the Welsh settler colony, and that vice versa the construction and performance of the Welsh settler colony was, both historically and during the time of my fieldwork, in part, dependent on the silencing of Indigenous people.



Figure 7. Welsh and Argentinian flags at Puerto Madryn, December 2015

*28<sup>th</sup> July 1865: The landing*

Though I have never seen a ship,  
And though my years are quite four score,  
If God permit, I'll join this trip,  
For Patagonia's distant shore!

(Rhys 2005: 24)

On July 28 1865, the *Mimosa*, a tea-clipper, pulled into the shores of Puerto Madryn. On board were a group of 153 Welsh men, women, and children, who had boarded the *Mimosa* ship in Liverpool two months earlier, and emigrated to Argentina, under the leadership of the independent minister Michael D. Jones (Lublin 2017; Coronato 1997; Whitfield 2005; Wilkinson 2007: 85-90).

The motivations of these 153 Welsh men, women, and children who emigrated to Chubut can only be understood within the context of the social dynamics of 19<sup>th</sup> century Wales (Williams 1965; Williams 1975, 1979, 1991; Ross 2008: 196-200). The social relations of the Welsh and English (broadly speaking) who were living in Wales at the time were strained; “despite the vigorous survival of the Welsh language... ‘there was no such place as Wales’” (Morgan 1971: 155). Schools operated exclusively in English, and individuals caught speaking Welsh were made to wear the ‘Welsh Not’; a wooden plaque worn around the neck to symbolise shame (Williams 1965; Williams 1975; Ross 2008: 196-200). In the workplace, bosses tended to be English speaking whereas the workers were Welsh speaking, serving to economically reinforce these hierarchical divisions (Manning 2002, 2004a, 2004b). In the religious domain, the Welsh settlers dreamt of “religious liberty”

(Rhys 2005: 23) to maintain their evangelical Welsh language religious practice in the chapels away from the influence of Roman Catholicism (see further Prins 1993; see further Cohen 2007). Michael D Jones “believed that the Welsh language was so inextricably linked to the national identity that losing it was virtually equivalent to being left without Welsh customs, values, and religion, which was what prompted him to act” (Lublin 2017: 4).

In 19<sup>th</sup> Century Wales, the “basic...thesis [was one] of the classless Welsh ‘gwerin’ [variously tenant-farmers, slate quarries etc.] suffering from oppression at the hands of the English” (Manning 2004b: 527, see further 2002). It was in response to this increasing Anglicisation of Wales that another group of around 2,000 migrated to Pennsylvania, North America. Despite their best efforts towards independence, they became rapidly integrated with US society, and quickly spread beyond Pennsylvania to other states, especially Ohio and New York (Coupland & Garrett 2010). To board the *Mimosa*, to found a new colony in the Chubut, would be to preserve and strengthen Welsh culture and language in isolation from the otherwise inescapable Englishness of Wales (Coupland & Garrett 2010; Bowen 1966; see further Prins 1993; Rhys 2005). As noted in a London newspaper article published in 1867;

Kept within proper limits, the worship of Welsh nationality is a harmless one, and may incidentally preserve some useful qualities from merging in the dead level of English society. Still, when it is set up as something more than a pleasant excuse for tolerably amusing and not intolerably absurd meetings, it may become positively injurious. In some papers lately laid before Parliament there is a singular illustration of this fact. Some Welsh patriots have lately spent some thousands of pounds in an effort to preserve their race and language. For this purpose they selected Patagonia as a favourable site for a colony, *being sufficiently removed from the contagion of the English-speaking races*. This unluckily turned out to be its only recommendation. One or two hundred Welsh men and women have been living there for a couple of years, speaking Welsh, no doubt, with the utmost purity, but obliged to subsist on the charity of the Argentine Government. It is doubtful whether they may not in time succeed in making their own living, but the chances seem to be against it. If it fails,

the last hope of preserving a distinct Welsh nationality will probably disappear; the Welsh will have to reconcile themselves to the prospect that their language will gradually cease to be a living one (The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art 1867: 342, emphasis mine).<sup>21</sup>

The move to Chubut, as well as being a response to the tentative relations between the Welsh and English, was also, at least in part, a response to the rapid assimilation in North America, which was viewed by the settlers as a failure on the part of the North American migration. Central to the move was a determination to maintain cultural independence in Argentina, where they had been secured an offer from the Argentine government of 100 square miles in the Chubut valley. As Lublin (2017: 4) argues:

The only way to preserve Welshness was to streamline migration to a single settlement where the Welsh would be the dominant ‘formative’ element rather than the ‘assimilative’ one, which led to a favouring of Patagonia over locations such as Vancouver, Palestine or Brazil because of its isolation from a potentially dominant non-Welsh majority culture. Nevertheless, the Patagonian venture still fits the general pattern from Wales due to economic reasons in the wake of the disruption of traditional patterns caused by the Industrial Revolution.

Put simply, settling in the Chubut Province was to do with the hope for a better life, with one of its foundational principles being to preserve and strengthen Welsh language and culture away from the threat of the English, a preservation which the previous migrants who left for North America had, in the eyes of these 153, failed to achieve (Coupland & Garrett 2010; see further Prins 1993). This is how, then, on July 28 1865, “after much suffering and many perils, both on Sea and Land, the[y]...found themselves together on the banks of Chubut in Patagonia, some 7,000 miles distant from the old home” (Rhys 2005: 51).

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<sup>21</sup> This newspaper was a weekly London newspaper which aimed to combat the influence of The Times. The political stance of the paper was Peelite liberal Conservatism.

*The dominant popular narrative of Welsh Patagonia: an empty landscape or friendly relations*

The Welsh Settlers had begun to fear they had been shunted aside in a lonely valley, in the solitude of the illimitable expanse of the Patagonian plains.

(Rhys 2005: 77)

At this point in the narrative, the story has tended to go one of two ways, whereby the Welsh settlers are either depicted as arriving at an empty landscape or as living peacefully alongside the Indigenous Tehuelche. There has been the argument, often seen in the media, in popular literature and in the Welsh curriculum taught in primary and secondary schools in Wales,<sup>22</sup> that the settlers arrived at an empty landscape, whereby they were presented with further difficulties due to the wilderness of the terrain. The terrain was tough – in contrast to the “paradise” promised, the soil was “dry [and] brittle” (Morgan 2013: 114; Wilkinson 2007).

The examples that follow can be seen as representing what I refer to as here as being the dominant popular narrative of Welsh Patagonia. By this I mean the narrative that is to be found in history books, memoirs of the Welsh settlers, early writings about the settler colony, news articles, local museums, documentary films, and radio programmes. This has been a highly influential narrative that was also the most prominent narrative in everyday conversations during fieldwork. Here, the emphasis has tended to be on the idea that the Argentine government provided the Welsh settlers with land, and that they struggled initially, but enjoyed relative independence thereafter. The land is described as difficult terrain, but the

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<sup>22</sup> Consider, for example, this set of online resources developed for KS2 and KS3 pupils in Wales: <http://www.150patagonia.cymru/html/ks3/main/index.php> (last accessed August 17 2020).

depiction of the relations of the Welsh settlers and Indigenous people are vague, absent, or described as being reciprocal and positive. As Rhys (2005: 27) elaborates:

It was not like the dear land of Wales, but brown and barren with sparse, tufted, coarse grass and stunted bush expanding in every direction. The cliffs on either side of the Bay were whitish under thin dark caps of struggling growth in the grip of midwinter. The immigrants stood mute before a landscape of mystery. Expressions of disappointment essayed the landscape.

When the relations between the Welsh settlers and the Tehuelche *have been* included in the dominant narrative, they have often been discussed in terms of friendship. Jones, for example, in a discussion on BBC Radio 4 (2014) mentions hurriedly the “nomadic Indigenous people” but goes on to emphasise the reciprocal relations between them and the Welsh settlers. Whitfield (2005: 339) likewise states that “the Welsh lived peacefully in Patagonia alongside the native Tehuelche, trading with them and learning survival strategies from them” (see further Whitfield 2011). Rhys (2005: 84) notes that “the Colonists treated the natives consistently with much consideration and with wonderful patience and indulgence”. Whilst the Tehuelche are present in these descriptions, their inclusion in terms of friendship remains problematic, in that it contributes towards an idealistic and romanticised picture of the establishment of the settler colony.

These narratives of arrival remained prominent in the more recent context too and were influential with regards to the perceptions of Welsh Patagonians and tourists from Wales, as evident in the vignette with which this chapter opens. Within museums in the valley, historical narratives were often presented in a teleological fashion, acknowledging the Indigenous Tehuelche as the first people to inhabit the land, but depicting the Welsh as the “group who established the first *permanent* and *lasting* settlements” (Berg 2018: 162).

Consider also this extract depicting the narrative of arrival from 1981, over 100 years after the original establishment of the settler colony:

It is impossible to describe the experience of arriving the airport at Trelew. Indeed, that first arrival in 1981 is still one of my big life experiences. The airport is in an *extreme desert in the middle of the prairie* a little outside of the city and there is nothing to see there but brambles. Seeing the endless prairie for the first time brought me great sadness – what came to my mind whilst looking at it was the saying ‘for what was this loss?’ To think that the Welsh left a beautiful country to come to such a place. But here they drowned in a sea of Welsh voices and all sadness disappeared. I remember very well the tears that first time, me worried that someone would notice, but I didn’t have to worry at all; we were all crying (Williams 1993: 16-17, emphasis mine).

This curious image has also been prominent in depictions of Amazonia (Nugent 2004; Harris 2004). Harris (2004: 84) states that the Amazonian floodplain has been “traditionally [mis]represented as a vast and hostile resource domain”, arguing that to focus on the social instead is to realise that “the floodplain landscape [is] a lived one, born of the interaction of people and places”. Nugent (2004: 107) likewise draws on his work with a community of Sephardic Jews who have been resident in Amazonia since the 1820s to counteract “the view...that Amazonia is fundamentally a natural resource domain lacking a significant social presence”. In each of these Latin American contexts, the emphasis on the empty land obscures the local inhabitants, which risks justifying their exploitation.

One key context in which these ideas were reinforced in the context of fieldwork was through the telling and retelling of the story of the *Plebiscito* (‘Plebiscite’), which was a people’s vote held on October 16 1902, to settle a Chilean-Argentine dispute over land in the Andes, which had been colonised by the Welsh settlers in 1885. Between October 14 1885 and February 1 1886, the pioneer John Daniel Evans led an expedition, accompanied by Luis Jorge Fontana and 30 other Welsh settlers left Chubut to look for more fertile land on which

to settle.<sup>23</sup> This expedition led to the discovery of Trevelin on October 16 1885, with some Welsh settlers moving from the valley to settle in the Andes mountains, in an area now known officially as Valle 16 de Octubre ('Valley 16 October'), and locally as Cwm Hyfryd ('Beautiful Valley'). As Rhys (2005: 13) explains:

During the last part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century many of the Colonists became interested in developing new settlements in Chubut. After a long wilderness trek of more than six hundred kilometres to the West, young Welshmen had discovered the great Andes range and some of its beautiful valleys. They were lured by the scenery and the agricultural possibilities, and began developing a new Colony which very soon became the most prosperous. They called it *Cwm Hyfryd* (Beautiful Valley), later, it was officially named "Colony October 16".

I first learned about the *Plebiscito* from Paula. Paula was a violin teacher, and the director of the string group (of which I was a member as a cellist) at Gaiman Music School. She was a tall and thin woman, always impeccably dressed, with long brown straight hair, thin-framed silver glasses, and an impressive command of the Welsh language. She grew up in Buenos Aires, but moved to Gaiman in her twenties. She had no Welsh ancestry, but she became a fluent Welsh speaker, and had spent a year studying in Lampeter in West Wales to perfect her skills. She later married Dafydd, a prominent and wealthy member of the Welsh community in the Andes, and had moved to live with him for a while in Trevelin. After her mother was tragically murdered in Trevelin by what she suspected were native Indigenous people (though nobody was ever officially convicted), she moved back to Gaiman with her two young children, Francesca and Stefano. At the time of the research, Stefano was living with his father in Trevelin, and Paula visited them with Francesca for the summer months and

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<sup>23</sup> Luis Jorge Fontana (1846-1920) became the first governor of Chubut in 1884 (Williams 1942, 1946; fieldwork interviews 2015). John Daniel Evans (1862-1943) was 3 years old when he sailed with his family to Patagonia. His nickname was 'El Baqueano' ('the guide/expert') as he was viewed as having a natural talent with regards to finding fertile land on which to settle (Williams 1942, 1946; fieldwork interviews 2015).

also for the Christmas holidays. Paula was very committed to her work. For the majority of fieldwork, she was juggling two jobs – teaching violin in the Gaiman Music School and teaching music in Escuela 100, a primary school which was also in Gaiman. Towards the end of my fieldwork she accepted another job teaching violin in a small music school in the nearby seaside town of Playa Union. She explained the story of the *Plebiscito* to me one afternoon as we were driving to Playa Union towards the end of April for a string group concert:

“In these days...on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April, Dafydd and everyone in the Andes will celebrate the Plebiscito. It is a very important day for Trevelin, well and for the whole of Argentina. What happened...well the Welsh community were living on a patch of land that belonged to Chile. That is, it belonged to Chile if you follow the rivers – that is ‘Futalefu’, viste, the river that runs by Chile and Argentina. At the end of the 1800s, I think 1893 or 4, a school and a chapel were built there, on that land, and that is when the dispute started. Chile wanted to have official ownership of the land. In the end, they asked the United Kingdom to help them solve the problem. As a result of this there was a plebiscite in 1902, which is when the people vote for what they want. Chile made some very generous offers to the Welsh who lived on the land. But in the end the Welsh voted to stay as a part of Argentina, because they wanted to be under the same flag as the Welsh living in the Chubut Valley. Every year in the Andes, they meet in the old school, which is where they voted, to remember the event. It’s a nice story, no?”

I murmured in agreement – it *was* a nice story, but there was another side to it too. In the few documents available on the specific boundary debate as it occurred in the Andes, it is clear that the land was shared with Indigenous Mapuche, even if unclear exactly *how* (see Perry 1980; United Nations 2006; Ministerio de Educación Gobierno del Chubut 2019). A document produced by the Ministerio de Educación Gobierno del Chubut (2019) notes that the piece of land in dispute in the Andes had been inhabited for more than 3,500 years. It further explains that a census conducted in 1895 recorded 300 inhabitants in total living in

Valle 16 de Octubre: 159 Argentinians (including Indigenous people), 44 Chileans, 67 English people (with Welsh people being counted here as English due to their UK origin, unless they had been born in Argentina, in which case they would be counted as Argentinian), and 30 more people – variously from Italy, the US, Germany, Spain, Australia, Switzerland, Denmark, Brazil, and France (Ministerio de Educación Gobierno del Chubut 2019). Whilst there is a lack of data on who exactly voted in the plebiscite, fieldwork discussions and interviews suggested that between 90 and 100 people had voted. That only one third of the population living in Valle 16 de Octubre voted in the plebiscite raises two key questions. Firstly, it raises the question of *why* the Indigenous population did not vote. Secondly, if they *did* vote, one might wonder why they were not acknowledged in the story of the *Plebiscito* alongside the Welsh in the success of maintaining this part of land as a part of Argentina.

Unfortunately, these questions remain unanswered, but what remains relevant is that there *were* others living there alongside the Welsh. This story as told to me by Paula shared with other versions that I heard during fieldwork the lack of discussion of Mapuche who also lived there. The *Plebiscito* story is therefore significant in relation to Johnston and Lawson's (2005: 364) comment that "for the settler...the land *had* to be empty" (emphasis mine). This resonates with much of the literature too. In 1911, Hesketh (1911: 22) wrote following a visit to Patagonia that "the difficulties and hardships which must inevitably have beset the commencement of their settling in Patagonia, contrasted with their present condition, show the Welsh to be splendid people". The emphasis here, as in the story of the *Plebiscito*, was on the heroic and noble acts of the Welsh in a context that was challenging for them, and on their final decision and vote to stay in Argentina.

## *An alternative narrative: the Conquest of the Desert and political dichotomies*

This dominant narrative, however, has more recently been disputed within academia. The alternative narrative states that when the Welsh settlers arrived in Chubut, the land was already occupied, with Indigenous Tehuelche. Lucy Taylor's (2012, 2013, 2014, 2017) recent work describes the changing relations between the Welsh settlers and the local Tehuelche.<sup>24</sup> According to her analysis, the two groups did, at the beginning, enjoy brief cooperative relations, insofar as after the "Welsh arrival the [Tehuelche] autonomy was largely untroubled, their language and cultural life was unchallenged" (Taylor 2014: 1; see further Lublin 2017). During the first years in the Chubut Province, the Welsh settlers and the Tehuelche maintained their own separate systems of education, economics, and their own local political and religious institutions. This remained the case despite the Welsh settlers receiving support from the Argentinian government. The Tehuelche, reportedly, "deemed the Welsh less of a menace than the Argentine government and were contented to see [the Welsh settlers] colonize on the Chupat, as trading with them would be easier than with the 280-mile-distant Carmen de Patagones" (Lublin 2017: 7).

However, in the 1870s, when Argentina sought to establish state control over Patagonia, the Welsh were essentially required to 'take sides' and due "to their geographical origin and skin colour, they were drawn into the category of Argentine civilisation" (Lublin 2017: 8). As Taylor (2017: 2) puts it, "far from being benign... 'friendship' can legitimise colonisation by stripping it of the obvious violence associated with political domination, asset appropriation, and cultural oppression. Clothed in the warm and fuzzy sensations of

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<sup>24</sup> Lucy Taylor is a senior lecturer in International Relations who, at the time of writing, works at Aberystwyth University.

camaraderie and mutual help, shared campfires and fair trade, colonialism becomes veiled in kindness”. Lublin (2017: 8) notes that “winds of change were blowing in Patagonia, as the infamous ‘Conquest of the Desert’ (1879-1884) spelt the end of successful trade between the Welsh and the Tehuelche with its systematic persecution, imprisonment, and murder of Indigenous populations”.

The Welsh were involved in a broader political project, and in doing so were complicit in oppressing the Tehuelche, a point which is often overlooked in the literature, as well as in the media depictions of the settler colony. Taylor’s (2014) analysis points to a very different outlook of history of the Welsh settlers, one which is more in line with Veracini (2013) and Johnston and Lawson’s (2005) perception of ‘settler colonies’ as perpetuating more subtle oppression in terms that are not necessarily physical (see further Taylor 2017; Lublin 2017). At this time, “the frame of the civilisation/barbarism dichotomy [informed] Argentinian intellectual thinking” (Lublin 2017: 4). Military occupation (the ‘Conquest of the Desert’) served to consolidate these dichotomies, with the state seeking to violently eliminate Indigenous groups. In this context:

The role of the Welsh settlers was clear in this arrangement. Insofar as the nomadic habits of Patagonia’s Indigenous people allowed the authorities conveniently to describe the region as a desert, the settlement of white northern European populations (the Welsh were virtually synonymous with the Anglo-Saxon from an Argentinian perspective) in the then frontier territory of Patagonia had a twofold objective. On the one hand, it was expected to plant the seed of civilisation in that remote corner of the country, contributing to the government strategy to counter Indigenous primitiveness with progress. At the same time, it was meant to realise the Argentine claim, until then merely nominal, to the region, under threat both from Chile’s expansionist designs and from European imperialism (Lublin 2017: 6).

Gordillo and Hirsch (2003), in their introductory article to a special issue of *The Journal of Latin American Anthropology* on Argentina, explain the offer of the 100 square miles of land in terms of the historical trajectory of Argentine state policies vis-à-vis Indigenous groups. They argue that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, whilst discourses of celebration of indigeneity were typical of other Latin American countries such as Mexico, Peru, or Brazil, Argentina was contrastingly constituted on a discourse of homogenous Europeanness. Argentina had opened its doors to (white) immigrants in conjunction with a systematic attempt to eliminate its Indigenous populations. Two key dichotomies were at play here, that of the ‘Argentine nation’ versus ‘the desert’ (used to refer to the Pampas, Patagonia, and the Gran Chaco) and that of ‘civilisation’ (European immigrants) versus ‘barbarism’ (Indigenous groups). Consider, for example, this extract from a Welshman’s farewell to his nephew who was travelling on the Mimosa which encapsulates these two dichotomies:

“Since you will not be dissuaded from expatriating yourselves to that wild outlandish desert, I write to wish you a safe and pleasant voyage and much success in your new country. If the Indians do eat you up, I can only wish them a confounded bad digestion” (Rhys 2005: 21).

These early dichotomies were reproduced in Welsh Patagonia through the telling and retelling of a story about a horse called Malacara, which was first told to me by Elena (see also Rhys 2005: 144). Locally referred to as ‘the queen of Gaiman’, Elena was in her 80s with long grey hair, which she usually wore clipped up at the back of her head. She was a direct descendant of Michael D Jones (the individual behind the settler colony in Patagonia) and throughout her life had worked as the headmistress for the bilingual Welsh and Castellano secondary school in Gaiman, Ysgol Camwy. Now retired, she continued to work for the community as the administrative coordinator for the Menter Patagonia Welsh teacher scheme. She was highly respected not least for her fierce personality, wisdom, welcoming

nature, and directness, but also as a source of knowledge, especially of informal information with regards to the personal politics of Welsh community, and the ongoing or upcoming social events within it. Despite the age difference between us, she became a good friend during fieldwork and one whom I admired, respected, and appreciated the company of greatly. One spring afternoon, I was with Elena in her home, a few days before I was due to visit the Andes to celebrate the anniversary of the discovery of Trevelin, when she asked me, “Do you know the story of *Malacara*?” I shook my head and she took a long sip of her mate,<sup>25</sup> and began telling it to me:

“Well, it’s important for you to know, especially given that you’re going to the Andes next week. It was March, 1884. John Daniel Evans and three other friends, Welshmen of course, were going on a trip to look for gold and for fertile land, near the Andes. *Malacara* was John Daniel Evans’s horse. A very clever horse. On the trip, Evans and his fellow travellers were attacked by a group of Indigenous people. Evans managed to lead *Malacara* to jump over a deep cliff. The three others were killed by the Indigenous people because their horses were not brave enough. *Malacara* died in 1901, aged 31. Well, in Trevelin, you can see the grave. The story is important, because it is with thanks to *Malacara* that Evans could return to Chubut to tell everyone at home about the fertile land there. Trevelin was discovered a year later, in 1885.”

Sure enough, in Trevelin the grave bears the inscription, in Castellano: ‘Here lie the remains of my horse *Malacara* who saved my life in the Indian attack in the Valley of the

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<sup>25</sup> Mate, a drink made up of a mixture of herbs and heated water was seen as central to most social interactions. A couple of dessert spoons of the mixture (*yerba*) are placed in a round cup, traditionally made from a gourd, a fruit that is dried and hollowed. More recently, the cup is made from materials like plastic and glass. After placing the herbal mixture in the round cup, one hand has to cover the cup before shaking it, to remove excess dust from the mixture. Water is heated to around 70 degrees, with varying methods to test the temperature. Some of my interlocutors poured a small amount into a sink, with the water ready when steam was visible, and others poured a little onto their little finger to ensure that the water was not too hot. The herbs in the cup are then tipped to an angle of around 45 degrees, and the water is slowly poured in, before adding a metal straw. Everyone drinks from the same cup, with each person drinking its contents before passing it back to the individual responsible for serving the mates. Some added sugar, honey, or extra herbs such as mint leaves for flavour.

Martyrs 4.3.84 when returning from the mountains. RIP John Daniel Evans'. There are several key elements to this story, including the tragedy of the deaths of the Welshmen, with the survived heroic Welshman galloping back to the valley to tell the others of the newly discovered land on his trusty horse. Perhaps the most significant element of this story, however, is the depiction of the Indigenous people living on the land as savage, an image which both justifies and obscures the colonisation of new (previously occupied) land in the Andes mountains. The story, which has gained almost a mythological status in Patagonia, was often repeated in the field, especially upon the arrival of new visitors to the area. Given that many visitors to Chubut tended to move on to the Andes after their stay, this story was often very easily integrated into the conversation. However, in light of the alternative discussion of the years following the establishment of Y Wladfa, its significance in relation to the history of the Welsh settler colony is in its reproduction of the same dichotomies that were underlying the 'Conquest of the Desert' whereby Welsh:Indigenous::civilisation:barbarism.

In this respect, the Welsh Patagonian case resonates with other cases of European migration to and settlement in Latin America in fitting with the "homogenisation promoted by the state in its construction of the country as white and European" (Lublin 2017: 25; see also Bjerg 2003 on the Danes in the Argentine Pampas). However, between the late 18<sup>th</sup> and mid 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Latin America also saw waves of migration from China, East India, and Japan (Hu-Dehart & Kathleen 2008; Denardi 2015) and from Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine (Boas 2017; Beaume 2019).

Hu-Dehart and Kathleen (2008) argue that whilst the history of Asian migration is barely registered in the history of Latin America, in practice, 4.5 million Latin Americans are

of Asian descent, and “Mexicans enjoy their *pan chino* with coffee for breakfast, Peruvians swear on their uniquely named *Chifa* restaurants that they have the best Chinese foods in the world, and Cubans love the lottery game they call *la charada china*” (Hu-Dehart & Kathleen 2008: 11). In other words, the migration is deeply embedded within everyday life. In terms of the dynamics of the migration, the biggest wave of migration in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century from China were men who were sent as cheap agricultural labour (Hu-Dehart & Kathleen 2008; Denardi 2015). In the last two decades, this gendered element has changed in the light of China’s investment in capital in Latin America, and more recent migration has consisted largely of a female work force to work in factories and to run supermarkets (Hu-Dehart & Kathleen 2008). Further, Boas (2017) notes that in the late 19<sup>th</sup> to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Argentina, Mexico, and Brazil saw a wave of migration from Syria and Lebanon, whilst Chile and Central America saw a wave of migration from Palestine (for an analysis of the more recent wave of Palestinian migration to Chile, see Beaume 2017).

Whilst the Palestinian case resonates partly with the Welsh Patagonian case in that migration was, in part, concerned with a “search for a better life” (Beaume 2007: 5), all these groups were ultimately marginalised and faced discrimination. Boas (2017: 1) argues, for example, that “Arabs are called ‘turcos’ (Turks) all over Latin America, which they regard as insulting”. Denardi (2015) argues that migration from China in the last two decades has largely been from lower income backgrounds, which contrasts with the relatively powerful economic position of the Welsh Patagonians in Chubut. Ultimately, then, whilst these migrations share with the Welsh Patagonian case the rough timeline of migration, the power dynamics and dichotomies at play were – and remain – different.

## *1884 onwards*

It is especially important to consider the role of the dominant narrative when considering the claiming of more land and the overall boom in the economy and Welsh language that happened in the 100 years that followed the landing, a success story and a “golden age” which has often been depoliticised and ascribed to the hard work and resilience of the Welsh on a difficult, wild terrain (Lublin 2017: 11). In Chubut the settlers irrigated an area three or four miles to each side of the 50 mile stretch of the Chubut river, creating fertile wheat-lands. New land was discovered in the Andes. By 1885, wheat production had reached 6,000 tons. At around the same time, in 1884, the Argentine Congress authorised the construction of the Central Chubut Railway, and work began in 1886, coinciding with the arrival of another 465 settlers on the Vesta steamer (McDonald 2001; Lublin 2017).

However, following the Conquest of the Desert, there was also increasing pressure from the government on the Welsh community to become a more integral part of the project of building the Argentine nation: it had begun to dawn on government officials that “the soil on its own did not magically create ‘Argentines’” (Lublin 2017: 9). In other words, the Welsh were considered to be civilised, but what the government was really aiming for was civilised Argentines. By the 1890s in Chubut, schools came under Argentinian control and Castellano became the language of the public sphere: the schools, the streets, and so on. Althusser’s (1971) model of subjectivation is useful here in that it offers a language with which to talk about the civilising project of the state. In his analysis, schools were a central means by which ideology could be interpellated into subjects. He argues that schools teach children a “‘know-how’, but in forms which ensure subjection to the ruling ideology or mastery of its ‘practice’” (Althusser 1971: 89). In other words, they learn to read, count, and write, but simultaneously, they learn “the ‘rules’ of good behaviour, i.e. the attitude that

should be observed by every agent in the division of labour, according to the job he is ‘destined’ for” (Althusser 1971: 89). In his view, the manipulation of these ideological apparatuses were central to the subjectivation of individuals as subjects of the state. In this light, speaking Castellano in schools could be viewed as a clear and efficient means by which to interpellate pupils as subjects of the Argentine state. However, it is important to note that the Welsh language continued, becoming ideologically associated with the private sphere: family, chapel, and agriculture.

Alongside the changing schooling system, serious environmental damage was caused to the irrigation system, and to Gaiman in particular, by major floods that occurred in winter 1899 and July 1901, meaning that some of the settlers relocated to Canada, Colonia Sarmiento in Chubut, and Choele-Choel in Rio Negro (see Figure 4; Blouet & Blouet 2009). The impact of the floods, alongside the disagreements between the settlers and the Argentinian government (which also introduced conscription, against the religious principles of the early settlers) caused some settlers to return to Liverpool on 14 May 1902, though some families later returned to Chubut (Griffiths 2014).

The years that followed were particularly politically turbulent (Lublin 2017). In 1925, a National Secondary School (Castellano medium) opened in Trelew. Between 1930 and 1938, Argentina saw a successive stream of military governments, followed by a democratic spell (1938-1943) before a more nationalistic regime. In 1940, non-Argentinian names became banned, in 1943, Catholicism became an obligatory subject in schools and in 1945, the Canals which had been irrigated by the Welsh settlers became nationalised. In this context, in which the Welsh settlers were becoming increasingly integrated into Argentinian culture, it was becoming something of a “paradox of history that Welsh Patagonians were eventually coerced into a culture more alien to them than the Anglicised Welshness that they

had fled” (Lublin 2017: 11). Similarly, the Indigenous populations were under pressure to assimilate, especially with the rise of Peron (1946-1955) which saw the collapse of conservative ideology and the acknowledgement of citizenship for Indigenous people. Whilst this may seem contradictory, this acknowledgement in itself was a subtle and complex means of supporting a narrative that Indigenous people no longer existed in Argentina. As Adkin (2006: 11, emphasis mine) argues:

The dominant national discourse of Argentina today holds that aboriginal elements completely disappeared from the country by the rise of Peron to power. With his first government, Peron granted citizenship rights to those Indians that still lacked them, and many of these people *received identification papers certifying their Argentine citizenship for the first time ever*. While this act did demonstrate that the Conquest of the Desert did not fully cleanse Argentina of its Indigenous population, it also firmly *established the foreign nature of aboriginality*. Parliament considered the granting of citizenship to these people to be justified because they had “Argentinized” and abandoned their traditional lifestyles sufficiently to truly be incorporated within the national community. Thus, the act of granting citizenship secured the belief that the Argentine nation was free of native elements, which in turn causes them to be stigmatized as foreign.

Peron’s fall had further implications and in the following years, Indigenous groups were repositioned as being in need of development. Simultaneously, the Welsh settlers were gaining increased recognition. Following the creation of the Chubut Province, Patagonians were granted the right to vote in 1955:

[This was] a development which turned out to be very significant for the Welsh. The new government officials – a number of them of Welsh descent – adopted the Welsh feat as the foundational narrative of the province and established *Gŵyl y Glaniad* (‘The Festival of the Landing’) on 28 July as the first bank holiday in Chubut. As the Welsh pioneers gained recognition as Argentine founding fathers of sorts, their descendants regained pride in their heritage (Lublin 2017: 13).

The early 1960s marked the beginning of an increasingly prominent space for Welsh language in Chubut. In 1965, a group of Welsh descendants created a committee to organise the celebrations marking the centenary of the landing, a celebration which served to strengthen the links between Wales and Patagonia (Brooks & Lublin 2007; BBC Magazine 2014). As Lublin (2017: 13) notes, “while the more than seventy ‘Welsh pilgrims’ who flew to Chubut marvelled at the survival of ‘a piece of Wales’ at the other end of the world, Patagonians updated their notion of Wales as a modern, thriving country”. 1965 also saw the revival of the Chubut Eisteddfod which had not taken place since 1950 (Lublin 2017; Brooks and Lublin 2007).

From the 1980s, “binational contacts thrived with the advent of new technologies, and a number of Welsh descendants in both the Chubut Valley and the Andean foothills set out to capitalise on their ethnic background by attracting national and international tourism” (Lublin 2017: 15). 1997 saw the strengthening of the links between Wales and Patagonia, with funding being secured for a Welsh Language Revitalisation project, coordinated by the Welsh government, the Wales-Argentina society, and the British Council of Wales (Kiff 2013, 2014, 2015; Arwel 2016, 2017, 2018). The key goals of this project are described as being “the secondment of teachers to key communities, the development of native teachers, the establishment of structured courses and the promotion of Welsh language activities in Patagonia” (Welsh Government 2019: 23; see further Welsh Government 2011, 2016, 2017). These developments signal a significant shift from the challenges that faced Welshness in Chubut before 1950. The Welsh language was being celebrated, Welshness was increasingly prominent, and the connections between Wales and Patagonia were quickly gaining in strength.

At the same time, from the mid 1980s, there emerged a “demand for a new legal framework for Indigenous rights at a national level” (Gordillo and Hirsch 2003: 18). Endere (2005) describes how prior to 1983, the key aim of the government was to present a unified culture based on defending religious (Christian) values and remembering historic heroes (see also Berg 2018). In this context, Indigenous populations, religious minorities, and non-European immigrants were absent in official historical narratives and museums. Vom Hau and Wilde (2010) further note that prior to the 1980s, that policies tended to be focused on class struggles was another factor contributing to the invisibilisation of Indigenous people. From 1990, Indigenous movements began to gain increasing relevance and support, with a focus on the reconstruction of language and cultural practices. As Vom Hau and Wilde (2010: 1288) explain:

Intensified Indigenous mobilisation was closely entwined with dramatic legal changes. During the 1980s, policymakers enacted several laws that treated Indigenous communities as legal subjects and granted them a number of special rights. A new national legislation, the *Ley de la Protección y Apoyo a las Comunidades Indígenas* passed in 1985 and ratified in 1989, established Indigenous communities as carriers of specific rights, guaranteeing them, among other things, the possibility to recuperate lands they had historical claims to. The 1994 constitutional reform confirmed these new legal norms by depicting Argentina as a pluricultural nation and encoding the ethnic and cultural pre-existence of Indigenous people.

In other words, in 1994, a constitutional reform granted specific rights to Indigenous people, based on a new definition of Argentina as being a multi-ethnic country, in contrast to the previous conception of Argentina as being a white nation of immigrants (Vom Hau and Wilde 2010). Ultimately, this quotation implies that, in a manner comparable to the increasing prominence for Welshness, there was also an increasingly centre-stage space for Indigenous communities, one which was now protected by legislation.

### *Present day situation: Welsh and Indigenous communities in Chubut*

However, despite these seemingly positive changes, Barreiro et al (2020: 63) argue that in practice, “the current hegemonic narrative about the Conquest of the Desert denies not only the Argentinian state’s responsibility for the injustices suffered by Indigenous people in the past, but also the ongoing existence of Indigenous communities in Argentinian territory in the present”. In other words, the new rights granted to Indigenous people did not translate into practice, in that Indigenous people were still being made invisible. Barreiro et al (2020: 63) further argue that the “purported absence of Indigenous populations in Argentina does not correspond to the reality”.

Indeed, in Chubut, of the 420,137 inhabitants of the Chubut Province who are recorded as living in private homes for 10 years or more in the 2010 census, 36,557 of these are defined as Indigenous or as having Indigenous descent (INDEC 2012). In Argentina as a whole, the corresponding figures are 33,398,225 and 788,497, respectively (INDEC 2012). Whilst there are no corresponding figures for those of Welsh descent, with the 2010 census only recording as ‘European’ those who were born in Europe and were living in Argentina, a significant proportion of the population of both Chubut and broader Argentina are said to be of Welsh descent, without taking into account whether or not they speak Welsh (INDEC 2012; Arwel 2018; fieldwork personal communications). In Patagonia, the figures of individuals of Welsh descent (with or without the Welsh language) were estimated to be around 50,000 at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which would make up around 25% of Patagonia (Arwel 2018). Given that these figures account for the whole of Patagonia (rather than only for Chubut) it would indicate that there are far fewer people with Welsh descent than Indigenous descent living in Chubut. Adkin (2006) further argues that whilst in the past

two decades Indigenous groups have progressed from a position of invisibility – in which they were ignored by institutions and organisations – to participating in assemblies, forming political parties, and winning governmental positions, “native populations have the strongest correlation with impoverishment, lack of education, marginalisation of any group in the region” (Adkin 2006: 1).

In terms of the more specific situation of the Tehuelche and Mapuche in Patagonia, exchange and commercial activity between the Mapuche and Tehuelche in Patagonia during the 18<sup>th</sup> Century has been said to lead to a ‘Mapuchisation’ of Tehuelche culture.<sup>26</sup> The ‘National Indigenous Census’ of 1966-1968 notes that the majority of Tehuelche who remain most attached to their culture are located in the Santa Cruz Province (200 of whom are recorded in the Census), and that the 278 individuals in La Pampa and Chubut were “found Mapuchised” (Fabre 2005: 8). In terms of Tehuelche language, the census notes “fewer than ten speakers in the decade of 80”, suggesting the near extinction of the language (Fabre 2005: 8; see further Aliga 2019). This Mapuchisation has political implications – Adkin (2006: 15) argues that “both national and provincial state institutions dismiss the claims of aboriginality by Argentine Indigenous groups [for example, their originality as Tehuelche] by stressing their lack of the traditional cultural markers [such as language] present in their foreign affiliates”.

Endere (2005) argues that the Mapuche of Chile have tended to maintain their religion, customs, and language more than their counterparts in Argentina, to the point that the two communities have few characteristics in common. However, in the Andes in

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<sup>26</sup> This term (along with the more outdated term ‘Araucanization’) is used to refer to the expansion of Mapuche culture in Patagonia and the process of assimilation for other Indigenous people such as the Tehuelche.

Patagonia, the Mapuche communities do organise an annual ceremony called ‘camaruca’ which used to be forbidden by authorities during the era of military governments (Endere 2005; for an ethnographic account of rural Mapuche in southern Chile, see Course 2011). In the Chubut Province, at the time of the research, there were mixed communities of Mapuche and Tehuelche, such as the ‘Mapuche Tehuelche Trelew Community’, and the ‘Namuncurá-Syhueque Community’ in Gaiman. Each year, on August 9, Argentina celebrated the ‘International Day of Indigenous People’. In October, ‘Columbus day’ (a national holiday which officially celebrated the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Americas) was firstly modified to ‘Day of Race’ and more recently (2010) to the more inclusive ‘Day of Respect for Cultural Diversity’. These days were all marked with a national Bank Holiday. However, as Berg (2018) argues, and as I too noted in the introduction to this chapter, there remained a general silence around discussions of the Mapuche Tehuelche communities, both in terms of the present day situation and in terms of their history. This silence was reflected in the museums of the valley, whereby the focus, in both the objects displayed and the narratives told, was mostly on the Welsh community.

Contrastingly, in recent years in Chubut, Welsh language and culture have been increasingly prominent, with a bilingual (Castellano and Welsh) primary school Ysgol yr Hendre opening in Trelew in 2006, and Menter Patagonia (which promotes Welsh activities in the valley) being established in 2008. In Chubut, at the time of the research, there were estimated to be around 5,000 Welsh speakers, the majority of whom were living in Gaiman, and statistics on the numbers of Welsh learners enrolling on Welsh courses demonstrated that this figure was increasing annually in a fairly consistent manner (see figure 8).<sup>27</sup> This

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<sup>27</sup> It is important to remain mindful that these figures cannot accurately represent the number of Welsh speakers. This data accounts for the number of learners enrolled on courses (some of whom may not attend the classes or speak Welsh). Others might be fluent Welsh speakers without attending classes.

mirrored a trend in Wales where there was also an emphasis on increasing numbers of Welsh language speakers. At the time of the research, there were around half a million Welsh speakers in Wales, accounting for around 19% of the population, and the Welsh Government had released a target of achieving one million Welsh speakers by 2050 (Welsh Government 2016, 2017, 2019; Garrett et al 2008; Johnson 2013).

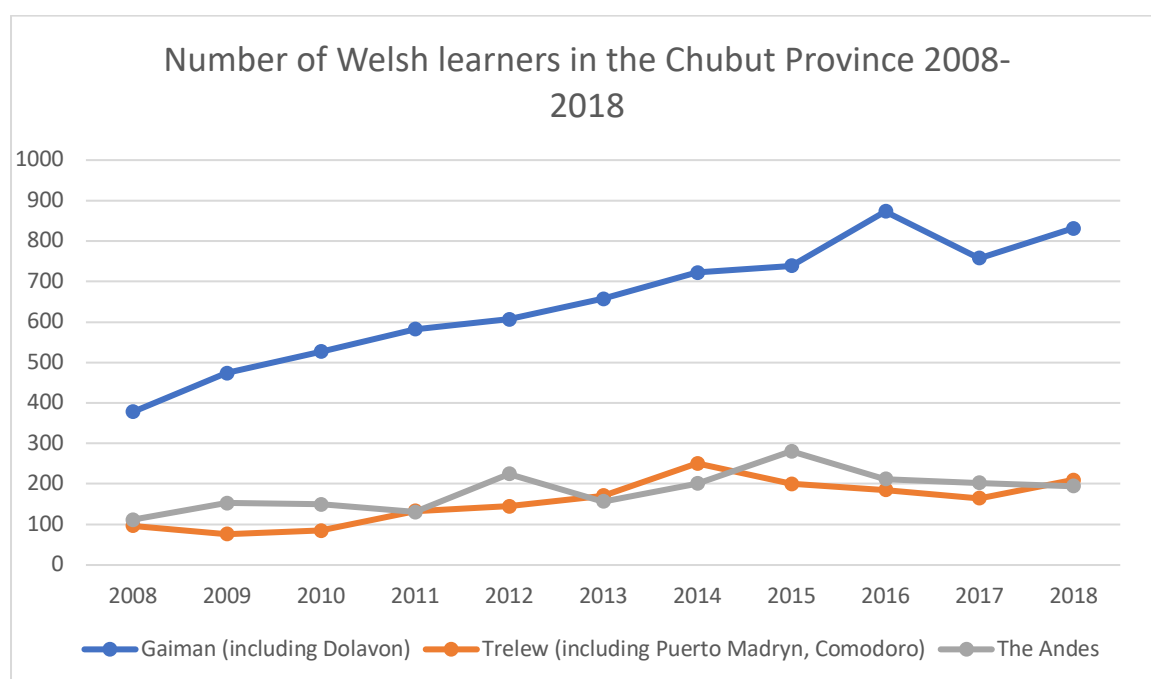


Figure 8. Number of Welsh learners (all ages) in the Chubut Province 2008 – 2018, chart constructed from data presented in Arwel (2018).

At the time of my fieldwork (between 2015 and 2017), Welsh culture and language were visibly thriving in Gaiman and Trelew, my two main field-sites. 2015 was a particularly crucial year, with celebrations of 150 years since the establishment of the settler colony serving to further strengthen the connections between Wales and Argentina. Whilst the Welsh Patagonian community were fully integrated into Argentinian society, they did maintain their own traditions and institutions within this integration. In Gaiman, there was a Welsh nursery called Ysgol Feithryn Gaiman, a primary school called Ysgol Gymraeg y Gaiman (which

taught pupils up to the age of 9),<sup>28</sup> a primary school called Escuela 100, a secondary school called Ysgol Camwy, a small museum full of historical artefacts belonging to the original Welsh settlers, the Casa de Cultura (an Arts Centre which hosted concerts, film nights, lectures, and photography exhibitions), three large Welsh teahouses (see Lublin 2009), a Welsh language music school, and a bakery-café called ‘Siop Bara’ (‘Bread Shop’) in the centre of the village. Two Welsh teachers were sent annually from Wales to Gaiman and Trelew as part of the Welsh Language Project, to support Welsh language development in the area. Gaiman’s main tourist attractions were the ‘first ever built Welsh house’ and the disused train tunnel which had been converted into a museum, where visitors could listen to a spoken history of the old railway in Castellano and in Welsh. Religious buildings were a prominent presence – on the outskirts of the village there was a Welsh chapel called Capel Bethel, and in the centre of town there was a large Methodist church.

Across the prairie in the Andes mountains was the village of Trevelin, with its Welsh chapels, traditional Welsh architecture, a recently opened (2012) bilingual (Castellano and Welsh) school called Ysgol y Cwm,<sup>29</sup> Welsh traditional dancing groups and classes, a museum which displayed a variety of items used by the Welsh settlers, Welsh teahouses, and one teacher being sent annually from Wales with the Welsh Language Project to support language learning. The permanent learning co-ordinator of the Welsh Language project also lived in Trevelin at the time of the research (Kiff 2014, 2015; Arwel 2016, 2017, 2018).

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<sup>28</sup> Ysgol Feithrin Gaiman was opened in 1993. A School, Ysgol Gymraeg y Gaiman was opened in 2013. There are now 90 children receiving bilingual education in the village (Arwel 2018; fieldwork interviews 2015).

<sup>29</sup> Ysgol Gymraeg y Cwm opened its doors in September 2012, with 9 pupils. It opened with 50 pupils. By 2018 there were 140 pupils attending the school. It accommodates pupils from nursery age to year 6. The school website was launched in July 2018, which aims to keep parents and pupils updated with news, important dates in the school calendar and other relevant information (Arwel 2018, fieldwork interviews 2015; see further <http://www.ygyccwm.co.uk>, last accessed September 27 2020).



Figure 9.  
Walking  
with  
friends the  
day after  
the  
Rifleros  
walk: a  
view over  
Esquel,  
November  
2015



Figure 10.  
Sunset over  
the village  
of Gaiman  
in the  
Chubut  
Valley,  
July 2015



Figure 11.  
Admiring the  
view from  
Craig Goch  
after hiking to  
celebrate the  
anniversary of  
Los Rifleros  
de Chubut and  
the founding  
of Trevelin,  
November  
2015



Figure  
12.  
Streets  
of  
Trelew,  
August  
2015

## *Conclusions: empty lands, multiculturalism, and the creation of Welsh*

### *Patagonia*

“This is a land of exiles,” the legendary writer Jorge Luis Borges would respond with a half-smile when asked about Argentine identity. Aside from exhibiting his taste for eccentricity and puzzling his audience, in his answer Borges was in fact repeating one of Argentina’s most powerful images: the idea that it is a modern country built from scratch through liberal economic and social policies and massive European immigration.

(Nouzeilles & Montaldo 2002: 1)

Today, Argentina is often described as being a country made up of European immigrants, and many people have French, Spanish, Italian, or Welsh descent. On the ‘Day of Gaiman’, which was an annual celebration of the establishment of the village, this multiculturalism was exaggerated and displayed through a parade in which groups of individuals with different European descent walked through the main street of Gaiman dressed in traditional outfits representative of their culture or country. However, this emphasis on ‘mestizaje’ (mixed, usually of Argentinian and European descent) and multiculturalism is problematic. Guano (2003) points out that the typical description of Argentina (his specific focus is on Buenos Aires) as the ‘most European of all Latin American countries’ is a discourse which romanticises and depoliticises Argentina, obscuring the struggles of Indigenous groups, Asian groups, Arab groups, and what Hooker (2005: 285) refers to as “Afro-Latinos” in relation to those of European ancestry who occupy positions of relative power and prestige. Between 1580 and 1640, at the height of the slave trade, many Africans were relocated to Latin America (Gorofolo 2012; Proctor 2012; Andrews 2004). This immediately “rooted people of African descent in an immediate and direct environment of patronage and hierarchy” (Gorofolo 2012: 34). Despite this, Guano (2003: 160) writes that

“even though in Buenos Aires a dark-skinned Argentine citizen can be arrested at any time under suspicion of being an illegal immigrant from another Latin American country, it is a commonly held belief...that there is no racism in Argentina” (see further Briones & Guber 2008).

Wade’s (1997, 2005, 2012, 2013) work has been central in this respect. He argues (2013) that starting from the 1980s in Brazil, Columbia, and Mexico, the discourse of multiculturalism placed populations of European ancestry on a pedestal, and black and Indigenous populations became treated as a singular homogenous ‘other’. Whilst the new framework of collective rights seemed, theoretically, to be inclusionary of both groups, Hooker (2005) argues that Indigenous groups have been far more successful in winning collective rights from the state. In practice, then, multicultural citizenship reforms have deepened gaps between Indigenous and Black groups. It has been easier for Indigenous groups to formulate their struggles within the parameters of collective rights, insofar as such rights must be claimed in terms of connections to the land and an essentialised conceptualisation of identity (see further Richards 2010; Warren 2013).

During my time in the field, Argentina was often described to me as a country made up of European immigrants. Once, whilst drinking a cup of coffee with one of my interlocutors in Trelew’s shopping centre, relatively early on into fieldwork, she smiled sympathetically at me as I stirred my coffee, and asked me how I was feeling in Argentina. “How do you feel here?” I paused, and said, “I feel good.” I explained to her that I had settled in easily and that I felt quite at home. “Ahhh yes,” she nodded, a knowing smile emerging, “Do you know why? It is because Argentina is the closest Latin American country to Europe – it is a country made up of Europeans, by descent. For you, it is just like being in France. We are very mixed. That is why you feel good here.” This emphasis combined with the

discourse surrounding the landing of the Welsh to the ‘empty land’ is exactly what Guano (2003) refers to when he discusses the discourse of multiculturalism serving to obscure the place of Indigenous people in Argentina.

This chapter has contextualised Welsh Patagonia within the context of Argentina, historically and geographically. It has argued that local stories, narratives, and discourses, regularly told and retold in the Chubut province, reinforced the idea that those 153 Welsh settlers arrived in Chubut to an empty land, in addition to the image of the ‘heroic’ Welsh, and the dichotomy of Welsh:Indigenous::civilisation:barbarism. In doing so, it has revealed the ways in which the encounters between the Welsh and the Indigenous people who were living on the land at the time of the establishment of the settler colony were central in the subjectivation of both the Welsh community and the Indigenous populations, and the ways in which the creation of Welsh Patagonia as a tangible ‘thing’ ultimately rests on the maintenance of this dominant narrative. The Welsh Patagonian settler colony has been considered within the context of broader Argentinian history, especially the Conquest of the Desert, which saw the displacement of Indigenous people from their traditional lands to make way for what the military government saw as being a civilising force of Europeans. Whilst the Welsh settlers were largely motivated to emigrate to Argentina to create a community in which their language and culture could thrive in the ‘desert’, away from the influence of the English, they were nevertheless complicit in this civilising mission. The stories and discourses from Patagonia presented in this chapter, including the story of arrival and establishment of the settler colony, the discourses of multiculturalism, the story of Malacara the heroic horse, and the story of the Chile-Argentina plebiscite demonstrate the recent significance of these ideas.

Finally, the remainder of the thesis turns to the particularity of the Welsh community within the context that I have described – to explore in more depth how and why it was continually created and recreated, both visually and sonically (especially within the context of music), how the image of a homogenous community was reproduced and maintained, and how its internal politics and the relationships between local Argentinians and Welsh descendants complicated this appearance of homogeneity.

### Chapter 3: *Performing Patagonia under the gaze of the Welsh other*

A line from the 1941 Oscar-winning adaptation of Richard Llewellyn's novel *How Green Was My Valley*, a story about a Welsh mining community at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, reads 'singing is in my people as sight is in the eye'. And this is true; we as a nation grow up singing in school, at parties, in church. [...] The national calendar is filled with festivals, concerts and events encompassing all types of singing. [...] The tradition of singing has been collectively handed down from generation to generation. *Being Welsh and singing seem to go hand in hand*, it is just something we all do, even if we don't quite know why.

(Clarke 2018, emphasis mine)

#### *Introduction: a Patagonian choir rehearsal*

"Sopranos, please, watch the rhythm in bar forty-six. Ok, tenors solos from bar twenty...Shh, listen! Please, sopranos, *listen*, so that you don't come in early!"

The light of the evening sun glinted through the window of the main hall of Gaiman music school, throwing shadows on the tiled floor. The sound of the four-part choir resonated through the building, accompanied by the echoes of a backing track from a large, square speaker, the intermittent sounds of tapping feet, the scrambling turnings of pages, and the occasional interjection from the choir director, Maria, a broad, enthusiastic Welsh Patagonian woman with a short, curly bob haircut.<sup>30</sup> It was a Monday evening in spring, early September, in the mixed choir weekly rehearsal, and we were rehearsing *Môr a Mynydd* ('Sea and Mountain'), which was a swing-style song written about life in Aberystwyth, a coastal university town in West Wales.

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<sup>30</sup> A four-part choir is usually a mixed choir which consists of soprano, alto, tenor, and bass voices.

Eisteddfod del Chubut –Prif Gystadleuaeth (cor dros 30 o leisiau- mas de 30 integrantes)

04 - MOR A MYNYDD *Coup. n°67 a*

115 Swing dawel

Soprano  
Alto  
Tenor  
Bass

Rhodes Piano

SOCIACION  
Eisteddfod  
del Chubut

S.  
A.

dw rw dw dw dw da - ba da ba da ba dw w *P* Mae

dw dw dw dw dw dw dw dw w *P* Mae

Figure 13. Môr a Mynydd sheet music

The dotted rhythm of the swing beat combined with the first few moments of harmonious humming were what gave this song its lazy, finger-clicking feeling. The imagery invoked by the lyrics complemented this rhythm, as we sang in Welsh of young romance “lovers whispering like the sun”, “the world wondering along the prom”, of “the waves lick[ing] the distant mountains”, of “fields of wheat [as] the waves whispering in the bay”, and of a still, tranquil presence in nature. These themes intertwined throughout the piece and the resulting musical message was simple and lovely: life is pretty good, if not bordering perfection, in Aberystwyth:

The lake is so close tonight,  
And the world is wandering along the prom,  
Lovers whispering like the sun,

And fields of wheat like waves whispering in the bay.  
A thousand and more stories and histories to tell,  
To repeat and repeat,  
Ha ha ha.

Everyone is searching for some faith,  
Still like children with their ice-cream smiles.  
The lake is so close tonight,  
And the world is wandering along the prom,  
Lovers whispering like the sun...

The lake is so close tonight,  
But the distance is the same today and tomorrow.  
There is nothing but the movement and stillness of the water,  
And the picture here changing over time.

The waves lick the distant mountains,  
As people greet each other on the prom.

The piece was written by Alberto, an eccentric, kind, redheaded Welsh Patagonian composer and an incredible pianist who was fluent in Welsh, English, and Castellano and who, during the time of fieldwork, lived in Gaiman with his wife Sofia, who was a music teacher at Ysgol Gymraeg y Gaiman, and their little girl, Siwan. His mother, Eleanor, who also spoke fluent Welsh, was the leader of Gaiman girls' choir. Eleanor's brother lived with his family in Wales in a village close to Aberystwyth, and visited Patagonia regularly. Vice versa, Alberto and his family had also visited Wales regularly, where Alberto had taken part in the Gorsedd in Wales and had also been a judge in the Llangollen Eisteddfod. Alberto stood at the edge of the rehearsal room in his characteristic combination of fleece and shorts, his glasses balancing precariously on the end of his nose, grinning widely. When we had finished singing it for the first time, he clapped his hands together and said, "Amazing, perfect, like that, but with more enthusiasm, it is honestly beautiful this place."



Figure 14. Running on Aberystwyth promenade during a fieldwork break, August 2016



Figure 15. Aberystwyth at sunrise, June 2020

Most – though not all – choir attendees could understand and speak at least a couple of sentences of Welsh. Even so, when a new piece of music with Welsh lyrics was distributed we usually went through the lyrics methodically together to come to something akin to an agreed translation. Maria stood up. “Have you got your pencils ready?” We nodded obediently. The lady sitting to my left stifled a yawn and I felt some fidgeting behind me. “Right, excellent, we will start from the start. ‘Llyn mor agos’ means that the lake is close. Do you understand?” A pause then, and the sound of pencils scribbling frantically. We continued like this, diligently, until we had reached a mutual understanding and an agreement on the full translation of the piece. Geographically speaking, the song was familiar to a few: some members of Gaiman girls’ choir had visited Aberystwyth in 1997, and a couple of others had visited independently. However, the majority had to use their imagination, filling the disjuncture between context and music in order to sing about a place to which they had never been. Despite the time dedicated to translation, during the first few times we sang the piece, whispers of “what does it mean?” and “where is it?” fluttered through the rows of choir members.

Just a month later, I was dressed in black formals, standing with the other choir members at the side of the stage in the Eisteddfod, holding our music folders, waiting to compete in the mixed choir competition. When we were called, we made our way in single file to the stage where the squeaking of the benches underneath our feet seemed deafeningly loud in the full, silent hall. Maria pressed ‘play’ on the backing track, before stepping back to her place in front of the choir and raising her arms with a grin. We sung with great energy and enthusiasm, painting an idyllic image of Aberystwyth – a seaside dream full of beaches, promenades, ice-cream, romance, and happiness – for the audience. The audience, largely made up of locals and tourists visiting from Wales, clapped vigorously when we finished. We

grinned and bowed collectively before returning to our seats where we eagerly anticipated the words that we had all been hoping and waiting for: “the first prize goes to...Gaiman Music School!”

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For Urry (2002: 3), “the tourist gaze is constructed through signs, and tourism involves the collection of signs (see further Urry 1990, 2001). When tourists see two people kissing in Paris what they capture in the gaze is timeless romantic Paris”. In the Patagonian context, Urry’s (2002) statement can be reframed as a question – what do Welsh tourists see when they attend the performance of a Welsh language choir in an Eisteddfod in Patagonia? Moreover, what *happens* to the members of the Welsh language choir when they are being watched by a tourist? Sartre’s (1958) ideas about looking and gazing, which he developed in *Being and Nothingness*, are useful here. He argues that we become aware of ourselves when we are confronted with the gaze of the other. He writes:

Let us imagine that moved by jealousy, curiosity or vice I have just glued my ear to the door and looked through a keyhole. I am alone and on the level of a non-thetic self-consciousness. This means first of all that there is no self to inhabit my consciousness, nothing therefore to which I can refer my acts in order to qualify them. They are in no way known; I am my acts and hence they carry in themselves their whole justification. [...] My attitude, for example, has no ‘outside’; it is my pure process of relating the instrument (the keyhole) to the end to be attained (the spectacle to be seen), a pure mode of losing myself in the world (Sartre 1958: 282-284).

We all know, or can imagine, that curious feeling of being lost in thought whilst reading a book in a library, looking out a train window, or painting a picture. Sartre (1958) argues that this individual – lost in his or her own activity – is not yet aware of him or herself

as a subject. It is only when Sartre's (1958) subject is caught looking through a keyhole by someone approaching him from behind that he becomes profoundly, embarrassingly aware of his own subjectivity and presence in that moment. In other words, it is not until we are confronted with the gaze of the other that we become aware of our own presence and subjectivity and of the subjectivity of the other. This is closely linked to the imagination. The feeling of shame at being caught peering through a keyhole and the possibility of seeing the other as a subject comes from our *capacity to imagine* the other person's perspective. As Sartre (1958: 280) puts it, "my fundamental connection with the other-as-subject must be able to be referred back to my permanent possibility of being seen by the other".

Whilst Sartre's (1958) focus is on individual human identity, his interest in the creative capacity of the gaze and the role of the imagination and shame is what make his allegory especially relevant here. Urry (1990) was the first to theorise what he called the "tourist gaze". He originally argued, in *The Tourist Gaze*, that the tourist gaze objectifies local residents and in doing so has the ultimate power and authority over them. He later revised his ideas to account for the "large increases in the growth of tourists emanating from many very different countries...that once were places visited and consumed by those from the West" (Urry 2001: 3, 2002). Others following him have argued variously that tourism is not only about how tourists view locals, but also about how locals view them (Moaz 2005; Guneratne 2001), that the submission to the tourist gaze can also be considered a form of "staged ethnicity" whereby traditional heritage is capitalised (Zhihong 2007: 256; Volkman 1990), that gazing cannot account for the active and involved tourist as it implies a certain objectivity and passivity (Perkins & Thorns 2001), and for a recognition of the elements of documentary film and other means of producing images which are key to the maintenance of the tourism industry (Geiger 2011; see further Chapter 4).

This chapter argues that it was under the recognition and gaze of the Welsh other that Welsh Patagonia came into being as a concrete entity. In making this argument, it seeks to bring the role of the imagination and shame to the forefront of the analysis. Imagination was key to this encounter, both in the sense of the capacity of the Welsh Patagonians to imagine how the tourists desired to see them (which could itself invoke feelings of shame), and in the capacity of the tourists to imagine Welsh Patagonia and Welsh Patagonians from home before their visit. In the moment of being observed, or potentially being observed, Welsh Patagonia was at its most self-conscious, and subjectivity as Welsh Patagonian – along with identity or membership within the ‘group’ – was at its most secure. In making this argument, the chapter focuses on the relationship between imagination, performance, and the gaze – the gaze of tourists and officials in the making of Welsh Patagonia.

This chapter firstly contextualises the argument within the context of Gaiman Music School and its relationship to tourism. The role of the imagination (the imagining of Patagonia in Wales and the imagining of Wales in Patagonia) and its connection to subjectivity is then discussed, through an exploration of singing the Welsh National Anthem out of context. It argues that the ways in which Patagonia was imagined in Wales and the ways in which Wales was imagined in Patagonia represented something social and creative that was constantly being re-defined in every social interaction, making a theoretical argument for a discussion of the ‘gaze’ rather than a ‘lens’ as has been previously used in describing the imagining of Patagonia. It provides an ethnographic analysis of tourist interactions in Gaiman Music School to consider the performance of a version of Welsh Patagonia and Welshness to visitors and the performance of Welsh Patagonia in more formal or official contexts beyond the music school, such as in the annual celebrations surrounding Diwrnod y Glaniad (‘Day of the Landing’), which were held on July 28 to commemorate the

arrival of the first settlers to Patagonia. Finally, it considers the ways in which joking was used by my interlocutors as a way to comment on the differences between themselves and the tourists, which highlighted the value of focusing on joking and laughter (Carty & Musharbash 2008), the agency in these interactions, and the ways in which imagining others was predicated upon a range of practices which maintained group boundaries.

### *Escuela de Música Gaiman (Gaiman Music School)*



Figure 16. Gaiman Music School, August 2015

If you were to approach Gaiman from the nearby town of Trelew via Ruta 25, and to follow its main street, you would pass the museum, the hospital, a few houses, a bakery-café called ‘Siop Bara’ (‘Bread Shop’), various kiosks selling a selection of chocolates, biscuits, beer, and cigarettes, and a large YPF petrol station, before reaching a set of concrete steps

framed with two pillars leading down to double wooden doors – the entrance to a creamy-yellow single storey brick building with a low sloping roof. Despite being impossible to miss in terms of its central location, and in that it leaned slightly away from the typical architectural style of the village, it only stood out as a music school from the sign outside, that read ‘Escuela de Música Gaiman’ in white letters against a deep blue background. The hall of the building was an open plan reception area, with two desks where the receptionists worked, and with cabinets displaying several trophies and awards won by those representing the music school in various competitions, in both Wales and Patagonia. The fading yellow walls were lined with shallow wooden benches where students could wait before or after classes. Beyond the hallway, the school opened up into several rooms of different sizes where classes and rehearsals took place. The main room had a grand piano, and some of the other smaller rooms had upright pianos or CD players to accompany rehearsals. There was also a small kitchen to the back of the building where teachers could replenish with a cup of tea, snacks, or heat up water for mate.



Figure 17. The main rehearsal room in Gaiman Music School, December 2015

Between 15:30 and 21:00, students could take classes of all kinds, including violin, cello, double bass, harp, percussion, guitar, music theory, electronic music production, or piano. The musical repertoire varied greatly across these classes, with some groups leaning towards a Welsh repertoire, and others focusing on rehearsing and performing traditional Argentinian pieces and styles. The classes were open to everyone and registration took place annually in late January as the summer holidays drew to a close. The student body largely consisted of children, but it had a few adults too, many of whom were learning a new instrument as a hobby or in preparation for a career change. Gaiman mixed choir rehearsed in the school on Mondays and Wednesdays from 21:00 to approximately 22:30, and the girls' choir also used the rehearsal space on Wednesdays from 20:00 to 21:00, and on Fridays from 15:00 to 16:00. Both choirs tended to intensify their rehearsals in the months and weeks leading up to competitions, concerts, and festivals. The string group rehearsed on Thursday evenings from 18:00 to 20:00 and was made up of children between the ages of 10 and 16 from Gaiman and the nearby smaller village of Dolavon (see Figure 5). Other groups such as recital groups or smaller ensembles also occasionally made use of the space to rehearse.

*This photo, [Figure 18. An individual violin lesson taking place at Gaiman Music School, December 2015], has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.*

*“If you’re going to visit, it has to be this year!”: tourism in Chubut*

Welsh tourism and the subsequent connections, exchanges, and consistent communication (especially via social media platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter) between Wales and Patagonia were a huge part of the economy of the Chubut Province. As this chapter will demonstrate, this was closely connected to Gaiman Music School, as it was viewed as a hub of Welsh activity in Gaiman. Teithiau Tango, a family business in Aberystwyth had been organising tours of Welsh Patagonia for nearly seven years at the time of the research, and tourists were arriving by the busload just in time for the busiest times of the year: to celebrate the founding of the colony, or to be a part of the Chubut Eisteddfod. Other travel companies such as ‘Welsh Patagonia’ (based in Esquel in the Andes) also organised several annual tours. The large majority of the customers who travelled on these tours were from Wales. Haz, the sales and marketing executive for Teithiau Tango, who herself had originally visited Patagonia as part of one of the tours of Teithiau Tango prior to taking up a full-time role in their Aberystwyth offices, said to me that she felt that many of her customers “were ticking Patagonia off their bucket list” as it was “somewhere they had always wanted to go for the Welsh connection”.

In this respect, the Welsh descendants, travel companies, and the Chubut economy benefited from the circulation of the ‘empty landscape’ narrative, which came with ideas of untouched Welshness (see Chapter 2). The empty land trope fed into the ways in which the formal memory of the province had been constructed to hold the establishment of the Welsh settler colony as the most important event. Berg (2018: 156) argues that what she calls ‘the Welsh-national community’ “envision tourism to the Welsh colony in Argentina as a way to experience *pure* and *untouched* Welsh heritage, with heavy emphasis placed on hearing the Welsh language spoken in a region that has not been *contaminated* by English...many Welsh

tourists come to Patagonia with the expectation of hearing an unadulterated form of Welsh” (see further Williams 2014).

Benson (2013) draws on her fieldwork with British migrants in rural France to make a similar argument. She notes that “rural France is imagined as the rural idyll” (Benson 2013: 502) whereby many of the migrants had visited as tourists before making the move in a desire to develop meaningful social relationships in a small, close-knit community. Analogously to the nostalgic ideas of Welsh Patagonia as being a place where it was possible to encounter a pure, harmonious, English-free Welshness, Benson (2013: 509) argues that “underpinning such perceptions [of rural France as being a more authentic way of life]...is a nostalgic understanding of village life as a close-knit community where ‘everybody knows everybody’”. Ultimately, then, as in Benson’s (2013) account of rural France, imagination and nostalgia were central to tourism in Patagonia (see further Benson 2011).

In this respect, 2015 was a particularly significant year for the Province. It marked 150 years since the establishment of the settler colony in Patagonia, which inspired several individuals and groups to visit. A group of 50 prominent individuals from Wales including the comedian Rhod Gilbert, Welsh weatherman Derek Broadway, and former Welsh rugby international Shane Williams completed a six-day trek in Patagonia to raise money for Velindre Cancer Centre in Cardiff. The National Youth Choir of Wales also completed a Patagonia tour which consisted of singing in several concerts around the Province, and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales (BBC NOW) visited the Province to host concerts and workshops in Gaiman Music School, to name but a few visits. Alongside these large group visits, several key individuals also visited, such as the Welsh harpist, Gwenan Gibbard, the Welsh textiles artist Cefyn Burgess, and the Welsh singer Casi Wyn, and many other tourists

decided to make the once-in-a-lifetime-trip too: as one couple enthusiastically declared to me on their visit to the Eisteddfod, “If you’re going to visit, it *has* to be this year!”

Accompanying this excitement and nostalgia for the original journey of the Welsh settlers was increased publicity and UK media coverage for Welsh Patagonia. From 2015, BBC Radio Wales began to host various programmes, including a three-part series on the Welsh settler colony and the reasons why the Welsh settlers left Wales, a programme following the six-day charity trek in Patagonia (see Price 2015), and a programme about making the Welsh women of Patagonia visible in the historical narrative, hosted by Welsh comedian Siân Harries. BBC Radio Cymru (2015) also broadcasted a programme called ‘Remembering Patagonia’. Beyond this, several news articles were published at around the same time, with headlines such as “Patagonia 150 years on: a little Wales beyond Wales” (BBC News 2015a), “150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Welsh emigration to Patagonia” (BBC News 2015b), “Welsh settlers path of friendship in Patagonia” (BBC News 2016), “Can the Welsh language survive in Patagonia?” (BBC News 2015d), “How is the Welsh language being preserved in Patagonia?” (BBC News 2015e), “Welsh connection important boost for Patagonia’s economy” (BBC News 2015c), “BBC National Orchestra of Wales first for Patagonia” (BBC News 2015f), and “Record number of Welsh learners in Patagonia, Argentina” (BBC News 2017).

In addition, there were several Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages in which people from Wales and Argentina communicated regularly with each other, by sharing photos and memories with each other, by sending each other messages, and by commenting on each other’s posts. Menter Patagonia had an ongoing Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter page. As of the 150 celebrations, the hashtag #patagonia150 was tagged in 668 photo posts on Instagram, and in hundreds more tweets on Twitter. On Twitter, there were several pages

dedicated to the settler colony, including a ‘Patagonia 150 page’ (@Patagonia150), a page for Welsh people in Patagonia called ‘Galeses en Patagonia’ (@galespatagonia), and a page for a social project initiative of the BBC NOW of Wales (which grew out of their 2015 visit) to send instruments to the music schools and groups in Patagonia, which was called ‘Patagonia instrument project’ (@pataginsproject). The social media pages were used at the time of fieldwork and beyond by those in both Wales and Patagonia to upload photos from past related events, to advertise future events, to find contacts in terms of accommodation, to find host organisations or individuals in both places, to outline volunteering or community-work plans, and to keep in touch with – or find the contact details of – friends met in either place.

The three aspects of tourism, media coverage, and social media worked in unison to promote Welsh Patagonia to visitors, with news coverage and social media sparking new interest in Patagonia. To take one example, in response to a Facebook post posted by the BBC NOW during their visit, one viewer commented, “Amazing! Welsh is still spoken in Patagonia!” In Gaiman, word of mouth quickly spread to passing tourists that Gaiman Music School was operating an open door policy for visitors from Wales, and in 2015 it became especially common for tourists to turn up at rehearsals, slipping through the side door to watch the choir rehearsal, and waving enthusiastically at the choir members before taking an observatory role in the rehearsal. After the rehearsal there would be an opportunity to chat with them, and as such Gaiman Music School became central to tourist interactions. Ultimately, the choir rehearsals and the interactions they generated between choir members and tourists created spaces in which ideas and imaginations about the other were defined, articulated, complicated, and performed.

## *Imagining Wales through the national Anthem*

Whilst Welsh events held in the Chubut Province were plentiful and varied, they all held one thing in common: they began with the audience standing and singing the National Anthem of Wales, and ended with the singing of the National Anthem of Argentina. The Gaiman String group also regularly rehearsed the National Anthem of Wales, and the mixed choir would end rehearsals by singing the National Anthem of Wales, if they were in the presence of visitors. Singing or playing the Welsh National Anthem was significant in this respect, in that it often became a key moment in inspiring the imagination of Wales or Patagonia.

The first time I took part in the collective singing of the National Anthem of Wales was one day after arriving in the field, on July 28 2015, in a ceremony to commemorate the arrival of the Welsh to Patagonia. The main purpose of the ceremony was to unveil a plaque outside the chapel where 43 of the original Welsh settlers were buried. There was a buzzing chatter as we waited for the pianist to drum out the introduction to the Welsh National Anthem on the keyboard. I listened to the mixture of Castellano and Welsh, as the two different languages and accents intertwined into each other. A pause in the introduction and an enthusiastic yet casual anticipatory wave from the pianist signalled the gap for us to take a collective deep breath. We obliged, and filled our lungs, before singing the first verse in Welsh, “The old land of my fathers, is dear to me, land of poets and singers...”. I glanced around the crowd. Some were reading the words from the sheet handed to us at the beginning of the ceremony, but others knew the words by heart. Standing among a crowd of locals and

tourists outside Capel Moriah in Trelew, huddled in our winter coats, it was strange to consider that we were 7,000 miles away from the country that we were singing for and to.

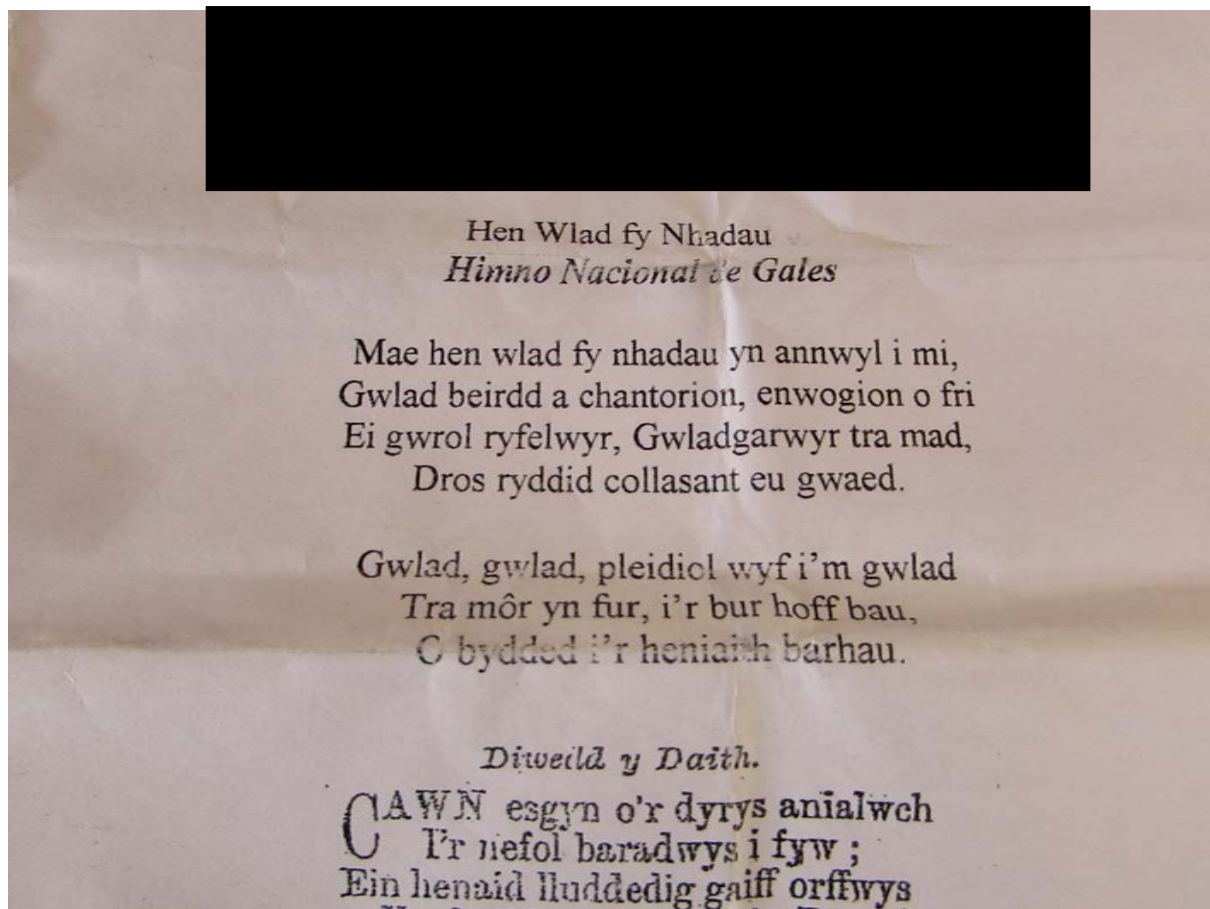


Figure 19. The National Anthem of Wales.<sup>31</sup> This is a photograph taken of the pamphlet stating the order of events and lyrics which was handed out during the Gorsedd for the Chubut Eisteddfod, October 2015.

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<sup>31</sup> English translation:

This land of my fathers is dear to me  
Land of poets and singers, and people of stature  
Her brave warriors, fine patriots  
Shed their blood for freedom

**Chorus:**

*Land! Land! I am true to my land!*  
*As long as the sea serves as a wall*  
*For this pure, dear land*  
*May the language endure for ever* (Classic FM 2019).

When the BBC National Orchestra of Wales (BBC NOW) visited Gaiman Music School in 2015, we were asked if we could end the rehearsal by singing the National Anthem of Wales. Later, a video of Gaiman choir singing the National Anthem of Wales was published on the BBC NOW Facebook page, with the post, written by one of the visitors, stating, “Very few of the Argentines in this video have ever been to Wales, and not all of them speak Welsh...but last week they belted out the anthem as if they were on the pitch at the Millennium Stadium”.<sup>32</sup> The video shows the rehearsal of the mixed choir singing the anthem, directed by the conductor of the BBC NOW, Grant Llywelyn, who had boundless energy and an eccentric spark. He confidently led the choir with what he himself referred to as the “little Spanish” that he had picked up from his holidays in Spain. The anthem was accompanied by Alberto on the piano. In the video, the main hall of Gaiman Music School is brimming with choir members, some having to stand with the lack of available chairs. The anthem is sung with passion – “belted” out indeed. The piano accompaniment is exaggerated with heavy chords hammered out in the left hand accompanied by the use of trills to generate a dramatic drum-roll effect, and the director shouts words of encouragement where rests in the signing allow. At the end of the second chorus, several choir members harmonise spontaneously, and the choir split into two octaves, with some of the sopranos singing an octave (8 notes) higher than the rest, and everyone laughs and claps.

With the added self-consciousness of singing in front of a camera, singing about Welsh Patagonia suddenly became a much more passionate, engaged event. Tourists would almost invariably film and photograph parts of the choir rehearsals, and this filming and photographing was a two way process, invoking enthusiasm from the singers but inspiring

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<sup>32</sup> The clip is available here: <https://www.facebook.com/bbcnationalorchestraofwales/posts/10156092175330408> (last accessed September 24 2020).

changes in the viewer too. As Gillespie (2006: 3) argues, “it is not only the photographee who is influenced by the interaction, so too is the photographer”. Tourists filmed a selection of things to show to family and friends back home, and their choice of what to film and photograph largely depended on their own ideas about what they came to see – for example, Welsh Patagonians singing the Welsh National Anthem. The pre-conceptualisations of Welsh Patagonia held by the visiting tourists and of the social media users at home became affirmed, challenged, and re-articulated at the boundary between them and the other. The imagination of the tourists, about what Welsh Patagonia should look like – singing the Welsh National Anthem – informed the reality in front of them (quite literally so, in that the choir were explicitly asked to perform the anthem for their visitors). Simultaneously, however, it was at this point that Welsh Patagonia ‘became itself’, in other words, it appeared to the tourists at its most *coherent*, as a tangible, bounded, identifiable group of Welsh Patagonians. This performance of Welsh Patagonia therefore in turn informed the imagination of its viewers.

Later in fieldwork, during a rehearsal of the music school’s string group one October evening, we played the Welsh National Anthem, twice, and afterwards, Juan, one of the violin teachers, who lived in the province of Rio Negro where he worked as a violinist in a philharmonic orchestra, turned to me, frowning, and said, “You know, in Argentina we sing this part \*pointing to the chorus with his bow on my sheet music\* twice when we sing the Welsh National Anthem, I think you only sing it once.” I nodded, and Paula responded to his remark, “It is probably to affirm the language.” Juan responded, “Yes, it is almost that when we sing the Welsh National Anthem here it must be sung with more enthusiasm and conviction.”

Whilst Paula's comment could be taken to suggest that people in Patagonia needed to practice their Welsh or make it more present in an Argentine context, Juan's response points to the relationship between music, the imagination, and creation. The suggestion here is that at least some imagination about 'other places' may come from the musical piece. In this case, the imagination comes from the structure of music or the musical style, whereby singing the Welsh National Anthem in the Patagonian context, and specifically the repetition of the chorus, is imbued with intentionality and purpose and imagined to be connected to the affirmation or consolidation of the link between place and person. Singing, in this context, has to be enthusiastic and convincing – it is a declaration of commitment to, and a creation of a tie of belonging to, a specific place. In this respect, the discussion in the music school resonates, in part, with Butler and Spivak's (2007) argument that singing the national anthem is an act of becoming. They argue that illegal Latin American immigrants in the United States sing the American National Anthem in Spanish (a language not officially recognised by a very nationalist state) to declare their right to belong. It is a performative act – to sing it is to become it – and the "counter-nationalist" act of singing in Spanish leads to the possibility of the recognition of diversity and multiplicity by the state (Butler & Spivak 2007: 58). Similarly, as my interlocutors pointed out, the act of singing the Welsh National Anthem in Welsh, in the context of Argentina where the majority language is Castellano, served to reinforce the presence of Welshness as well as to consolidate the links between those singing and Wales.

However, there is a significant difference between the two examples. Beyond the fact that the Welsh were not singing the Argentinian National Anthem in Welsh, but rather singing the *Welsh* National Anthem in Welsh, the power relations of what Butler and Spivak (2007) describe are quite different to the dynamics in the Welsh Patagonian context. As

argued in the previous chapter of the thesis, the Welsh Patagonians were a powerful group, both economically and politically. They were not illegal immigrants, by contrast Argentina had *invited* them to live there as part of its broader civilising mission in the late 1800s, and they were drawn into this civilising mission (see further Chapter 2). Due to the influx of money that the Welsh community received from tourism, as a collective they were much better off financially than many of the local Argentinians with whom they shared the Chubut Province. The implication here is that differently to Butler and Spivak's (2007) argument, singing the Welsh National Anthem could be about asserting power or authority rather than about asserting their subordinate rights to belong.

In addition to affirming the connection between Wales and Argentina, singing the Welsh National Anthem in Chubut created a disjuncture between context and music, and it is within this disjuncture that we find scope for imaginative and creative ideas concerning place and personhood, something especially significant for those who had never visited Wales or who did not view themselves as having a Welsh connection by descent. Shortly after the string group rehearsal finished, I walked home. There was a warm breeze, indicating the very welcome emergence of summer after a bitterly cold winter. My hands were in my pockets, my headphones over my ears, and my mind was far away, reflecting on the day's events. I was walking across the bridge above the Chubut River to the other side of the village, where I lived, when I bumped into two of the girls who both played first violin in the string group, Martina and Valentina, who were walking home in the same direction. They were good friends with each other, both being around 14 years old, and living close to each other in Gaiman. Both girls were local Argentinians, without Welsh descent, but regularly played Welsh music as members of the Gaiman String Group. I greeted them by giving them each a kiss on the cheek, the typical Argentinian way, and we walked the rest of the way home

together. As we turned a sharp right into our neighbourhood, Martina looked up at me with her big brown eyes full of curiosity and asked me, somewhat shyly, “What’s Wales like?” I was thrown by her simple question.

When I realised that Martina and Valentina were waiting patiently for a coherent explanation, I tentatively explained that it was pretty, with lots of green space, an abundance of hills, and winding roads, but that just like any place, it had its problems: political, economic, structural, and social. I told them that I grew up in Aberystwyth, and that it was quite a bohemian, arty, seaside town, but that many young people tended to leave as there weren’t enough opportunities for jobs locally. They looked intrigued, and I began to gain a better understanding of how it must feel to not have any trace of Welsh descent, nor to have ever visited Wales, but to play the National Anthem of Wales weekly in their violin lessons, often multiple times, and to be admired and photographed by Welsh tourists for doing so. Martina later elaborated during an interview, “Yes, when I think about it, I think...wow...how crazy...but we are used to it...we don’t know Wales, but we don’t know anything different to what it is like here with a mixture of Wales and Argentina.”

Whilst some of my interlocutors did have quite fixed ideas about what Wales was like, many of my interlocutors, like Martina and Valentina, were open to new imaginings of Wales. Fixed ideas about the types of people who lived in Wales or about the quality of life there were often based on my interlocutors’ own subjective experiences of Wales, inevitably coloured by a myriad of factors such as their social environment, economic circumstances, personality, and geographical location. Paula often spoke about Wales in terms of it being better than Argentina. She often described it as being cleaner, more organised, with better education and fewer social problems like poverty or social inequalities, problems which she

frequently described as existing in Argentina, a country which she described as being “in the third world”. Alberto focused less on material aspects, but always emphasised the beauty of the green landscape. A friend of Paula’s who had not visited Wales would get a completely different image of Wales to a friend of Alberto’s, and Martina and Valentina’s image of Wales would undoubtedly be coloured by their experiences in the string group as well as by my own descriptions. The theme of imagining Wales was complex and multi-layered. Images were constructed from personal experience, from music, from conversations with people, and from watching television or reading, and it was possible for people to play Welsh music with lyrics invoking specific imagery and to remain unsure about what Wales was like or to be open to different representations or interpretations of the country.

### *The dynamics of seeing and being seen: under the gaze*

In theorising these dynamics of seeing and being seen, Whitfield (2005) suggests that it is possible to speak of ‘lenses’ in this context. She argues that Patagonia is viewed both in Wales and in current fiction through a lens combining the exotic and familiar, whereby a common language ultimately overrides differences of geographical, social, political, and economic context. Such an image is sometimes prominent in fiction; consider this extract from a children’s book with a bear named Alan as its protagonist, who travels from Wales to Patagonia on the back of a whale to re-experience the journey of his ancestors:

Everyone was listening carefully to the teacher, as she spoke of a distant land, far, far away (Tomos 2013: 3). A long time ago, many from Wales travelled to Patagonia on a large ship, called the Mimosa, in search of a new life (Tomos 2013: 4). Patagonia is very far from Wales, but *despite the long distance between the two countries, they are very similar* (Tomos 2013: 22, emphasis mine).

The message of the book is clear: it is a long way to travel, but ultimately you arrive in a place not too dissimilar to home. Welsh Patagonia is often represented, especially in Wales, as being a ‘little-Wales-away-from-Wales’; a hub of Welshness that can flourish, so long as it receives the right developmental support from Wales. As one of my neighbours in Aberystwyth, who has never visited Patagonia herself, put it, “we [meaning, ‘the Welsh’] have ownership of the place”. It is in this context, where Patagonia is seen as being ‘a place in progress’, that projects like the Welsh Language Patagonia Project (a project which sends Welsh teachers to the Chubut Province annually to deliver Welsh lessons) and the Patagonia Instrument Project (a project which collects old, unwanted, and unused instruments in Wales and sends them to schools in Patagonia) can flourish.

Even in the context of re-emerging themes like ‘exotic’, ‘familiar’, and a ‘hub of Welshness’, lyrics to songs and fiction books, whilst powerful in their own ways, cannot be taken as stand-alone examples of how Wales or Patagonia were imagined by various individuals. In that music, poetry, or art cannot be taken as being ‘the lens’ through which Patagonia or Wales were imagined, the word ‘lens’ is not an analytically useful one in a context of constant cultural exchange between Wales and Patagonia and where Welsh ideas about Patagonia and Patagonian ideas about Wales were heterogeneous and complexly interrelated. The concept of viewing Patagonia through a lens implies distanced observation and does not seem to require an awareness on the behalf of the one being watched. The concept of the ‘gaze’, however, is highly pertinent to the Welsh Patagonian context. To be watched or gazed upon implies in many ways a physical presence of another person, even if this is not always a literal one (it could, for example, be a virtual presence). In this, it allows analytical space for recognition on the part of the one being gazed upon, for an exploration of the dynamics of seeing and being seen and, crucially, space for exploring the contestable

power relations between the looked upon and onlooker. In this, it is concerned with a social relationship and interaction with implications for subjectivity and self-awareness. Further, Sartre (1958) notes the close connection between the concept of a ‘gaze’ and the imagination, arguing that the possibility of imagination, more specifically imagining how you are seen by another, is central to the gaze. These ideas were pertinent in the Welsh Patagonian context.

*Performing Patagonia under the gaze of the Welsh other*

I don't ask for a luxurious life,  
The world's gold or its fine pearls:  
I ask for a happy heart,  
An honest heart, a pure heart.

A pure heart is full of goodness,  
More lovely than the pretty lily:  
Only a pure heart can sing,  
Sing day and night.

If I had wished worldly wealth,  
He has a swift seed;  
The riches of a virtuous, pure heart,  
Will be a perpetual profit.  
Late and early, my wish,

Rise to heaven on the wing of song,  
To God, for the sake of my saviour,  
Give me a pure heart.

(Calon Lân, traditional Welsh song)

It was late October, and we were slighting towards the hotter months, yet on this particular Saturday it was raining relentlessly, leaving the typically dry mud streets of

Gaiman awash with rainwater. We had arranged to have an extra rehearsal in preparation for the arrival of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales (BBC NOW), who were due to arrive in the valley a couple of days later, to spend a week there. The full orchestra had arranged a concert and some members of the orchestra had also arranged to do some community work, which involved travelling around the various music schools in the valley to teach, to conduct workshops, and to perform smaller concerts.

There was a huge amount of media coverage surrounding the visit, especially given that Catrin Finch – a famous, world renowned harpist from Wales – was part of the tour. The BBC News website provided detailed coverage of the journey before it had even begun. The motivations behind the trip were described by Suzanne Hay, the head of partnerships and learning of the orchestra in a BBC News (2015f) interview as a desire for the community to experience new forms of music. As she put it, “To have a professional full-sized symphony orchestra for them [i.e. people living in Chubut] is going to be a once in a lifetime experience, and hopefully really inject a new energy into music-making in Patagonia.” Michael Gary, the director described the tour as a unique opportunity, stating that, “To feel the passion and hear the noise coming to them off the concert hall stage is a wonderful experience for them.” Further emphasis was placed on the practicalities, such as the fact that 260 instruments would be accompanying the players, adding up to 3.5 tonnes of cargo which would travel more than 17,000 miles (BBC News 2015f). This anticipation in the media surrounding the event was felt in Patagonia too as everyone eagerly and nervously anticipated the visit.

Paula had arranged the extra rehearsal in the light of this anticipation, emphasising that the children must be sufficiently prepared to be able to play the relevant pieces with the

members of the BBC NOW, who were professional musicians. Arriving at the music school, I let myself in through the narrow, wooden side door, knowing that this would be the door that Graciela (the head of the music school) would typically leave open for weekend rehearsals. The familiar, high-pitched sound of violins tuning grew louder as I neared the rehearsal room. There were six of us altogether including myself, Paula, Francesca (Paula's daughter), Martina and Valentina (first violins), and Gabriel and Zoe (second violins). I blew a kiss to them and sat down in my usual seat.

“Can you start off by doing some scales with them? I need to write out a part for the Welsh National Anthem for Zoe,” Paula asked me. I smiled, nodding. We started with an A minor melodic scale, and then moved on to play a major scale, Eb. I ask the children to play one note per bow, then two per bow, then to play in triplets (three notes per beat), then to play faster and faster until it became impossible. The children and I laughed, and Paula told us to stop. She asked if we could play Calon Lân followed by the National Anthem of Wales,<sup>33</sup> and then she turned to me and said, “You’re from Wales... you must hear these two pieces all the time and know them so... well, have you any advice on how to play them, musically?” I laughed and replied, “I’m not sure...just always play with love.” It was a joke, albeit a weak one, but Paula took my comment seriously. Her voice lowered, softened, and the children listened intently. “Listen, children...when the BBC NOW come, it is important for you to show, visually, by being happy and by smiling, that you *want* to be here, and that you are *happy* to be here. Think about Lucy, and how happy she usually looks.” I felt embarrassed to be hailed as an example, and glanced down awkwardly at my cello.

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<sup>33</sup> Calon Lân is a Welsh religious hymn that was written in the 1980s but that later became associated with the Welsh rugby union, as a song that is sung before matches.

Paula's comment and her emphasis on the visual and on 'showing' points to the self-conscious core of performance. As a self-conscious act it is, to a certain extent, flexible and it is possible to manipulate it based on the type of impression you want or need to give in a particular context, an impression which in turn is influenced by ideas of the expectations and desires of the 'audience' to which you will perform. The rehearsal was not happening in a void but rather had as its reference point the arrival of the BBC NOW. In other words, the children's performance was taking place under by the gaze of the Welsh other at anticipatory distance.

The following Monday, we had two evening choir rehearsals in the music school, and members of the BBC NOW, it was rumoured, were to be present at both. From 20:00 until 21:00 we had a girls' choir rehearsal, and then – following the usual schedule for a Monday – we had a mixed choir rehearsal from 21:00 until around 22:30. I was one of the first to arrive, as I had already been in the music school all afternoon assisting with violin lessons. I began to pull out some chairs for the girls' choir rehearsal, and shortly afterwards, Alberto arrived clutching a thermos flask of hot water in one hand and mate in the other, with Eleanor (his mother, and the girls' choir conductor) at his side. Behind them was an unfamiliar man, whom I assumed to be the man referred to a few days ago by Paula as the "important person" from Wales. "I have been trying to get through to Eleanor, but she's busy with an *important person* from Wales," she had told me, her eyes wide. He was tall, broad, and at a guess around 30 years old, but he was unintimidating in jeans and a casual striped t-shirt. He seemed friendly but shy, and his head slightly lowered as he entered the room, his eyes rising to greet us and his mouth breaking into a restrained smile a few moments later. When Alberto greeted me, I took the opportunity to ask who the newcomer was. It emerged that he was a choir inspector from Wales who was going to assist with the girls' choir rehearsal.

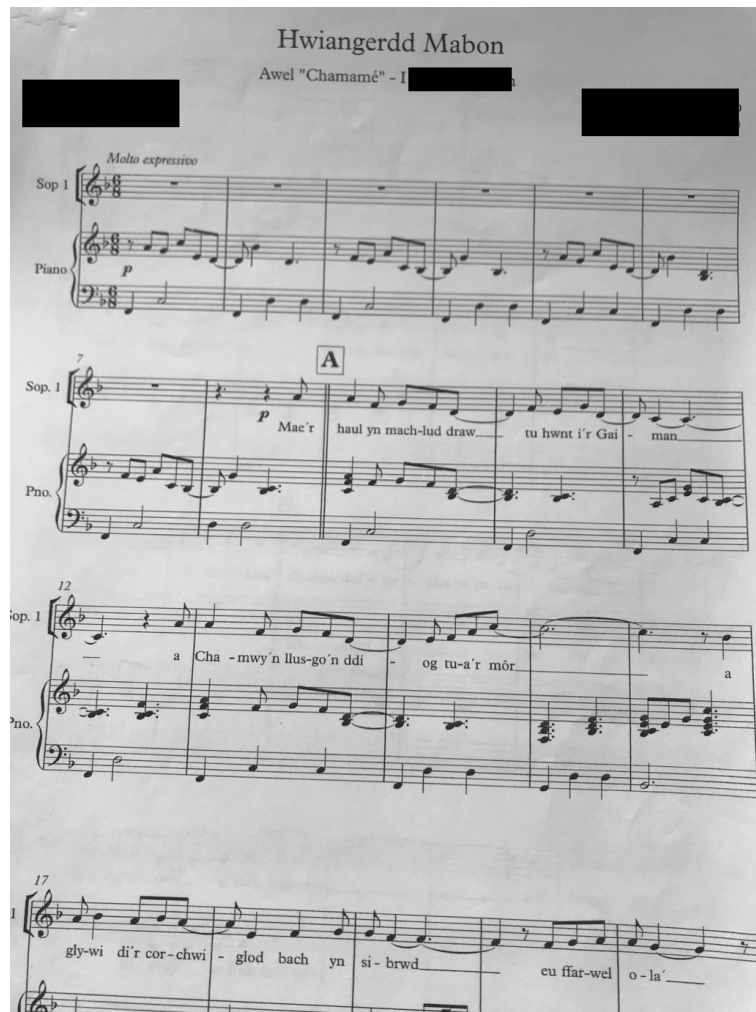


Figure 20. Hwiangerdd Mabon sheet music

We firstly sung Hwiangerdd Mabon ('Mabon's lullaby'), a lullaby, for soprano and alto accompanied by soft chords on the piano. The music was composed by Alberto and the lyrics were written by Awel, who eleven years ago, in her thirties, had moved temporarily from North Wales to Gaiman to teach Welsh for the Welsh language project, and had stayed after falling in love with a local Welsh Patagonian dentist. "I didn't even go back," she said to me one evening over dinner, "I just shipped all my stuff over here in a trunk!" They had since married and had two young boys, and the lyrics had been written for the eldest of the two boys. Awel was a very active and much loved member of the Welsh community. In addition to working in Ysgol Camwy and in Ysgol Gymraeg y Gaiman, she also taught harp

lessons in the music school and did much of the writing and translation work for the community. The lyrics evoked quite effectively the spectacular Patagonian sunsets, which were a splashing of red, orange, pink, and purple, in addition to the broader Patagonian landscape – “the sun sets beyond Gaiman, and Camwy drags lazily to the sea”.

When we had finished, Eleanor looked at us with sparkling eyes. “Is there anything in particular you girls would like to go over?” she asked. I suggested a song called *Cân y Wladfa* (‘Song of the Colony’). It was an emotive, romantic song composed by Alberto that the girls’ choir had been singing for a few years. Eleanor, who was quite a frail woman, stood up from her usual seated conducting position and marked the beat with great force. Her dangling earrings were swinging vigorously, and we were singing with far more energy than usual. I felt completely engaged in singing the song, and in that moment truly meant the words that I was singing. I could see, and feel, that the other women in the choir were similarly energised. Dylan, the choir inspector was grinning, filming on his smartphone, and had tears in his eyes. At the end of the song, Eleanor asked Dylan what could be improved, to which he responded, “I don’t know what to say, I feel quite emotional. The hairs on my arm are standing on end. I can sense the passion.” I had goosebumps too. The excitement and energy in the room was palpable, unusually so.

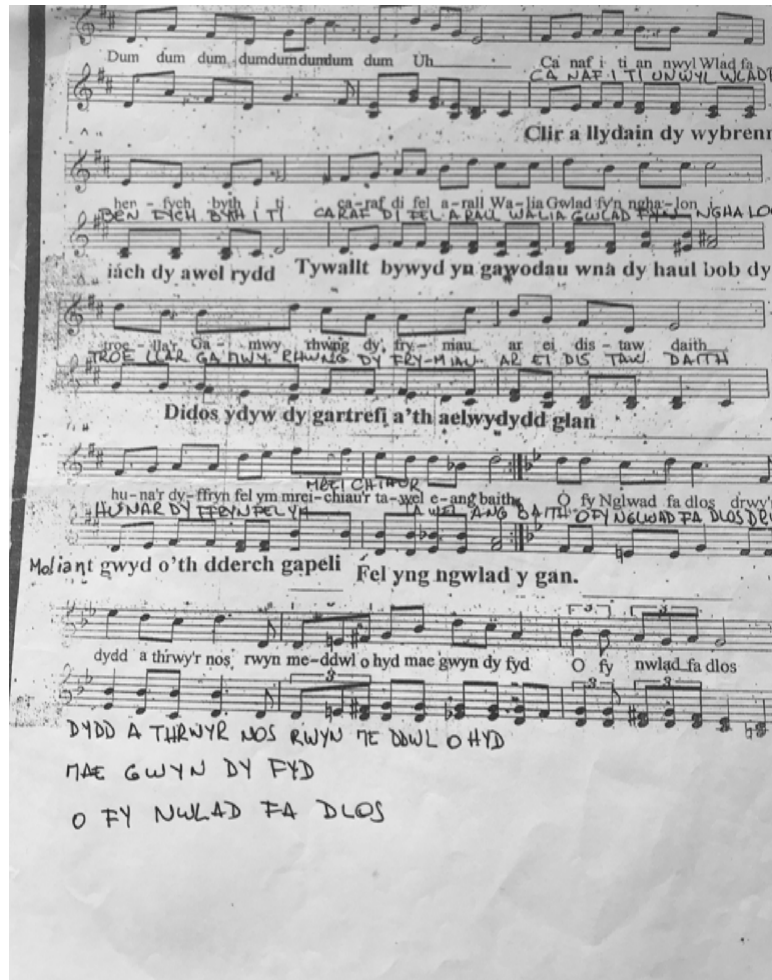


Figure 21. *Cân y Wladfa* sheet music

The side door opened, and people started trickling in for mixed choir rehearsal, which was due to start a few minutes later. Insofar as the mixed choir operated more or less with an open-door policy (in contrast to the girls' choir, which was more selective), it emerged during fieldwork as being a key site of performative interactions between tourists and locals.

Visitors from Wales often attended the rehearsals, some choosing to take an observational role, and others joining in with the singing. Through the corner of my eye, I could see two people arriving through the side door, a girl and a boy. Members of the BBC NOW were also arriving – I recognised Suzanne, the head of partnerships and learning of the orchestra; a tall, gracious woman, who had stylish blonde hair, and a bright smile. A couple of young women came in, one with a cello case, and the other with a violin case, followed by some older men,

who were also carrying instruments. There were also a couple of younger people with film equipment, who went on to film the rehearsal.

Choir was notably busier than usual, and the room was full and stuffy. The news had spread quickly in the weeks before that members of the BBC NOW would be present at this particular rehearsal. We began by singing Croeso Patagonia ('Welcome Patagonia'), an acapella piece written for four-part choir, accompanied by the beat of the bombo (a type of traditional Latin American drum). The lyrics combined Wales and Argentina "sleeping a siesta before having a cup of tea", and melodically, bits of Calon Lân were recognisable within the Argentinian rhythms:

Wake up here, midst the Welsh of the desert, on the Patagonian land you can forget your work,  
A little sip of mate to awaken the day and you'll forget all the worries of your old country easily.

CHORUS: Did you have an asado (yes yes), a full stomach of beef, two or three chorizos, roasted chicken meat, and by the flames of the fire sharing the thrill of Calon Lân, the brothers of Wales and the colony uniting in song).<sup>34</sup>

Sleep a siesta before having a cup of tea, you must quench all thirst under the southern cross,  
A cake full of cream, go and fill your tummy, and you'll have enough dulce leche to fill two carts!

CHORUS: Did you have pancakes (with your tea), a plate cake bigger than the space, bread and butter, quince jam and the sweetest lemon pie; And above all the small crumbs sharing the thrill of Calon Lân, the brothers of Wales and the colony uniting in song.

Wake up here, midst the Welsh of the desert.  
(Croeso Patagonia)

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<sup>34</sup> An 'asado' is both the word for the traditionally Argentinian way of preparing food and the word for the overall event or gathering. This tends to be a gathering of family or friends with meat (usually beef, sausages and chicken) and occasionally vegetables cooked on an outdoor grill called a 'parilla' or over an open fire. This main course is usually served with salads. Asados were seen as being an appropriate way to celebrate almost any occasion, whether this be a relaxed Sunday spent in the company of family, a birthday celebration, Christmas, the New Year, a wedding, or the arrival of a new baby.

Following this, Grant Llywelyn (the conductor of the BBC NOW) took over. With great enthusiasm, he led the choir through the songs that were going to sing with the orchestra in the concert: *Ar Hyd y Nos* ('All through the night') and *Hafan Gobaith* ('Another Day'). Despite the short amount of time that we had to rehearse these two long, harmonically difficult pieces that we had never seen before, the choir improved significantly. The rehearsal finished later than usual, at 23:00, but nobody seemed tired.

If this was not simply a case of performing with more energy for an audience, then what was it? Ultimately, what these varied situations held in common was the marked coherence of Welsh Patagonia when it was performed as a tangible and homogenous whole to outsiders, especially to tourists and visitors from Wales, in that as a group we appeared united, sharing the same objectives and goals. Further, we *knew* which image we needed to perform. Sartre's (1958) argument touched upon earlier in this chapter emphasises that the reason that we are most acutely aware of ourselves when confronted with the gaze of another is due to our capacity for *imagination*, in particular our capacity to imagine what we must look like from the onlooker's perspective. Central to Sartre's (1958) argument is the concept of shame, that is the shame felt in imagining how we must look, having been caught looking through a keyhole. Having been caught looking through the keyhole, he notes, "I am this being...my shame is a confession" (Sartre 1958: 285). Sartre's (1958) concept of shame is pertinent here in that it emphasises the social qualities of shame as something which arises in relation to others (see further Rosaldo 1983; Fajans 1983). In the Welsh Patagonian context, shame was explicit in the anticipatory rehearsal, in which we discussed the desired image that the musicians of the BBC NOW would be looking for, and considered how we could create this image (by appearing happy as we played our instruments, for example). In this particular

performance, our enthusiasm was implicitly related to our capacity to imagine what the audience wanted and what would happen if we did not perform as expected.

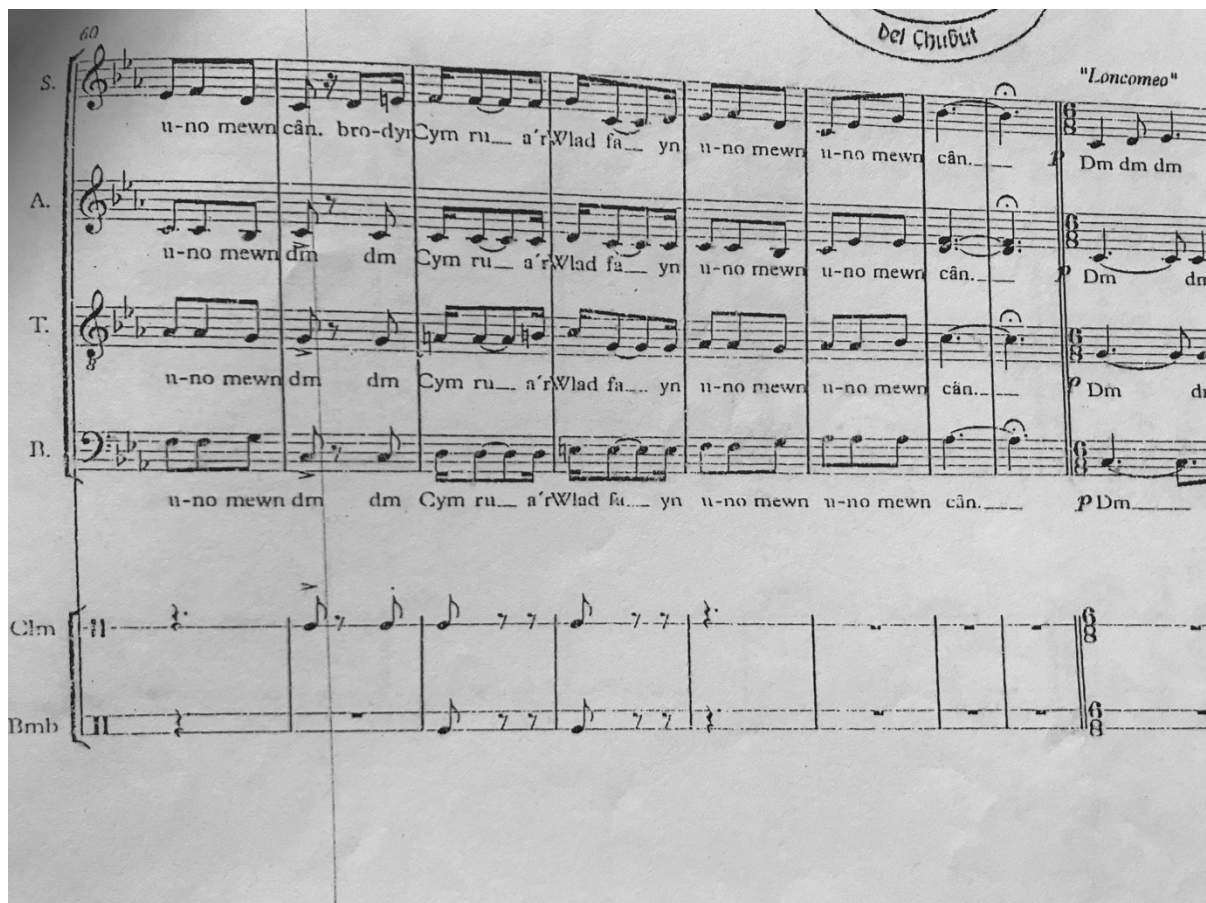


Figure 22. Croeso Patagonia sheet music

### *“Tut tut, we aren’t being very Welsh”: Performing Patagonia for officials*

A similar process could be seen during official celebrations and more formal meetings, especially during the annual celebrations marking the arrival of the original settlers to Patagonia, which took place in the week around July 28. These celebrations typically consisted of an early morning meeting in Puerto Madryn where tourists and locals gathered around a statue on the seafront to commemorate the arrival of the original settlers, whilst locals re-enacted the arrival by rowing boats, lifting Welsh and Argentinian flags, and

listening to speeches alongside attending concerts and teas in the following days, organised by the committees of the chapels in the valley (see Golwg 360 2015). As Geraldine Lublin described in an interview with the BBC:

The festival of the landing is the most significant festival for the Welsh in Patagonia, and 2015 will mark 150 years since the first settlers from Wales established themselves in Patagonia. Investigating the history of the festival on the turn of its birthday has been eye-opening, as I have discovered just how early the festival won an official acknowledgement by Argentinian officials. I saw in the *Drafod* [a local newspaper] that the viceroy of Chubut, Alejandro Conesa, had given a speech in the celebrations of the festival of the landing by saying ‘we must remember that we owe everything that is in Chubut today to that group of 153 people who landed in Puerto Madryn 35 years ago’ (Cymru Fyw 2012).

July 28 2015 was a day full of celebrations to commemorate the arrival of the first Welsh settlers to Argentina, with the added excitement of it being 150 years since the original settlers had landed. In the morning, a group of local actors dressed in traditional Welsh clothing depicted the landing, arriving at Puerto Madryn bay in what Elena jokingly referred to as the “new Mimosa”, which was adorned with large Welsh and Argentinian flags. When the speeches welcoming the groups of tourists and emphasising the importance of Welsh cultural continuity were over, it was time to travel to Trelew, to Capel Moriah, for a ceremony which was to take place before most of the chapels in the valley opened their doors to serve a Welsh afternoon tea. The chapel was significant for its cemetery, which was the rest place of 43 of the original Welsh settlers, including Lewis Jones, the founder of Trelew.

There were already several people there when I arrived, and looking around, I recognised a few familiar faces from my first fieldwork trip in 2013. We were surrounded by Welsh and Argentinian flags. The ceremony started late with the singing of both the

Argentinian National Anthem and the Welsh National Anthem.<sup>35</sup> Tourists and locals clicked their cameras and clapped, as formal speeches were given by the First Minister of Wales, and the British Ambassador. Speaking Welsh, the First Minister of Wales, Carwyn Jones, pointed to the significance of the Welsh settlers in their creation of the settler colony, acknowledged the importance of the Welsh language teaching projects and the sending of teachers from Wales in terms of generating cultural continuity, and finally emphasised the desire to strengthen links between Patagonia and Wales. He later reiterated his speech in an official statement from the Welsh Government in which he wrote:

I was warmly welcomed at every event and the strong *links between Wales and the Welsh communities in Patagonia were firmly cemented* during my visit. I concluded my official programme by hosting a reception to thank the Welsh of Chubut for their hospitality and *continued commitment to keeping the Welsh culture alive* for future generations (Welsh Government 2015, emphasis mine, see also Appendix A).

That we were in Argentina, that there were fewer people singing the Welsh National Anthem than the Argentinian one, and that the faint whisperings of conversations in Castellano were audible amongst the crowds whilst Carwyn Jones spoke into a crackling microphone felt like minor details in relation to the all-encompassing evocative speeches, powerful national imagery, clicking cameras, and emphasis on the ‘Welsh community’, continuity, and identity that was surrounding us. “It is incredible to think that we are in Patagonia, but it is just like Wales,” one tourist remarked to me, astonishment in her low voice, “There really is a feeling of being Welsh here.” Elena similarly emphasised in a later interview with BBC Radio Wales that alongside paying respect to the ancestors, the day was

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<sup>35</sup> See p. 113, this chapter.

about acknowledging the continuity of Welsh traditions through language and custom that was visible in the valley (BBC Radio Cymru 2015).

Following the speeches, a plaque was unveiled by Carwyn Jones outside the chapel, and a wreath was placed on the grave of Lewis Jones. After listening to a solemn Welsh song sung by a young singer, Casi Wyn, who had travelled from North Wales, the ceremony came to a close and the crowds slowly began to disperse to make their way to Gaiman to a chapel of their choice for a ‘Welsh tea’, which was a selection of cakes and sandwiches served with tea, usually costing around 150 pesos a head (which at the time of the research was around £7). I accepted the offer of a lift back to Gaiman with Elena and her two distant relatives from the United States who were visiting the area. I presumed that we would be going to Capel Bethel (known as the ‘Welsh chapel’) for tea, given that it was where Elena could be found every Sunday as an active participant in the regular chapel service. When we were about halfway to Gaiman, Elena admitted that she “really just fancied some mate” instead of having tea, especially as the queues to the teahouses would be long. I said that I didn’t mind what we did, and so we headed back to her house. We sat around the table in the kitchen, and Elena laughed as the conversation slipped into English, “Tut tut, we aren’t being very Welsh.”

The obvious contradiction – between Elena’s emphasis on the continuity of language and Welsh cultural traditions being followed by her almost immediate flexibility – was not referred to by Elena herself, which made clear that for her, there *was* no contradiction between the almost automatic performance of a homogenous Welshness when it was seen as necessary and the swift change into English that followed. Once away from the gaze of tourists, the presence of officials and the questioning of news reporters, the homogeneity of

Welshness seemed to slip away in favour of the more typical, relaxed daily experience of a specific type of Welshness within Argentina, whereby the mixture of languages and cultural preferences was a natural given. In the official meetings, however, speeches tended to refer to the Welsh community without considering the specific Argentineness of their situation. The emphasis on the continuity of Welsh culture and the links between Wales and Patagonia, along with the more striking visual elements, such as the presence of Welsh and Argentinian flags helped to reproduce these feelings of belonging to a particular ‘community’ amongst participants in the audiences. Locals often performed back to news reporters the same homogenous image that was evoked in official speeches, demonstrating the efficacy with which a particular version of Welsh Patagonia was brought into being in certain contexts: under the gaze of officials and when surrounded by nationalistic items such as flags. These moments, even if they turned out to be somewhat fleeting, had huge significance, as they were the site at which key ideas were created, ideas which later became attractive to potential tourists.

*“Why have they dressed like elephant hunters? ”: laughter and power*

On the first day of the Eisteddfod in 2015, several busloads of Welsh tourists arrived at the Predio Ferial (a large wool barn that had recently converted into a concert hall on the outskirts of Trelew). They stared at the people in Welsh traditional costumes (who were about to compete in Welsh traditional dancing), at the children in their green and red outfits, and at the choirs singing in Welsh, and their cameras flashed constantly. I was watching them too, from my seat, and Paula must have been doing the same, as she commented, “These people who come on buses, in a week they will see more of Patagonia and Argentina than I have seen in my life.” I nodded, uncomfortably. The dynamics of seeing and being seen were

saturated with power relations, and my interlocutors were acutely aware of the specificities of the unequal dynamics between themselves and the tourists.

In this context, joking was often “utilised to demarcate difference, [to] express and negotiate power relations” and as a social tool to comment on difference and formality in a ‘light’ way (Alexeyeff 2008: 288). One example of how this was navigated through laughter came from the 2015 Eisteddfod. I was with my interlocutors at the Gorsedd ceremony which was about to begin.<sup>36</sup> The audience was growing rapidly. I could see my fellow choir members arriving, and I waved to them, smiling. They were easy to spot, in their black shirts, black trousers, black shoes, and characteristic bright blue scarfs. I could see some others from Gaiman, Trelew, and a few from Esquel. However, the majority of the audience were tourists. They stood out clearly, in part because in a small village like Gaiman, you very quickly come to identify a new face, but also due to the constant clicking of smart phones and cameras, and even more so for their summer clothes. They were all wearing white or cream cargo-style or linen shorts with white or lightly-coloured shirts, or long trousers with light shirts, practical walking sandals, and large sunhats. For the locals, however, for whom ‘summer’ was 45 degrees, the mild October temperatures of 20 to 25 degrees were not yet enough to warrant even contemplating getting out of long sleeved clothes. The general attire for the Gorsedd was no different from winter clothes, but with the addition of sunglasses. The contrast was strikingly clear. As I scanned the crowd, my thoughts were interrupted by Sebastian.

Sebastian was a tall, witty Argentinian historian with Welsh Patagonian connections. He

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<sup>36</sup> One of the core cultural elements of the National Eisteddfod of Wales is the ‘Gorsedd of the Bards of the Island of Britain’, more commonly referred to as the Gorsedd. The Gorsedd and the Eisteddfod – though they are intrinsically connected – are theoretically two separate institutions. The Gorsedd is a cultural institution which promotes literary scholarship and the creation of poetry and music. Nowadays, the Gorsedd consists of a group of people (bards) and a series of six ceremonies. The bards announce the Eisteddfod, mark the beginning of each Eisteddfod and are involved with important prize-giving ceremonies. In Patagonia, the Gorsedd is a prestigious group of individuals who by the very fact of their membership must have been nominated due to a specific significant and continuous contribution to the development and maintenance of Welsh culture in the valley (Parry & Cynan 1956).

lived in Comodoro but often travelled often to the Chubut valley for research and to the UK to present his work at conferences. He nudged me, and with a huge grin, asked in English, “Why have they dressed like elephant hunters?” He pinched his fingers and thumbs together and shook his hand up and down – the typical Argentinian gesture to express a mixture of lack of understanding and bemusement. He laughed then, a snickering-out-of-control-laugh. I laughed too, relieved to not be the only one who had picked up on the curious contrast in outfit choice.

Alberto played a flowery introduction to the National Anthem of Argentina, and the choir led the singing of the anthem, which was followed by the enthusiastic applauding of the members of the Gorsedd, who were still waiting at the side of the circle, and of the other attendees of the ceremony who were standing opposite us. A solo trumpet broke through the crowd to indicate that it was the time for the Gorsedd to take their seats in the allocated chairs, which were lined in rows within the stone circle. In pairs, they walked slowly, majestically, and proudly. Most members of the Gorsedd were older individuals, and most of them were bards, wearing suits and formal clothing underneath their long blue robes. The druids were wearing white robes and headwear, and amongst them was Christine James, the archdruid of the Welsh Gorsedd. The archdruid of the Patagonian Gorsedd, Ana, was wearing a blue robe, with a gold and red crown.

Gorsedd members were such due to their contribution to Welsh culture in Chubut, whether this contribution was through their work (many were teachers of the Welsh language in the nursery and secondary schools in the area, and some ran the Welsh teahouses in Gaiman), or through their personal lives (by learning the Welsh language, teaching Welsh to their children, dancing Welsh traditional dances, or supporting cultural activities such as the

Eisteddfod and other festivals such as the ‘Festival of the Landing’). Most members of the Gorsedd were nominated to this position after demonstrating a committed contribution to Welsh culture through a combination of the two. Ana, the head of the Patagonian Gorsedd, climbed up two steps to the top of a large rock in the middle of the stone circle and when the singing had finished, spoke into a microphone, in Welsh, to welcome those present to the ceremony (especially the visitors from Wales and beyond) with a short speech:

“It is a great pleasure to welcome you here, and especially to the many friends that have come from Wales to join us in our special celebrations this year with the Wladfa being century and a half. It is an extreme honour to welcome the archdruid of Wales, Mrs Christine James...the archdruid of Cornwall...and a representative from Brittany. This is a special honour for us this year...also the gorseddau of Ireland and Scotland have sent us their greetings as they cannot be present. It is an honour to us...in our little Gorsedd...the representation is so important. A big welcome here to all of you.”

Towards the end of the ceremony, the three archdruids began to walk around the outer circle, where the audience members and choirs were seated, to greet them individually. They walked profoundly slowly and solemnly, their long white robes almost reaching the ground. Just before they reached the girls’ choir, Alberto turned to me, grinning, and said, “I didn’t realise that the three wise men were coming.” I laughed, as did most of the other sopranos within earshot. The altos further down the choir, noticing the ripples of laughter travelling through the choir, began to ask each other, “What did he say?” then shared in the laughter as the joke was repeated again and again. The archdruids thanked us for the “lovely singing”. We greeted them politely and thanked them for coming, before exchanging one final giggle as they moved on to the next crowd.

In the Welsh Patagonian situation, the teasing was asymmetrical, in that whilst the Welsh Patagonians joked about the visible differences between them and the tourists, I never heard tourists joking about the Welsh Patagonians. The laughter in the Eisteddfod ultimately reflected deeper inequalities between Welsh tourists and Welsh Patagonians. This resonates with much of the ethnographic literature on the topic. Musharbash and Carty (2008) argue that an ethnographic focus on laughter is significant precisely because it provides a perspective on how people manage social inequalities. McCullough (2008: 284) draws on fieldwork in North Queensland to further argue that “joking and humour performances...are enmeshed in the daily structuring of race, nation and alterity in Australia”. Alexeyeff (2008: 292) notes that in the Cook Islands, “humour is a product of global economic forces and accompanying race and sexual politics”, arguing that in a context of “asymmetrical power relations, relative wealth and poverty, jokes...reflect this asymmetry”. Goldstein (2013: 5) draws on her fieldwork in the shanty towns of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil to argue that laughter provided a commentary on the political and economic structures within which her interlocutors were embedded, revealing “both the cracks in the system and the masked or more subtle ways that power is challenged”. These ideas are reminiscent of a Butlerian (1995) concept of agency, whereby submission to – and laughter within – dominant structures can be perceived as a form of agency in its own right.

The Welsh Patagonian context similarly demonstrated that jokes can act as both a light social commentary on social situations as well as revealing and relating to more serious social distinctions and structural inequalities (see further Musharbash 2008). The joking by the Welsh Patagonians in this particular context acknowledged and negotiated the underlying existence of a form of inequality which emerged from their positionality in a context in which the tourists, as Welsh, were viewed from many of their perspectives as being ‘better’ than

them, both economically and culturally. This laughter directly contrasts with the ways in which it has typically been treated by thinkers such as Aristotle, Plato, and Hobbes, who each viewed laughter as being directed towards someone who we perceive as *inferior* to ourselves (Morreall 1987). Joking about the inappropriate clothing choices of tourists, and laughing at the archdruids robes in their solemnity and formality, was not only a ‘light’ way to subvert situations of global inequality, but also a way to recognise the existence of hierarchies and underlying conflict.

However, there was a critical difference here. My interlocutors occupied a curious position of power and subordination, whereby they were powerful in relation to the local Argentinians with whom they lived, but whereby they also acknowledged the relative economic position of tourists over themselves. Being interpellated by – and submitting to – the tourist gaze and performing a certain image of Welsh Patagonia was necessary for my interlocutors in order for them to maintain their identity, sense of community, and their relative position of power and prestige in the Chubut Province. In this context, submitting to the tourist gaze could eventually be a means to gain prestige and power (through increased publicity, or in a financial sense, for example). Here, laughter complicated the idea of jokes being a commentary on, or reflection of social inequalities, in addition to shedding new light on Butler’s (1995, 1997a, 1997b) concept of having the agency to act within dominant structures as a form of self-mastery. Ultimately, my interlocutors were laughing at their own positionality vis-à-vis the Welsh tourists (arguably demonstrating agency within dominant structures), but this laughter simultaneously came from its own relative position of prestige (in relation to their local Argentinian neighbours), a position that was directly connected to their positionality in the context of tourist encounters.

## *Conclusions: the potentiality of the gaze*

Inevitably, in the days and weeks after events in the village, several albums of photographs would be uploaded online. At Paula's house one afternoon, we were sitting around the kitchen table drinking tea when she put her glasses on, opened her laptop, opened Facebook, and started flicking through a set of recently uploaded photographs. She squinted, frowning at the screen, "We do loads of things with the string group and never put anything online, so *I guess people in Wales just think we do nothing.*" What this points to, is the possibility of a 'potential tourist gaze', one which works largely from a distance. In this case, Paula was imagining the scenario of tourists at home looking for Welsh performances in Patagonia, and being met with nothing, and her comment reflected the shame that she associated with that situation. Whilst Sartre's (1958) emphasis is largely on the gaze as a literal and physical presence, he does point towards the possibility of being made a subject in the absence of presence:

The fact remains that I can discover that I have been mistaken. Here I am bent over the keyhole: suddenly I hear a footstep. I shudder as a wave of shame sweeps over me. Somebody has seen me. I straighten up. My eyes run over the deserted corridor. It was a false alarm. [...] What then is absence (Sartre 1958: 300-301)?

The notion of an absent yet present gaze as alluded to by Paula and as theorised by Sartre (1958) has been developed more precisely by Foucault (1991), in *Governmentality*, in his notion of panopticon – the idea that in a prison situation, where the prison officer is located in a tall tower in the middle of cells laid out in a circle, the prisoners behave accordingly not because they are always physically under the gaze of the prison officer, but rather because of the notion of possibility: they feel the possible gaze of the prison officer

from afar. The uncertainty of whether or not the prison officer is watching them, because they cannot see him or her, leads to the possibility of being watched all the time (see further Foucault 1981, 1990).

The gaze of the other, as demonstrated by the simple anecdote above from Paula, could be felt at a distance, as a *possibility* rather than a reality. A string-group rehearsal organised in anticipation of the arrival of the BBC NOW, or a reflection on how the string group could be perceived by social media users 7,000 miles away, are two examples of the ways in which the gaze of the Welsh other worked in a more imaginary way, with individuals discussing the ways they could and could not, should and should not act during the concert. Similarly, social media performances from Welsh Patagonia were self-conscious performances, invoking a coming into being at a distance whereby a version of Welsh Patagonia was performed on social media platforms under the possible gaze of the Welsh other. This was closely connected to possible feelings of shame – shame at not living up to the imagined standards or the online presence that the tourists were looking for.

In conclusion, this chapter has argued that Welsh Patagonia as a concrete whole comes from outside itself, demonstrating quite how fleeting, how constructed, and how performative the concept of cultural coherence or cultural wholeness is. In making this argument, it has outlined the ways in which the gaze and the imagination were intrinsically connected in the Welsh Patagonian context. The empty land trope of Patagonia had resonance in Wales and fed into the creation of an imagined Welsh Patagonia, which in turn fuelled the booming tourist economy. Tourists therefore often arrived in Welsh Patagonia with their own ideas about what it would be like, what they had come to look for, and what they would see. The performance of Welsh Patagonia to tourists took place with reference to imagining the

kind of Patagonia that tourists were coming to see – a heightened or exaggerated Welshness. During these encounters, both Welsh Patagonians and tourists found their imaginations being articulated, re-articulated, and challenged. The following chapter seeks to explore the role of the tourist gaze in more detail, by considering the role of the “local gaze” in terms of representation, reflection, and the place of documentary film in the tourist encounter (Maoz 2005: 222).

Ultimately, then, Welsh Patagonians created an image of Welsh Patagonia which influenced what other tourists could expect to find, and which also influenced the image that locals sought to generate. It was a two-way process: in the performance of a song with increased energy to please an audience, in the providing of a quotation that my interlocutors knew would be pleasing for a cameraman, Welsh Patagonia performed itself, and in doing so came into being as coherent under the gaze of the cameraperson or audience – the Welsh other. This chapter has argued that during these encounters, members of the Welsh Patagonian community became aware (though, as the presence of joking demonstrated, not simplistically so) of the presence of the tourist gaze and performed the identity of Welsh Patagonia. Finally, to realise that the core of Welsh Patagonia and the feeling and appearance of the community as a concrete whole came from its performance to tourists, visitors, and officials is to emphasise the centrality of tourism and cultural exchange between Wales and Patagonia in this particular context, and most importantly, to realise the complex role that the Welsh Patagonian community played in performing and producing the image that they needed to project.

## Chapter 4: *Mirror mirror on the wall, who is the most Welsh of them all?*

Like translation, ethnography is also a somewhat provisional way of coming to terms with the foreignness of languages – of cultures and societies. The ethnographer does not, however, translate texts the way the translator does. He must first *produce* them. [...] The ethnographer...*presents* languages, cultures, and societies in all their opacity, their foreignness, their meaninglessness; then...he clarifies the opaque, renders the foreign familiar, and gives meaning to the meaningless. He *decodes* the message. He *interprets*. The ethnographer conventionally acknowledges the provisional nature of his interpretations. Yet he assumes a final interpretation – a definitive reading. “I have finally cracked the Kariera section system,” we hear him say. “I finally got to the root of all their fuss about the *mudyi* tree.”

(Crapanzano (1986: 52, emphasis mine)

### *Introduction: two awkward moments*

It was a Sunday evening in December. At Elena’s suggestion, a few of us were sitting around a long table in ‘Siop Bara’, Gaiman’s local coffee shop and bakery, as a way of welcoming a young couple who were visiting Chubut for a couple of days. We had come from Capel Bethel, at the other side of the village, where we had taken part in a Cymanfa Ganu.<sup>37</sup> The waitress came to take our order and we made small-talk whilst we waited for our drinks to arrive. The couple were travelling around South America on their honeymoon and

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<sup>37</sup> Cymanfa (Gymanfa with the mutation) means assembly and ‘canu’ (‘ganu’ with the mutation in this context) means ‘to sing.’ In a 2014 conference on Welsh Patagonia held at Aberystwyth University, it was suggested to me by Professor Wyn Jones that Cymanfa Ganu could be translated into ‘hymn singing sessions.’ Other possible translations suggested informally have included ‘hymn festival’ and ‘songfest.’ Evans and Thomas (194: 140) in *Y Geiriadur Mawr* suggest ‘a singing festival.’ Y Gymanfa Ganu was typically shortened to Y Gymanfa in Welsh Patagonia. In Welsh this word captures the singing, social and religious element of the singing, and there is no proper equivalent in English. Throughout the thesis I follow my interlocutors to use Y Gymanfa when referring to individual/specific Cymanfeodd Canu (the latter being the plural). I use Y Gymanfa Ganu when referring to the general concept of a Cymanfa (see further Cassarino 2013).

had decided to pass through Gaiman as they were learning Welsh. As we listened to them recounting all the incredible places they had visited, they suddenly turned to me and asked me, almost in unison, what I was doing in Patagonia. Elena swiftly put her arm around me, squeezed my shoulder, winked at me, and answered on my behalf, in English, with a wicked laugh, “Lucy is studying the *local people*...she follows us around and looks at what we do, that’s all she does!” She indulged in their look of surprise and continued, “No, *really*, she doesn’t do anything else, well apart from a bit of cello in chapel... and then she’s going to write a *LIBRO*...a BOOK! A book about the real Welsh Patagonians.” She laughed and laughed, and as she wiped tears from her eyes, I couldn’t help but laugh too, amused by her unusual burst of childishness. The visiting couple glanced at each other, slightly bemused, and laughed nervously. I nudged Elena and responded jokingly, “You’ll miss me when I’m gone!”

The sun was setting by the time we began to think about dispersing. The others left quickly, in time to catch a bus to Trelew, where they were living. Elena offered me a lift part of the way home. “I’m tired,” she said, “but I’ll be kind and take you to the bridge.” We trundled along the stony road in her little white car in companionable silence. I was looking out of the passenger seat window when Elena said, “Several people have come here and written horrible things about the Welsh community, you know.” I turned to look at her, but she was looking straight ahead at the road. I assured her that it was not my intention to have a harmful effect on the community and explained that the final thesis would offer an insight from an anthropological perspective into the community. She smiled briefly, nodding in response, but her eyes remained fixed on the road. I hoped that she felt somewhat reassured, but her concern cut like ice through the carefree laughter of earlier, the sound of the stones

flicking up from the road and hitting the bottom of the car seemed louder, and the silence between us felt somewhat different.

Almost exactly a year later, an American linguistics student visited Gaiman for a month. She was documenting and analysing different forms of Welsh as part of her doctoral research on language change, and her research intentions were to find Welsh speakers in the valley who would read out lists of Welsh words on tape, to be analysed back in the United States for their accents and different use of mutations. In the car on the way home from choir one evening, I asked Paula whether or not she was going to partake in the research project, as the researcher had recently called for participants via an online post in the Menter Patagonia Facebook group. She hesitated, and assuming that she had not heard of it, I responded hurriedly, “I don’t think you have to do much, just read out lists of Welsh words.” Paula’s body tensed slightly, her lips tightened, and although she continued driving calmly, her anger was palpable. Her response was snappy, “No. I won’t participate. I don’t know who they think they are, coming here for two days and studying us as if we are...*dinosaurs*.” Taken aback by her response, I blushed, but didn’t respond.

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Crapanzano (1986: 52), with whom this chapter opens, argues that ethnography is never neutral: it is always a form of interpretation. Ruby (2005: 165) discusses the idea of interpretation in relation to film more explicitly, expanding the idea of an “anthropology of visual communication”, which he defines as being an anthropological analysis concerned with the communication and representation of visual media. I would consider both these definitions to be relevant to many other forms of representation: journalism, filmmaking,

theatre, photography, and radio recordings. In Welsh Patagonia, several films, radio programmes, and internet articles have been written by various visitors to the province, taking the Welsh Patagonian community and Welshness performed as their focal point. Furthermore, news reporters and other journalists in pursuit of data have often invited the participation of the local community, by calling on Welsh Patagonians to act, feature, or participate in interviews, recordings, and films.

One of the key criticisms of Urry's (1990) early work on the tourist gaze is also a key issue present in Sartre's (1958) concept of the gaze. Both these thinkers allowed little room for the agency of the individuals being observed in their analyses (Moaz 2005; Zhihong 2007). More specifically, in the Welsh Patagonian context, their work doesn't allow room for the ways in which the gaze of tourists and the gaze of the locals (or the gaze of the onlooker and the gaze of the individual being watched) could work both ways in that "the locals construct their gaze upon previous and numerous encounters with tourists" (Moaz 2005: 229). In the context of performance, specifically, it has been argued that "performance and audience feed each other in a process of mutual becoming (Elliot 2013: 87). Geiger (2011) has further pointed to the ways in which cinema or the production of images has become a central component of selling the concept of travel, arguing that "motion picture technology – like tourism, a growing leisure pursuit – kept pace with modern travel developments, mirroring and often exploiting them. The tourist and image-making industries are mutually dependent" (Geiger 2011: 40). This chapter considers these issues – performance, tourism, representation, film, and the mutual gaze – through an ethnographic exploration of the moment at which the Welsh Patagonian community came face-to-face with the representation of their performance in films during film nights held in the Casa de Cultura (Arts Centre) in

Gaiman whereby the “subject rediscovers him – or herself within cinema” (Silverman 1988: 6).<sup>38</sup>

This chapter argues that film in this context makes visible the performance of the self whereby the performance is mirrored to the performers. Lacan’s (1966) theory of the mirror stage is particularly useful here, in that much like Sartre (1958), the theory is based on looking, gazing, and recognition, but at the same time it enables a more in-depth consideration of issues like desire, self-awareness, the mutual gaze of tourists and locals, and the role of documentary films in the valley in this process of subjectivation. In doing so, this chapter follows others who have drawn on Lacanian psychoanalytic theory in the context of film analysis (see, for example, Silverman 1988; Restuccia 2012; Mulvey 1989). The chapter draws mainly on Lacan’s (1966) theory of the mirror stage to consider ‘film as mirror’. Lacan (1966) argues that when infants view themselves in the mirror, they objectify themselves, and in doing so, they encounter a gap between the self as experienced and the self as reflected. Similarly, in these specific encounters in which my Welsh Patagonian interlocutors viewed their performance on screen, the performers were confronted with the gap between the self as objectified and the self as experienced. This gap constituted individual subjectivity but also pushed the viewer and actor not only to a level of self-awareness, but to reflect critically on their own roles in bringing Welsh Patagonia into being as a coherent community through representation in films, theatre radio programmes, music, or research articles.

In making this argument, the chapter firstly contextualises the main argument within the broader politics of representation in Welsh Patagonia, with a focus on theatre, film,

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<sup>38</sup> Casa de Cultura was an Arts Centre in Gaiman which hosted several exhibitions, concerts and film nights.

television, cameras, and the scholarly gaze. It then turns to the main argument which concerns the viewing of the film *Galesa* through a metaphorical reading of Lacan's (1966) mirror stage, arguing that when local actors in the film were confronted with their own performance, they were confronted with a gap between their own self-image and the image that was represented. This 'gap', or the difference between the self as experienced and the self as performed pushed them to reflect critically on many issues relevant to their lives, such as mobility between Wales and Argentina, feeling torn between Wales and Argentina, and the use of the Welsh language. Finally it draws on contexts in which friends dressed up in traditional Welsh costumes to elaborate the concept of 'peers as mirrors', arguing that peers too can act as a mirror; a mirror made up of other individuals rather than a mirror offering a direct reflection of their ego.

### *The politics of representation and the scholarly gaze in Welsh Patagonia*

Fieldwork was a haze of interviewers, filmmakers, researchers, photographers, musicians, librarians, journalists, and artists passing through the village. This was especially the case in 2015, a significant year which marked 150 years since the establishment of the settler colony in Chubut. 'New arrivals' in the village were weekly – and at peak times such as during the annual Eisteddfod – daily occurrences. Against the background of daily routine in the valley, the circulating gossip that what was locally termed a 'new investigator' was in the village to collect data for so-and-so-a-project, the intermittent calls on Facebook and WhatsApp for 'interview-participants', the tapping of microphones to record radio interviews, and the sudden appearances of newcomers observing, taking photos, or recording in choir rehearsals became normal experiences.

The purpose of visiting varied widely amongst what were locally subsumed under the umbrella of ‘investigators’ – from conducting feminist studies of the settler colony focusing on women, to anthropological work looking at the ways in which all the institutions in the settler colony cooperated, to researching for the British Council in order to write reports on the Welsh education programmes, to photographing the landscape to knit Patagonian-inspired blankets, to doctoral research involving recording lists of individuals reading out Welsh words for a linguistics project, to conducting research for undergraduate dissertations, and finally to artists researching for personal musical or poetic inspiration. In the midst of this diversity of documentation and research, several elements remained consistent, such as the omnipresence of cameras documenting even routine events, the simple yet significant frequency of being introduced to new, fleeting ‘investigators’, and that all these projects shared the same subject – the Welsh Patagonian community. Although the issues of documentation and representation were certainly exacerbated in 2015, they were not new. In 2014, Rene Griffiths, a songwriter, singer, and guitarist from Patagonia, who lived for a long time in Cardiff before eventually returning to the valley, published an autobiographical-style book called *Ramblings of a Patagonian* in which he wrote:

Back in Wales, a few years ago *I found out by accident that I was in another interesting feature film, and had no idea that I had been involved in its production.* As it seems that I was the inspiration for the film, I would normally think that I had been more inattentive than usual, but on this occasion I need to share the blame with a distant relative (who I was also unaware of, so I was possibly doubly inattentive). This distant relative turned out to be quite famous, and I didn’t know that either, so *all in all the experience was quite a revelation* (Griffiths 2014: 290-291, emphasis mine).

This passage aptly summarises the power structures between and unequal encounter of those representing and those represented (Faier & Rofel 2014). Rene is talking here about

the film *Separado* (2010).<sup>39</sup> The protagonist of the drama was the Welsh singer Gruff Rhys, who works as a soloist and also with several bands, including the ‘Super Furry Animals’, who originally formed in the 90s in Cardiff and who were, at the time of the research, a relatively well-known psychedelic rock band based in the UK. The film is based on Rhys’s search in Patagonia for Rene, after discovering that Rene is a distant uncle of his. Alongside the search for Rene, Gruff Rhys also finds himself in the midst of Welsh Patagonia, performing music and meeting many people. Rene himself does not appear to be offended by his representation in the film, but it is important to note that he also had the possibility of responding critically to the ways in which he was represented. He is trilingual, having lived in Cardiff where he learnt English alongside Welsh (his first language) and Castellano (his second language) and was in a position – economically, socially, and politically – to be able to write and publish a book which addresses some of his concerns, albeit in a humorous tone. As Ruby (2005: 163) puts it, “cultures that once were the passive subjects of ethnographic and documentary work are now imagining themselves, and critiquing the images made by others”. Ultimately, however, it remains implicit that in some way Gruff Rhys, as a powerful outsider, felt that he had a right to the data that he sought to collect.

At the time of my research, the broader relationship between my interlocutors and the visiting ‘investigators’ was based on the co-existence of suspicion and necessity. My interlocutors began to tentatively express their feelings of mistrust regarding the constant flow of researchers and people passing through wanting to document the village, but much like Rene, they felt it was a social duty to provide the data. As one of my interlocutors from Gaiman said, “We don’t have much choice...it is important that we welcome people to the

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<sup>39</sup> Rose (2010) describes the film as “a delightful experience – hilarious and surprising” and states that “for a low-budget documentary, it’s hard to see how they could have done much better”.

community, involve them in what we are doing, as well as getting involved in what *they* are doing to keep the relationships between Wales and Patagonia alive.” In many ways, then, the scholarly gaze coexisted alongside – and overlapped with – the tourist gaze. Despite feelings of ambivalence and mistrust towards researchers or new arrivals to the valley, more often than not, locals would take part in interviews, focus groups, fill in surveys and in practice performed a similar image of Welshness to that presented to tourists, something which became increasingly clear as I spent longer living in Gaiman.

News about potential new arrivals would travel long before each data-collector, teacher, workshop-coordinator, artist, film crew, anthropologist, orchestra, or radio presenter would arrive in the village. Suspicions would quickly circulate, and my interlocutors would often conduct research of their own, by asking around, and by searching for individuals on social media. “Do you know that girl that is going to be coming on Tuesday?” people would ask me, subtly looking for information as to the kinds of people that were going to be arriving. “She doesn’t live far from you in Wales, do you know her? What is she like?” With time, people became even more open about their ambivalence, as was the case when the director of the mixed choir announced that some people would be visiting “the local choir”, holding two fingers up as speech marks around the phrase and rolling her eyes dramatically to indicate the irritation induced by the phrase. Others were sceptical about whether or not the increased attention was beneficial to the whole village. One of my interlocutors suggested that the publicity was only beneficial to a select few individuals, stating that, “I don’t know if it is too good...some people are becoming world famous [by making connections which led to new opportunities in Wales]...and the rest of us stay behind.” She elaborated that one of the key issues was that journalists and film-makers came with their own ideas about what – or who – would capture the attention of an audience back home, and as such tended to focus

on particular ‘key’ individuals from within the Welsh community. Consequently, other potential protagonists were ‘left out’, despite being fluent Welsh speakers with high levels of involvement in the Welsh community activities.

However, alongside these suspicions and critiques, the documentation of Welsh cultural activities was simultaneously viewed by many as central and necessary to the continuation of Welsh culture in the valley. From 2015, the recording of the activities of the Welsh community via photography began to carry with it a certain element of prestige. October 2015 was significant in this respect, in that it marked the public recognition of the work of a local photographer, Jonathan, who lived in Trelew. He had – with a considerable amount of dedication and for several years – systematically attended, documented, and uploaded to Facebook vast quantities of photos of the Welsh Patagonian community events, thus disseminating the activities, and crucially, the *existence* of the Welsh community to a far wider online audience. In 2015 Jonathan was accepted to the Gorsedd at the Chubut Eisteddfod.<sup>40</sup> In the speech preluding his admittance to the Gorsedd, his work was hailed as “essential” and “central” to the Welsh community.

### *Self-awareness of the performance of Welshness*

What might seem to be a slightly contradictory co-existence – of the suspicion surrounding ‘investigators’ with the view that investigation and representation was a necessary part of keeping the settler colony alive – made sense in its broader context, a context in which my interlocutors repeatedly performed a homogenous and harmonious

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<sup>40</sup> For a more extensive discussion of the National Eisteddfod of Wales Gorsedd and the Chubut Eisteddfod Gorsedd, see Chapter 7.

Welshness alongside a self-awareness that the Welshness performed to tourists and others was in some ways different to the reality which informed it.

In 2015, the National Youth Theatre Company of Wales collaborated with Clwyd Theatre Wales to create a theatre project based on a drama written by Tim Baker in 2011, called 'The Spirit of the Mimosa'. The cast consisted of four professional actors from Wales (Dylan Williams, Hanna Jarman, Tom Blumberg, and Bethany Gwyn), and other young actors from both Wales and Patagonia. The purpose of the musical theatre production was to describe the journey of one family of original Welsh settlers onboard the Mimosa, focusing especially on the treacherous journey, the arrival to the disappointment of the barren land, the search for fertile land, and the importance of Welshness and the Welsh language. It depicted the story of 31 year old William Jones, his wife Catherine (also 31) and their two daughters, 3 year old Mary Ann and 16 month old Jane, who had left their home in Bala (North Wales) for Patagonia. Their voyage was fraught with grief and tragedy as both daughters died on board of the Mimosa, and the play was a representation of the emotional turmoil of the journey. It ended on a note of hope, however, with the birth of two babies on board, and the discovery of the Chubut River and nearby fertile land. Tim Baker described the show as "a magical, amazing story but one that is also full of disappointment, anger, and hardship". The play was performed on a tour of Wales in July 2015 with the cast of four professional actors, who were later joined by 16 young actors in association with the Urdd and 2 young actors from Patagonia in order to perform in the National Eisteddfod in Wales in August 2015 before beginning their Patagonia tour shortly after, with the cast performing in Gaiman, Puerto Madryn, Trelew, and finally in Trevelin in the Andes.

In August 2015, I attended the play, performed at the gym in Gaiman (commonly referred to as the ‘gimnasio’), with Sebastian and Katy. Katy, Sebastian’s partner at the time, was an American anthropologist who was living in Trelew, and who was in the final months of her fieldwork. We settled into the plastic chairs in the gym, eagerly anticipating the show. We shared mate as the lights dimmed. The play provided an interesting interpretation of the historical events, particularly with respect to the tense relationship between English and Welsh, which was a large part of the motivation to leave Wales. The ship’s captain was presented as being English, and there were several arguments throughout between him and those on board. Throughout the play, the captain shouted orders, especially at women, which would be swiftly followed by the male Welsh settlers on board acting to defend themselves in a morally righteous way; a father, for example, stepped up to defend his young daughter against the captain’s threats. Given that the various characters were played by the same group of actors, the actors changed the tone of voice and stance to differentiate between roles and to create a clear dichotomy between the English and the Welsh. The English speakers spoke with exaggerated Queen’s English and the way in which their bodies occupied the space on stage was significant. They swaggered with their shoulders back with an air of arrogance that was indicative of richness and upper classness, which was contrasted with the Welsh settlers who consistently made themselves smaller by pulling their shoulders forward, shuffling in their old clothes, and huddling together in a way which portrayed them as subordinate, loving, caring, poor, and humble.

At the end of the show, as Sebastian, Katy, and I were leaving, we were stopped by the door by a teenage boy with a microphone. He asked us eagerly, “Would it be possible for you to record something on tape, saying what you thought of the show?” We looked at each other and it was clear that we all felt reluctant to contribute. I said in Welsh that I thought the

show was excellent. Katy stayed silent, and Sebastian responded, in English, “I am originally from Patagonia, and so it was very close to home. For me, it was very emotional.” The boy with the microphone grinned widely, clearly pleased by his answer and prompted further, “Was it good to see lots of people speaking Welsh on stage?” “Yes,” Sebastian nodded enthusiastically, “It was wonderful.” As we walked out of the hall, Sebastian burst into laughter and remarked, “I just said anything.”

A few months later, I began volunteering weekly at Gaiman’s Welsh museum with Lucas, Elena’s son, who had taken over the role of running the museum since April 2014 following the passing of his aunt. Lucas was tall, thin, and distinctive-looking with his curly hair and glasses. He was the same age as Paula and Alberto – the three had grown up together. His intelligence and constant political commentary combined with his wicked sense of humour made him great fun to be around. The time spent waiting for tourists to turn up to be shown around the museum was always filled with chatting, sharing mate, and laughter – as Lucas put it, “You go mad here in about an hour.” One summer’s afternoon, early into volunteering, I asked him what exactly I could help out with in the museum. He pointed to the corner of the room where there was an old Welsh harp and responded in English, “You can sit in that corner and just play the harp, so that the visitors can see a real-life Welsh person with red hair and everything. Do you play the harp?” I laughed, shaking my head, “I don’t even play the harp!” Our laughter rapidly subsided with the familiar sound of the bell above the door chiming twice, indicating the arrival of visitors ready for their tour of the Welsh museum. Lucas hurriedly took the mate to the back room, and brushed through his hair with his fingers, getting ready to greet the newcomers with an enthusiastic “good afternoon!”

These two examples point to the awareness of the performance of Welshness, or what Covington-Ward (2016: 7) has termed the “explicit self-consciousness of performance”. Sebastian, when confronted by the boy with the microphone, responded quickly under pressure and provided him with exactly what he came to look for – a depiction of Welsh Patagonia as a coherent place from an ‘original’ Welsh Patagonian and an expression of emotion and connection with the history of the settler colony. Lucas’s suggestion that I could play the harp, his rapid hiding of the mate, and his swift but natural change of character to greet the tourists was based on his own knowledge of what they would expect and hope to find in the Welsh museum.

Ultimately, to be able to perform Welshness in this way, the levels of awareness were threefold. Firstly, there was an awareness and understanding of the image that the Welsh community were collectively aiming to present. This first level of awareness is reminiscent of Sartre’s (1958) idea of the gaze explored in the previous chapter. The individual caught peering through a keyhole recognises at that moment the way he or she appears to the onlooker. In the previous chapter too, I discussed the ways in which anticipatory rehearsals were organised with the arrival of potential onlookers from Wales in mind. The feelings of shame connected to the possibility of ‘not being good enough’ implied an awareness of how my interlocutors thought they *should* appear, and an awareness of the ‘correct’ or most appropriate social behaviour in that context. Secondly, alongside an awareness of what the Welsh tourists were looking for, there was an awareness of its relation to the image presented by the Welsh community, and an understanding that “the cinema [or more broadly, the performance] substitute[d] for [the tourist] gaze – a world more in harmony with [their] desires” (Bazin, quoted in Restuccia 2012: 39). Finally, and closely connected to this, there

was a self-awareness of the discrepancy between the performance and the reality, though this is not to imply that the performance was ‘false’ in any way.

Sebastian’s remark of, “I just said anything”, and Lucas’s joking before the arrival of tourists at the museum both point explicitly to the understanding of the co-existence of two different realities. At first, an awareness of the discrepancy between the performance and reality combined with the objective continuation of the performance might seem contradictory. However, what became clear in the Welsh Patagonian context was that there were elements of feeling, desire, and belonging embedded within this. As Lucas later elaborated, when I asked him what would happen if he didn’t perform, “Oh, well...we would never do that. It’s not *pretend*...it is a part of our identity.” Lacan’s (1966) theorisation of the mirror stage is relevant here in that he also offers a way of considering how elements of desire (or in his case, striving) can coexist with the gap – the gap that will always be there – between the performance and the reality. He argues that when an infant views his or her mirror image, the image is viewed as an ideal ‘I’, or in other words, as something to strive for and work towards. This closely reflects the element of desire that Butler (1995) elaborates, and specifically her argument that we ultimately want to be constituted as subjects – we desire that element of identification to the extent that we performatively constitute it ourselves. In this respect, both Lacan (1966) and Butler (1995) have moved beyond Sartre (1958) to consider the role of desire in the process of subjectivation. As the remainder of this chapter will demonstrate, in the context of Welsh Patagonia, this can help to explain the continuation of the performance of Welshness alongside the joking and laughter that indicated a self-awareness of the differences between two realities.

### *Viewing the performance of the self: S4C's Galesa*

The self-awareness of the performance of Welshness was especially heightened in a context where members of the Welsh Patagonian community gathered together for film nights to watch their own performances of Welshness. Abu-Lughod (1997: 110) draws on her fieldwork with women in an Egyptian village to argue for increased ethnographic attention to encounters with media, stating that we must begin to consider the “significance of television’s [and by extension, film’s] existence as a ubiquitous presence in the lives and imaginaries of people in the contemporary world”. The messages of television, film, and the media, though they may be imbued with intentionality by producers, are modified both by the ways in which people frame, interpret, or reflect on these experiences, as well as by the everyday realities and power structures within which these messages are inevitably embedded. She points to the gap between the villagers’ ideas of what the series represented for them (in that it opened up a discursive space for them to comment on the differences between their lives vis-à-vis the wealthy women on the screen), and the intentions of the director (who had intended it to have a feminist message), arguing that “the same cultural texts have different imports in different contexts” (Abu-Lughod 1997: 120, see further 1991).

In the Patagonian context, one example of a similar film was the film *Galesa*, directed by the S4C (a Welsh language television and broadcasting company). *Galesa* was filmed in Gaiman over 18 days in April 2015. Its cast consisted of one professional actor (the protagonist, Elizabeth Fernandez, who at the time of the research was living in Cardiff but who was originally from Gaiman) and local Welsh Patagonians in other roles. The film was created using structured reality techniques, which meant that the actors were not given specific scripts to follow, but rather were provided with a broad storyline and encouraged to

improvise their lines within the structure. This is an important element to consider in a context where we have moved away from viewing documentary films as representative of “authentic embodiments of culture” to consider the role of “the strategies of dramatic enactment”, such as the use of structured reality techniques to create a specific plot (Ebron 2007: 172-173). Whilst watching the films, self-awareness of the divisions between performance and reality often developed into critical self-reflection, both of the gaps between Welsh Patagonia as represented and the reality, and also in terms of my interlocutors’ own roles in the homogenous representation of the settler colony. As such, the storyline of the film encouraged my interlocutors to consider other subtle – and arguably more current – themes, such as the relationship between mobility and status, the feeling of being torn between Wales and Argentina, and the ways in which Welsh language use was represented.

In August 2015, a few weeks into fieldwork, Menter Patagonia had arranged the debut film viewing of the film *Galesa* in the Casa de Cultura. I felt a growing sense of curiosity as I walked from my house, over the bridge, and up the road to the Casa de Cultura. When I arrived, I was greeted at the door by two young boys. They were both wearing red Welsh football shirts and offering small squares of Torta Negra Galesa as people arrived.<sup>41</sup> Holding a piece of cake wrapped in a white napkin, I walked down the corridor and pushed open another door which led to the room where the film was to be shown. Despite arriving early, I was surprised to see the fairly large room nearly full. I sat next to Emily, a Welsh undergraduate student who was studying Spanish in Scotland, and who had been living in Gaiman for a few months as part of the exchange programme for her degree, and leaned forward to greet Awel, who was sitting in front of us with her two children. There was a large

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<sup>41</sup> Torta Negra Galesa, otherwise known as Welsh Black Cake, is a type of fruitcake which, according to local sources, was made by the original settlers when they first arrived in Chubut. It is made with sugar, whiskey, raisins, coffee, butter, eggs, cinnamon, nuts, flour, milk, baking soda, and lemon juice (For a full recipe, see Presti (2015: 28).

square projector screen hanging from the ceiling at the front of the room, with two black speakers placed on chairs either side of the screen. The film was going to be streamed from an attached laptop. Within the space of ten minutes, the room was full. I noticed Rhiannon motioning from the front for someone at the back of the room to flick the lights off. Rhiannon was a Welsh teacher from Wales, who was working for the Menter Patagonia project for 2015 and 2016. Her husband, Tomas, originally from Dolavon, was of Welsh descent, and was also working for the project that year. Since meeting in Patagonia when Rhiannon had been working as a Welsh teacher in the valley for the first time several years previously, they had married and usually lived with their two young children in Wales. The whole family were living in Patagonia during the time of my fieldwork. Rhiannon and Tomas were working as Welsh teachers, and their two children were attending local schools. As the lights dimmed, a loud ripple of ‘shhh’ ran through the audience, and the opening music began to play.

The film follows the true story of Elizabeth Fernandez who plays herself in the film. She was originally from Gaiman and had moved to live in Cardiff to act in the popular Welsh soap opera *Pobl y Cwm* (in both real life and in the film). It is an exploration of her struggle to accommodate different personal and societal pressures as she returns to Argentina to visit her hometown, Gaiman, after several years away. Her time in Wales has been spent working at a prestigious and highly paid job with several famous Welsh actors, and consequently she returns to Gaiman with a new status of village-celebrity. However, this new-found fame turns out to be somewhat of a burden, and throughout the film she is presented with several demands that she feels uncomfortable with. Her old friends, family, and acquaintances are represented throughout the film as having been ‘left behind’ by her in Gaiman, and consequently have new interests and ideas concerning the ways in which she can ‘help’ them

– not only in an individual sense, but also, more broadly, in terms of the Welsh community as a whole.

The film begins with Elizabeth arriving in Gaiman, and a meeting between Elena and Elizabeth in Elena's home, during which Elena provides her with a long list of people that she must contact whilst she is in the area. In real life, Elena was typically referred to as the 'Queen of Gaiman', and as a huge source of authority on Welsh Patagonia, she acted as a kind of 'grandmother' figure to many local young people and visitors in the village, which is the role that she appeared to have in the film too. It slowly emerges throughout the film that all the listed people want something from Elizabeth, such as a role for themselves on *Pobl y Cwm*, a trip to Wales, or money. Consequently, the questions posed to Elizabeth by her family and friends during her visit to Patagonia are big ones. Will she stay in Chubut? How can she improve their lives and give back to the community, with her newfound contacts, fame and wealth? Throughout the film, Elena's character comes across as highly manipulative, and she puts a huge amount of pressure on Elizabeth to stay in Chubut, by outwardly complaining that many people, especially young people, often leave Patagonia for Wales. She explains to Elizabeth that although people pass through regularly from Wales, with some staying to help with Welsh culture and language in the valley, it is not sufficient. She tells her, convincingly and sincerely, "We need people, we need you, Elizabeth." Several people, myself included, could not hide their amusement at the depiction of Elena's character. Whilst I could not imagine her being so forceful in terms of pressurising someone to stay in Chubut, the bluntness and directness of her character were amusingly accurate, and in many ways represented an exaggeration of her normal self.

Ultimately, what is supposed to be a relaxed return to her hometown, to her family and friends, and to her old choir rehearsals, leaves Elizabeth feeling torn – between staying in

Gaiman with her family and old friends to support the community or continuing with her new independent glamorous life as a television star in Wales. It is within this context that the storyline of the film turns on the question of whether Elizabeth should stay in Argentina or whether she should return to Wales. Throughout the film, Elizabeth is haunted by a dramatic ghost-like woman dressed in a pink dress and blue bonnet, intended by the directors to represent the presence of the original pioneers. Patagonia is depicted as vast and deserted, with several panoramic shots of Elizabeth walking across empty land carrying only a red suitcase, as she tries to come to a decision about her future. The explicit message of the film is that the spirit of the original Welsh settlers still exists as a haunting presence within the descendants, structuring many of their actions and influencing their decisions.

Jain (2019) argues that Indian films reflect exactly the patterns of mobility, whereby the protagonists of the films created before 1990 always leave India for short career breaks then return, and the protagonists of films after 1990 reflect the reality of increased global travel. However, in the Welsh Patagonian case, mobility from Argentina to Wales was, in reality, more complex than its depiction in the film. Emily, sitting to my right, shook her head and murmured, “It’s not that simple,” as the actors on the screen asked Elizabeth if they too could live in Wales. Mobility was related to many factors, including free time, personal motivations to travel, job or project opportunities, family dependents, and health concerns, but the consistent theme during conversations about mobility was economic status, given the expense of travelling such a far distance.<sup>42</sup> On the one hand, some of my interlocutors, whilst speaking Welsh fluently and being highly committed to Welsh cultural activity in the valley, had not had the opportunity to visit Wales for many years (if ever) at the time of my

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<sup>42</sup> These issues, arguably, were exacerbated in Argentina’s credit card culture. None of my interlocutors had savings or put money aside, but rather lived month by month, pay-check by pay-check. Most cited Argentina’s economic precarity as being behind their lack of interest in saving money, and related their reluctance to save to the 2001-2002 economic crisis. My interlocutors bought all sorts of items, from pillows to cars, on credit cards.

fieldwork.<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, some of my interlocutors spoke less Welsh or participated in fewer Welsh cultural activities but due to their younger age had the access to scholarship opportunities to go to Wales to participate in Welsh courses or, age aside, simply had the economic means to travel.<sup>44</sup> Mobility from Wales to Argentina was therefore accessible to a much larger group of people, with far more Welsh people visiting Argentina than Argentinian people visiting Wales.

Feeling torn between Wales and Argentina was also a running broader concern in the settler colony, but in reality, was more often than not closely connected to marriage between Welsh Patagonians and Welsh people (which was relatively common).<sup>45</sup> Some couples who moved to Wales stayed there permanently, whilst others decided to return to Argentina in later life, and vice versa. Whilst every situation of marriage had its own history, it became apparent that couples faced similar difficulties. One half of the couple had to leave behind family, friends, home, and their career in Wales or Argentina to reconstruct their life in a new place, a pressure which many couples admitted produced new challenges to the relationship, with worries about being unable to visit family members and friends regularly (especially those who were aging or unwell), about finding appropriate work in their new homes, about persisting language barriers, about bringing up their children in different cultural contexts or

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<sup>43</sup> Even in situations where everything is in place for an individual to travel, border control can present new problems. In 2009, a Welsh learner from Patagonia was denied entry to the UK (BBC News 2009). Evelyn Calabrini was 20 years old at the time and was travelling to stay with a local couple for 6 months. She was refused entry at Heathrow, after a 15 hour flight from Buenos Aires and was immediately sent back to Patagonia, with border control refusing to believe that she was visiting to learn Welsh (BBC News 2009).

<sup>44</sup> Each year, Aberystwyth University offers three scholarships, worth £2000 each by the National Centre for Learning Welsh to learners from Patagonia to help them study Welsh in Wales for one month over the summer (for more detail see <https://learnwelsh.cymru/news/scholarships-for-welsh-learners-from-patagonia/>, last accessed September 27 2020).

<sup>45</sup> During fieldwork, I knew of 7 such couples. 3 of these couples moved to Wales together permanently, 1 couple moved to Wales but later returned together with their children to Argentina, and 3 of the couples stayed together in Argentina. Many more had shorter-term relationships that dissolved before marriage.

education systems than to the ones which they were accustomed to, and even about adjusting to the radically different climates.

Baldasser (2008: 248) in her analysis of transnational family relationships in the context of Italian migrants in Australia, argues that the emotions of ‘missing’ and ‘longing’ and a wish that “they [the family members] could be physically closer to each other” are central to the maintenance of transnational relationships (see also Baldasser 2001). Baldock (2000) also points to the feeling of ‘being torn’ as a common component of transnational relationships (see further Agullo 2012). Several of my interlocutors referred to this as feeling stretched, at least at times, between the two places. As one interlocutor who had moved with her (Welsh Patagonian) husband to Wales confided in me, long after fieldwork had ended, over a cup of coffee in Wales, “I feel like Elizabeth sometimes...do you remember that film? Like half of me is in Argentina and half of me in Wales.”

Further, throughout the film, Welsh is presented as being the language of daily life, with the actors greeting each other in Welsh on the streets, and speaking Welsh in their homes. However, the knowing giggles in the room as we were watching these scenes were indicative of the shared knowledge amongst those present in the audience that everyday conversation was usually conducted in – or at least quite quickly slipped into – Castellano, especially when not in the presence of Welsh tourists or other visitors. During fieldwork, some of my older interlocutors from the Welsh Patagonian community did speak Welsh to each other regularly, and some families seemed to be more committed to bringing their children up bilingually. Amongst these were a small but significant number of families who had moved from Wales more recently, and who only spoke Welsh at home. However, in general, conversations tended to slip back into Castellano, especially when topics became more complicated, as was often the case when discussing politics or economics, for example.

As Rosario put it to me, one day, “Someone asked me once whether I thought the Welsh colonisation had been successful, and I think, it hasn’t, in that it hasn’t been successful in the way the Welsh colonisers wanted it to be, but in another way, it has been, because here we are, in the arse-hole of the world, and we speak a few words of Welsh.” The laughter indicated that to them, the exaggerated performance of speaking Welsh during the film was obvious.

The film ends with a portrayal of Elizabeth’s uncertainty, as she stands in the middle of a deserted Paith with her long hair blowing in the iconic Patagonian wind, clutching a bright red suitcase and looking wistfully out at the expansive land around her. Several audience members could not contain their laughter at this scene, and comments were shouted out at what they saw to be the solemnity and ridiculousness of the depiction. The credits of the film began to roll, and the audience clapped and cheered enthusiastically, with some standing. Rhiannon and Tomas ended the evening by thanking everyone for attending. They joked, “Deciphering the film would require another film session in itself.” Some audience members laughed, and Elena called out from the audience, “I did not understand what was happening in the film, I couldn’t follow the storyline.” A few audience members murmured in agreement and Emily, who was sitting to my right, muttered discretely, “If there is one, which I suspect there isn’t.”

### *Face to face with representation*

The following day I had promised Elena that I would go to her house in the morning to help her to make Welshcakes for an upcoming annual Welsh tea that was organised by the Gaiman mixed choir. At around mid-morning, I pulled my thermal coat tightly around myself against the bitter cold as I knocked on the front door. I smiled to myself as I heard her shouting, “Go round, to the back, to the cat’s porch.” The ‘cat’s porch’ had been named to

honour the stray cats and kittens which Elena had allowed to live there in a cardboard box. I walked around the side of the house to let myself in through the glass door. We sat around the kitchen table with mugs of hot tea, and as I was grating nutmeg with a tiny grater into a bowl to add to the mixture, I asked her what she'd thought of the film that we had watched the previous evening. She paused mixing the dough, leaving one hand in the bowl but lifting the other to push her hair out of her face using the back of her wrist and looked up at me. She shrugged and explained that it had felt strange, to view, and that in reality she hadn't understood much of it, despite being one of the main characters. Discussing the scenes, she said, "It was odd to me, the ways in which the filmmakers made it seem so natural, when actually we had been directed." She paused again, shook her head, waved her arms towards the kettle and laughed, remembering, "I had to film one bit about five times, the scene with the mate." She laughed again and shook her head, remembering the scenes depicting the Paith, before saying, "Poor Patagonia, looking like the end of the earth... That bit with poor Elizabeth looking across the Prairie with her suitcase... well, how crazy!" I smiled, remembering the scene with Elizabeth and her red suitcase. Elena pushed the bowl of dough over to me and as I began cutting the Welshcakes into small circles she shrugged, "I still don't quite understand the film."

Later that week, I finally had a chance to catch up with Paula after the string group rehearsal. She had arrived at the film night characteristically early and had been sitting at the other end of the room to me. As we were packing away the instruments at the end of the rehearsal, I asked her what she had thought of it. She paused whilst piling up the chairs and explained:

"Well... I didn't have a main part in the film. I enjoyed the film night... not a lot goes on in Gaiman so it is a good thing when Menter Patagonia hold different evenings. It was funny to me because I know everyone who acts in the film. But... I do feel like

some things were slightly misrepresented...like that scene with the asado...everyone from Gaiman eating together – that is not an everyday occurrence. But I suppose we could have said that to the film makers!”

Much like Sebastian and Lucas’s comments revealing their self-awareness of these gaps, both Elena and Paula demonstrated a critical understanding of their own roles in perpetuating the film’s depiction of Welsh Patagonia, in addition to touching upon the power structures between themselves and the visitors. Both Paula’s comment of “I suppose we could have said that to the filmmakers”, and Elena’s comment of “it was odd to me, the ways in which the filmmakers made it seem so natural”, indicated that they had not voiced their critiques to the filmmakers themselves. Furthermore, Paula and Elena’s comments, when considered alongside the earlier discussions on the themes of mobility, feeling torn between Wales and Argentina, and the Welsh language, point to the viewing of *Galesa* as being first and foremost an encounter that brought together the social reality for Welsh Patagonians with the reality depicted in the film. Through viewing themselves externally, the encounter ultimately generated reflection and debate through the exposure of the gaps between the two.

### *Film: the metaphorical mirror stage?*

Lacan (1966) argued, in his mirror stage theory, that typically developing human infants, when they are around 18 months of age, pass through a developmental stage in which they are confronted with the external image of their own body, reflected in a mirror. This could be either a literal mirror, or a metaphorical one, if presented to them through the mother or other primary caregiver. The infant, according to this ‘mirror stage’ theory, identifies with the image, at least on a basic level, and this is when the infant begins to have a sense of self, but in that the image in the mirror is of a complete, unified body which does not correspond with the infant’s physical vulnerability and dependence on others, it more

concretely represents an ideal 'I' toward which the subject will strive throughout his or her life. Gallop (1983: 12) notes that the "mirror stage is a turning point. After it the subject's relation to himself is always mediated through a totalising image which has come from outside". What is of significance in the Welsh Patagonian context is the 'gap' between the objectified reflection and internal self-image that is theorised by Lacan (1966). Looking in the mirror – or at yourself on film – therefore means to confront the gap between the performed self as presented in front of you and the self that you thought yourself to be (Gallop 1983; Kodre 2011; Leader 2014).

Lacan's (1966) theorisation of the mirror stage is complicated by Rubenstein (2012: 44), who, taking Lacan (1966) as "referring to an actual mirror", argues that the obsession with mirrors and self-reflection is bourgeois, noting that "this reading reflects the ways that actual mirrors are taken for granted in bourgeois society; it effaces bourgeois dependence on mirrors" (Rubenstein 2012: 44). Rubenstein (2012) draws on his work with the Shuar who live in Ecuador, in the easternmost foothills of the Andes and the uppermost fringe of the Amazonian rainforest, to argue that the Shuar do not experience their image as received and reflected in the reactions of another 'me' ('ego's') but alternatively, that their subjectivity is constituted through visions – or encounters – in relation to other separate beings ('I's').

Rubenstein's (2012) argument enriches Lacan's (1966) argument because it enables a consideration of how subjectivity can be constituted through encounters with others rather than self-reflecting beings. However, arguably, the mirror can be both actual and metaphorical. Films in the Welsh Patagonian context fit exactly with the concept of an 'actual mirror' as described by Lacan (1966), because the viewers are faced with their own accurate yet delusory performance. The performances in this context are accurate in the sense that they are 'real', but equally they are delusory in their presentation of a modified version of the

daily life of Welsh Patagonia. Film in the Welsh Patagonian context therefore challenges both our perceptions of what a mirror is or *needs* to be, and in the process of doing so illuminates an important aspect of performance – that whilst it is a *performance*, it can be both accurate (or real) and a modified version of reality at the same time. As Mulvey (1989: 18) notes in her seminal essay on the centrality of the mirror stage to analysis of film:

It is an image that constitutes the matrix of the imaginary, of recognition/misrecognition and identification, and hence of the first articulation of the I, of subjectivity. This is a moment when an older fascination with looking (at the mother's face, for an obvious example) collides with the initial inklings of self-awareness. Hence it is the birth of a long love affair/despair between image and self-image which has found such intensity of expression in film and such joyous recognition in the cinema audience. [...] The cinema has structures of fascination strong enough to allow temporary loss of ego whilst simultaneously reinforcing it (Mulvey 1989: 18).

In the Patagonian context, film nights help to shed light on the ways in which Lacan's (1966) mirror stage can be analytically useful within anthropology in addition to within film theory, especially in thinking about the subjectivation of individuals, communities, and the relationship between this subjectivation and performance. Lacan (1966) emphasises that the image mirrored to the infant in the mirror is that of a unified and somehow independent body in contrast to the reality, which is a body that is entangled in a web of dependency relations. As explored in the previous chapter, the performance of Welsh Patagonia as a homogenous community similarly tends towards a representation of it as a unified or homogenous body, yet when this image is mirrored to its viewers (who are also its actors), they are confronted with the perhaps slightly uncomfortable gap between the self and community as presented and their lived reality. Like Lacan's (1966) infants, those living in Welsh Patagonia are entangled in webs of dependency, but differently to Lacan's (1966) infant, their webs of dependence are intrinsically related to – if not contingent on – the maintenance of the

performance of homogeneity. In this context, the economic and cultural dependence on tourism fuels and is fuelled by the maintenance of Welsh Patagonia as a tangible entity, rather than the performance of homogeneity or the unity in the mirror existing as *contrasting* to the reality of dependence, as Lacan (1966) has it.

*Peers as mirrors – “I can’t see how I look but looking at you...we must all look so strange!”*

Rubenstein (2012), in his critique of Lacan (1966), argues that subjectivity for the Amazonian Shuar is constituted in relation to other separate beings (I’s). Whilst he does not deny that individuals experience their actions reflected in the reactions of another (whereby the other is another ‘me’), for the Shuar this is not the primary mode of the making of subjectivity. In this respect, his argument is reminiscent of Goffman (1956) and others who consider the encounter with the other as central to their theories of performance and subjectivation (see also Althusser 1971; Butler 1995, 1997a). However, in the Welsh Patagonian context, the constitution of subjectivity through the mirrored image of another ‘me’ (in films) was in coexistence with the creation of subjectivity through encounters with other ‘I’s’. Beyond coming face to face with their own performance in films, there were also situations in which individuals were confronted with the performance of the self through the mirror image of other individuals.

Recognising the self through others in Welsh Patagonia was most prominent in contexts in which individuals dressed up in traditional Welsh costumes for various events. Individuals tended to reflect on their own performance and subjectivity not at the moment in which they were dressing up, but rather when they saw other individuals dressed in the same outfits as them, engaging in the same performances as them, and mirroring their performance

yet with the crucial difference of being another ‘I’. In other words, dressing in Welsh traditional costumes in the field created yet another type of mirror, whereby peers – other ‘I’s’ (separate individuals), rather than other ‘me’s’ (actual reflections of their ego, as in the case of a literal mirror or the performance of the self on film) – reacted to each other’s costume in a way that also demonstrated a reflexivity about their own performance. A few months into fieldwork, I received a message from Paula asking me whether I was free the following morning, to perform in a concert in a small chapel a few miles away from Gaiman. I agreed, and she phoned me to explain a little further:

“A teacher from another school is arranging a school trip for her pupils, and they are travelling to every chapel in the valley in the morning, something to do with Welsh heritage. Anyway, I was talking with her yesterday after the girls’ choir rehearsal had finished and she was asking whether I would be able to get together a small group of musicians – say me on keyboard, you on cello, and Francesca on harp, and whether we would be able to be in Glan Alaw Chapel set up with our instruments at around 11am, so that when they pass by the chapel, they can come in and find us playing Welsh music. We are going to wear Welsh outfits too. Shall I pick you up at 10?”

The following morning, we braced the Patagonian wind and trundled along the stone road from Gaiman to Glan Alaw Chapel. Glan Alaw was one of the smallest chapels out of the twenty-four in the valley, and one which quickly became a firm favourite of mine. It was quite rurally located, made of red bricks, and was about the size of a small, single-storey house. Francesca was sitting in the back seat of the car, with a small harp across her knee, wearing a traditional Welsh outfit – a red and black checked dress. Paula and I were in the front seats, and the sound of Welsh folk music playing from the CD player filled the car. After a few months in the field, I was slowly becoming more accustomed to these types of situations. “Oooh Francesca, you put your outfit on already,” I grinned at her, and Paula laughed. “Don’t worry,” she replied, “We have more outfits for us in the boot.” I laughed. A few moments later, having collected the key from the gatekeeper who lived in a nearby

farmhouse, we arrived at the small chapel and parked the car outside. I took the cello out of the car and Paula reached into the boot to pull out Welsh traditional outfits – a hat and scarf each for us to wear. Diligently, we put them on.

As we waited for the school students to arrive, Francesca and I sat in the open boot of the car, sharing mate. Paula, dressed in a Welsh hat and long skirt with a shawl over her outfit, took the keyboard into the chapel, and returning a few minutes later could not contain her laughter. “Seeing you two there, in your outfits...it makes me laugh...I can’t see how I look but looking at you...we must all look so strange!” Francesca and I turned to look at each other, and we laughed too, as for the first time I began to properly reflect on how we must be about to come across to the viewers of our performance, dressed in Welsh outfits clutching our mate flasks for warmth. “They must think that we dress like this all the time,” Paula remarked.



Figure 23. Arriving at Glan Alaw in our traditional Welsh costumes

Winkler-Reid (2017), in her ethnography with girls in a London High School, argues that the dynamics of seeing and being seen are key to creating peer relations and female subjectivity in this context. In the school context, the girls' interactions with each other and much of their understanding of who they are and who they want to be comes from commenting on others, and striving to be like – or not be like – others. She argues that analytical attention must be placed to the role of friends and peers in influencing subjectivity (Winkler-Reid 2017; see further Grasseni 2004). Similarly, in the Patagonian context, with no mirrors to hand and with no films to watch with hindsight, my interlocutors' understanding of and reflection on their performances came from another type of mirror – that of their peers, much like the girls in Winkler-Reid's (2017) school.

Ultimately, the reactions of laughter to the gap between our performance of Welshness in Glan Alaw Chapel and the reality of our daily lives was reminiscent of the laughter heard whilst watching the performance of Welshness in hindsight on the screen. However, whilst the component of laughter remained consistent in its signalling of the recognition of the gap between the performance and the reality of day-to-day life, what differed was who was to be seen in the mirror. Paula, for example, reflected on her own reality by viewing mine and Francesca's performances, rather than upon viewing her own performance with hindsight as was the case with film. Subjectivity, then, was constituted both in relation to a mirror (as in the film) and in relation to other beings (through the mirror imaging of peers).

### *Conclusions: “do you feel Welsh?”*

“Do you *feel* Welsh?” I asked Paula one afternoon, as we travelled in the car to Trelew to perform in a choir concert. “Yes, of course I feel Welsh, why do you ask?” she responded, without hesitation. She sighed, and said, “I know my surname is not Welsh, and some people think that is important...but being Welsh or not being Welsh is so much more than that. It is also a feeling...a connection.” She elaborated, “I feel Argentinian too, of course, I am Argentinian...I was born here and I have lived here all my life, I have all the Argentinian habits and gestures...you know that...but I was so happy when I was visiting Wales, I speak the language to my children, I sing in Welsh, I drink tea not ‘mate’ ....” She continued, speaking passionately about the sense of identity and community she felt from attending the choir, and of her enjoyment of singing Welsh songs and playing Welsh pieces. “I would be lost without choir and the music group,” she stated, simply. I nodded – I knew she meant it. The answers of my other interlocutors were similar. Some were surprised that I had even asked the question, with one of my interlocutors asking me, in a typically Argentinian manner, “*Qué te pasa...tomaste algo?* (What’s happened to you, are you drunk?)” and others explaining that they felt like a mixture of Welsh and Argentinian, or simply remarking that they had never thought about it.

For my interlocutors, there was no conflict between laughing at their own performances of Welshness on a screen or at their traditional Welsh costumes and what they experienced as the embodied simplicity of being both Welsh and Argentinian at the same time. In this context, self-awareness, and being able to laugh at yourself, in doing so recognising the gap between performance and reality, was important, and co-existed unproblematically with feelings of belonging (feelings which are explored in more depth in

the following chapter). Arguably, this makes sense when considered within the broader context of Argentina, where joking regularly stemmed from a particular type of humour especially focused on physical appearance, individual differences, or laughing at a situation. Joking could simultaneously be two things at once. It was used to feel good, and in this respect, my interlocutors would also regularly say that “Argentines love joking and laughing”, but it was also used to demarcate difference, comment on inequalities, and express the positionality of my interlocutors in relation to the power structures within which they were embedded (see also Chapter 3).

This laughter is quite different, then, to the centrality of shame in Sartre’s (1958) theorisation of the self-awareness that occurs when coming into being as a subject in relation to the gaze of an onlooker. Contrastingly, what this chapter has demonstrated is that there were other elements in the self-awareness of subjectivation, such as the elements of desire or belonging, or striving towards a particular performance, which coexisted unproblematically with a critical reflection of the performance. Similarly, joking was simultaneously about belonging and power. Ultimately, this chapter has considered how Sartre’s (1958) theory of the gaze and Urry’s (1990) later work on the tourist gaze cannot account for a situation in which individuals are watching their performance on a screen or dressing in traditional Welsh costumes. That my interlocutors and I ‘got into character’, were aware of doing so, and reflected explicitly on the implications and consequences of this whilst laughing at ourselves suggests that the performance under the gaze of the other was not something that happened in a reflexive void. In this respect, the Welsh Patagonian context demonstrates how Lacan’s (1966) mirror stage theory, with its focus on the self-awareness of the gap between performance and reality, and with its focus on seeing an ideal reflection in a mirror, can enrich Sartre’s (1958) concept of the gaze by enabling discussion of issues such as desire,

self-awareness, the mutual gaze (between locals and tourists), and the role of documentary films.

This chapter has built on the concept of the gaze of the Welsh other developed in the previous chapter, to consider the politics of representation in Welsh Patagonia and their relevance to the creation of Welshness, the portrayal of a homogenous community, and the viewing of the performance of the self through film and peers. In a context like Welsh Patagonia with a thriving tourist market and a boom in international exchange, where researchers and filmmakers often visited with narratives pre-imbued with meaning for their media to speak, an exploration of encounters of representation has great significance for understanding the power dynamics at play. In the focus on film and representation, this chapter has followed Messier (2019: 289) who has argued that “considering cameras as participants helps us to focus...on the technical conditions...and on the representations they produce”. Ultimately, this chapter has focused largely on the film *Galesa*, to argue that when the local actors in the film were confronted with the external image of their own body, rather like Lacan’s (1966) infant in his mirror, they were confronted with the gap between their own self-perception and the image that had been represented. This gap between the self as performed and internal self-image provided my interlocutors with a productive locus from which to explore and critically reflect on many thematic issues relevant to their lives, such as mobility between Wales and Argentina, feeling torn between two places, and the use of the Welsh language. Further, encounters between peers in the field whilst dressing in traditional Welsh costumes provided another context in which individuals reflected on their own positionality vis-à-vis others and on these themes, through viewing a mirror image that was made up not of a reflection of their ego but of other individuals.

Finally, this chapter and the chapter preceding it have focused on the dynamics of seeing and being seen, whether through the gaze of a tourist, through watching films at a film night, or through seeing peers dressed in traditional Welsh costumes. The following chapters move from the visual subjectivation to focus more specifically on the dynamics of hearing and being heard in Gaiman Music School, and the implications of this in terms of power structures and the subjectivation of individual and community.

## Chapter 5: *“The community is a family and the choir is the glue”: music and belonging*

In the spring of 2006, street demonstrations on the part of illegal residents broke out in various California cities, but very dramatically in the Los Angeles area. The US national anthem was sung in Spanish as was the Mexican anthem. The emergence of “*nuestro himno*” introduced the interesting problem of the plurality of the nation, of the “we” and “our”: to whom does this anthem belong? [...] It’s not just that many people sang together – which is true – but also that singing is a plural act, an articulation of plurality. If, as Bush claimed at the time, the national anthem can only be sung in English, then the nation is clearly restricted to a linguistic majority, and language becomes one way of asserting critical control over who belongs and who does not.

(Butler, J, & Spivak, G 2007: 58-59)

### *Introduction: soundscapes and subjectivity*

It was a Monday evening in October 2016. I pushed the heavy wooden door of the music school open, and as I breathed in the musty smell of weekend closure I was greeted with the piercing sound of a single violin tuning, the notes floating from the main rehearsal room. Listening carefully, I could hear a single, high-pitched note, being played softly, methodically, and slightly out of key – a sonic indication of the bow being drawn slowly and carefully across the highest string, E. I knew it must be Paula. There was a pause, and then the bow met the string again, this time producing a slightly lower E. Another pause, and this time the E was in tune. Once the highest note had been tuned, the other notes were tuned with it, the violinist feeling for the perfect fifth between the two strings. I heard two notes next, an E and a slightly out of key A, which glided up and down in pitch until the perfect space

between them was achieved and sonically celebrated with a sustained bowing of a chord – an A and an E in perfect harmony. The tuning continued – a single pitch-perfect A this time, joined by a slightly out-of-tune D. I quietly turned the handle on the door to the rehearsal room and pushed the door open. Paula was standing with her back to the door, tall and poised, holding her violin under her chin, with her right arm bowing the note and the left arm turning the small tuning pegs on the front of the violin as she played. Her arm lifted the bow up again, but just before it touched the string, she turned around abruptly, jumping, before exclaiming hurriedly, embarrassed, “Oh, hello, I didn’t see you there, I was lost in the tuning. I hope it didn’t sound too bad!”

For Sartre (1958), despite some mention of sound and hearing, viewing and seeing are the central principles underlying his elaboration of the gaze:

All of a sudden I hear footsteps in the hall. *Someone is looking at me*. What does this mean? It means that I am suddenly affected in my being and that essential modifications appear in my structure (Sartre 1958: 317, emphasis mine).

Central to Sartre’s (1958) idea of the gaze is the possibility of being able to conceptualise how you are *viewed* by another person in a context like this. However, the above encounter with Paula’s tuning demonstrates the possibility, in the Welsh Patagonian context, of considering an aural subjectivation. Paula’s focus in the present moment, her full engagement in the flow of the tuning was similar in some ways to the level of concentration of Sartre’s (1958) individual peering through a keyhole. Yet her comment of “I hope it didn’t sound too bad”, indicated less of an awareness of how she might have been *viewed* by an onlooker, and more of an awareness of how her *sound* might *sound* to a listener.

When I think of a fieldwork encounter or situation, it is true that I can ‘see’ the situation, and moreover that in Welsh Patagonia the dynamics of seeing and being seen were critical, as demonstrated in the previous two chapters. I can see what my interlocutors looked like, what they were wearing, the stance with which they walked, and how their performance was modified under the gaze of others – I can see them being seen. When I am *really there* though, it is not only about sight. I can remember how I felt that particular day, I can feel the heat of the road reflecting against my legs whilst out running in the early morning, I can taste the bitterness of the mate and smell the asado, but most of all I can hear. I can hear the comforting, familiar sound of the tin kettle just starting to boil on the gas hob, the sound of old car engines starting, the sound of teenagers laughing and joking on the bus, the sound of dogs barking to each other on the streets through the night, the crackling background noise of Chubut radio in shops and bars, people greeting each other in a mixture of Welsh and Castellano, the sound of a four-part choir, and the sound of the string music group. Sound was important too, in Welsh Patagonia.

\* \* \*

Within subjectivity studies, especially studies bearing the influence of Foucault’s (1991) tower, Sartre’s (1958) gaze, Lacan’s (1966) mirror, or Althusser’s (1971) police officer, the focus remains overwhelmingly on the subject either being formed through speech or through a visual encounter, whereby the subject, to be formed, must either hear another person calling him or her into being or be aware of him or herself being seen by another. Foucault’s (1991) prisoners are watched, or at least *feel* as though they are being watched, by the guard. Sartre’s (1958) subject’s feeling of heightened sense-of-self stems from being seen by an onlooker. Lacan’s (1966) infant forms a sense of self by seeing an ideal version of him

or herself which in turn ‘sees’ the infant in the mirror. Further, when Althusser’s (1971) police officer shouts, ‘Hey you!’, his interjection is heard by a person on the street, causing that individual to turn around and *see* the police officer, in doing so coming into being as a subject of the state.

The thesis, so far, in its focus on how the Welsh community come into being under the gaze of the other, and on how film acts as a Lacanian (1966) mirror to present the performed self to its audience, has been subject to the biases typical of subjectivity studies. In other words, all of the performances and encounters considered thus far have been biased towards the processes of ‘looking’ and ‘seeing’. This chapter moves away from the role of the gaze and towards listening, hearing, and what Clifford (1986: 12) called the “ethnographic ear”, to explore the significance of sound in this context. It draws on choir rehearsals in Gaiman Music School, Cymanfaeodd Canu that were held in various chapels in the valley, and the musical contribution of visiting musicians to argue that in the Patagonian context, alongside the visual formation of subjectivity, another form of subjectivation took place, through music and aural experiences. It demonstrates that by addressing issues of performance, performativity, and subjectivation through different senses, new insights can be revealed about the process of subjectivation and about the subject. In doing so, despite the use of the separate terms ‘musical structure’ and ‘lyrics’ it considers music and lyrics as a unity in terms of their social experience, following Ingold (2000: 407) who argued that their separation is an imposition: “speech may be present in the song, in the words that accompany the music – thus the song may be conceived as it is written on paper, in two registers proceeding in parallel: the musical sequence written as a series of notes, and the linguistic sequence as a concurrent of words”.

When Clifford (1986: 12) asked his readers “what of the ethnographic ear?”, his intention was to call attention to the other senses aside from sight, and especially to the aural dimension of social life. Beyond the fact that music has been relatively absent in anthropology (Feld & Brennis 2004; Samuels et al 2010), Clifford’s (1986) broader ideal, in asking this question to his readers, was to attempt to move beyond the Western emphasis on observation and from the elevation of writing above other forms of documentation (such as audio recordings). Many following him have since argued for recognition of the musical dimension of social life (see, for example, Erlmann 2004; Stoller 1984; Seeger 2004, Nakamura 2013; Askew 2000; Turino 2008a; see further Trotter 2015).

In this respect, it has been argued that the concept of ‘soundscape’ is productive in working towards an anthropology that can account for sound (see especially Samuels et al 2010). A focus on ‘soundscape’ takes into consideration the ways in which sound connects with place. To take one example, the sounds constituting a Welsh Patagonian soundscape would necessarily be different to those making up the London soundscape, and within the Welsh Patagonian soundscape, there would be, different individual soundscapes – for example, in the shopping centre, the music school, and in the bars in Trelew. Ingold (2011: 138) argues that on the most literal level, the concept does not make sense, noting that “when we look around on a fine day, we see a landscape bathed in sunlight, not a lightscape. Likewise, listening to our surroundings, we do not hear a soundscape. For sound, I would argue, is not the object but the medium of our perception”. Sound, for Ingold (2011: 138) is less an object and more a “phenomenon of experience – that is, of our immersion in, and commingling with the world in which we find ourselves”.

Ingold (2011) elaborates that we do not phenomenologically experience the world divided up into sections in terms of the senses, further highlighting that in the insistence on a connection between sound and space, the concept of soundscape cannot account for sounds that travel, such as sounds that are recorded and then played out of context, as is the case for CDs recorded by Welsh tourists who have visited Patagonia. Connected to this is the issue that the concept of soundscape implies a shared sound, and therefore it cannot account for private sounds as experienced through headphones (Feld 1988; Bull 2000). Another implication in the idea of ‘soundscape’ is that it exists independently of individuals, as opposed to the idea that people themselves *create* the soundscape, and with it the type of image that they seek to portray. Finally, and perhaps most critically, it implies that everyone in a particular space or place experiences the same soundscape, obscuring the fact that different people experience sounds differently due to varying factors such as context, mood, class, race, and gender, and crucially, that the soundscape is not necessarily equally audible to everyone.

Whilst many of Ingold’s (2011) criticisms of the concept of soundscape resonate with the Welsh Patagonian context, his concept of the phenomenological sensory experience as a completely immersive one has implications in terms of understanding the processes of subjectivation through sight and sound. If we cannot separate the concepts of hearing and vision, then the mechanisms of subjectivation through gazing or through sound must be similar. However, how then can we account for what my interlocutors saw as being the unique relationship between music and feeling, the conceptualisation of their musical instrument as an extension of their body, or the sheer *power* of sound to act on individuals? Music was unique in terms of the experience it induced, and in terms of what Hofman (2015: 26) has described as the “reaction manifested in the skin, on the surface of the body and in

the heartbeat...something that goes beyond the body, a passage from one experiential state of the body to another”. Thompson and Biddle (2013: 5) also refer to “the mobilising capacity of...music, its capacity to transmit an ‘energy’ or an ‘aura’”. This chapter seeks to understand these issues, arguing that a focus on subject formation through music allows us to consider the specificity of musical subjectivation. In doing so, it speaks to Hofman’s (2015) call for more work on how music and sound work at an intrapersonal level, through an analysis of how the creation, circulation, and experience of music in the Welsh Patagonian context created notions of community and belonging, an analysis which also paves the way for a consideration of the power relations embedded within that creation, explored in the following chapter (Chapter 6).

### *“Que cantamos?”: choir rehearsals in Gaiman Music School*

Good music making or dancing is a realisation of ideal – *possible* – human relationships where the identification with others is so direct and so intense that we feel, for those best moments, as if our selves had merged.

(Turino 2008a: 19)

Gaiman Music School mixed choir, at the time of my fieldwork, was mostly made up of individuals who were in their 50s or older, with a large percentage of these being retired. The other members were between 30 and 50, and there were about 7 regular younger attendees of the choir (including myself), with 2 of these being older than 25. This age imbalance was partly due to young people leaving Gaiman for university, but my younger interlocutors in the field who chose not to be a part of the choir also told me that this stemmed from younger people having different interests, different musical taste, and different

responsibilities which clashed with the late rehearsals, such as football, partying, other social events, and late-night jobs. One friend, who was fluent in Welsh and who lived in Trelew with her family shrugged and said, “I can’t go because I have yoga at the same time.”

Choir rehearsals took place on Monday and Wednesday evenings from 21:00, and though they were scheduled to finish at 22:30, sometimes ran over by an hour with no break. Choir concerts tended to take place at weekends, and often required that choir members travelled to nearby towns for last-minute-rehearsals before performances. Attendance at choir was not compulsory, and the mixed choir was open to anyone. Once one had ‘become a member’ by communicating with the choir directors (Maria, for the mixed choir, or Eleanor, for the girls’ choir), and subsequently attending a rehearsal, attendance at rehearsals was not formally monitored. However, most choir members were highly committed, and they attended late night rehearsals and concerts diligently of their own accord, in the 45 degree heat of the summer and in the plummeting winter temperatures, on bank holidays, and at the weekends. Despite this, several times before singing in the concerts, I was nudged by my fellow sopranos, often minutes before we were due to go on stage, and asked, “What are we singing?” This was a blasé question which never showed any real concern or worry. Despite ‘the concert’ being seen as “something to aim towards” by my interlocutors (praised variously as “having something to work for”, or for existing as “a deadline by which we need to learn the piece”), it was not viewed as the end-goal, as such, of choir rehearsals in Gaiman.

At the end of one choir rehearsal in September, Elena waved me over to her. She asked me whether I would be willing to go to her house the following day to help her with one of the pieces that we were going to be singing in the Eisteddfod in October. “I can’t sing a note!” she exclaimed, laughing. I reassured her that I would be there, and that we could go

through the music with her piano. The following morning, we sat together in her home sharing a piano stool in front of her slightly out-of-tune upright piano in the study, with the sheet music in front of us, and I played the soprano part with one finger for us both to sing along. After ten minutes, Elena shook her head, “I still can’t. I don’t know why I go. I’m too old!” She then elaborated:

“It might be the case that I can’t sing properly, but the reason I go is really to keep the traditions going, *viste*. It’s a good opportunity to socialise with people that I won’t see outside of choir. Lots of us are old, and it keeps the old brain going...it’s good having help with you...taking advantage of you being here...but it is not the be all and end all. Choir means more than that to most of the people who sing, well the ones who aren’t experts. We try our best, and we have fun, but we are old! Cup of tea?”

“Yes please, I never say no to a cup of tea,” I said to her. Elena went through to the kitchen and I reflected on her comment, a comment which became increasingly pertinent as fieldwork continued. What Elena emphasised was that choir rehearsals were less about perfection and more about being a social opportunity to socialise with people from the community, with whom choir members would otherwise not have an opportunity to see in their daily routines, and a chance to engage mentally in something different. These opportunities were especially significant for those who were retired (see also Pavlicevic & Andsell 2004; Ahessy 2016). To put it simply, for Elena, there was something about singing together that made her feel happy, joyful, and connected to other people.

Elena’s words rang true throughout the many choir rehearsals that I attended during fieldwork. It became increasingly clear that choir rehearsals were considered to have value in and of themselves in terms of their role in bringing the community together, and that at their best, were fun, and punctuated with continuous commentary, jokes, and laughter from the

participants. One rehearsal early into fieldwork, we were preparing the classic Welsh hymn, Pantyfedwen, a solemn-but-not-sad hymn in a simple 4/4 rhythm, which we were due to sing in a concert in Gaiman in a weeks' time alongside the philharmonic orchestra of Rio Negro. We had finally received a backing track to the singing parts, but we soon realised that this was significantly faster than the speed with which we had been rehearsing, throwing most of us off. The choir was lagging, and Alberto stood up and began to clap a loud beat for us to try and follow. On top of this difficulty with the speed, the soprano part was extremely high, with several top Fs and Gs, which were out of the range of the majority of the sopranos (myself included).

Brenda, a Welsh-speaker from Trelew, and Rhiannon, who were sitting in front of me, were giggling; I could see their shoulders shaking. They turned around to include me in their joke. Rhiannon said that they could not reach the notes, and Brenda added that they were going to simply open their mouths and pretend that my voice was theirs. "I'll do the same thing later in your Welsh lesson, Rhiannon," she commented, laughing. I could hardly reach the notes either, and the laughter was infectious. We reached an agreement that I would stand between them in the concert to balance the sounds. Brenda winked at me, "It's teamwork." I couldn't keep a straight face in the second or third run-throughs of the song. Every time we reached – or tried to reach – a top F or G, I could see them from the corner of my eye doing dramatic openings of their mouths, as though singing with great passion. Our laughter and shared experiences followed us out of the rehearsal room, and led the three of us to form a close friendship during and beyond fieldwork. Ultimately, the social role of the choir as elaborated by Elena, and as enacted by Rhiannon and Brenda, was perhaps most explicitly summarised by Alberto, who, following a choir rehearsal one day, put his arm round me and slapped my back enthusiastically, "You see? The community is like a family and the choir is

the glue.” His comment resonated with MacDonald’s (2013: 13, emphasis mine) statement that:

Music is completely woven into the fabric of our lives. It provides the focus of, or the soundtrack to, countless social situations, and can also provide refuge or solace in private moments. Also, everyone has a sense of the ways in which they participate in music and of their own level of ability and interest, and so it *forms an important part of identity development and maintenance for many people, especially given that music plays a central role in contemporary society.*

This idea that music can be mobilised to create powerful feelings of community and belonging is a familiar one in the ethnographic literature. James’s (1999) ethnography of the songs of women migrants which form part of the musical style ‘kiba’ in Johannesburg, South Africa, is relevant here, in that ‘women’s kiba’ is a style of music that is entirely within the control of women, used as a means to generate friendship and solidarity. Seeger (2004) makes a similar case in his work with the Suyu, an Amazonian group living in the Xingu National Park in Mato Grosso, Brazil. He argues that music is critical in community coordination, whether concerned with economic activities or with the more personal consolidation of relationships with other humans, with animals, but also with their cosmology. Music here actively creates and affirms the “fabric of social life” (Seeger 2004: 6; see further DeNora 2000; Jarman 2013). Askew (2002), in her ethnography of musical performance in Tanzania, focuses on the close relationship between music and politics (see also Turino 2008c). To take one example, she argues that performances of *Taarab*, which are a type of love song, are a means of negotiating social relations and managing disputes in Swahili society. These songs provide “an opportunity for communicating certain messages that cannot be communicated otherwise” (Askew 2002: 155). Ultimately, these studies echo what my interlocutors emphasised in the field and what became clear in Gaiman Music

School choir rehearsals – the effects of music on self and community and, critically, its specific role in generating feelings of belonging.

*“The brothers of Wales and the colony uniting in song”*

These ideas of music generating ideas of community and belonging were strengthened by the fact that much of the repertoire covered by the choir was created by local composers and poets who wrote about the arrival to the settler colony, about the old Welsh homeland, and about the positive relations between the Welsh settlers and Indigenous people. Much of the music composed in Welsh Patagonia was based (both harmonically and lyrically) on the romantic narratives explored in previous chapters. Much like Paula’s awareness of me listening to her with which this chapter opened, singing in choir did not occur in a social void but rather choir members sang with a reference point – namely the ears of their audience, variously other Welsh Patagonians, local Argentinians, tourists from Wales, and tourists from elsewhere. By listening to and singing these harmonious compositions during choir rehearsals, concerts, and in other situations, in addition to appearing coherent and tangible under the *gaze* of the other, Welsh Patagonia also *sounded* coherent and tangible to the ears of the other. However, at the same time, these concepts of belonging were not simply ideas that remained in the music alone. Playing music together, or singing together, did have an emotional and social impact on the group – it made us feel more connected, more coherent as a group, and had a positive impact on our mood and wellbeing.

Just a few weeks into fieldwork on a cold Monday evening in August 2015, we began learning a Welsh song called Croeso Patagonia (‘Welcome Patagonia’) with the mixed choir for the ‘self-selected piece’ competition which we were due to compete in during the

upcoming Eisteddfod in October. The words had been written by Awel and the music by Alberto, and it was intended to depict the arrival of the Welsh in Patagonia and the subsequent establishment of the settler colony. Written for four-part harmony, it was an acapella piece, to be sung accompanied only by two drums, with swinging dotted rhythms. Although its upbeat nature made it enjoyable to sing, the difficulty of maintaining the pitch throughout without the support of a piano often resulted in the choir dropping or rising half a tone by the end of the piece. This pitch change, however, was hardly ever noticeable from the audience's perspective. As Maria always emphasised during rehearsals, only the sharpest musical ears would spot this, especially if the whole choir changed pitch together, as was most commonly the case.

Musically, the piece was a musical hybrid, in its combination of Argentinian and Welsh rhythms and melodies. It was rhythmically Argentinian, written in the style of a chacarera, meaning that the bombo drum played in 3/4, with the overarching melody in 6/8, resulting in a syncopated rhythm. This was combined with the use of the Welsh melody of Calon Lân to mark the end of its phrases, a subtle musical borrowing which was likely only noticeable if you were familiar with the latter song. The piece opened with an introductory section in which the choir hummed, softly and rhythmically – “dm dm dm” and “www” – with dotted rhythms. After 8 bars, the choir was joined by a drumbeat, working to set the harmonious, feel-good scene for the first verse.

The sopranos and altos took the melody in the first verse, accompanied by the continued humming, slightly quieter now, from the tenors and bases for the first two lines. Then, the four voices joined together to sing of forgetting the “worries of the old country”, the old country being Wales, with a “little sip of mate”. Following the quieter verse, the

chorus was contrasting in its energy, with the questions ringing through from the bass, “Did you have an asado?” and the sopranos, altos, and tenors answering in joyful unison, “Yes, yes” – “Did you have an asado – yes yes – a full stomach of beef, two or three chorizos, roasted chicken meat”. The end of the chorus was dramatic, with a change of key to accommodate the Welsh melody of Calon Lân, slowing down towards the end. The lyrics read, “And by the flames of the fire sharing the thrill of Calon Lân, the brothers of Wales and the colony uniting in song”. Here, the lyrics explicitly invoked the idea of the Welsh and the Argentinian “brothers” uniting in song, with singing together taken as a broader metaphor for the good relations between the two.

This musical representation of Welsh Patagonia was constructed both through the creative intertwining of the imagery of tea, siestas, asados, Welsh traditional songs, dulce leche, and lemon pie, and through the musical choices of major key and upbeat rhythms. The final image was one of cultural compatibility and harmony, whereby different musical traditions mixed together seamlessly to invoke the cultural mixture. Music, in the structure and lyrics of this piece, was a unifying activity. Musical harmonies overrode any differences between participants, and the four choral sections cooperated without fail and bounced off each other in a complementary way.

During the rehearsal period leading up to the Eisteddfod, it became clear that this particular piece was a favourite for many. The increased energy in the rehearsal room, when we sung it, was outwardly expressed in the tapping of feet and the exclamations of “*mira qué bueno*” and “*qué lindo*” throughout the rehearsals. When Alberto introduced the piece to us for the first time, his passion and enthusiasm for it was catching. One of my fellow sopranos clapped her hands with delight and said, “They [the tourists visiting the Eisteddfod] are going

to love it.” We worked hard in those rehearsals, trying to ensure that we captured the rhythms and intonations of the piece as intended, and each time singing the piece slightly rhythmically and melodically tighter than the previous rendition. Many weeks of rehearsing Croeso Patagonia with Gaiman Music School mixed choir eventually led to its performance in the annual Chubut Eisteddfod, in the choral competition. After performing the piece on the stage of the Eisteddfod, we sat back in our chairs, awaiting the results of the competition. Shortly afterwards, we heard the news that we had won first prize. Maria grinned widely, visibly thrilled, and congratulated the choir members before walking up to the podium to collect the prize. I felt someone tap me on the shoulder, and I turned around. I was greeted by two broad smiles from a man and a woman who were sitting together. “We have heard that you are from Wales,” said the woman. The man interjected, “That piece by the choir was incredible...we are here from Wales for two weeks so we can’t see everything but...well...that piece gave me a very incredible idea of the Wladfa.”

Croeso Patagonia was not the only piece of music that had as its focus the cultural compatibility of the Argentinians and the Welsh in the settler colony. Other compositions also acted as the glue-gun for the choir to bind the community members together. Towards the end of fieldwork, Alberto phoned me. He excitedly told me that he had been commissioned by an Argentine poet called Sergio Pravaz, to compose the music for a suite of seven poems about the arrival of the Welsh in Patagonia, and that they were ready to be rehearsed. The poems, written in Castellano, told the story of the creation and consolidation of the settler colony. The first piece was about landing in southern Argentina, and it was followed by the journey at sea, the forming of the four-part choir, the settling of the Welsh settlers in their new home, and finally a song celebrating the success of the settler colony. The poems were written in Castellano, and the rhythms accompanying them were drawn

from Argentinian folk music, such as the chacarera, the zamba, the baguala, and the takirari. Alberto had composed the music for four-part choir, to be accompanied by a string section (two violins, two cellos, and a double bass), a percussion section (with a full drum-kit and traditional Argentine drums), a keyboard (which would be played by Alberto), and acoustic guitars.

The first piece of the suite *Para Llegar al Sur* ('To Arrive in The South') was written in the style of a baguala. Originating in the northeast of Argentina, the baguala is one of the lesser known genres of Argentinian folklore, perhaps as it is less 'danceable' than the other, more upbeat – or typically 'faster' – genres, such as the zamba or chacarera. Its rhythmical form is slow and uniform, and the percussion is equally slow, usually echoing the rhythms of the melody of the singer. In the piece, the singers were instructed to sing 'lento' ('slowly') and 'con sentido' ('with feeling'). After 24 bars of instrumental introduction, the choir entered quietly, with a melody that did not move too much, and the four sections of the choir (soprano, alto, tenor and bass) sang in unison, rhythmically, "We will gather together to sing and our verses will be the bread of the land, they will reveal the Psalms and our language will be left in peace". The singers were then instructed to increase the volume to a *ff* ('very loud') whilst singing of how the verses will be the bread of the land ("We will gather together to sing and our verses will be the bread of the land") before returning to a quiet and apt dynamic to sing of peace ("Our language will be in peace...in peace"). The verse was sung in unison, and the final chorus followed the same structure to the first one in terms of its changes of dynamics:

We will gather together to sing and our verses will be the bread of the land,  
They will reveal the Psalms and our language will be left in peace.

We are those who have left everything behind,  
 When they said 'let's go',  
 We went straight to the sea.

We will gather together to sing and our verses will be the bread of the land,  
 They will reveal the Psalms and our language will be in peace in that land,  
 Our Psalms will be revealed and our language will be in peace...in peace.

SUITE DEL DESEMBARCO

# 1 - PARA LLEGAR AL SUR

Baguala

Sergio Pravaz

36 *Lento, sentido*

Soprano

18

S. A. T. B.

*pp* *cresc...* *mp* y

Nos jun-ta-re-mos a can - tar

*pp* *cresc...* *mp* can -

Nos jun-ta-re-mos a can - tar

*pp* *cresc...* *mp* y

Nos jun-ta-re-mos a can - tar

*pp* *cresc...* *mp* y

Nos jun-ta-re-mos a can - tar

27

S.

nues-tros ver-sos se-rán el

*f* pan de-c-sa tie - rra sal-drán los sal - mos y nues-tra len - gua es-ta-rá *pp* en

Figure 24. Para Llegar al Sur sheet music

Lyrically, the focus of the song was similar to that of Croeso Patagonia, despite the words being written by two different people. The focus was on gathering together to sing, again highlighting the uniting force of music in bridging cultural differences. Whilst the musical structures of the other six pieces in the suite differed in that they followed different traditional Argentinian musical forms, the lyrics were reminiscent of the baguala. The second

piece in the suite, *La Espera En El Mar* ('The Hope In The Sea'), was a *chacarera*. It was louder and stronger with a strong percussion part, to convey a feeling of increasing hope whilst crossing the sea. The choir sang in unison in the chorus, "We advance, here and there, together to begin". The fifth piece in the suite, *Ya Estamos De Pie* ('We Made It') took the form of a relaxed *zamba*, and the lyrics emphasised the establishment of a village and a community ("we are a village") through sound ("the voice of the whole").

The orchestra consisted of Paula and Francesca playing first violin and second violin parts, respectively, Flor, an Argentinian cellist from Trelew who taught individual cello lessons at Gaiman Music School, Diego, an Argentinian double bass player who was also a teacher at Gaiman Music School (alongside performing with his *cumbia* band at the weekends), Pedro, an Argentinian percussion teacher from Gaiman Music School, on drums, and Alberto on keyboard. I had been asked to play cello alongside Flor rather than singing in the choir. Through the sentiment of the lyrics and the musical style, the suite intended to evoke a positive, hopeful journey and a happy, harmonious arrival at the settler colony, and it was certainly successful in doing so. The rhythms were clever and catchy, and many choir participants commented that having live musicians accompanying made singing significantly more enjoyable. Rehearsals were busy, as many students were back from university to spend the winter holidays in the village with their families. In describing the suite of compositions to me in an interview a few days before the concert, Alberto said:

"The concert will be very big, I am sure that many people will come. Pravaz has illustrated the *Wladfa* perfectly...it shows how difficult it was for the first settlers and it shows that they sung to keep the language alive...and probably to keep them alive in such a difficult situation in the extreme South! The music I have written is strong...lots of drums...and the Argentinian rhythms show the mixture of culture and show how easy it is to switch between two cultures for us. The music and the poetry

are like a couple...they need each other to *show the image we want to portray*” (emphasis mine).

Alberto’s emphasis on the calculated portrayal of an image is important here as it signifies the composition of music in relation to a listening audience, implying an awareness of how it might sound to a listener, the kind of sound a listener might desire, and the power to portray a certain message through music. It worked both ways – not only were my interlocutors acutely aware of the ways in which joyous and harmonious group singing *might* sound to the visiting tourists, but visiting tourists listening to performances by the choir used the imagery and musical harmony portrayed to create and consolidate their own perceptions of the settler colony. The messages portrayed in both Croeso Patagonia and Para Llegar al Sur were similar with images of people sitting around an open fire, eating and singing together as a way to inspire commensality. The imagery invoked was also reminiscent of the two stories explored in Chapter 2: the *Malacara* story depicting the heroic horse, and the story of the Welsh settlers voting to retain their land in the *Plebiscito*. These songs and stories painted a particular picture of the heroic Welsh settlers, invoking the dominant popular narrative of them being a group of people who faced serious difficulties during their journey to Patagonia, who struggled initially with the management of the barren land, but who managed to overcome these two factors in order to establish a successful and harmonious settler colony.

However, the music had additional elements to make it emotive, such as the use of major and minor keys which were used to invoke joy or sadness, respectively, and the use of drums, which portrayed an element of certainty. These musical elements had a significant impact in terms of setting the scene and the tone of the music. Consider, for example, the first piece of the suite, Para Llegar al Sur, with its slow, uniform melody. The drum plodding

along underneath the singers provided an apt portrayal of the length of the journey to Patagonia, the grief of losing crew members, the fatigue of travelling, and the endless search for land on which to settle. The choice of a chacarera for the piece *La Espera en el Mar* was significant too, and its faster, quirkier rhythms were a perfect way to convey the hope, excitement, and joy of searching for – and eventually finding – fertile land. As a choir and orchestra, we reacted to these rhythmic and melodic choices. A slow, uniform melody made us sing and play quieter, and more solemnly. Contrastingly, the choir and orchestra moved more, smiled more, and were more energised during the lively chacarera. In other words, the musical components had a profound impact on us, in conjunction with the lyrics. Or, as Alberto said to me, “You just have to listen to the music, and you will be transported on the journey.”

*“I feel SO uplifted!”: Y Gymanfa Ganu*

It was not only in the context of choir rehearsals that music was discussed as having the overwhelmingly positive, magical quality of coordinating group harmony. There were, at the time of my fieldwork, twenty-four chapels in the valley, each with their own atmosphere and style, and although they were no longer used as educational institutions as intended by the original settlers, they remained in use for chapel services, weddings, funerals, and other events. Some chapels were more accessible due to their central locations, such as Capel Bethel which was a ten minute walk from the centre of Gaiman, and were therefore used for weekly chapel services. Many of the other chapels in the valley were used on a rotational basis about once every two weeks for *Cymanfaoedd Canu*,<sup>46</sup> organised by Asociación San

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<sup>46</sup> See also Cassarino (2013), who argues that a similar shift has taken place in the US, where the responsibility of organising *Cymanfaoedd Canu* has shifted from the chapels to related associations.

David, or separately by the Welsh teachers who were working for Menter Patagonia, though both organisations did collaborate in other activities.<sup>47</sup> Rhiannon and her husband were particularly proactive in organising Cymanfaoedd Canu during their time working for the Menter Patagonia project in Patagonia between 2015 and 2016. During fieldwork, I attended Cymanfaoedd Canu more or less weekly (though slightly fewer sessions took place in the summer months). I usually took part as a cellist accompanying the organ with other musicians, and occasionally I sang with the congregation.

Cymanfaoedd Canu were different to the regular chapel services which took place on Sunday mornings in the valley in that music was the main focus, with up to (and sometimes more than) ten hymns being sung in any one session. Although there were Bible readings, prayers, and a message from a priest in the service, the texts were shorter than those recited during a typical Sunday morning service. Cassarino (2013) explains that Cymanfaoedd Canu developed in Wales in the 1860s in denominational chapels, and that their original purpose was to teach the art of hymn-singing, with the intention of improving the standard of congregational singing more broadly (see also Roberts 1990; Evans 1991).<sup>48</sup> Interestingly, the Cymanfaoedd Canu in Patagonia at the time of fieldwork seemed to reflect this. The individuals selected to conduct the hymns tended to be well-respected practising or retired music teachers from the area, and they were structured in a way that made them similar to a singing lesson *en masse*. It was not uncommon for those conducting the sets of hymns to stop the singing, as soon as a couple of notes into the piece, to work on the intricacies of the

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<sup>47</sup> Asociación San David was founded in 1892, and it is an organisation committed to the continuation of Welsh traditions in the Chubut Valley. They are involved with Welsh classes, the activities of Menter Patagonia, choral rehearsals, traditional Welsh dancing and publishing books (to name but a few activities), and collaborate with many Eisteddfodau in Gaiman and in Trevelin (for further details see <https://www.galesesenpatagonia.com.ar/index.php/component/content/article/26-asociaciones/38-asociacion-galesa-san-david-de-trelew?Itemid=101>, last accessed September 27 2020).

<sup>48</sup> Evans (1991), in a leaflet of *Cymanfaoedd Canu* in North Ceredigion from 1891-1991 notes that in a *Gymanfa Canu* in 1905 the Rev. Eli Evans said that the singing was not up to standard because not many of the audience had attended the rehearsal.

composition. Eleanor, who was invariably asked to conduct a few pieces, always treated the audience like a choir, asking them to sing louder, quieter, or to divide the verses by gender, whereby the men sung the first verse, then everyone sung the chorus, followed by the women singing the second verse, and so on.

Many of the sessions would begin slowly, quietly, and tentatively, but by the end of the sessions most people in the room would have relaxed into the event, often swaying back and forth, clicking their fingers, or even harmonising spontaneously. In conversations with people who had attended the sessions, their responses were always overwhelmingly positive. They would often simply state, “*Me hizo bien*”, translated literally as, “It did me good”. Accompanying the singing by providing the bass line on cello, I too would invariably feel uplifted afterwards. As one of my interlocutors from Wales explained, after a Gymanfa in winter 2016:

“I felt a bit down, when I arrived at the Gymanfa this morning. I think it’s the weather...waking up the dark, walking home from school [where she volunteered] in the dark, and it’s *so* cold, isn’t it? I feel like I say that all the time, but, it is *so* cold I can hardly think of anything else. Anyway, an hour of singing was *just* what I needed! I feel completely transformed...a new woman! I never thought I’d say that. I don’t even go to chapel or anything like that at home, but here I am.”

We sung more or less the same repertoire of hymns in every Gymanfa, and the hymns were all sung in Welsh. The lyrics of the hymns, though they touched on similar themes to the other pieces of music such as those sung in choir – for example, the themes of belonging, happiness through music, unity, and harmony – were different in that they largely deferred to

God as the ultimate authority.<sup>49</sup> So, for example, alongside lyrics such as those of Côt Caersalem ('Caersalem Choir'), a popular hymn, which read, "Oh! Wonderful singing, without end to the song, the singing of the family will stay in the Caersalem choir" and which emphasised music as generating feelings of togetherness, others largely emphasised the presence of God. Yr Arglwydd yw fy Mugail ('The Lord is my Shephard') emphasised "He will lead me along the path, justice for his name", in a way similar to another hymn Mor Fawr Wyt Ti ('So Great You Are') with the lyrics, "Sing, my soul, sing, my dear Lord, to you...so grand you are". Another hymn, Diolch a Chân ('Thanks and a Song') joined the theme of God and belonging together explicitly by thanking God for family and home, "for the sweet love of parents and our home...Great Lord of the heavens and earth, receive this thanks through our song".

The hymns tended to follow the structure of verses with a repeating chorus, and the most traditional ones tended to follow relatively simple strict rhythmic forms of mostly whole and some dotted notes, with the music following the lyrics in a highly structured way. The singers also tended to sing in rhythmic unison. The hymns ended with an 'Amen' chord structure which moves from the fifth chord to the first chord. Whilst some hymns that we sung during Cymanfaoedd Canu had been reinterpreted by later composers, they still tended to maintain the structure of verses and a repeating chorus, despite often adopting slightly catchier, or more notably uplifting, melodies.

The Eisteddfodau that took place in the valley during fieldwork were accompanied with a Gymanfa which was held the morning after the ultimate day of competitions, and in

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<sup>49</sup> To note the lyrical difference between hymns and other pieces of music is not to suggest a broader distinction between religious and secular spheres; there was no such dichotomy as for most of my interlocutors who were regular church or chapel-goers, religion formed a habitual backdrop and reference point for all their daily activities and influenced all their decisions.

this respect, the Gymanfa for the Youth Eisteddfod held in early September 2016 was particularly memorable. The Cymanfaoedd for the Eisteddfodau were significant events, and were more likely to include guest conductors from Wales (who were often spontaneously asked to conduct during their visit to the Eisteddfod), more musicians, and tended to attract a much larger audience (in part due to them being held at a peak time in terms of tourism). In this particular Gymanfa, Alberto was playing piano, Paula and her daughter Francesca were playing violin, and there was also a drummer – a young boy from the village. The songs, despite retaining their religious sentiment lyrically, were not hymns in the traditional sense, but lighter, catchier songs. The words to the songs were projected from a laptop onto the wall of the church, though several members of the congregation seemed to be familiar with the lyrics. We were encouraged throughout by the conductors to add in certain movements to accompany the lyrics on the screen and there was a palpable positive energy in the chapel, with attendees swaying to the beat, laughing, and smiling. I had attended with Sebastian, who was staying in Gaiman for the weekend, and who had complained all the way to the chapel that he did not want to go. Now, he too was swaying, smiling, and clearly enjoying himself. He leaned over, nudged me, and whispered in my ear, “Ok, I take it back, this is kind of fun.”

After the session was over, we opened the chapel doors to be greeted by the first hint of spring – a warm breeze and a bright sun in a cloudless sky. Many members of the congregation were gathered on the step, chatting and laughing amongst themselves with visitors from Wales who were in the valley for the Eisteddfod. I could see Andrea, who lived in Gaiman, waving me over to speak to her. Andrea was the headteacher of the Welsh medium nursery school in Gaiman. Tall and thin with a short bob haircut, and always dressed smartly in stilettos and suits, she was a born leader and natural organiser with a can-do attitude. She self-identified as someone who did not have any Welsh descent, but

nevertheless, she had learnt Welsh fluently by taking lessons, sitting examinations, and by immersing herself both socially and professionally in the language. She had organised the Gymanfa as part of her work with Asociación San David. I waved back to her and went over to say hello to her, reaching up to her awkwardly with a kiss on the cheek, as she towered over me in her heels. “I feel *SO* uplifted after the Gymanfa,” she declared enthusiastically. “There was *such* an air of happiness in the room.” I had to agree with her – just like the choir rehearsals, there was something particularly powerful about singing upbeat, happy songs, in unison.

### *Inspired and inspiring others: the musical cycle*

Thus far, this chapter has argued that the musical pieces that were rehearsed and performed in choir rehearsals, and the group singing of the Cymanfaoedd Canu were sonic encounters that created intrapersonal feelings of belonging. Additionally, however, they were another context in which Welsh Patagonia sounded tangible and coherent, in that outsiders were presented with a united congregation singing in harmony through the medium of Welsh. The performance took place in relation to a particular reference point: the ears of tourists and visitors, who in turn were influenced by what they heard, and who used the imagery and harmony to construct an image of Welsh Patagonia in their minds. When these tourists were musicians, this often created a ‘musical cycle’, whereby musicians were inspired by the music they heard in Welsh Patagonia to create their own musical compositions depicting images of the settler colony and to share these compositions, both at home, and in the settler colony on their following visit.

During fieldwork, many visitors to the valley were musicians, and many of them chose to share their music and engage in musical practice during their stay. Engaging in musical practice in the community, by attending choir rehearsals, playing in musical groups, teaching, conducting workshops, or performing concerts was a sure way in which outsiders could become part of the community and “give something back”, as one guitarist put it. Alongside my own presence in the field as an anthropologist, I too participated consistently in many activities as a cellist and as a singer, and this was a space that I was especially grateful for during the early fieldwork days of clumsy Castellano. It became increasingly clear to me that I was not the only visitor for whom a musical contribution or participation generated feelings of belonging that cut across linguistic differences. Several musicians passed through the valley during fieldwork, and nearly all of them performed concerts and conducted workshops. Most notable among these were the members of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales (BBC NOW), Gwenan Gibbard, (a harpist from North-West Wales), Cafi Wyn, (a singer from North Wales), and Rhishiart Arwel, (a classical guitarist who had fostered long-term relationships with Welsh Patagonia as a Welsh teacher, as the external examiner for the Menter Patagonia project, and as a musician). Though few of the musicians could speak Castellano, it was notable that their feelings about Patagonia were overwhelmingly that they felt at home, that “a part of them belonged to Patagonia”, or that they felt “a strong connection” to the valley. One member of the BBC NOW related this explicitly to the experience of sharing music. He exclaimed, “Music really is the universal language...I thought it would matter that I didn’t have Spanish...but we can understand each other. It’s amazing!”

As a consequence of fostering these musical relations, a new context developed in which music was created with the settler colony in mind, in that it was created by Welsh

musicians and poets who had visited Chubut and who had, during their time there, participated in – and contributed to – the musical activities. Working from back home in the aftermath of their experience, they drew on inspiration from the valley to write, compose, play, and record. These pieces and poems generally conveyed a positive and harmonious portrayal of the settler colony.<sup>50</sup> One example of the creation of this musical cycle could be seen in the work of Gwenan Gibbard, who visited in 2015 during the 150 celebrations and who later returned in October 2016. Her visit in 2015 was funded by Wales Arts International, and she took with her a commissioned harp, which was made by Telynu Teifi (a prestigious Welsh harp company). She performed her concerts using the harp, before leaving it as a parting gift in the Andes. In an interview with Wales Arts International after her 2015 visit, she said:

“If you were to see the pile of books I’ve got at my bedside at the moment, you’d have a good idea of what’s been on my mind over the past few weeks...I can’t get enough of the tales and stories of Patagonia and the Patagonian way of life at the moment...nothing could have prepared me for the thrilling experience of being there myself, on South American soil, further away from home than ever before, while *at the same time feeling safe and completely at home among friends and kindred spirits*...I had tried on a number of occasions to imagine what kind of a place the ‘paith’ (the prairie) would be...and I got a dramatic view of it while travelling overnight on the bus. It was a clear and still night, and the paith was illuminated by a bright moon and endless stars, and I gazed at *this remarkable, magical landscape* for ages, just as if I were watching a film...*the Welsh language and Welsh culture – these were absolutely central to the lives of the early settlers in Patagonia, and I see that they’re still incredibly important in the lives of Welsh Patagonians today*. I felt the enthusiasm of the old and the young alike, and a desire to sustain the language and our traditions. A hundred and fifty years after the Mimosa’s pioneering voyage, it’s great to think that there’s so much contact and coming and going between Wales and

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<sup>50</sup> It was not only music that was inspired by individuals’ experiences in the settler colony. Several photography projects came out of time spent there. See, for example Gold (2012), which is one of two books of photography which the photographer Ed Gold compiled from visits to the valley.

Patagonia today, and that we are, as always, '*one big family*.' I have been inspired by my journey and am keen to try to sing about the experience – we'll see what happens!" (Gibbard 2015, emphasis mine)

Gwenan kept her word, and by her visit in 2016, she had composed and recorded a CD titled *Y Gorwel Porffor* ('The Purple Horizon') inspired by her experiences in the settler colony. In the tracks of her CD, Gibbard plays the harp and sings poetic lyrics, in a variety of folk Welsh styles, most notably 'Cerdd Dant'.<sup>51</sup> The CD is comprised of a series of six songs, all written in Welsh, and all inspired by various encounters that she had experienced in the settler colony. The topics are varied, though complementary, and include, amongst others, descriptions of the landscape as "perfect, the purple horizon", explorations of religion – "when a man is measured, he is asked by God, not how he died but how he lived", light-hearted songs about celebrating a birthday through the medium of Welsh in a nursery school – "little Lisa is three years old", and more solemn songs about origin and heritage – "old language before the birth of other languages...she is our nation through all nations and she will lead our *hiraeth*".<sup>52</sup>

One song called Ddoi di draw? ('Will you come over?') is a song written about Puerto Madryn:

Will you come for a stroll to Puerto Madryn beach,  
Where the prairie nudges the waters' edge,  
The dry desert are waves,  
Will you come over for a walk?

Will you come for a stroll to Puerto Madryn beach,

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<sup>51</sup> Cerdd Dant is the art of improvisational vocal work over a Welsh folk melody. Despite the improvisational element, it has strict rules regarding cadences and rhythm. It is usually performed on the harp. The performance and competition of Cerdd Dant is a major element of the Urdd Eisteddfod in Wales, the National Eisteddfod in Wales, of Welsh musical teaching in schools and of Welsh culture more broadly.

<sup>52</sup> There is no English equivalent for the Welsh word of 'hiraeth', which seeks to convey a particularly 'Welsh' sense of longing and memory.

Where the language is in the sound of the shells,  
Caves full of memories,  
Will you come over for a walk?

Will you come for a stroll to Puerto Madryn beach,  
Where the journey of each sea begins,  
The morning sun rises an anchor,  
Will you come over for a walk?

Will you come for a stroll to Puerto Madryn beach,  
One more time I ask you,  
Will you come bravely over the shallow sea,  
Will you come over for a walk?

(Music and lyrics originally in Welsh by Gwenan Gibbard)

Puerto Madryn – or Madryn as it was more typically referred to locally – was a relatively large town, and its main feature was its large, expansive beach, which was especially busy during the hot summer months. During the time of my fieldwork, it was commonly referred to as being a wealthier area in comparison to Trelew and Gaiman, and this was reflected visually in the higher house and rental prices, and in the luxurious and expensive shoe, clothing, and homeware shops in the area. Madryn had further significance for the Welsh community, as it was the first place where the Welsh settlers had landed before travelling by foot to Gaiman. On the promenade in Madryn, there was a large stone monument of a ‘Welsh Woman’, which represented the arrival of the first Welsh settlers, and on July 28 each year, there would be an early morning gathering at that spot to mark the annual celebration of the arrival. Madryn was therefore a popular tourist destination for Welsh visitors, despite having relatively few Welsh speakers in comparison to Gaiman or Trelew. However, Madryn also symbolised sadness for some of my interlocutors. In a car

journey once to Madryn with Paula, around the time of the anniversary of the landing, she said to me, shaking her head:

“Sometimes when I travel this journey to Madryn in the car, well, especially around this time, I think about those first settlers, who had to cross across all this land with nothing without knowing where they were going, can you imagine? All the women, and children? [...] That journey...it must have been so difficult for them.”

In late October 2016, Gwenan played *Ddoi di Draw?* in a concert that she performed in Capel Bethel in Gaiman. The piece was an easy listen. It had a cheerful, upbeat feeling to it, and several members of the audience were happily tapping their feet whilst listening before applauding for a very long time afterwards. Written in a folk style, the harp played an underlying melody with bouncing chords, both on and off the beat, in a major key. A repeated little melody intermittently broke through, tinkling down through a scale which connected the verses. Above this was the sound of Gwenan skilfully singing in a mezzo-alto voice, and each verse followed the same chirpy melody, overall making it a memorable and uplifting piece of music. The lyrics, with the repetition of the questioning, “Will you come for a stroll to Puerto Madryn beach?” were reminiscent of a childlike persistent questioning, adding to the feeling of adventure and excitement that the song invoked. The lyrics describing “the language [...] in the shells” subtly depicted the omnipresence and embeddedness of the Welsh language. This was an image which likely reflected the reality of the typical tourist experience of Welsh Patagonia, for whom it was ordinary to spend a week or so in the village, without much contact with locals beyond the Welsh Patagonian community.

Ultimately, the lyrics combined with the major key produced a feel-good song, which painted a romanticised, magical picture of Puerto Madryn, and which created a ‘musical

cycle' whereby the music created both in the settler colony and by visiting musicians to the settler colony reinforced dominant ideas about Welsh Patagonia. However, something more profound was also taking place here. A few days later, I was sitting with Paula (with whom I had attended the concert) at her kitchen table, drinking tea. As we waited for the kettle to boil to fill another teapot, she shook her head, saying, "I only heard the lovely Madryn song once, and I can't stop humming it! I can't get it out of my head!" I asked her what she had thought about the concert, and she clapped her hands together, delighted, and said, sincerely:

"I didn't know what to expect, but I knew Gwenan was an incredible musician...well...of course...we all knew that from her visit before. I had been working all day, hadn't eaten much, and I was tired...I almost didn't go to the concert. I could easily have gone home to sleep! But I'm so glad I went with you. Listening to her sing like that...I felt so proud of our little Gaiman. Things are not always easy here for me, or for any of us really, in Argentina, but the way she sung about us...it was amazing...it made me happy...viste? I'm so glad I bought her CD...now I can have that experience at home too. Every time I need to feel better...every time I need to remember what I have to be grateful for here in Patagonia...that is the CD I will listen to."

I smiled, and agreed with her. During the concert held a few days previously, even whilst being able to consider the lyrics from a critical, anthropological perspective, I was still enchanted by them. Even whilst understanding the possible issues of the narrative, or the imagery that was being portrayed – of the heroic Welsh settlers and of the harmonious relationships and pure place of Welshness in the settler colony – the music had captured me in an emotive sense. Listening to Gwenan, I had glanced briefly over at the smiling tourists, and had felt a rush of deep pride for Welsh Patagonia (where I had been living for nearly a year and a half), and a strong sense of belonging and community. Like Paula, I too had left the concert hall feeling uplifted and happier, and similarly to Paula, in the months and years

after fieldwork had ended, as I wrote these chapters, it was that CD that I turned to when I needed to ‘be back there’.



Figure 25. Gwenan Gibbard performing Ddoi di Draw? from her album *Y Gorwel Porffor* in Capel Bethel, October 2016

## *Conclusions: sound and the subject*

Sound has an extraordinary capacity to work on us before consciousness...to ‘yank our chains’, to tune us like instruments. It works across bodies, both within and across populations, and offers possibilities that visual materials cannot.

(Kassabian 2013: 179)

In the discussion of the tourist gaze, I noted that ‘we all know, or can imagine, that curious feeling of being lost in thought whilst reading a book in a library, looking out a train window, or painting a picture’.<sup>53</sup> For Sartre (1958), an individual who is in this state of immersion – lost in an engaging activity – is not yet aware of him or herself as being a subject. He would argue that we become subjects at the exact moment at which we are looking out a train window, painting a picture, or reading in the library, and feel the eyes of another person watching us. When we stop what we are doing to look up, or turn around, we become subjects, and in our capacity to imagine how we must look to the individual watching us, we also become aware of the subjectivity of the other.

For Lacan (1966), Sartre (1958), and Althusser (1971), though each of these thinkers differ in the precise means by which subjectivation occurs, subjectivation through the gaze requires a certain level of recognition, whereby we become self-aware, and recognise the presence of the other. For Sartre (1958), individuals become subjects precisely at the point of recognition. Sartre’s (1958) individual looking through a keyhole is fully immersed in the activity, and then suddenly feels the eyes of an onlooker. He or she turns around, and recognises how he or she might *seem* to the other. There is an element of shame in the

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<sup>53</sup> See page 103, Chapter 3

moment of subjectivation, whereby the individual is ashamed to have been caught, a shame which indicates that he or she is able to consider the onlooker's perspective.

Lacan (1966) and Althusser (1971) both differ in relation to Sartre (1958), and in relation to each other. Lacan (1966) modified his original mirror stage theory (in which he argued that subjectivation was momentary) to argue that becoming a subject is a continuous process. The concept of the mirror theory, whilst it enables a richer consideration of subjectivation in terms of how subjectivation is laced with desire and a certain 'striving' to become a subject, still implicitly retains an element of recognition, in that the infant must continuously see him or herself in the mirror, and recognise the gap between the self as reflected and the reality. Althusser (1971) takes Lacan's (1966) argument (that subjectivation is continuous) a step further to argue that individuals are already *born* subjects. In other words, we are already subjects of the state. However, recognition remains central. In the act of recognition (for example, when we turn around to face a police officer who shouts, "Hey, you!" at us on the street), we are interpellated, time and time again, by state ideology. Key to this is Althusser's (1971) perception of the success of interpellation whereby:

You and I are *always already* subjects, and as such *constantly practice the rituals of ideological recognition*, which guarantee for us that we are indeed concrete, individual, distinguishable and (naturally) irreplaceable subjects. [...] All ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects, by the functioning of the category of the subject (Althusser 1971: 117, emphasis mine).

In Welsh Patagonia, the element of recognition, in daily life, whilst under the gaze of the tourist other, or as my interlocutors watched their own performances of Welshness on film, was also paramount. Consider, for example, the moment in the museum, when Lucas

and I were laughing about the harp in the corner, the sudden interruption that followed – the sound of the bell chiming to indicate visitors – and the immediate reaction, a spontaneous performance of Welshness. Lucas later told me that it was not a ‘performance’, but rather part of his identity. At the moment of recognition, or interruption, in this particular context, Lucas immediately came into being as Welsh, recognising what the tourists would be looking for, and aware of how he might seem to them, if he was laughing about the harp and drinking mate when they entered. More broadly speaking, my interlocutors felt the gaze of the tourists watching them, recognised the particular image that the tourists hoped to find in Welsh Patagonia, and performed that Welshness to them, both in person and at an anticipatory distance whereby the gaze was felt as a potential subjectivation (for example, in rehearsals prior to the tourists’ arrival, or on social media). Similarly, in the film nights organised in Gaiman, my interlocutors recognised, laughed at, and later reflected on, the gap between the self as experienced (in daily life) and the self as performed in the film *Galesa*. Ultimately, in all these interactions or encounters, there was a certain element of recognition or self-awareness.

In the context of music, however, we all know, or can imagine, that feeling of being lost in music, whilst listening to a certain piece of music that we love – one that perhaps evokes happy or sad memories, whilst playing a musical instrument that (at our best moments) becomes an extension of ourselves, whilst singing with friends in a choir, or whilst attending a gig at a festival. We all know, or can imagine, that feeling of what Paula experienced, when a particular song becomes ‘stuck’ in our heads, or when it has a particular impact on us – so much so that we seek it out in moments when we know we *need* to listen to it. This is where sound demonstrates its differences to the gaze. In the context of music, in Welsh Patagonia, whilst there was an awareness of how sound might sound to a listener, in

terms of generating feelings of belonging and community, subjectivation through music was most effective during this state of what Diaz (2011: 42) has termed “flow” – a state of complete absorption in an activity. As Turino (2008a: 4) further notes, flow is a state in which “one is so intent on the activity at hand that all other thoughts, concerns, and distractions disappear and the actor is fully present in the moment”. Cohen and Bodner (2019: 421) define this as a “subjective psychological state often associated with optimal functioning”. The state of flow in music, was not characterised by recognition, but was rather one characterised by a “lack of self-consciousness” (Cohen & Bodner 2019: 421; Mowitt 2013; Diaz 2011; Turino 2008a).

During choir rehearsals, Cymanfaoedd Canu, or whilst listening to concerts, the moments in which my interlocutors felt most uplifted and most united with their fellow choir participants, the rest of the congregation or the audience around them, were also the very moments in which they allowed themselves to be “transported on the journey”, as Alberto so aptly put it. The goosebump or tear-inducing moments, when the music and its meaning was embodied by my interlocutors were not necessarily the moments in which they were so acutely aware of their subjectivation, but rather they appeared to be the moments in which there was a lack of self-awareness in the activity. In other words, whilst my interlocutors did demonstrate a self-awareness of the power of music, in that they explicitly reflected on it, the actual moment of subjectivation through sound did not occur at the moment of recognition, but rather at the moment of immersion. In the vignette with which this chapter opened, I presented a situation with Paula in which I interrupted her playing, noting that her comment of “I hope it didn’t sound too bad” indicated an awareness of how she might sound to a listener. In reflecting on this vignette, arguably, the moment of interruption was not the moment in which Paula became a subject in this context, as would be the case for Sartre’s

(1958) individual being caught looking through a keyhole. Rather, the subjectivation through sound would have been occurring *before* I interrupted, whilst she was fully focused on and engaged in the music, therefore enabling its impact on her.

Ultimately, this chapter has been interested in the ways in which this subjectivation through sound worked on an intrapersonal community level. In doing so it has explored the role of music in the creation and consolidation of both social relationships and an image of community. It has combined a structural analysis of music with an exploration of music and belonging in Gaiman music school choir rehearsals, Cymanfaoedd Canu, and the role of what I have termed the ‘musical cycle’ whereby tourists created and circulated music inspired by their experiences in the settler colony. Across these varied situations, the fundamental message remained the same in its association of music with positive qualities, be this in bringing people together, or in invoking feelings of happiness. In making this argument, it has argued that the sheet music must ‘come to life’ as it were, or in other words, it must be played or sung to create feelings of belonging. At the same time, the sheet music does have an element of intrinsic power in that it is created with intentionality, in social and political contexts. This has further pertinence in a context in which the composer lives, works, or has travelled within the community. Structure and lyrics are important and they *do* help in some way – in this context, the positive and harmonious portrayal of social relationships, and specifically the relationships between Wales and Patagonia, through lyrics and melodies, provided at the very least a *platform* for these types of sentiments.

Whilst it is important to consider the differences in the process of subjectification as interpellated through vision or through sound, there were similarities too. Analogously to the ways in which under the gaze of the Welsh tourist other, Welsh Patagonia seemed to take

shape as a homogenous, graspable entity, the listening to, performing, rehearsing, and creation of music which evoked the idea of harmonious relationships between the Welsh and local Argentinians or Indigenous inhabitants of the settler colony, or which portrayed a depiction of a positive and romanticised life in the settler colony, also helped to create this as the perceived reality or subjectivity of the group. This was strengthened by the musical techniques of major keys and bouncy, dotted rhythms (which tended to invoke a more positive and harmonious atmosphere). Singing in choir, singing in *Cymanfaoedd Canu*, and participating in the ‘musical cycle’ between Wales and Patagonia contributed towards the sonic formation of an outwardly homogenous Welsh Patagonia, working in conjunction with the effect of tourism, cameras, and the gaze of the other explored in previous chapters. Tourists not only consumed and then reflected the images presented to them through music, but also often, as musicians themselves, later created them based on their experiences in the settler colony.

Despite these similarities, the simple but pertinent difference between vision and sound complicates Ingold’s (2011) analysis of sound and vision as being phenomenologically inseparable, and has further implications for our understanding of the subject, as the three final chapters will demonstrate. The lack of recognition required on the part of the subject in the context of subjectification through music implies a subject that is far more porous and more open than the separate subject implied through the concepts of the gaze. However, this is not to imply a compliance with – or lack of knowledge of – subjectivation through sound. If we take into account Hofman’s (2015: 47) argument that “people experiencing music and sound invest their own affective dispositions, moods, and emotions, and although they are open to the affective environment, they are not just empty vessels for impersonal affect”, it is possible to consider the ways in this subjectivation was more complex than it might seem.

The following chapter seeks to address this complexity, and in doing so it explores the encounter between music and the self in more detail, arguing that whilst playing Welsh music was, to an extent, successful in creating feelings of belonging and in calling into being the image of a homogenous Welsh community, the flow – although desirable – was not always achievable, and moreover, my interlocutors were able to manipulate the powerful qualities of music for other purposes, such as for music therapy.

## Chapter 6: “*Music helps you to live*”: musical self-cultivation in *Welsh Patagonia*

Music is not merely a ‘meaningful’ or ‘communicative’ medium. It does much more than convey signification through non-verbal means. At the level of daily life, music has power. It is implicated in every dimension of social agency...Music may influence how people compose their bodies, how they conduct themselves, how they experience the passage of time, how they feel – in terms of energy and emotion – about themselves, about others, and about situations. In this respect, music may imply, and, in some cases, elicit associated modes of conduct. To be in control, then, of the soundtrack of social action is to provide a framework for the organisation of social agency, a framework for how people perceive (consciously or subconsciously) potential avenues of conduct. This perception is often converted into conduct *per se*.

(DeNora 2000: 16-17)

### *Introduction: “It just goes like this...it’s really simple”*

In one of the final concerts that I performed in as a cellist in Gaiman, we performed a suite which was the joint creation of Alberto and an Argentinian poet, Sergio Pravaz. The suite, explored in detail in the previous chapter, combined lyrics depicting the harmony of the settler colony with the clever, subtle intertwining of Welsh melodies and Argentinian folk rhythms. Together, the lyrics and the music worked to depict a particular story of the creation of Welsh Patagonia, one which closely followed the dominant narrative of the establishment of the settler colony, that being a narrative in which the Welsh settlers lived in harmony with the Indigenous people with whom they shared the land. In practice, however, the unproblematic combination of different musical forms was not as simple as it appeared on the sheet music. Well, it was simple for some. To those around me, it appeared effortless, and

most told me that it was. The other musicians often expressed the complicated rhythmical forms of Argentinian folk music as being corporal, embodied, or something that they performed out of habit, and did not elaborate much further than that. However, bringing two rhythms or musical styles together did not come naturally to me. Much to the great amusement of my fellow musicians, I struggled to ‘feel’ the syncopated beats of the zamba and chacarera, finding myself constantly searching for the security of a 4/4 or 3/4 beat. Having been trained in classical orchestral cello playing, I had little ear for improvisation or folk rhythms. I often said, “I don’t get it,” to which the rest of the orchestra would laugh, “It just goes like this” or, “It’s really simple” followed by the clicking of the (next to impossible) rhythms, or singing of the melody accompanied with clapping, to which I would have to say, again, “I don’t know, I just don’t get it, it’s not in my body.” It was only with Flor, the other cellist who played a lot of folk music, by my side that I was slowly able to begin to relax into the Argentinian rhythmical forms, and reach something akin to that desired state of flow that my interlocutors seemed to experience so effortlessly.

The playfulness of the music was also a reflection of the social structure, and especially of the informality and fun that permeated choir rehearsals. The atmosphere of choir rehearsals was described fondly by my interlocutors as “chaotic but joyful”, as “very typical of here” and as “very Argentinian” (see also Chapter 5). Contrastingly, choir rehearsals, from my own experience of them in Wales, were a relatively formal occasion. I grew up in West Wales, and attended Welsh medium primary and secondary schools as a child, an education of which singing was a central component. My own memories of attending lunchtime choir rehearsals, evening choir rehearsals, and weekend choir camps regularly from a relatively young age largely consisted of standing in rows for hours, structured rehearsals with precisely timed breaks, compulsory attendance, evenings spent

learning words for pieces in preparation for the concerts, auditions for entrance to county choirs, and another series of auditions to try for solo parts within the choir. This is not to say that choir rehearsals were not enjoyable, but musical standard and perfection were prioritised. Alberto, who had also spent time with choirs in Wales, agreed with me. During one particularly rowdy choir rehearsal, he said to me, “It is completely different, over there [in Wales] no? You stand up, you arrive on time, you are *so quiet*...incredible!” It was difficult for me to conceptualise walking up the stairs to a concert stage without knowing the words of each piece, the repertoire, and the order in which they would appear, let alone to begin to understand not knowing which piece we were about to sing. This is why, then, it took me many months to respond with “I have no idea...we will have to ask somebody else” to my interlocutors’ questions of “What are we singing?” moments before we were due to go on stage.

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What DeNora (2000: 16-17) seeks to emphasise in the quotation with which this chapter opens, what this anecdote illustrates, and what the previous chapter sought to demonstrate, is the close relationship between music and social conduct. This has been a broader theme in the ethnographic and ethnomusicological literature. It has been argued that for the Kaluli in Papua New Guinea, there is a close relationship between their social identity and a particular musical structure called ‘lift-up-over-sounding’ (Feld 1988), that understanding Mapuche songs and understanding the Mapuche concept of personhood necessarily imply each other (Course 2009), that the male dominance of certain musical instruments reflects gender structures (Doubleday 2008), and that standing up (rather than sitting down ‘the traditional way’) to play the violin in Saraguro, Ecuador reflects a broader

societal push towards modernity (Violinsky 2010). Traditional Argentinian music felt like a game. With its syncopated rhythms that appeared ‘off the cuff’ (see further Tilley 2009: 22), its quirky melodies, and its creative combinations of instruments, it was a perfect reflection of the informality, playfulness, and joking with which social life was conducted. Contrastingly, the classical four-part choral Welsh tradition tended to be more formal and structured in nature, whereby the music often moved simultaneously with the vocal parts (rather than working in syncopation). The music, whilst equally creative, in its own way, tended towards stricter rhythms. Choir rehearsals reflected this, with their formality and punctuality.

Bloch (1974) too, in his analysis of a Merina circumcision ceremony in Madagascar, argues for a focus on the power of music. He describes the ceremonies as being dominated by the repetition of formalised songs, arguing that social control stems specifically from the structure of the song. The formality of the music has two key consequences – it dampens the possibility of creativity on behalf of the singer, and increases the authority of the singer, or as Bloch (1974: 71) puts it, “You cannot argue with a song”. However, as Avenburg (2012: 143) notes, these types of theories imply “passive subject[s] who receive and can only accept, reject, or modify offers of musical interpellation”. It is not the case that musical structure and harmony unproblematically imprint themselves on its listeners.

Later scholars have moved away from Bloch’s (1974) idea that the authority could be found in the structure of the song, arguing alternatively for a focus on social context, or on the human *process* of formalisation (see, for example McClary 1991; DeNora 2000). DeNora (2000) argued in her book *Music in Everyday Life* that the process of musical manipulation is a dialectical one, whereby we can be mobilised and influenced by music, but we can also use

it to our own advantage in an act of ‘self-manipulation’ (see further Thompson & Biddle 2013). For example, we might listen to upbeat music to improve our mood or to motivate us during exercise (DeNora 2000), calming music as a relaxation tool (Jarman 2013), or relaxing music to help us to sleep (Kassabian 2013). Jarman (2013: 189) elaborates that “the fact that the music is additional or even secondary to some other listening...does not mean that it has no effect on the listener”. This interpretation of music is reminiscent of Butler’s (1995) concept of subjectivation, whereby submitting to dominant structures can lead to mastery. Consider, for example, the case of Paula from the previous chapter, who stated that she would listen to Gwenan Gibbard’s CD to make her feel happy. In this context, the music on the CD portrayed a romanticised interpretation of Welsh Patagonia, but submitting to this interpretation was also, in some contexts, a means of generating happiness or improved wellbeing.

The previous chapter argued that interpellation or subjectivation through music, or in other words, the *enabling* of music’s powerful effect on us, was most effective in Welsh Patagonia when my interlocutors and I reached a state of flow – when we lost ourselves in the music, and when we were fully immersed in it. This was closely connected to the creation of feelings of belonging and enjoyment. As Diaz (2011: 42) argues, “intense enjoyment resulting from engagement in intrinsically rewarding tasks is due in some part to an individual’s degree of absorption or immersion in relationship to said activity”. This chapter builds on the previous chapter to explore more closely the relationship between music, belonging, desire, community, and power in the Welsh Patagonian context. In doing so, it acknowledges, with Bloch (1974), the powerful qualities of music in reflecting and creating community, but builds on the concept of flow explored in the previous chapter to argue that being in a state of flow was not a passive act. As the vignette with which this chapter opens

demonstrates, flow was a desirable state to reach and we consciously worked towards it, much like Lacan's (1966) image of the ideal self in the mirror (see further Cohen & Bodner 2019). To take one example, in my frustration of being unable to play the complex rhythms, I envied my interlocutors who were so quickly able to lose themselves in – or be interpellated by – Argentinian folk music. I wanted to share their experience, and I worked to get there.

This chapter seeks to explore this dimension, arguing that musical subjectivation in Welsh Patagonia was not about repression through music, but was a more complex dialogue of power, desire, and manipulation. In doing so, it considers the moments in which the flow did not work as intended and the implications of this disjuncture for subjectivation. It argues that music was also a tool for individuals who manipulated its powerful qualities to work towards the flow, in doing so working towards an 'ideal I'. My interlocutors utilised music as a form of self-cultivation through self-induced 'music therapy', which made sense in a context where therapy was extremely widespread in the Argentinian middle classes, with Lacanian psychoanalysis being the most commonly used method. In making this argument, the chapter is underpinned by Foucault's (1984a, 1984b) understanding of the ethical subject which he develops in the final phase of his work. His conceptualisation of the ethical subject is of a being continuously creating him or herself in a process of self-cultivation, through the ethical principles of caring for the self. This self-cultivation, whilst it takes place within a particular social and cultural framework, is less about compliance with an abstract set of moral rules, and more to do with self-mastery whereby "[the] ethical work that one performs on oneself [is] not only in order to bring one's conduct into compliance with a given rule, but [is an] *attempt to transform oneself* into the ethical subject of one's behaviour" (Foucault 1984a: 27, emphasis mine; see further Smith 2015).

Ultimately, then, this chapter explores the themes of music, flow, belonging, desire, community, and power in addition to an exploration of the underlying value system structuring this. It firstly considers the moments of disjuncture in flow, and the capacity of individuals to use music to their advantage as a tool for what Kassabian (2013: 165) has termed “management of the self” through the practice of musical self-cultivation. It argues that musical self-cultivation – reaching the flow – was embedded within a specific social and cultural context of which therapy, and more specifically Lacanian psychoanalysis was a central component. It further argues that musical self-cultivation reflected and created societal values such as ideals of perfection or improvisation as well as inequalities and issues of accessibility within the community.

### *“The reason I play...”: Musical therapy*

It was August 2013, and I had agreed to perform a solo cello piece during a concert that Gaiman choir were organising to mark the end of their annual fundraising tea. The piece that I was going to play was a Welsh folk tune called *Ar Lan y Môr* (‘At the Seaside’). Alberto would accompany me on the piano. We had practiced at his house a couple of times in the days preceding the concert, and had also recorded the piece, for fun, in his recording studio (which was attached to his house). The tune was relatively simple, the notes were objectively easy, and the piece was short. However, when the piano introduction cued me in and we began to play, I could immediately feel myself getting tenser. I had performed in other concerts and contexts without this issue, but I knew exactly what was happening – nerves. I could feel the eyes of the audience on me, and almost all my energy was focused on desperately trying to slow my breathing and to control my shaking bow hand, rather than on an enjoyment of – or any real level of engagement with – the piece. I played quietly,

nervously, and far too quickly – the antithesis to how I had performed during rehearsals, and to how I actually *felt* about the piece, which was one of my favourite Welsh folk songs. The whole time I willed Alberto to play louder, and to drown out my sound, but he increasingly lowered his volume so that I could be heard. Finally, the piece was over. I breathed an embarrassed sigh of relief. The audience clapped politely. I nodded and scuttled to the edge of the stage.

Later that evening, in spite of the plummeting temperatures outside, Paula and I were sitting in the ice-cream parlour in the centre. “You,” she declared, pausing to lick her vanilla and chocolate cone, “are like me.” I looked at her, expectantly. “Some people play instruments to be the best, you know, musically. For those people, it is easy for them to lose themselves in the music. For others, though, like you and me, the reason we play is to better ourselves, as people, rather than to play perfectly, you know, musically. For people like you and me, I do think you can learn to perform a musical concert with confidence, it’s just like you can learn to speak in front of a crowd...I can do that now since starting to work as a teacher, but I think it is so difficult to reach that moment when you are lost.” She touched my shoulder. “What I mean, is, don’t worry. You know your reasons for playing cello, it’s your therapy...you know you can reach that moment in private...anyway, it [music] makes you a better person...and it doesn’t matter what anyone else thinks.”

“Music performance anxiety” has been proven to impact on reaching the ideal state of flow required for an optimal performance, in turn leading to less enjoyment on the part of the performer and a reduced impact in terms of the affective dimensions of music (Cohen & Bodner 2019: 422). Put simply, it is difficult to fully immerse yourself in a performance if you are too nervous, or, to push this further, if you simply cannot play the piece, in a

technical sense (as occurred in the fieldwork vignette with which this chapter opened). As Turino (2008a: 4) notes, “if the challenges are too high, the activity leads to frustration and the actor cannot engage fully”. In this respect, Paula’s comments resonate with Cohen and Bodner’s (2019) broader argument which is that the state of flow, that is so necessary to reach in order to perform confidently, and to fully experience the effect of the music, is a *desired* state to achieve. For many of my interlocutors, reaching the level of flow was not automatic and it certainly did not come ‘naturally’ to everyone, but it was possible to work towards it, and upon reaching this state of immersion in the music, whether in public or in private, the power and subjectivation of self and community through music was at its most effective. Ultimately, however, this idea of being able to ‘work towards’ interpellation has implications in terms of our understanding of agency and power within musical subjectivation. What became clear during fieldwork was that it was also a privilege to reach – or have access to – these moments of immersion.

Paula’s comments also suggested that she saw practicing violin, playing music, and reaching the optimum flow as a path to self-improvement, inner peace, or happiness on a deeper level, beyond the simple increase of musical standard, and this became something which she elaborated on time and time again during the course of fieldwork. This concept of manipulating the powerful qualities of music for her own benefit also resonates with MacDonald’s (2013: 2) definition of musical therapy as “interventions [which] will [not] have musical developments in terms of increasing technical skills as a primary objective”. Paula regularly cited the therapeutic qualities of violin playing as being one of her main motivations to play. As she emphasised one evening, “Music saved me... The musical community here, when I was in my twenties, saved me.” I nodded, and she continued, “The

reason that I play the violin,” she explained to me, “is that it helps me mentally, and it gives me space to deal with my problems, in addition to seeing my therapist.”

In a manner consistent with Zhang’s (2018: 54) argument that “life stories and personal narratives of feelings are essential in the cultivation of a new therapeutic self and personal growth”, music fitted into a coherent narrative for Paula, and she regularly told me the history of her moving from Trevelin where she lived with her family to Gaiman in her late teens, about the death of both her parents when she was relatively young, about her estranged brother, about the difficulties of her marriage, and about the struggles and joys of parenthood. All of these factors were key points in her narrative which inspired her to begin taking more “seriously” her musical studies by playing more violin and attending choir. “It *helps* me,” she stated, sincerely. Twenty years later, she was a consistent, daily presence at Gaiman Music School and music was a part of her daily growth and self-work. Eleanor had similar ideas about the healing and transformative qualities of music. One scorching summer’s day, we were sitting in her living room waiting for the other women to arrive for a girls’ choir rehearsal when she said to me:

“It is good if we can have the rehearsals here, instead of at the music school, for now. It is easier for me...my bones. You know, I have had cancer twice. And both times, I have been told that the cancer has gone. I think what has saved me, both times, well...God...praying to God and trusting in Him, but also music. Playing music, leading the girls’ choir, it helped me to feel better, to feel happier...to feel hope for a better future.”

These ideas about the therapeutic benefits of music found concrete expression in Paula’s method of teaching. At the beginning of the violin classes that she taught at Gaiman music school, she tended to devote fifteen minutes to yoga-style stretching before we began

the class, with the emphasis being on the importance of finding the connection between mind, body, soul, breath, and music.<sup>54</sup> With our eyes closed, we were told to reach our arms up to the sky, and to focus on our breathing. We firstly breathed in for five seconds through the nose. We then breathed out for ten seconds through the mouth. We repeated that a few times before beginning the stretching. We would twist to the side, first to the right, holding the stretch for twenty seconds, and then to the left, holding the stretch for another twenty seconds.

Finally, we would reach up to the ceiling and then bring our arms down in front of us, before slowly folding forward, bringing our arms down to the floor. In this final position, Paula would encourage us to think of a moment in which we felt truly at peace with ourselves, and in which we were truly happy, encouraging us to recreate these feelings. “Try to be back in that space,” she would tell us, in a soft voice. The silence would then be broken as we were handed the violins, but we still would not speak. When we played, the atmosphere in the room remained the same – still, calming, and tranquil. We would often warm up by playing scales, but the musical focus during the classes was on “enjoying the music”, “feeling the music”, and allowing ourselves to be moved by it. This was an embodied experience, and Paula would emphasise the importance of good posture and perfect bow-hold in enabling us to be, as she called it, “at one with the violin”.

My other interlocutors pointed to similar motivations behind their musical activities. One of my fellow violin students was a local Argentinian woman, who was Martina’s (one of the young girls from the string group) mother. She was striking with her creative, colourful

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<sup>54</sup> During fieldwork, I attended a term of group violin classes in 2016 with three other students as a pupil with Paula.

clothing and jet black hair. When I asked her in an interview what had inspired her to take up the violin, she explained to me that learning the violin, which she had been doing for around a year at the time of my fieldwork, was part of a broader project of self-care. She said:

“I have lost a lot of weight, I am eating better...and I come to these classes once a week. I saw Martina coming, and I saw it does her good...so I thought...why not! I am old, but I am not too old to try something new. Since coming I have found that I am feeling less stressed, I am eating better, I smile more, and I am more disciplined in my whole life. Those things...music...health...all go together for me.”

A similar case came from towards the end of fieldwork. I was surprised to see my landlord (from whom I rented a *quincho* for the duration of fieldwork) walking through the doors of the music school with a guitar case. Although she ran her own cake business, she was a very quiet, family-orientated woman who spent most of her time at home. She was originally from Chile, but had moved to Gaiman when she married her Welsh Patagonian husband, who had since died. Although her children were very involved with the Welsh community, and she occasionally attended the mixed choir, she was a relatively reserved attendee. She had previously explained to me that she distanced herself because in Gaiman “everyone knows what you have done before you even do it”. In the music school, she laughed at my reaction, “Are you shocked? My children too...I’ve decided to start guitar! I need to do something for me. I am always in the house, cooking, baking, missing my sister in Chile, and cleaning...well now it’s time to do something to better myself. It was my daughter who first suggested it.” Ultimately, Paula, Martina’s mother, and my landlord pointed towards similar motivations to play, in that music would help them with a broader project of self-care, serve to “de-stress” them, or as Foucault (1984: 53) puts it, to induce “tranquillity of the mind”.

*“Oh, I can’t do that time, I have therapy”: therapy in Argentina*

Many qualitative and quantitative studies have pointed towards the positive effects on music on overall health and well-being (MacDonald 2013). More specifically, research has focused on community music therapy such as the creation of community choirs for older adults (Pavlicevic & Andsell 2004; Ahessy 2016), the impact of music lessons (especially within schools) on psychological or social variables and cognitive development (Costa-Giomi 2012), the ways in which listening to empowering music has a positive impact on self-esteem (Elvers et al 2018; Rooyen & Santos 2020), and the positive outcomes of music therapy across a range of diagnoses (Baker et al 2008). However, Laukka (2007: 232) argues that although there are studies positing the link between music and belonging, there is little work to show *why* this may be the case, and “future studies should...pay more attention to the motives for engaging in various activities”.

The concept of musical self-cultivation made sense in the Welsh Patagonian and broader Argentinian context in which it was embedded, where therapy was part of the tapestry of daily life, especially for the middle and upper classes. Zhang (2018: 46) draws on her fieldwork in China to argue that the concept of self-improvement through therapy raises the question of how one can become culturally re-embedded following their journey of self-enlightenment and self-development. She explains how one of her interlocutors, overwhelmed by her responsibilities at home, which included caring for her elderly father and her daughter, had hired a carer to look after her family and left for a journey of self-discovery to Tibet. This resonates with Stafford’s (2016: 69) highlighting of the tensions between caring responsibilities in his fieldwork context in rural China, and his questions of “exactly whom did they want to make happy? Her parents, their children, or themselves?”

Zhang's (2018) interlocutor ultimately chose herself, and in leaving for Tibet, she had disentangled herself from her obligations to focus on her own self-cultivation. However, when she returned, she was faced with the new challenge of reconciling her new concept of the self with existing notions of personhood.

Contrastingly, therapy has long been a central component of middle-class Argentinian culture and so ethical self-cultivation was considered the norm (Dagfal 2018; Fierro et al 2018; Jock et al 2013). In 2018, there were 82,000 (mostly female) psychologists active which amounts to 206 psychologists per 100,000 people (Dagfal 2018). These figures are striking in comparison to the 21,500 psychologists registered in the UK in 2016, which amounts to 32 psychologists per 100,000 people (Farndon 2016), and in relation to Thornicroft's (2018) argument that "most people with mental illness worldwide receive no treatment at all". Paula's comment about music helping her "alongside seeing [her] therapist" was a typical one. Given that the majority of my interlocutors were Welsh Patagonians, who were relatively well-off economically, many people I knew in the field had a therapist whom they saw regularly, or at the very least had received therapy in the past. In this context, then, therapy was openly discussed in an offhand manner, as reflected as in the comment of one friend with whom I was arranging to meet for a coffee who said, "Oh, I can't do that time, I have therapy." My adult English students in Trelew would also regularly refer to their therapy in class discussions and their comments reflected the idea of self-cultivation as a lifelong endeavour. As one of my students commented during an interview:

"It is not that you go to therapy when you feel bad and then leave when you feel better. You have to keep going when you feel good, then when things happen in your life that are difficult...or when you are struggling in your relationships...maybe with your husband or your children or your friends...you are already going to therapy once a week or maybe less and you can talk about it with your therapist. I have been going

to therapy for nearly 10 years now and my therapist, he knows me very well and he understands the way I think. That is really helpful when it is hard for me to express myself when things are going bad in my life.”

Psychoanalysis, at the time of the research, was the most common therapeutic approach in Argentina, existing as the dominant trope in both academia and in clinical practice, with the majority of the clinical psychologists who were working in mental health services adopting a Freudian or Lacanian methodology, a psychoanalytical style which focused on narrative construction and childhood experiences (Fierro et al 2018; Dagfal 2018; Jock et al 2013). As Dagfal (2018: 254) notes, “Psychoanalysis has acquired such a great scope in [Argentina] academia, in the healthcare system, and in the common understanding of everyday life, that this situation has drawn the attention of the specialised literature and the international press”. Lakoff (2003: 85) raises the further possibility that the popularity of Lacanian methodology was rooted in the social and political context of Argentina:

There were a number of explanations for the phenomenon. Some observers suggested that *lacanismo* was simply the latest fad in a long-running Argentinian fascination with psychoanalysis. Others, however, argued that the turn in the mental health community toward Lacan’s hermetic philosophical system had been complicit with the military dictatorship’s effort to depoliticise the mental health field – that Lacanianism’s detachment from social problems allowed it to survive the ‘dirty war’ period, while more engaged movements were brutally repressed by the dictatorship following the 1976 coup.

Ultimately, then, this desire for self-improvement was embedded within and supportive of a broader social context of which therapy, and more specifically Lacanian psychoanalysis, was a central component. On a more theoretical level, the concept of self-mastery within dominant structures resonates with Foucault’s (1984: 43) concept of self-cultivation. He notes that “cultivation of the self can be briefly characterised by the fact that

in this case the art of existence...is dominated by the principle that says one must take care of oneself. It is this principle of the care of the self that establishes its necessity, presides over its development and organises its practice”. In other words, to even consider practicing self-cultivation, there must be some broader societal framework that is compelling us to look after ourselves, and a broader concept of what that might look like in practice.

For example, for Paula, playing the violin was concerned with the formation of the self in a structured, intentional way. Practicing and playing the violin was closely connected with self-improvement, self-discipline, and with working towards an ‘ideal I’, whereby achieving control of breathing before a rehearsal or achieving a full control of the bow by pulling the bow along the string slowly and methodically led to a level of emotional control which extended beyond the specific context of playing. As she said to me once, at a time when her schedule was so busy that she was unable to practice the violin daily, “The ideal for me is to play every day, just a little bit. But right now life is so busy, and even if I only play once a week, it does help me for the rest of the week.” She explicitly contrasted her reasons for playing with playing to improve musical standards. The focus, for her, by contrast, was on physical and mental wellbeing and on living well. As DeNora (2000: 47) states, “music is appropriated by individuals as a resource for the ongoing constitution of themselves and their social psychological, physiological, and emotional states”.

Despite Foucault’s (1984) idea being one of *self*-improvement and *self*-care, “one of the most important aspects of this activity devoted to oneself: it constituted, not an exercise in solitude, but a true social practice” (Foucault 1984: 53). White (2014: 498) elaborates:

Foucault argues that the care of the self is ontologically prior to the concern for others. This does not mean that the self has a higher value than anything else –

including one's family, friends, fellow citizens, or even the state. It simply means that both logically and psychologically, the care of the self is a precondition for the care of other people. Foucault affirms that caring for others follows naturally from caring for oneself because one cares for oneself as a parent, citizen, friend, or member of the human community....and in promoting our own individual virtues we are thereby enhancing our connection to the community and to others.

Similarly, practicing and playing violin, for Paula was an inherently social act. She often organised weekend rehearsals with her daughter, Francesca, and I at her home in Gaiman, both in preparation for upcoming concerts, and in a more informal context. During the rehearsals, we would play various pieces of music including the usual repertoire of the music school string group alongside additional Welsh folk tunes. Paula would play the violin or would sing, Francesca would play the harp or the violin, and I would play the cello. Paula often emphasised her enjoyment of playing music with other people. In the early days of our friendship she alluded towards this implicitly, by regularly complaining that her violin teacher continuously set her scales and technical exercises to practice alone. "Just me, in the house, with my scales," she would state, wrinkling her nose, in a tone of voice that indicated she was half joking, but half not. Towards the end of fieldwork she began to confide in me more explicitly and would often say that playing music was better with company, especially with the company of like-minded people. In one of the final weeks of fieldwork, we were walking on the beach in Playa Union together when she said:

"One of the best things about having you here, is that I have the opportunity to play music with other people...I mean...I do have the chance to play with my professors, but they are so focused on improving my standard...I have to do scales and exercises and it is not always a happy experience, *viste*? So that is why it is so nice to be able to play with someone else who understands that it is about *more* than just being a good violinist....that experience doesn't always happen for me."

What Paula emphasised was that playing music as a form of therapy, when undertaken within a group, was ultimately more effective as an act of self-cultivation in relation to the alternative of playing alone. Martina's mother similarly mentioned to me, during a conversation that we had one evening after our violin lesson, that the group helped, in some way. As we were putting our violins away in their cases, and clearing the chairs, she said, "It is so much *better*, with you three [referring to me and the three other students with whom we attended the class]. When I practice at home on my own...even though I know I need to do it...it is not quite the same." Rooyen and Santos (2020) make a similar argument in their article on community music therapy in South Africa. Drawing on their research in weekly choir sessions held for teenagers in a children's home, they argue that the teenagers, through the intrapersonal experience of singing together, improved their social skills and the quality of their relationships, in addition to demonstrating increased self-esteem and better regulation of their emotions. Ahessy (2016) likewise argues that for the older adults with whom he conducted research, participation in a music therapy choir reduced symptoms of depression, an intervention that was inseparable from the social interaction generated through participation in the choir. Ultimately, these examples demonstrate the intrinsic connection between music, therapy, and social group.

### *Musical values: the ideal 'I'*

However, the musical repertoire chosen by Paula and my other interlocutors' on their journey to self-improvement, happiness, and inner peace was not banal. As Walker and Kavedžija (2016) note in relation to happiness, specifically, "happiness cannot...be separated from the spectrum of cultural values in relation to which it becomes meaningful". The same basic premise is relevant for the other concepts of peace, tranquillity, and self-improvement

that were significant to my interlocutors in the process of combining the “momentary pleasure” or the “enjoyable and positive experiences” of playing music with having a “higher purpose [and] a meaningful life” (Walker 2016: 285). In this respect, the musical repertoire was chosen not only within a specific social context of which middle-class therapy was a central concept, but also in line with a socially constructed hierarchy of societal and musical value.

The question here therefore became: who exactly was this better self that my interlocutors were working towards? In other words, what did the ideal ‘I’ look like in a musical context, and why did it look that way? Graeber (2013: 226) argues that “insofar as value is social, it is always a comparison; value can only be realised in other people’s eyes. Another way to put this is that there must always be an audience” (see also Graeber 2001; Appadurai 1986). Graeber’s (2001, 2013) broader argument is that we must consider human beings as existing in a continuous process of creation, with value being the way in which the project of creation becomes meaningful to the individuals involved. This resonates with the Foucauldian (1984) idea of self-cultivation that I have elaborated. There is no such thing as a ‘better self’ that exists in a social void. We create ourselves, in relation to others, based on an underlying value system. My interlocutors’ manipulation of the powerful effects of music to become what they saw as being ‘better people’ took place in relation to certain values of what being a good person entailed, whether this was to do with gendered ideals (such as being thinner, as in the case of Martina’s mother), being more sociable, being more disciplined, or being more Welsh. Further, there was a clear class component in this kind of self-improvement, not only in that therapy was generally a middle-class pursuit, but also in that being in a position to even conceptualise improving your position or circumstances was itself a privilege.

The concept of the ‘ideal I’, in Welsh Patagonia, was a carefully defined category in a context where my Welsh Patagonian interlocutors were continually performing to a Welsh audience (see Chapter 3 on the tourist gaze of the Welsh other), in addition to viewing their own performances of Welshness in films, where the ideal Welsh ‘I’ was reflected back to them (see Chapter 4 on film as mirror). In these contexts, there was an understanding of the ideal Welshness that needed to be performed and projected to an audience of Welsh visitors, who themselves came to the settler colony with their own values and understandings of what Welsh Patagonia was. Much of what was happening in fieldwork was a project of creation, of community and of self, in relation to an imagining of what Welsh Patagonia was, could, and should be. Underlying this project of creation, therefore, was a subtle hierarchical system whereby Welshness was seen to have higher social and economic value than Argentineness, and more specifically, where Welsh music was seen, by many of my interlocutors, as ‘better than’ Argentinian music.

One conversation with Rosario was particularly illuminating in this respect. Rosario’s involvement with the Welsh community changed during the course of our friendship. When I first met her in 2013, she was working in Ysgol yr Hendre in Trelew as an English teacher. In 2016, Rosario became employed in Ysgol Gymraeg y Gaiman. We were drinking mate in the kitchen one afternoon, when she suddenly looked up and asked me, “Could you help me to write a letter, in Welsh?” She explained that she was paid hourly, without holiday or sick pay. “We are not paid for the hours or preparation or for the hundreds of meetings we have to attend...you know how it is in Argentina.” She explained that a representative of the Welsh teaching project would be visiting the school that week, and that her colleagues had encouraged her to speak up on behalf of them all. I wasn’t surprised that she had been chosen, given her outspoken and fearless nature. She said, “I’m going to ask for holiday pay,

sick leave, and that we stop being treated like illegal workers, and receive the respect we deserve as trained teachers.” I nodded, and asked, “What do you mean?” She elaborated:

“Well, I mean, they must have money, because they are funding teachers from Wales to come and teach. This man is being paid to come to Argentina to observe and the actual teachers who live here earn around 5,000 pesos a month [around £200 at the time of the research] which is nothing if you are trying to pay rent, maintain a family, and keep up with all the economic changes.”

She explained that the Welsh teachers were offered free accommodation in Trelew in addition to being paid to work at the school. Their wages were modest, but due to the lack of rent and the low living costs in Argentina, they had a comfortable quality of life, especially in comparison to many of my interlocutors. Being Welsh, and being in a position to cultivate and perform Welshness, was a privilege. Similar hierarchies were also expressed during a concert that I attended early on in fieldwork. As we were listening to the introduction for the Welsh National Anthem, one of my retired Welsh Patagonian interlocutors – who was a regular attendee of Gaiman Music School mixed choir – leaned towards me, and whispered in my ear, “I think the Welsh National Anthem is just so much better than the Argentinian one, don’t you? It just sounds so much better.” I whispered back, “I think they are both good, why do you say that?” and she responded, “I don’t know, it’s just everything from there [Wales] seems to be better...a better standard.”

Another example of these hierarchies came from the end of July 2015 in Gaiman, three days into fieldwork. I was travelling to the outskirts of Trelew with Paula and Francesca (Paula’s daughter) to spend the day in a wool barn that was in the process of being converted into a concert hall. Francesca, along with some other singers from the valley, had received a prestigious invitation to participate in a concert that evening with a group of young dancers,

singers, and performers who had travelled from Buenos Aires. The concert was a government-funded musical spectacle, and it was intended as a musical and theatrical representation of the founding of the settler colony. Musically, it remixed traditional Argentinian rhythms and lyrics in Castellano with traditional Welsh songs, specifically Calon Lân. In the show, some performers represented the original Welsh settlers and others represented the Indigenous Tehuelche.

Prior to the official show, there was a prelude. We listened to a band of students from La Plata (the capital city of the province of Buenos Aires), who were at a guess in their late teens or early twenties, playing Argentinian folk music with an eclectic mixture of instruments. There was a recorder player, two boys playing mandolins, one playing a hand-held side drum, and finally a boy playing the spoons. Following this two guitarists came onto the stage to play Argentinian zambas. The complex rhythms were unfamiliar to me, and I was amazed at the apparent ease with which they played. Suddenly I heard a voice in my ear. Paula whispered, “This is the music of Argentina – boring.” To end the prelude, a couple danced the tango, accompanied by two singers. I clapped enthusiastically when it was over, all the while aware that Paula, sitting to my left, wasn’t clapping. She smiled sympathetically and said in my ear again, “Oh, Lucy, you are so kind to clap.” She elaborated later, on our way back to Gaiman in the car, “I just prefer Welsh music, personally. I think the standard is better. Wait until you see the children who come from the Urdd to compete in the Eisteddfod – it is not comparable to what we have here!”

What these two examples demonstrated was that Welshness was a privilege, and that Welsh music, for some of my interlocutors, was associated with perfection, structure, and high standards. On the other hand, in contrast to the more formal structures of Welsh music,

Argentinian folk music such as cumbia, tango, chacarera, and zamba were associated with improvisation and playfulness (as elaborated at the beginning of this chapter). Therefore, part of the process of ethical self-cultivation, for these individuals, was twofold: to move away from Argentinian folk music and to play more Welsh music, even whilst the aim of practice was not to improve one's own standard, musically speaking per se.

### *Gaiman Music School: who gets to sing?*

Being in a position to cultivate an ethical self and an 'ideal I' through music was a privileged one, related to a broader issue of accessibility, both accessibility to Welshness, and accessibility to the music school. Foucault (1984a, 1984b) recognised that the project of self-cultivation is not necessarily open to everyone, and neither is it without its constraints. In Welsh Patagonia, the same musical practice that brought people together was open to some and subtly closed to others. Flood (2017) argues that bringing musical skills to a musical fieldwork context can help to facilitate initial immersion (see also Rabinow 1977).<sup>55</sup> She writes:

I had done less than three hours of fieldwork at Roy's Opry when I found myself taking an extended fiddle solo in front of a fifty-person audience. My fingers moved automatically through the melody of a fiddle tune called 'Leather Britches' as I contemplated how my plans had gone awry. On my first trip to Roy's, a weekly country music show in eastern Tennessee, I had intentionally left my fiddle in the trunk of the car...the next week I arrived fiddle in hand and was immediately coaxed on stage (Flood 2017: 486).

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<sup>55</sup> Flood (2018) notes however, that bringing musical skills also created problems for her in that her interlocutors assumed her fluency in the music she wished to research, and thus were not forthcoming with elaborate elaborations about how and why and when. I evaded this issue largely by taking the role of a pupil rather than a teacher in the context of the music school. Although I performed regularly, I rarely performed as a soloist, and I did not create and lead any new groups, choosing instead to join existing musical ensembles in the valley.

My experience of fieldwork was similar in this respect, as within days of my first trip to the field in 2013 I quickly found a role for myself as a cellist and a singer. However, as I noted in the introduction to the thesis, my access to the music school was less to do with my musical abilities and more to do with my status as a young white woman from Wales. To be accepted in the music school, and therefore to have access to the violin lessons of self-cultivation, usually meant to be accepted primarily within the Welsh community. In other words, having the possibility of working towards the ideal ‘I’ required some level of engagement with Welshness to begin with. In 2015, I was immediately welcomed back to the school and invited to sing in both the mixed choir and the girls’ choir, and to play cello in the string ensemble, with the head of the music school, Graciela, saying to me with a smile, “You’ll be one of us by the time you leave.” Later, I was given permission to participate in the violin classes as a pupil despite it being a few months away from the official date of class registration. Other visitors from Wales had a similar level of accessibility, and were regularly invited to join the choirs and music groups in the music school upon their arrival in the valley.

As I began to make friends with other individuals living in Gaiman, I began to realise that my own experience of accessibility was not reflective of their experiences. One example of this came from Manuela. I met Manuela through Rosario; they had met many years previously through their common interest in languages. Manuela lived in Gaiman with her mother, father, and brother. She taught English in Trelew, and she was a kind, clever, articulate, and extremely generous woman. We became good friends during the course of fieldwork, often travelling to Trelew on the bus together to teach English at our respective workplaces, or meeting up at her house at the weekends to watch films and share mate. One afternoon, we were sitting in Rosario’s kitchen, when Rosario mentioned to Manuela that I

was heading to the music school later that afternoon for the string group rehearsal. Manuela pushed her jet-black hair behind her ears and her glasses higher up her nose. She paused briefly, before saying, “I enjoy singing, and I used to go the music school all the time...but then I stopped.” I asked her why, but she didn’t elaborate very much, simply stating that she had not felt comfortable there, and that she preferred to sing at home nowadays. Later, during an interview, she elaborated further:

“Because Gaiman is a small community, they [meaning, the Welsh community] are considered gossips. I think it is an open community principally because as the years have passed the Welsh descendants have created relationships with people from other cultures and places and to do this it has been necessary to be flexible. *I think that many people who visit from other places are able to participate in activities like the Eisteddfod, choir, and music.* At the same time, for a while now it has been considered *bad or strange if someone who did not have a Welsh surname participated in Welsh activities, but I think that this is something that must be modified and adapted to the multicultural nature of the village*” (emphasis mine).

Here, Manuela problematised the notion of accessibility within the music school, pointing out that whilst the community was often open to visitors from other places, internal politics were perhaps more complicated for locals who wish to participate in Welsh musical culture. As White (2014: 499) notes of the concept of self-cultivation, “Foucault is not saying we are free to choose anything we want to do”. What this also exemplifies is the other side of music and belonging – the role of music in establishing communal boundaries. As the relations of belonging are strengthened for those involved, they can be increasingly alienating for those who remain on the outskirts.

### *Conclusions: power, value, and manipulation*

At the end of July 2016, in the end of term concert before the winter holidays, the division between Welsh and Argentinian music that had been brewing over the course of fieldwork in the string group became explicit. Paula played with the group and conducted the Welsh pieces as Juan stood at the side of the room, stepping in to play with the group and to conduct the Argentinian pieces.<sup>56</sup> Paula would always choose Welsh folk music for Gaiman string group to perform, and said that she preferred this type of music to the Argentinian pieces and classical repertoire that Juan would select for the ensemble. She would also often listen to traditional Welsh music at home, and often described Welsh music as being “better” than Argentinian music, distancing herself from the latter. As she once said, “I want to play music that makes me feel good and that makes me happy and that is *a part of who I am*.” Juan, by contrast, focused more on the importance of introducing new rhythmical styles to the pupils, as well as the importance of engaging them in Argentinian folk music in addition to a broader classical repertoire (Beethoven, Bach, Mozart, etc) which he argued were equally, if not more, important for the children to learn in terms of improving their musical standard. Not all my interlocutors subscribed to the value system within which they were embedded.

The previous chapter explored the specific power of music, and the ways in which, during moments of immersion, musical engagement could induce feelings of community and

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<sup>56</sup> Other teachers did combine Argentinian music with Welsh music more seamlessly in their repertoire. Although on one occasion I heard Diego complain about the heavy emphasis on Welsh music in the ensemble, more broadly speaking he seemed to un-problematically reconcile playing Welsh music in the string group ensemble and cumbia with his cumbia band at weekends. Similarly, the guitar teacher and the electronic groups often presented a repertoire in concerts that included a mixture of Welsh and Argentinian folk or pop songs.

belonging. This chapter has explored the ways in which reaching this state of flow and enjoyment was not unproblematic. For my interlocutors, reaching the state of flow by immersing and losing themselves in the music was not always an automatic occurrence. In the case where nerves got the better of a performer, when performers became *too* aware of the audience, or *too* self-conscious, musical subjectivation was not as effective. This is interesting to consider in relation to the centrality of shame to Sartre's (1958) keyhole example. Music performance anxiety has similar qualities to the concept of shame as developed by Sartre (1958) in that it involves conceptualising being seen by another. Consider, for example, the example from earlier in this chapter, when I wrote 'I could feel the eyes of the audience on me'.<sup>57</sup> However, in the context of music, this shame and heightened self-consciousness *interrupted* rather than facilitated interpellation. Further, interpellation was made more complex in that my interlocutors (those who had the means to do so) could also work towards this state of flow. In this respect, this chapter has been underpinned by a similar theoretical concept of music to that of DeNora (2000) whereby it can be seen to be both powerful (acting *on* individuals) and also malleable (whereby individuals can manipulate its powerful qualities).

That individuals sought to manipulate the powerful qualities of music for their own benefit demonstrates the elements of desire and agency that were present in musical subjectivation (see further Butler 1995). Individuals *wanted* to reach the state of flow, they *wanted* music to act on them, and some of my interlocutors also had the capacity to manipulate the power of music for their own self-improvement. Ultimately, Paula's motivation to play was reminiscent of DeNora's (2000) analysis of an aerobics class in

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<sup>57</sup> See page 224, this chapter.

England, in which she argued that the women attending the class used music to manipulate their motivation, ultimately practicing self-improvement techniques via music. She notes:

“Observing them [the women at the aerobics class] over forty-five minutes shows how music is much more than a mere accompaniment to the aerobic movement, how it is constitutive of aerobic agency...music may be understood as having active, structuring properties on and for the body [...] Through the creation and *use* of such technologies actors bodies are enabled and empowered, their capacities are enhanced” (DeNora 2000: 105).

Similarly, for Paula and some of my other interlocutors, playing music was about manipulating the self to ‘feel’ a certain way. In exploring this, the chapter has drawn on Foucault’s (1984a, 1984b) understanding of the ethical subject and the care of the self and Graeber’s (2001, 2013) theory of value to consider the dialogue of power, desire (of the ideal ‘I’), and manipulation that took place when individuals worked to cultivate the musical self in Welsh Patagonia. My interlocutors used music to enable them to feel calmer, happier, and to improve their overall sense of physical and mental wellbeing. Or, as Eleanor said to me gently, later in fieldwork, “Music helps you to live.” What she implied with this statement was that the powerful qualities of music, in terms of improving mood, inducing emotion, or revisiting memories could be helpful during hard times. For her, this was particularly poignant during her treatment for cancer. Engaging in music could therefore also be a means of escapism, whereby my interlocutors could “forget their worries,” as the lyrics to Croeso Patagonia (explored in Chapters 3 and 5) emphasised.

However, critically, this self-improvement took place within broader hierarchies of value. This chapter has further argued that the use of music as a constitutive tool to make my interlocutors “feel good” and “feel happy” took place within a cultural context in which therapy – and specifically Lacanian psychoanalysis – was a central component, and in which

Welsh music was viewed by some of my interlocutors as being better than Argentinian music. The idea of attending therapy was typically a middle-class concept and pursuit in Argentina, which meant that the very concept of ethical self-cultivation was grounded in class structures. Furthermore, musical self-cultivation existed within a particular social context which had its own hierarchies of values and taste. As Bourdieu (1984: 1, emphasis mine) writes, “to the socially recognised hierarchy of the arts, and within each of them, of genres, schools, or periods, *corresponds a social hierarchy of the consumers*. This predisposes taste to function as markers of class”. His argument is that assumptions regarding taste are ultimately grounded in power structures. In the context of Welsh Patagonia, there was a subtle hierarchy of music for some of my interlocutors, and for them, the act of ethical self-cultivation through music corresponded with reaching the state of flow with specific music – in this case, traditional Welsh music, which was viewed as being associated with qualities such as a clear structure and a high standard.

Finally, this chapter has touched upon the implications of the flow ‘not working’ in the context of musical interpellation. The following chapter draws on the Eisteddfod as the culmination of the musical year to explore in more detail the significance of failure, what Keane (1997: 95) refers to as “slippages”, and the flow ‘not working’, arguing that paying attention to these particular moments (in both performance and daily performative acts) has further implications in terms of our understandings of the underlying power dynamics in Welsh Patagonia.

## Chapter 7: ‘Eisteddfodamos’: the Eisteddfod as ritual performance

The relationship between power and collective ideas is riddled with contradictions. The ideas that are most conspicuously present, that are most aggressively pushed, are also the most likely to collapse under their own weight. [...] In other words, the potency of ideology is rooted in its fragility.

(Pelkmans 2017: 170)

### *Introduction: enjoyment and work at the Chubut Eisteddfod*

In August 2015, I arrived at a secondary school in Puerto Madryn which was being used as a site for the small annual ‘Mimosa’ Eisteddfod. I glanced up at the large Welsh and Argentinian flags hanging down over the entrance to the school, and the smaller bunting-style flags lining the walls, and tentatively pushed open the double doors, unsure of what to expect on the other side. I was immediately welcomed enthusiastically in Welsh and Castellano by two women sitting behind a desk at the school reception. “Croeso! *Bienvenidos!*” they announced, almost in unison. They both grinned widely at me as they called me forward to the makeshift ticket office, located in the school reception booth. After purchasing my ticket for the day, I went through into the main hall, where the competitions were already taking place. Rows of plastic chairs faced a stage at the front of the hall, and despite it being early, the room was already busy. I glanced around. Groups of people were sitting on the chairs huddled against the gas heaters at the edge of the hall, sharing mate and snacks, and chatting amongst each other whilst the competitions took place on stage.

The ambience of the room was one of light-hearted fun, with the constant stream of chatter in the background only interrupted by intermittent applause from the audience for the contestants on the stage. I scanned the room, relaxing as I noticed a group of friends whom I

had known since 2013 from Gaiman Music School sitting towards the middle of the room. I waved and Alberto called me over. He welcomed me to the group with a hug and explained the situation to me in Welsh, “We are here to enjoy. Even the competing is all done in good spirits...we don’t mind who wins. It is just fun to have an opportunity to get together, listen to music, and drink mate. We are not strict like the Eisteddfod in Wales...you can see that because everything always runs over and we are late to *everything*. You’ll be the same eventually.” He smiled warmly, and I settled into a chair, accepted the mate from him, and eagerly awaited my first Welsh Patagonian Eisteddfod experience, one which, in many ways, would set the scene for the many other Eisteddfodau that I would attend during fieldwork.

A month later, I was sitting with the other choir participants in the main rehearsal hall in Gaiman Music School waiting for the weekly four-part choir practice to begin. My interlocutors were chatting about how much they were looking forward to the upcoming Chubut Eisteddfod when Maria, the choir director, bounced through the doors. Her curly hair bobbed above her shoulder, and her bright red blouse and booming voice immediately filled the rehearsal room. She had a strong, reassuring presence, and she didn’t miss a beat:

“One month and two days to go! I can’t believe how quickly it has come round again. Can you believe that a year has passed? Hands up if you know the pieces from memory yet? If you don’t...then it’s getting quite urgent so now is the time to begin learning them and to begin learning them quickly! You don’t need to learn the words, but you should at least try to know what you are singing and when you are singing it. What about blouses? Have you all got your blouse ready? Do they still fit you nicely from last year? You all need a blouse, a black one, and a coloured scarf if you are singing in the girls’ choir. People visiting...Rhiannon, Lucy...you can borrow. Black on the bottoms, remember. Who hasn’t got trousers? We can sort that out later...we haven’t time now, we need to start...come and see me at the end of the rehearsal or send a message on WhatsApp. Not to the group, to my private one. For now, the main thing is knowing how the pieces go and especially making sure that you have booked

time off work for the rehearsals and Eisteddfod itself. Right, shall we start with Croeso Patagonia? Oh, and don't forget to have fun!"

\* \* \*

Without a doubt, 'Eisteddfod season' in Welsh Patagonia was the most anticipated and most important time of the year, summarised on the official Chubut Eisteddfod Website as "one of the most relevant and representative events of the cultural tapestry of the country...taking part...creates the possibility of manifesting the values that enrich our lives",<sup>58</sup> and as Eleanor (the director of Gaiman Music School girls' choir) succinctly put it, the "most important event of the year for us in Patagonia" (see further BBC Cymru Fyw 2017; El Chubut 2015a, 2015b, 2016a, 2016b, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c; Jones 2005).<sup>59</sup> The calendar year in the Welsh community revolved around the Chubut Eisteddfod as an ultimate end goal to hours of learning pieces in rehearsals, practicing alone to backing tracks at home, and performing in other smaller concerts throughout the year.

Every year, following a brief post-Eisteddfod respite in rehearsing to recuperate, attention in the music school turned, slowly but surely, to preparation for the next Eisteddfod, interrupted only by the Christmas, summer, and Easter holidays. From around November, new pieces would start to trickle into the rehearsals amidst the usual repertoire. The intensity of rehearsals and the pressure to attend them did increase in the months, weeks, and days leading up to the Eisteddfod and other big concerts. In addition to the usual rehearsals, extra rehearsals were scheduled, often at the weekend or on bank holidays. Whilst there was still no formal register taken, the expectation to attend these critical rehearsals was quietly clear,

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<sup>58</sup> See <http://www.eisteddfodpatagonia.com> (last accessed July 22 2020).

<sup>59</sup> The term Eisteddfodamos was a coined term used by some of my interlocutors in Welsh Patagonia, which takes the '-amos' first person plural (e.g. 'voy' ['I go'] turns to 'vamos' ['we go'] and adds it to Eisteddfod.

with choir participants often leaving work early, taking time off work, and postponing other commitments in the days leading up to the Eisteddfod, as well as during the Eisteddfod itself. Additional singing, reciting, and music groups were also created in anticipation of the Eisteddfod, often appearing as sub-groups of the already existing choirs. We worked hard, and preparation for competing in the Eisteddfod took up most of our free time as the festival approached. In January, following the summer break, the Castellano and Welsh bilingual schools also turned their focus to learning and rehearsing pieces to perform in the Eisteddfod. The importance of the Eisteddfod was often reflected in counting down to the big day, as Maria so often reminded us at the beginning of choir rehearsals, “Three/two/one week[s] until the Eisteddfod!”

The Chubut Eisteddfod was the largest of the Eisteddfodau in Chubut and was held in October. It consisted of a few days of a diverse and carefully planned programme of competitions and performances which ran late into the night. It closed with a large Cymanfa Ganu and a traditional Argentinian asado (for which tickets could be purchased at the Eisteddfod on the final day). Generally speaking, the ceremony of the Gorsedd, which served as the official opening of the Eisteddfod, whilst closely connected to the Eisteddfod, was theoretically a separate institution which – through its members (writers, poets, musicians, and academics, to name but a few) – celebrated and promoted literary scholarship and the creation of poetry and music. In both Wales and Patagonia, the Gorsedd was an important element of the Eisteddfod. In Patagonia, however, the Gorsedd was younger, having been re-established in 2001 following a lull period (Brooks & Lublin 2007). In both Wales and Patagonia, the Gorsedd referred more abstractly to a group of scholars, poets, artists, and musicians who were recognised as members of the Gorsedd due to their contributions to Welsh culture. To become the archdruid (the head of) the Gorsedd you must have won one of

the Eisteddfod's two most important awards – the chair (for poetry), or the crown (for prose).<sup>60</sup> The archdruid was generally elected for a period of a few years. His or her role was to conduct the Gorsedd ceremonies which included opening the Eisteddfod and conducting the ceremonies for the presentation of the chair and crown.<sup>61</sup> In more practical terms, 'Gorsedd' was a term most often used to refer to the opening ceremony of the Eisteddfod. In Patagonia, the Gorsedd ceremony was held in a square in the village, known as the 'Welsh settler's square'. This was considered to be a sacred space in that within the circle of stones that defined the square, only Welsh was to be spoken.

I was in the field for two Eisteddfod seasons, 2015 and 2016. In 2015, I attended the annual 'Mimosa' Eisteddfod which took place over one day in a local school hall in Puerto Madryn, and the Chubut Eisteddfod which took place in an old wool barn that had been converted into a concert hall on the outskirts of Trelew. In 2016, I attended the Youth Eisteddfod which was held in Gaiman gym and the Chubut Eisteddfod which took place in St David's hall in Trelew. My role in the Puerto Madryn Eisteddfod was as a member of the audience, and I participated in the other Eisteddfodau as a singer in choirs and other vocal groups, as a cellist accompanying choirs, and as an audience member. In both the official Gorsedd ceremonies for 2015 and 2016, I participated as a member of Gaiman girls' choir. This chapter draws on data gathered during those Eisteddfodau (during the official Gorsedd ceremonies, the festival itself, the Cymfanaoedd Canu, and the asado that marked the end of the Eisteddfod) as well as from the rehearsals leading up to them, and from conversations

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<sup>60</sup> For more detail on the Gorsedd, please refer to Chapter 3, pp. 136-138.

<sup>61</sup> In Wales in 2001, the archdruid began to be elected by a postal ballot of all Gorsedd members instead of elected by the members of the board of the Gorsedd, described in the *Guardian* (2001: 10) as being a "whiff of democracy ruffl[ing] the ankle-length ceremonial robes of Welsh druids". In Wales, it is possible to apply to become a member of the Gorsedd, whereby examinations are used to determine the suitability of the candidate. In Patagonia, members must be nominated to the Gorsedd after many years of clear commitment to promoting and supporting Welsh language activities and development in the valley, on both a professional and personal level.

with my interlocutors that emerged in their aftermath. Additionally, in January 2018, I conducted archival research into the history of the Eisteddfod at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, reviewing newspapers from 1800 to 2017. Finally, in August 2018, I conducted fieldwork as an audience member at the National Eisteddfod of Wales in Cardiff Bay.

This chapter seeks to understand the importance of the Eisteddfod, as the culmination of the encounters explored in the previous chapters. The Eisteddfod, to an extent, represented the formalisation of the daily performative events and activities, such as singing together, analysed in the previous chapters. It was viewed as the ‘end-goal’ to several rehearsals and smaller events that took place throughout the year. However, it was also the scene of the *creation* of new relations of belonging and power. Covington-Ward (2016: 9) has argued that “performances, like many other forms of embodied movement, can provide a critical site of inquiry for examination of struggles for power and authority in multiple settings”. In this context of heightened emotion, this particular site of encounter between Welsh tourists, local Welsh Patagonians from the Chubut Valley, Welsh Patagonians from Trevelin and Esquel, and local Argentinians was a key space in which multisensory power dynamics were navigated.

Keane (1997: 18) defines a “ritual performance” as a public and formal event which hides its creative potential. In Welsh Patagonia, for example, an event such as the Eisteddfod might appear to enact already existing social relations (between Welsh Patagonians and tourists, or between Welsh Patagonians and local Argentinians), but in reality, it simultaneously creates them. As Covington-Ward (2016: 7) states, one “major characteristic of performance...is its potential to transform social realities”. Beyond a focus on the creative

element of performance, Keane (1997: 95) argues that paying attention to “slippages”, or moments at which the performative fails to function, is key to the understanding of ritual performance. As Pelkmans (2017: 171) similarly argues in the context of state ideology, “things can and do go wrong”. The chapter argues that the context of the Eisteddfod demonstrated that beyond the slippages that occur during ritual performance itself, we should pay attention to what I have termed ‘moments of disgruntlement’. These moments, in which my interlocutors did not enjoy – and complained about – the festival, or in which they expressed doubt about what Pelkmans (2017: 183) refers to as the “ideational power” of the Eisteddfod, occurred largely in moments beyond the ritual performance itself and revealed different power dynamics to those revealed by slippages, in that they were related to the difficulties of organising and financing performance, and the connected issues of inclusion and exclusion.

The chapter begins by providing an historical contextualisation of the Eisteddfod in Wales and Patagonia and a discussion of the present-day institution in both Wales and Patagonia. Following this, it explores Keane’s (1997: 95) concept of “slippages” in relation to the ceremony of the chairing, which was one of the most prestigious ceremonies of the Eisteddfod. The chapter then explores the relationship between enjoyment, flow, and power in the Eisteddfod. It argues that beyond the slippages, attention to the moments in which my interlocutors expressed enjoyment of the Eisteddfod – or conversely, in which they complained about it – which occurred during the festival but also in its leadup and aftermath, were not only key to understanding the multi-layered nature of the power dynamics in this context, but also in moving away from the objectifying nature of visual theories of anthropology toward a more subjective understanding of the relationship between performance and performativity, on the one hand, and towards a better understanding of the

interactions between the themes of flow, enjoyment, power, accessibility, and belonging explored in the previous two chapters, on the other.

### *Contextualising the Eisteddfod: Wales*

What is a Welshman without his Eisteddfod? A poor unhappy mortal, more miserable than an Englishman without his cricket-field or a Scotsman without his haggis. The Welshman, however, takes care that he is not without his Eisteddfod. Go to America, Australia, or wherever he has a footing, and wherever two or three are gathered together there you will find Welshmen competing in song and poetry... You are perhaps a bard – to be a bard is as natural to a Welshman as to be a wrestler is required of a Cumbrian – and you must keep up your annual appearance at the Eisteddfod as a pilgrimage or as a penance, if your conscience will not allow that it is a pleasure. You are a competitor, or you once were, or you are the friend of a competitor, and you must see the thing through. We have now included the whole population of Wales, for if you are neither bard nor competitor, you cannot be a Welshman.

(The Musical Herald, 1990: 296)

It was in Wales that the concept of an Eisteddfod first originated. The first Eisteddfod in Wales was held in 1176, when Lord Rhys invited poets and musicians from all over Wales to a grand gathering at his castle in Cardigan, but the public did not form the role of an audience until 1789 (Parry & Cynan 1956). From the 1800s to 2017, trends and structural changes to the public perception of the institution of the Eisteddfod have been reflected in national British newspapers.<sup>62</sup> From the 1800s to 1900, the press focus was largely on issues of organisation and money (see, for example The Musical World 1869, 1872, 1876; The Magazine of Music 1886). During this time, the Eisteddfod also appears to have been subject to ridicule and criticism in the English press, which reflected the broader power imbalance

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<sup>62</sup> Parry, T & Cynan (1956) and Edwards (2016) both offer a comprehensive overview of the historical trajectory of the Eisteddfod.

between the Welsh and the English (Morgan 1971; Manning 2002, 2004a, 2004b), something which was especially apparent after one Eisteddfod held in London in 1888.<sup>63</sup>

On a Welsh mountain the ceremony of the Gorsedd may be impressive enough, but when a number of gentlemen meet in Hyde Park, address each other as Archdruids, Bards, and Ovates, stand upon stones and perform all manner of ceremonies to the astonishment of a miscellaneous crowd, the line which divides the sublime from the comic is at least within measurable distance. Fortunately the Bards had fine weather for their ceremony, and were not, as in November last, when London was ‘proclaimed’ as the next meeting-place, compelled to go through their ancient rites under the shelter of umbrellas (The Musical World 1888: 629, see also figure 26).

*This image, Figure 26. Proclaiming the National Eisteddfod of 1887 in the Temple Gardens, London (Parry & Cynan 1956: 54) has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.*

In spite of this, as early as 1892, it was recognised that the Eisteddfod “no doubt does an excellent service in keeping alive interest in Welsh music and Welsh poetry” (The Musical Herald 1892: 630). The Eisteddfod continued to flourish; as noted in The Saturday Review (1887: 341), “Our Welsh friends are at it again. They have been exposed to a fair share of ridicule, and as is generally the case, it seems to have done them good. In fact, of the two evils, an excess of ridicule and an excess of flattery, there can be no doubt that ridicule is by far the most favourable to a struggling institution”. During the First and Second World Wars, the Eisteddfod continued running, with music being considered to be indispensable in keeping spirits high. As reported in The Musical Herald (1915: 403), “If anxiety and doubt and fear cast a gloom over the land, let us revive its fainting soul with the harp and with those intellectual distractions which cluster around the Eisteddfod”.

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<sup>63</sup> Interestingly, the Welsh Patagonian Eisteddfod was also ridiculed in the local Chubut press (see figure 27).

From the 1960s the Eisteddfod underwent more changes, with the introduction of rock music and wrestling contests in 1985 contrasting “sharply with the measured solemnity of earlier events” (The Guardian 1985). From the 1990s, news articles have tended to celebrate the diversity of the modernised Eisteddfod and its role in preserving and promoting the Welsh language (The Guardian 2008; BBC Cymru Fyw 2017). Though most of the competitions appear to have remained the same, choral competitions for children and youth choirs became increasingly prominent, as did non-musical competitions, such as theatrical performances.

At the time of the writing, in Wales, the Eisteddfod is a prestigious, annual cultural event, comprised of several different competitions with a specific focus on poetry, literature, and music. There are several Eisteddfodau which occur annually in Wales, including the National Eisteddfod of Wales, which consists of eight days of competitions and performances in Welsh, and which is held in varying locations across Wales. According to the National Eisteddfod of Wales website,<sup>64</sup> approximately 6,000 individuals compete annually in the National Eisteddfod, with the overall attendance of the festival generally exceeding 150,000 visitors. Its overall philosophy remains consistent with Parry and Cynan’s (1956: 39) description of it as being “first and foremost an institution for the safeguarding of the Welsh language and the promotion of Welsh culture”. This Eisteddfod is typically held in the first week of August and alternates in its location between North and South Wales, though in the past it has been held in other locations, including London (The Musical World 1888; see also Figure 26). Since 1952 the competitions have all been held in the Welsh language, and this

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<sup>64</sup> The website is available at <https://eisteddfod.wales/about-us> (last accessed September 18 2020).

element is considered to be vital in the preservation of Welsh language and culture. As

Lublin (2007: 3) elaborates:

This pinnacle of the Welsh-speaking world represents much more than the competitions that provide its structure. Once a year, Welsh native speakers and learners get a chance to immerse themselves in a unique atmosphere, while various institutions, businesses, government and non-governmental organisations set up their stalls around the main pavilion and establish a more direct link with the thousands of visitors that make the Eisteddfod the biggest wandering festival in Europe.

There is also a Youth Eisteddfod ('Eisteddfod yr Urdd') which involves Welsh children from nursery age to 25 years old, and several other smaller-scale local Eisteddfodau which are held throughout Wales, including within primary and secondary schools as part of the regular curriculum. Another important Eisteddfod that is held in Wales is the annual Llangollen International Eisteddfod, which attracts choirs, singing groups, and folk dancers from all over the world. As Parry and Cynan (1956: 37) note of the early Llangollen Eisteddfod, "Important things took place at Llangollen. The most important was the setting up of a committee to plan a really national Eisteddfod". Llangollen was established in 1947 in the aftermath of the Second World War, with the philosophy behind it being to promote world peace by uniting the nations, using what its organisers saw as the unifying force of music to do so. The competitions, at the time of writing, are mostly choral, vocal, dance, and instrumental. With time Llangollen has grown into an eclectic celebration of international musical traditions, with competitions held during the day, and concerts performed during the evening. The key message of global unity and of bringing people together in peace and harmony is still emphasised, and materialises in the mixture of musical traditions. In 2017, for example, there were days devoted to European music, South American music, Asian music, and African music.

In 2018 there was much talk of the changing National Eisteddfod, which was to be held in Cardiff Bay. In August of that year, Cardiff Bay came to life, with stalls selling handmade goods such as clothes and homeware, food stands selling beer and freshly cooked food, stands advertising companies – from the ‘Welsh-Argentinian Society’ stand to the ‘Welsh Society of Place Names’ stand, and several music stages with live musicians performing. The key word of the weekend was “accessible”. Several people explained to me during fieldwork in the Eisteddfod that the most significant change to the Eisteddfod was that entrance was free and that the site was open, in contrast to previous years where the festival had been confined to a fenced field, with charged entry. Or as a friend from Aberystwyth bluntly put it, “There are more people here beyond just the middle-class white Welsh people”. With free entry, free music, free activities for large families and children, access to baby changing rooms, and access to fully equipped disabled toilets with adult changing tables in the Welsh Millennium Centre, the festival was without a doubt more accessible to many people who would otherwise be unable to attend.<sup>65</sup>

### *Contextualising the Eisteddfod: Patagonia*

*This image [Figure 27. Cartoon from a local newspaper: “It is the fourteenth time that they have sung the song of the frog.” “Is there much left until our daughter sings?” “Just two little hours. I love the Eisteddfod!”], has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.*

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<sup>65</sup> It is important to note that following this, in 2019, the Eisteddfod, held in North Wales in Llanrwst, returned to a traditional enclosed site setting, which was also the planned the layout for the 2020 Eisteddfod. The 2020 National Eisteddfod of Wales was scheduled to be held in Tregaron, Mid Wales, but was postponed due to the 2020 Coronavirus pandemic.

In Patagonia, although it is certain that a few Eisteddfodau were held in the early days of the settler colony sometime between 1865 and 1875, it has been difficult to establish an exact date as to when this occurred (Brooks & Lublin 2007). The Eisteddfod did not become an ‘official’ event until 1965, when 73 visitors from Wales, including several government officials, visited Patagonia to celebrate the centenary of the colony, a visit which led to its revitalisation (Brooks & Lublin 2007). Ap Aeron Jones’s (2005: 184) discussion is one of the few academic documentations of the early Patagonian Eisteddfodau (for a more recent analysis, see Brooks & Lublin 2007), and whilst it is a romanticised account, it is worth quoting at length:

In the Chubut Valley the first Eisteddfod took place in 1875, in a small meeting place constructed with the boards salvaged from an old shipwreck that lay on the shore near Rawson. There the group sang, recited, danced and reminisced their *old and beloved country*. During the first years of consolidation of the groups, regardless of the adversity that they had to confront, the settlers celebrated new competitions every year, maintaining the tradition of their ‘Old Wales’. In the nineteen-forties, the Eisteddfod began to include presentations in the Spanish language. The descendants of the first Settlers could no longer maintain a linguistic isolation, not even in the Eisteddfods, even considering that in its prime objectives they wished to uphold Welsh language and traditions. In a short time, the two languages have come to share equally and fuse perfectly.

Brooks & Lublin (2007) agree with this analysis, arguing that during the early years of the settler colony, the Eisteddfod suffered as “a result of such a discouraging political and socio-economic context”. During fieldwork, the Eisteddfod was an official and popular annual event, organised by the Chubut Eisteddfod Association. The employees of the association worked all year round in their offices in the centre of Trelew, and the association defined itself as follows:

The Eisteddfod Association of Chubut is a charity association that has as its main objective to organise the Youth eisteddfod and the Chubut Eisteddfod, complying in this respect with its proposal to strengthen the Welsh language and to enable the arts as a path towards a better world. The organisation commission that is elected is grateful for the invaluable collaboration of the coordinators a group of people who work tirelessly throughout the whole year to create a varied, dynamic, attractive programme of competitions which is of high quality for all the disciplines. The programme of competitions is prepared a year in advance. Both events are financed with donations from public and private entities, as well as by the collaboration of individuals, families, selling of tickets and programmes.<sup>66</sup>

The Association organised two large Eisteddfodau during the year, the Eisteddfod de la Juventud ('Youth Eisteddfod') and the Eisteddfod del Chubut ('The Chubut Eisteddfod'). The competitions for both these Eisteddfodau were held in a mixture of Castellano and Welsh. The Eisteddfodau were attended by many individuals from Chubut, but Eisteddfod season was also a peak time for tourism in Chubut. Many individuals and groups would travel from the Welsh speaking communities of Trevelin and Esquel in the Andes to attend the Eisteddfod, and it also attracted Welsh tourists visiting from Wales (see further Chapter 3). Busloads of tourists on all-inclusive package holidays from Wales would arrive annually to witness the display of the cultural tapestry – the seamless mixture of Argentinian and Welsh culture. A group of around 25 young people were also selected annually by the Urdd organisation in Wales to visit Chubut, following a rigorous application process in which they were required to demonstrate the ways in which they could contribute during their time in the valley (such as through singing, conducting, instrumental performances, or by providing accompaniment on the piano or harp). Their visit would coincide with the Eisteddfod and they would take part in a variety of competitions over the course of the festival, often winning several first-place prizes.

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<sup>66</sup> See <http://www.eisteddfodpatagonia.com/institucional/> (last accessed on August 28 2019); see also Appendix B for original text in Castellano.

Admittedly, in terms of attracting an audience from Wales, the seemingly effortless mixture of tango and Welsh traditional dancing, the natural switching between Castellano and Welsh to introduce choirs, singers, and instrumental performances to the stage, the Welsh Patagonian choirs singing in Welsh, and the chair and crown being presented to the best Welsh poem and prose in Argentina was a surreal and spellbinding experience, especially for first-time visitors and viewers. Even towards the end of fieldwork, I found the combination of tango and traditional Welsh music, and of highly formalised Welsh competitions – like the presentation of the chair and the crown – with the performance of a zamba, fascinating to watch. These elements were crucial in attracting tourists. As one couple from North Wales told me during the Eisteddfod, they had “always wanted to visit Patagonia”, had “always dreamt of visiting Patagonia”, and had decided that this year would be the best year to make the journey, with October being a logical choice of month on the basis that, “If we are to visit, we couldn’t miss the Eisteddfod!” Tour companies often took advantage of the ‘magical’ and ‘surreal’ elements of the Eisteddfod in their marketing strategies. Teithiau Tango, for example, described the Chubut Eisteddfod tour in a way that resonated with the comments of tourists visiting the Eisteddfod:

Travel to Welsh Patagonia next autumn and enjoy warm days, a welcoming Welsh heritage and something every Welsh person will recognise – an Eisteddfod! Hosted in the city of Trelew, this is an Eisteddfod with a Latin twist and is *something that has to be seen to be believed* (emphasis mine).<sup>67</sup>

For many Welsh tourists visiting Welsh Patagonia, the Welsh Patagonian Eisteddfod was their first experience of the mixture of Argentine and Welsh culture. Further,

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<sup>67</sup> See <https://teithiautango.co.uk/tour/eisteddfod-y-wladfa/> (last accessed July 23 2020).

analogously to viewers in Wales watching the films of Welsh Patagonia (see Chapter 4), the snapshot of what they saw in the Eisteddfod also became their own representation of Welsh Patagonia. The experience of the Eisteddfod therefore influenced their own perceptions of what Patagonia was, the image that they took back to their friends, families, colleagues, and neighbours in Wales, and their expectations of later trips which were inspired by these images. Whilst there were several structural elements of the Welsh and Patagonian Eisteddfod that could be noted as being similar, such as the structure of competitions, the presence of the Gorsedd ceremonies, and the ceremonies of the chairing and the crown, the Welsh Patagonian Eisteddfod had developed and evolved into its own unique institution. In this respect, many of my interlocutors from Wales commented on the ways in which the Eisteddfodau of Patagonia and Wales were similar but simultaneously radically different. They pointed especially to the visual differences (such as the presence of Argentinian flags and traditional Argentinian dancing costumes), the linguistic and musical differences (namely the mixture of Castellano and Welsh and the mixture of Argentinian folk music with traditional Welsh music), and the different ambience (in Welsh Patagonia, despite being a highly regarded event, and despite some competitions being highly structured, the Eisteddfod was generally a relaxed and informal occasion). Contrastingly, in Wales, the Eisteddfod pavilion where the competitions took place was generally a silent and serious environment. As Ap Aeron Jones (2005: 185-186, emphasis mine) notes:

Today, the Eisteddfod is one of the typical festivals of the Chubut Province that became part of us through the immigrants from Wales. It congregates around the arts all that nurture in their lives the sense of freedom, solidarity, and respect for peaceful and convivial living. *Every contest constitutes, not a battle for a prize, but an opportunity to learn and enjoy the sharing of an enriching experience. The participation in these competitions is open to every person and group that seeks it, for no one is specifically invited to participate, but all are welcome.* The organising committee does not pursue financial gain and the festivals are financed by public and

private donations, and the fees from ticket sales...Those that participate in the celebration grasp the possibility of manifesting the values that ennoble and dignify our lives. It further contributes to promote mutual understanding and international Peace through the *universal language of music, poetry, and dance. As recognised, this minimises the differences between Nations and unites thousands of hearts in a joyful harmony.*

In this passage, Ap Aeron Jones (2005) emphasises many of the key themes that were apparent during the choir and music rehearsals that took place in the settler colony, such as the focus on feelings of solidarity and the engaging experience that stemmed from performing – or listening to – music together. However, whilst the emphasis in the musical pieces performed and rehearsed by my interlocutors during choir rehearsals was on creating *localised* feelings of belonging within the context of the rehearsal room, Ap Aeron Jones (2005: 186) suggests here that the role of the Eisteddfod was much larger than that, in its ability to generate international peace and minimise international cultural differences in a “joyful harmony”.

In practice, as the remainder of this chapter will demonstrate, similarly to the choir rehearsals, there were two sides to this joyful harmony. In that the festival itself represented the much anticipated culmination of months of hard work and preparation, it was a key context in which emotions were heightened, whether these were emotions of enjoyment and happiness, as Ap Aeron Jones (2005) suggests, or other emotions stemming from complex issues of conflict and power dynamics between my interlocutors. Further, in that the Eisteddfod season was one of the busiest times of the year in terms of tourism, it was also a key context in which many of the encounters explored in previous chapters were publicly formalised, staged, performed, and watched by onlookers. Ultimately, the Eisteddfod was a

key site of performative encounter for Welsh tourists and Welsh Patagonians, and a key site in which power dynamics were performed, created, and navigated.



Figure 28. Traditional Argentinian dancing at the Chubut Eisteddfod, October 2015



Figure 29. Ticket and Programme for the Puerto Madryn ‘Mimosa’ Eisteddfod, August 1 2015

*“Is there peace?”: Success and potential slippages in the ceremony of the chairing*

Keane (1997) argues, in *Signs of Recognition*, that a ritual performance is one which has within it an element of creation, whereby it presents relations as already existing whilst simultaenously having a performative effect. Ritual performance, for Keane (1997: 18) is “fraught with both logical dilemmas and practical hazards, and it cannot be understood by looking at its efficacy and successes alone”. In this respect, he calls for a focus on the “potentials for performative infelicities and material misfortunes” (Keane 1997: 18), arguing that attention to when things go wrong and to the moments in which the performative fails to function as intended are equally critical to analysis as a typically successful performance.

Whilst Keane (1997) makes this point with regard to ritual performance in particular, this has been a broader concern in the anthropological literature. Askew (2002) notes that in the context of nationalism, there has been too much focus on the effectiveness of state construction, arguing that alternatively, we should shift our focus to consider moments at which the state does not come into being. She argues that “however unified a nation may appear...it is always and necessarily...a work in progress” (Askew 2002: 26). Pelkmans (2017) makes a similar point in relation to state ideology, arguing that a focus on failure is important in and of itself (rather than only focusing on failure in relation to success), given its common occurrence. He further argues that “the ideas that are most conspicuously present, that are most aggressively pushed, are also the most likely to collapse under their own weight” (Pelkmans 2017: 170). Zigon (2007) draws on his fieldwork in Moscow to make a similar argument with regards to moral breakdown. He argues that the move to study morality as a set of shared values reflects more closely an anthropological reflection of morality, in that morality in context is something that is “normally unquestioned...and simply done” (Zigon 2007: 137; see further Zigon 2017). Contrastingly, by refocusing on moments of moral breakdown, these being those moments of ethical dilemmas when our interlocutors “need to consciously consider or reason about what one must do” (Zigon 2007: 133), we can begin to understand better the significance of ethics and morality to our interlocutors.

In the previous two chapters, I made a related argument with regards to musical flow, arguing that a focus on the moments in which musical flow did not work, such as in moments of musical performance anxiety, was important in terms of understanding the dynamics of structure and agency in musical interpellation, with breakdown of flow – to borrow Zigon’s (2007) term – demonstrating that musical interpellation was not automatic. In the context of musical flow, some of my interlocutors were able to manipulate its powers, and work towards

the optimal flow and an ideal ‘I’ as a form of musical therapy. However, as Pelkmans (2017: 179) notes, “while the discrepancy between the ideal and the real keeps people motivated, the optimal distance between desire and fulfilment is rarely maintained for a long time”. His argument is more broadly relevant – in the Welsh Patagonian musical context, being able to work towards the ideal ‘I’ (which was connected to the value of Welshness) was a privileged position to be in, and therefore the gap was only bridgeable for a few of my interlocutors.

In the context of the Welsh Patagonian Eisteddfod, Brooks and Lublin (2007) have argued that the Eisteddfod represents a reinvention of tradition, in the Hobsbawmian (1983) sense. They argue that the reinvention occurred in response to what was perceived as being a crisis within the local community (that being, the attempt of the Argentine state to ‘Argentinise’ the Welsh culture). It was as a response to this that the Eisteddfod rose “up from the ashes” and experienced a revitalisation within its new Patagonian context (Brooks & Lublin 2007: 5). Their account focuses largely on the *success* of the reestablishment of the Eisteddfod, on the ways in which it was “enjoyed by growing audiences composed of both Welsh and non-Welsh descendants”, and the ways in which it has contributed to the preservation of language and Welsh culture (Brooks & Lublin 2007: 10). However, during the ceremony of the chairing in the Chubut Eisteddfod, what became clear was that the *potentiality* of what Keane (1997: 95) refers to as “slippages” were just as potent, and just as revealing of power dynamics, as their actual materialisation.

The ceremony of the chairing was, at the time of fieldwork, perceived (in both Welsh Patagonia and Wales) to be one of the most – if not *the* most – important and prestigious ceremonies of the Eisteddfod. In the ceremony, a poet was awarded a large and uniquely handmade wooden chair, for the best poem written in Welsh in traditional form along a pre-

decided theme. Winning the chair would bring with it a great amount of status within the Welsh Patagonian community, as the poems were judged by established poets from both Patagonia and Wales. During the ceremony, the winner would remain anonymous, referred to only by his or her chosen pseudonym, which would be called for the poet to take his or her place on the stage. A trumpet would sound, and to the third sounding of a trumpet, the poet would be asked to stand, with some selected members of the Gorsedd solemnly walking down the aisle to ‘collect’ the poet and bring him or her to his chair. Then, a series of celebrations would begin, including traditional Welsh dancing, a speech by the head of the Gorsedd (who would also read out the winning poem), the presentation of other gifts (such as flowers) to the winner, and a greeting read out to the poet, usually by a young child who was a member of the group of traditional Welsh dancers.

In the Chubut Eisteddfod in October 2015, the wool barn on the outskirts of Trelew was full for the ceremony. I had been invited to play cello alongside Paula on violin, Alberto on piano, and Sofia (Alberto’s wife) on flute. Aside from the presence of us four musicians at the edge of the stage, and the empty Eisteddfod chair, which was lit by a spotlight, the stage was completely bare. We played a solemn introduction in a canon style (with melodies overlapping), each of us taking turns with the main melody, as the members of the Gorsedd dressed in their blue cloaks, and the children dressed in their dancing outfits, walked to the stage from the back of the hall. The audience perched forward on their chairs in anticipation. The atmosphere had changed from one of informal fun to one of tense excitement. Once everyone had reached the stage, they stood still and looked straight ahead. The ceremony began with a short introductory song, which was typically sung at the beginning of the ceremony. The male soloist’s words were echoed by the members of the Gorsedd and the others on stage. Following this, Ana, the head of the Gorsedd, gave an introductory speech,

welcoming everyone to the ceremony, before an academic from Cardiff University read out the judgement of the poetry, and the winning poet, seated in the audience, was asked to stand to the third sounding of a trumpet, which played a simple, piercing melody.

With the first and second sounding of the trumpet, the anticipation built, and the crowd stretched their necks and looked around to see if anyone was standing up. Finally, at the third sound of the trumpet, the poet stood, and the crowd burst into applause, cheering loudly. A spotlight moved across the crowd to find the poet, which added to the dramatic effect of the trumpet and cheering. Once the poet had been located with the spotlight, he was followed by it as he moved from his seat to the aisle where he waited, smiling nervously. Finally, he was greeted by two children and Awel, a longstanding member of the Gorsedd, who walked slowly to him from the stage. They draped a white shawl across his shoulders and walked in front of him, leading him to the stage. As they passed the crowds, the audience stood up to show their respect for him. His eyes glistened and he held his head high as he made his way up the steps to the stage. Before being invited to sit on the chair, a member of the Gorsedd raised a sword in a case above the poet's head, and as he pulled the sword out marginally, he asked, "Is there peace?" to which the audience responded, "Peace." This was repeated three times. At each response, the "enormous sword" would be pushed with certainty back into the case, never fully revealed (Brooks & Lublin 2007: 7). The whole scenario was striking, with the encounter between the Gorsedd member, the sword, and the audience being particularly compelling. The procedures of the ceremony remained similar to those conveyed by Parry and Cynan (1956: 44, emphasis mine):

Following the chanting of the opening prayer, the Archdruid opens the Gorsedd Session by partially withdrawing the Grand Sword from its sheath thrice with the challenge – "Is it Peace?" The Bards thrice respond with the cry – "Peace." *A similar*

*ceremony is observed at the Closing of the Gorsedd and at the Crowning and Chairing of the Bard on the National Eisteddfod Stage.*

The Grand Sword of the Gorsedd is indeed a Sword of Peace. It is never fully withdrawn from its sheath in any bardic ceremony. It must always be carried by the point and must never be held, borne or bared against any human being. This testifies that the Bards of the Isle of Britain are men of peace and bear no naked weapon against anyone.

The choice of the sword as an object of peace was striking in that it was a contradiction of the violence that would usually be associated with that object. By partially revealing the sword, the tension was made more powerful and the potential violence was made explicit in that the possibility of fully revealing the sword was always underlying. Alongside the Sword of Peace, there were two other critical elements to the ritual – the sounding of the trumpet in an eerily tense and silent Eisteddfod hall and the singing of the Song of the Chairing, which had a similar question and answer structure to the partial revealing of the sword, with the soloist (one of the male members of Gaiman Music School choir) singing the verse and the audience joining in with the chorus:

Greetings to the chief bard on his success,  
Shout his name to the four winds!  
He is the king of the bards at the festival,  
Blow the horns to the four corners of the world!  
Greetings chief bard,  
The Sword has been unsheathed,  
The Eisteddfod shouted, Peace!

CHORUS: Greetings chief bard,  
The Sword has been unsheathed,  
The Eisteddfod shouted, Peace!

The sound of the trumpet – a clear, loud sound – cut through the chattering of the audience with its simple melody. Its repetition created an air of tension in the Eisteddfod Hall, causing members of the audience to look around to see if anyone had stood up. The winning poet already knew what he or she had to do – rise to standing on the third sounding of the trumpet. This physical act of standing to the sound brought him or her into being as the poet of the Eisteddfod, an identification that was affirmed in the singing of the Song of the Chairing that followed, which performatively named the poet as the “chief Bard”. The audience singing the chorus also had a powerful effect, with the roaring sound of an entire hall of people singing in unison invoking a particular sense of solidarity and unity, much like the feeling of the *Cymanfaeodd Ganu*, but in this context marking a unanimous agreement with the chairing of the poet. In addition to creating the poet, song and sound here had a similar role to formal speech as defined by Keane (1997: 115), who argues that “ritual speech...embodies an unchanging ancestral heritage that transcends the here and now. But if living people are to benefit from this heritage...they must speak”. In the context of the Eisteddfod, the sound of the trumpet and the singing of the song consolidated the history, heritage, and critically, the *authority* of the Welsh (in making the decisions about the chief poet) whilst also bringing this to the present, through the use of present-tense language – “is there peace?”

This performative encounter resonates – to an extent – with Althusser’s (1971) concept of interpellation. Here, much like Althusser’s (1971) individual on the street, the poet was hailed by the trumpet, causing a relatively immediate bodily reaction in recognition of subjectivation (in this case, standing up). For Althusser (1971), subjectivation requires repetition, and in this context, the songs that followed the hailing by the trumpet served to confirm and consolidate the poet’s subjectivity in addition to representing a particular

heritage. However, the poet was smiling (albeit nervously). He had entered the competition knowingly, with the desire for this outcome – he wanted to become the poet of the Eisteddfod. Furthermore, this subjectivation was not a subjectivation to a subordinate position. Rather, it reflected more closely the complex combination of desire and mastery that Butler (1995) elaborates. In this context, by allowing himself to be hailed by the trumpet and the audience the poet was, in some ways, submitting to the structure of the Eisteddfod and the authority of the Welsh. However, this ultimately led the poet to a position of mastery in that he was hailed as the most powerful and prestigious of all.

Given that the ceremony was highly formal – strikingly so in the Argentinian context – there was always scope for things to go wrong and for the performative to fail in some way, and in the 2018 National Eisteddfod of Wales which was held in Cardiff Bay, the underlying potential for what Keane (1997: 95) refers to as “slippages” was made explicit. The winning poet was standing in front of the Eisteddfod chair, waiting for the sword to be partially unsheathed, and for the questioning and answering to begin, knowing that the audience must say “peace” for the third time before he could be seated on his chair. Two members of the Gorsedd stepped forward until they were positioned behind the winner, and they slowly and carefully lifted up the large sword that they were holding between them above the poet’s head. The hall was silent, until the solemnity of the situation was interrupted by the head of the Gorsedd who was leading the ceremony. Addressing the winning poet, he joked, “Move forward a little bit there...just in case...be careful that this rugby player doesn’t get your head...because the pseudonym was a football player, no?” The audience clapped and the sound of laughter broke through an otherwise tense moment, revealing the specificity of that ceremony and the creative potential and flexibility of ritual.

However, this joke also revealed the potentiality of slippage in the ceremony. As Parry and Cynan (1956: 44) have argued, the ritual speech in this context in combination with the unsheathing of the sword was a symbol and a means of testifying “that the Bards of the Isle of Britain are men of peace and bear no naked weapon against anyone”. The symbolism of peace here was reminiscent of other encounters explored in previous chapters of the thesis, such as the representation of the encounter between the Welsh and the Tehuelche in media, academia, and literature, the ways in which Welsh Patagonia was depicted in film, and the ways in which the encounters were portrayed in songs in the colony emphasising the “brothers of Wales and the colony uniting in song”. Consider, for example, the story of the *Malacara*, with its image of the Welshman retreating (peacefully) back to the settler colony in the valley of Chubut after his two companions were killed by Indigenous people on their search for more fertile land in the Andes, the representations in the popular narrative of Welsh Patagonia of the Welsh settlers living peacefully alongside the Indigenous Tehuelche with whom they shared the land, or the image of a harmonious and homogenous Welsh Patagonia portrayed in the film *Galesa*.

The potentiality of slippages in a highly formalised, multisensory ritual like the Eisteddfod, considered within the context of the imagery and symbolism underlying the ritual, risked revealing the other side of belonging and the power relations that were always underlying in the settler colony. Here, there was always the possibility of the poet not standing to the sound of the trumpet, of the audience not singing back to the soloist singing the Song of the Chairing, of the Gorsedd members dropping the sword, or of the audience not answering “peace” to the question of “is there peace?” Dropping the sword, of course, would be the biggest slippage of all in a context where the Sword of Peace “must never be held, borne, or bared against any human being” (Parry & Cynan 1956: 144). All of these risks had

high stakes in Welsh Patagonia where performing a certain kind of peaceful, harmonious encounter was critical to the construction, consolidation, and maintenance of Welsh Patagonia as a tangible place (see especially chapters 2 and 3).

*“Someone needs to get rid of that awful dog”: Actual slippages in the 2016 Gorsedd*

The potential for ‘slippages’ did sometimes become a reality. It was a bright and warm morning in late October 2016. The Gorsedd ceremony to mark the official beginning of the Eisteddfod and to welcome new members to the Gorsedd was due to begin at 9:30. Capel Bethel was about a ten minute walk from the stone circle in the Welsh settlers’ square, where I was waiting with Gaiman girls’ choir for the beginning of the ceremony. The members of the Gorsedd had met an hour or so earlier at Capel Bethel in order to form a procession. Wearing their blue and white robes, they walked slowly and purposefully to the stone circle, alongside three horses ridden by male farmers from Gaiman (who were also carrying the flags of Wales and Argentina), and accompanied by a group of young dancers from Gaiman Music School who would perform traditional Welsh dancing after the new members had been accepted to the Gorsedd.

As the procession entered the stone circle through the official concrete pathway, each group solemnly took their relevant positions. The dancers lined the pathway: the girls stood on one side wearing white dresses, ties around their waists, and each holding a small bunch of wildflowers, and the boys faced them from the other side, wearing white shirts, black trousers tucked into long white socks, and black shoes. The farmers and their horses were stoic and poised. They trotted gently around the outer circle before coming to a stop at the

edge of the ceremony. They were striking in their traditional ‘gaucho’ clothing, and wore cowboy hats, checked shirts, and thick woollen shawls wrapped around their shoulders. Their Welsh and Argentinian flags moved lightly – but poignantly – in the breeze.

We stood in the Welsh settlers’ square, and listened to the familiar call of the trumpet which indicated for the Gorsedd members to take their seats. Ana walked up the two steps to stand on the rock, but the trumpet call was followed by an uncomfortably long period of silence. The microphone was broken. Ana, however, was unaware of the technical issue, and continued her speech despite her words being lost to her audience. Many members of the choir became distracted, and I could see audience members shaking their heads and talking amongst themselves. The situation was exacerbated by the entrance of a stray dog to the stone circle, sniffing curiously at the steps of the large rock before making its way around to visit the choir and audience members, oblivious to the formality of the event. Finally, the microphones were changed and the speeches continued, but the stray dog remained. Alberto rolled his eyes, laughed, and talked over Ana, “Every year something goes wrong. My favourite event of the year is the Gorsedd. It is so funny. I could write a book about it.” Paula, to my right, leaned over and said, “Someone needs to get rid of that awful dog”.

Analogously to the ways in which the critical musical moments in which my interlocutors and I had our flow interrupted revealed the dynamics of structure and agency and the musical value system, slippages – potential and real – were often revealing of underlying power dynamics and dependencies within the community. In this particular case, the slippages and their revelations were twofold. Firstly, the broken microphone, and the distracted chatter that followed among the audience as the head of the Gorsedd failed to capture their attention, was an apt reminder of the centrality of not only formal speech to

ritual performance, as Keane (1997) would have it, but of the tools and technology required to disseminate it. Although Ana continued speaking, her words were ultimately lost, and the sound of the audience became louder than her singular voice, reminding us of the fragility and dependency of creating a unified collective (see further Pelkmans 2017).

Secondly, the stone circle was seen to be a sacred space, in which only Welsh should be spoken. Paula's comment was a pertinent reminder of the exclusive component of the ceremony. In previous chapters, I discussed the choir rehearsals, arguing that despite the overall focus on enjoyment, harmony, and belonging, the choir rehearsals and the music school were not accessible to all. Similarly, I argued that in the context of musical flow, though my interlocutors could work towards reaching this optimal musical state, or use the power of music to manipulate themselves, as a form of self-improvement, to have the access to the means by which to improve the self was itself a privileged position to be in.

In the context of the Gorsedd, the subtle complexities of the ceremony were similar. The Gorsedd appeared to be an inclusive space. This was symbolised, visually, by the presence of the Argentinian and Welsh flags, and by the presence of tourists from Wales, Trevelin, and Esquel. Sonically, it was symbolised in the singing of both the Welsh and Argentinian National Anthems, and in the song sung by the girls' choir (which was also the song with which the thesis opened and one which we regularly rehearsed with the girls' choir). The lyrics depicted the unity of Wales and Patagonia – “your house and dignified chapels provide shelter just like in the land of song”, but also suggested an image of peace through the use of words such as “soothing”, “sweet”, “love”, imagery which became more explicit in the final line – “All day and night I think that peace is with you, my sweet colony”. Ultimately, in this context, the unwelcome presence of the stray dog cut through the

messages of unity, belonging, and harmony, as a clear reminder that there were limitations to who could enter, who could belong, and who could speak, within the stone circle.

*“Relaxing into the music”: enjoyment, flow, and subjectivation*

Whilst Keane (1997) focuses on slippages in ritual performance in particular, in the Welsh Patagonian context, the disjuncture between the smooth running, enjoyment, and getting into the ‘flow’ of the Eisteddfod, and the potential (and real) slippages often expressed itself in a broader sense, as moments of enjoyment or moments of disgruntlement, moments which extended *beyond* the specific ritual performances. As elaborated in the ethnographic vignette with which this chapter opened, the relaxed and informal ambience of the Eisteddfodau in Welsh Patagonia was one of its defining factors. Competition was not the key focus. As one instrumental soloist said to me, “Of course I like to win...it feels good to win, just like when you win with the choir you feel good, you get a trophy and it feels like the hard work is all worth it...but that is not the main point. There are no bad feelings, we greet each other afterwards and we always leave as friends.” Key to creating this ambience were the same elements of fun, enjoyment, and belonging that permeated choir rehearsals (and Argentinian social life more broadly).

Enjoyment in the context of rehearsals and the Eisteddfod was not viewed as being the antithesis to hard work, but was rather seen as an integral component and a central motivating factor. As Alberto said to me one day, shrugging his shoulders and pulling a face, “If it wasn’t fun, then can you imagine attending hours and hours of choir rehearsals!” My interlocutors who were tourists from Wales variously called this enjoyment “getting into it” or “getting involved”, something which was mirrored in my Welsh Patagonian interlocutors’

discussions of “relaxing into the music”. Ultimately, analogously to the ways in which reaching the state of flow was key to full engagement with a musical piece, enjoyment was an intrinsic – if not vital – component to the success of the Eisteddfod. Both these states generated feelings of immersion, belonging, inclusion, and connection.

One afternoon, Rosario and I were sharing mate in her kitchen when she pointed to a similar connection. Rosario looked directly at me, took a long sip of the mate that we were sharing, and tapped the end of her cigarette out of the window before explaining her recent enjoyment of the event:

“A few years ago, even though I taught English at Ysgol yr Hendre, I never really went to the Eisteddfod, but I really enjoyed it this year. Since having a baby and working in the nursery especially this year, things have changed. I see every day the hard work that the staff and pupils put into preparing for the Eisteddfod. They work at it all year, but make sure that it is fun for the kids too, viste? Benji [Rosario’s son] is a part of it and I can see now how important it is for him to feel like he belongs by participating in the rehearsals and the final Eisteddfod. I mean, you can look around Gaiman and see...you know...the road signs in Welsh, and you can attend some Welsh events, but it is really the Eisteddfod that is the most important. That is the one time a year where you can really see the mixture of Welsh and Argentinian.”

Her eyes were wide as she spoke of her newfound enthusiasm for the Eisteddfod, and as she explained precisely why she had so enjoyed the Eisteddfod which she had attended the previous weekend. She said, “It can teach my son a lot...how to work hard towards a goal, at the same time it is good for his mind and brain, as well as giving him a sense of belonging in our culture in Chubut.” Whilst her comments were surprising on the one hand in the sense that they signalled a radical shift in her own participation in the Eisteddfod – and more broadly in terms of her relationship with Welshness – on the other hand they also reflected broader themes that were prevalent amongst my interlocutors, such as the powerful capacity

of music to act on individuals, in doing so generating feelings of belonging, alongside the agency in the manipulation of this power for my interlocutors' "minds" and "brains".

Rosario points here to the relationship between work and enjoyment at the Eisteddfod. As she emphasised, when we watched the choirs and individuals performing in the Eisteddfod, we were also imagining and remembering the hours of preparation, rehearsal, and the series of smaller performances or concerts that were behind the final performance. Gell (1998: 7) in *Art and Agency*, argues that a central component of the power and agency of art is that "art objects are the equivalent of persons, or more precisely, social agents". Part of our feeling of awe is attributable to conceptualising the human agency behind it – the hours of work, the skill, the preparation, and the concentration that become embodied in a work of art. Similarly, behind any polished performance are hours of classes, training, rehearsing, and perfecting, even whilst the goal is to conceal these hours for the audience (see also Keane 1997). Furthermore, what Rosario drew out as being specifically Welsh Patagonian in this process of work, was that the hard work consistently took place within the philosophy of enjoyment underlying choir rehearsals and performances. Maria explained the rationale behind this in a conversation that we had one evening following the Chubut Eisteddfod in 2016:

"If we start preparing early and slowly, then in the long run it works better. We have usually performed the Eisteddfod pieces in other, smaller concerts throughout the year, which provides great opportunities to practice. It takes the pressure off, choir can continue to be fun and more like a social event than hard work. By the time the Eisteddfod comes around, we can work harder but it is less pressure than it would be if we sang other songs then suddenly started the preparation for the Eisteddfod. We already know all the songs without trying, and we have already had very good concerts with them."

Paula nodded in agreement, saying, “It’s much better, we can just dip into our choir folders that we keep in our brains and sing...that helps us to relax and enjoy the concert more.” The feeling of enjoyment that was so encouraged during choir rehearsals was also present during the Eisteddfod. Just a couple of days after the Gorsedd in 2015, we were in the converted wool barn on the outskirts of Trelew waiting for the Welsh traditional dancing competitions to begin. The Eisteddfod was running late, night had fallen, and the building – made of tin – was getting bitterly cold. However, with several more competitions to get through, there was a while yet before the day would draw to a close. Alberto, dressed in black dancing shoes, long white socks, balloon style shorts, and a white shirt was gearing himself up to perform in the traditional Welsh dancing competition with his wife and the other dancers. Nearing his 50s, he did not exactly fit the part amongst the other younger dancers, and he knew it. “Try a bit of this,” he said to me with a wink, handing me a large thermos flask. I took a swig and was surprised at the strength of the whiskey. He roared with laughter at my reaction, and his friends joined in. “This is what you need to be able to Eisteddfod with energy until three in the morning. How do you think I dance so well? Do you want more? You’ll be dancing next!” I laughed. Judging by the ratio of whiskey to mixer, he was probably right.

Around fifteen minutes later, the introductory music began to play for the traditional Welsh dancing competitions. I watched from the back of the room, holding the flask containing the remainder of the whiskey. As the men and women walked in pairs up to the stage, the music increased in volume and their walk developed into a skip before the dancing began. The long skirts of the women blew out as they moved, their heeled shoes tapped and clicked on the floor, and the audience clapped and cheered as the pairs of dancers gracefully swirled around one another. I shook my head to myself as I saw Alberto, grinning widely as

he whirled around the other dancers. The music, which played from large speakers, moved quickly, without pausing, but the rhythms were steady, with string instruments, recorders, and an accordion playing in cheerful unison. Those on stage were clearly enjoying themselves, and the audience were clapping to the beat. As they finished performing, the dancers stood in a row, held hands, and bowed together.

Music and sound had a specific role in generating the enjoyment of the Eisteddfod. Similarly to the choir rehearsals explored in previous chapters, much of the music that was performed in the Eisteddfod was pleasing to the ear – it had a harmonious and feel-good nature. This was especially so in the case of the music performed by the choirs, with many of the songs performed being pieces that we had rehearsed throughout the year, such as *Croeso Patagonia* and *Cân y Wladfa*. These were songs that emphasised, both through their lyrics and through their upbeat nature, the positive influence that music had in terms of bringing people together. These ideas were reflected in the Eisteddfod. When I asked Rosario how she had found that she had been able to enjoy the Eisteddfod this year in particular (in contrast to the previous years), she elaborated, “I found that what I needed to do was relax into the situation, listen to the music, relax into the music. Once I did that, then I found that I could enjoy it so much more and then I felt better. Before, I was too tense and stressed...too self-conscious and worried about what people thought about me being there.”

In Rosario’s view, through this process of “relaxing into the music”, she had found a deeper sense of belonging in the Eisteddfod. Reaching a state of flow, enjoyment, and full engagement was a state in which, at its height, enabled feelings of belonging in the Eisteddfod, but as the case of Rosario demonstrated, this is not to say that my interlocutors were passive in their subjectivation. Contrastingly, as in the case of musical flow, the element

of *desiring* identification was central here (Butler 1995). In the context of the Eisteddfod, my interlocutors wanted to belong, and they worked hard to move past other feelings (such as feeling “tense” or “stressed”) to reach the feeling of enjoyment. Ultimately, analogously to the ways in which my interlocutors could manipulate the powerful qualities of music for music therapy, or could work towards achieving this flow in the context of music rehearsals, in the Eisteddfod too, “relaxing into the music” was one way in which they could work towards subjectivation, identification, and feelings of belonging.

### *Moments of disgruntlement: the politics of inclusion and space at the Chubut Eisteddfod*

Rosario’s experience highlighted the transformative and creative potential of the experience of the Eisteddfod, in terms of bringing people together. Key to this were the feelings of enjoyment and fun that the atmosphere of the Eisteddfod – in its informality and through its uplifting music – generated for its participants. However, it was also a context that exacerbated and created internal community politics and was seen by some to be a source of pressure and stress rather than enjoyment. Several moments during fieldwork did not fit clearly into Keane’s (1997) category of slippages, but rather were ‘moments of disgruntlement’ that referred to other kinds of tensions stemming from, for example, the financial implications of hosting visitors, or from the politics of converting a large wool barn. Whilst Keane (1997: 17) does argue for a focus on both ritual performance and its relationship to what he calls the “mundane activities”, his argument is that the focus on tensions, hazards, risks, and slippages in the ritual performance will ultimately reveal tensions that can be explored further in more mundane contexts. Constrastingly, in the context of Welsh Patagonia, the moments of failure and conflict that occurred beyond the

Eisteddfod were significant in the sense that they made explicit *new* tensions and power dynamics.

Just as Rosario was telling me about her renewed interest and feeling of belonging in the Eisteddfod, there was a knock on the front door, and it was Bauti, Rosario's good friend. He worked in Trelew for a textiles company as a clothing designer, and I often saw him on the bus to and fro from Trelew. He was tall, thin, and outspoken, with a diamond ring in his ear, and more often than not, a cigarette in his hand. I had briefly seen him at the Eisteddfod on the previous Saturday and I asked him whether he had enjoyed it. He laughed, and said, "No." Expertly, he flicked a cigarette out of a box and tucked it behind his ear. With a shrug and a grin, he elaborated on what he saw as being the problematic elements of the Eisteddfod, connecting them more broadly to the community dynamics:

"Instead of trying so hard to make it like Wales, we should accept that we are in Argentina and take the idea of the festival but have it adapt to the cultural context. If they were to include more types of arts...photography, dress-making, and cooking instead of only having limited competitions in which people who can speak Welsh can participate, then the Eisteddfod could grow, and it would maybe have a good influence on the relationships in Gaiman more broadly as well."

Whilst Bauti highlighted was that despite the focus on overall enjoyment, power dynamics were made visible through moments in which my interlocutors could not enjoy the music or the performances. In this quotation, Bauti suggests that the Eisteddfod was an exclusive space, and points to a direct link between the improved accessibility of the competitions and the relationships that could be formed in the village on that basis. These issues of inclusion, exclusion, and social relationships were particularly relevant in 2015, with the increased media presence and the consistent tourist gaze from Wales co-existing

with what was perceived as the potential for an elevation of status for some individuals. Such elevation of status could occur by being recognised by wealthy or significant visitors from Wales, a recognition which could lead to personal and career opportunities in Wales and Chubut. These opportunities involved appearing on the television, being asked to contribute articles or resources, being invited to stay with families in Wales, or being recognised as one of the ‘key hosts’ in Gaiman.

However, these opportunities were not necessarily readily available to those who were ‘the most active’ in the Welsh community, but rather tended to be dominated by individuals who were extroverted and sociable. A few days after the youth Eisteddfod in 2015, one of my Welsh Patagonian interlocutors explained the situation to me. Despite being one of the most diligent participants of the choir rehearsals and other Welsh activities, and despite speaking Welsh at home with her daughter, she felt that she remained on the outskirts during the 2015 celebrations. She explained, “I think this is a particularly bad year, because there is an opportunity for *certain people* in the Welsh community to be put on a pedestal, and to have their names in the lights and walk on the red carpets. It depends on if you’re confident or not. I was supposed to do a *certain role* in the youth Eisteddfod, but then *she* took over, like the queen of the area. How is it that I am lesser than them? [...] I really didn’t enjoy this year.”

Alongside the subtle competition for limelight and status, the increase in visitors also brought with it a necessity to host them. Whilst the influx of tourists was broadly described in positive terms, it had other effects beyond increasing competition between individuals within the community, including inducing a feeling of pressure to conform to the expected standard and to perform a particular type of Welsh Patagonia – the type that the tourists were

visiting for. As Elena (the ‘Queen of Gaiman’) said, “It is difficult, because every year, we know that beyond the audience of people from Chubut, there are people from Wales...important people. That brings its own challenges, and sometimes adds...you know...stress because we want to be good hosts to them and for them to have a good experience here.” She further explained that she herself felt personal pressure to ‘be a good host’, despite being in her 80s and being too tired to engage in all the activities (such as showing tourists around the village). During one choir rehearsal in the weeks before the arrival of a large group of visitors from Wales, Maria, the choir director, was visibly concerned that a group arriving from Wales wanted an asado. “An asado? They never said how many people they wanted for an asado. Will it be eighty?” The choir members tutted and laughed – it went without saying that it would be next to impossible for them to cater for eighty people. Later, in the car home with the head of the music school, who lived in the same neighbourhood as me, she explained the general anxiety around the visit:

“It is not a problem with the visitors, per se. The problem is that the province has made it appear like we have lots of money, like we can afford to invite people and pay for them, but we can’t. We are the third world, we haven’t got that kind of money. There is this idea that people in Wales are so organised. When we go to Wales, we think, wow, this is a country that works. But now nothing has been organised, so it’s a mess.”

Similar feelings were also clear in the conversion of a large wool barn on the outskirts of Trelew in 2015 (the space that was used later that year to host the Eisteddfod). The wool barn had been converted in anticipation of the celebrations in 2015 marking 150 years since the establishment of the settler colony, and more specifically it had been turned into a concert hall for the visit of a large orchestra from Wales earlier that year. The building was huge. It had the capacity to hold 1,500 people seated and 5,000 people standing, and was fitted with

toilets, air conditioning, and heating. Rumours quickly began to circulate in the village that the orchestra had made it a condition of their visit to have a concert space large enough to host a symphonic orchestra. My local Argentinian interlocutors told me that the local government in Chubut had obliged, and had justified funding the conversion of the wool barn on the basis that the hall would be used for many other concerts within the community. Many of my interlocutors felt angry about the conversion of the wool barn, as they saw it as an example of both the irresponsible spending of government money in a context where there was visible poverty, and of the privileging of the Welsh community. In a phone conversation with one of my local Argentinian interlocutors who lived in Trelew, two years after fieldwork ended, I asked her what had come of the wool barn, and she said:

“That barn...you wouldn’t believe it...they used for one book fair...you know the one usually in Trelew. Nobody went because nobody could reach it and now it’s just standing there empty...! And at the same time there are children going without food in the other *barríos*...I told you didn’t I...how it would turn out. It was to make an impression, I think...to the visitors. More or less we set fire to the money because we never use [the barn].”

In the field, when I asked my interlocutors what they thought about the wool barn conversion, I was often met with shrugged shoulders, or once, a blunt response, “There is no space to host a symphonic orchestra in Chubut because there *isn’t* a symphonic orchestra in Chubut.” Given that even the largest of concerts could easily be accommodated in the local gymnasium, it was very rare for the province to require such a large space. Further, the space, though large, was cold, especially at night, as it was made of tin, and it was also not accessible by foot from Trelew. Ironically, then, despite the additional space, the new space was not as inclusive as previous sites. With time, it became clear that the barn conversion had been a misplaced project. During my time in the field, I saw the barn being used three times,

for a musical show in July 2015, for the Chubut Eisteddfod in October 2015, and for the orchestra who performed in Trelew in late October 2015. In the run-up to the 2015 Eisteddfod, many of my interlocutors, especially those in charge of organising the Eisteddfod became concerned about filling the hall, and much of the discussion became centered around whether or not it would be possible to attract a large enough audience, or whether it would look empty in comparison to the tightly packed hall that the festival was usually held in, and the possible implications of either outcome for the popularity, future, and funding of the Chubut Eisteddfod. As Andrea (the headteacher of the Welsh medium nursery school in Gaiman, who was also heavily involved in organising and planning the annual Eisteddfod) told me, in the days leading up to the Eisteddfod, “I want to feel excited, but I can’t...not yet. Now, I have a funny feeling in my throat and tummy...my doctor tells me it is stress. When I know we have an audience and everything is ok...then I will relax and enjoy.”

Following the Eisteddfod, many of my interlocutors who said that they had “enjoyed” the Eisteddfod followed their comment up with a remark that they felt as though they “belonged” or that they felt a sense of “community”. One couple who were visiting from Wales said to me, “We were talking last night, in our hotel, about how *weird* it is, that we have only been here for three days, but we already feel like we belong!” Allowing themselves to relax in the environment, and to get into the flow of the Eisteddfod was, for many of my interlocutors, not difficult to do. The general anticipation of the event generated an air of excitement, there was the consistent sound of chatter and laughter in the hall, and much of the music performed, with its upbeat nature, lifted the mood of the crowd. However, as emphasised in the examples above, being in the flow of the Eisteddfod was a privileged position to be in. Not all of my interlocutors found that this engagement and enjoyment came so easily, and consequently they did not feel the same sense of identification and belonging.

Bauti felt alienated, for example, by what he perceived as being the lack of opportunities for local Argentinians to participate. Some of my other local Argentinian interlocutors thought that the conversion of the wool barn was a waste of money, and were ultimately unable to identify positively with the project. Rosario, contrastingly, ‘changed her mind’ (critically, she also had the option of doing that, given her Welsh descent) and *allowed* herself to get into the flow of the Eisteddfod for the benefit of her son’s future – she knew that enjoyment and what she called “relaxing into it” were key to the feeling of belonging within the community.

### *Conclusions: slippages and moments of disgruntlement*

As a hugely anticipated event, and the culmination of the musical year in the Chubut Province, the Eisteddfod embodied many of the key themes which emerged from the encounters explored in previous chapters, such as the philosophy of enjoyment and informality which permeated choir rehearsals, the connected ideas of belonging and solidarity, and the creation and performance of identity. To an extent, the Eisteddfod was the multisensory formalisation of many of the previous encounters, but it was also its own scene of creation. The atmosphere, upbeat music, and focus on harmony created relations of belonging. The previous chapters argued that the mechanisms of subjectivation through sight and sound had a subtle difference. Subjectivation through sight required a level of recognition whereas subjectivation through sound worked best when my interlocutors reached the optimum level of flow, a state which is characterised by immersion and reduced self-awareness. Much like the idea of musical flow explored in the previous chapters, when my interlocutors “relaxed into the music” in the context of the Eisteddfod, or in other words, when they allowed the performance to mobilise them, the interpellation of this ideology of belonging, peace, and inclusion was at its most effective.

Contrastingly, however, this chapter has largely focused on moments of failure. In doing so, it has analysed potential and real slippages in the ceremony of the chairing, which was a highly ritualised and formalised performance. The potential for slippages in this ceremony reflected real issues, and arguably underlying fears. The ceremony of the chairing, and the sword in particular, was representative of peace, an image that was more broadly key to the continuation of Welsh Patagonia. The Welsh Patagonian audience knew that dropping the sword in the ceremony of the chairing could not happen. The stakes were too high – it would damage the image of peace and in doing so potentially reveal the violence underlying the construction of Welsh Patagonia. In other words, it was a threat to the process of creating the relations of harmony and belonging that were so central to the Eisteddfod. In everyday life, this potential of risk or slippage was clear in the refusal to speak about the Indigenous Tehuelche. Potential slippages could also become real slippages, as in the case of the Gorsedd of 2016.

In exploring the concepts of failure and slippage, this chapter addresses one of the key criticisms of Althusser's (1971) model of interpellation, which is that his account does not allow for failure. In his analysis, there is no hesitation, no doubt, and no question that the individual being interpellated will *not* turn around. For Althusser (1971), this is not necessarily about *desire* to turn around, but rather it is more to do with our unfailing compliance with ideological apparatuses that shape who we are as subjects. Similarly, Sartre's (1958) model of subjectivation, whilst it acknowledges the individual feelings in the interaction (such as the element of shame), also assumes a level of compliance on behalf of the subject looking through the keyhole – that he or she *will* turn around, and *will* feel shame. Contrastingly, in the Welsh Patagonian context, there were concrete moments in which the

performative did not work as intended, and even in contexts where the slippages did not necessarily materialise, the potentiality for failure was always implicit. Furthermore, when the performative *did* work, it was not as simple as an act of submission to dominant structures. In the case of the chairing of the poet, for example, subjectivation was desired and not entirely concerned with subordination in that being hailed as the chief Bard was to become a highly respected and – in many ways – powerful subject.

Ultimately, integrating the concept of flow and enjoyment – or lack thereof – into the analysis of ritual performance has two key outcomes. Firstly, it enables us to develop a theoretical understanding of what ‘moments of disgruntlement’ might mean in terms of power dynamics. In this respect, the chapter has moved beyond Keane (1997) who focuses on slippages in the specific context of ritual performance, to argue for a focus on the subjective disjuncture between the moments of enjoyment or flow and the ‘moments of disgruntlement’ that my interlocutors expressed. In this context, this focus revealed *new* tensions and discussions specifically related to the financing and organising the Eisteddfod – tensions that would not have been revealed through a focus on the slippages that occurred in the ritual performance alone. This has further implications for our analysis of performance and performativity. Working towards an analysis which takes into account not only the concept of ritual performance being performative, as Keane (1997) does, but rather which takes practical account of both performance (for example, the Eisteddfod) and performativity (for example, the rehearsals leading up to it, and the aftermath) can reveal new power dynamics that are not visible when looking at slippages in the actual performance alone.

Secondly, and related to the first outcome, the concept of slippages also begs the question – who chooses what a slippage is? Whilst we are analysing ritual performance, how

are we to know whether our own definitions of slippages are relevant to our interlocutors and fully reflect their concerns? This is a pertinent question both in terms of locating slippages, and in terms of analysing them. The term – to an extent – implies an outsider looking in, defining what he or she views as errors, which arguably cannot work in a context where there can be disjuncture between what an audience member and performer might view as a slippage. On the one hand, consider, for example, the case of the Croeso Patagonia song (analysed in Chapter 3). The piece was without accompaniment, and Maria, the choir director, told us that it would *not be obvious* to the audience if during the piece, our intonation rose or dropped by half a tone. Subjective experiences of minor musical performance anxiety, if well managed, are also not always visible to the audience. On the other hand, a highly musically skilled audience member might notice a more-or-less irrelevant slippage in a piece of music that the performers were unaware of.

However, this is not to suggest that the concept of slippages is invaluable. Alternatively, as this chapter has demonstrated, a consideration of points of potential and real slippage can be useful in that they are revealing of certain subtle contradictions and tensions within the ritual performance. However, this chapter has argued that these should be considered in combination with the expressions of enjoyment and moments of disgruntlement expressed to us by our interlocutors, which may occur long before the ritual performance begins or long after it is over, and which may reveal new tensions. The contradiction between slippages and ‘moments of disgruntlement’ ultimately reflects the broader argument of the thesis, which represents a move from the objectifying acts of looking, watching, or gazing towards listening, hearing, and engaging. Ultimately, in the context of the Welsh Patagonian Eisteddfod, the attention to slippages, flow, enjoyment, and moments of disgruntlement highlighted the contradictions between agency and control, between order and risks of

failure, between objectivity and subjectivity, and between belonging and exclusivity embedded within the festival.

## **Chapter 8:** *Conclusions: performing Welshness in the Chubut Province*

Perfect, the purple horizon,  
May's horizon at the seaside.  
Sail the ship like air and wine  
on the colours of the West,  
And from the whispering of the water,  
the challenging voice of the pioneers.

The Mimosa, through the course of months,  
Sailing to an adventure on what grounds.  
Her shells challenge the wide seas,  
That were given to colour a vivid dream.  
Aim from the loveless mist  
Sail to a country away.

There, somewhere, beyond the horizon,  
There were snowy mountains a prize for the brave.  
A secrecy that gave courage to the heart,  
A strong will, a word: '*Afallon.*'  
Love far and wide from the fields,  
There came pure joy and full crops.

(‘Patagonia’ from the CD *Y Gorwel Porffor*: music and lyrics by Gwenan Gibbard)

### *Singing to the sweet colony*

‘Patagonia’ was one of the songs performed by Gwenan Gibbard as part of her concert in October 2016 in Capel Bethel to launch her new Patagonia-inspired CD *Y Gorwel Porffor* (‘The Purple Horizon’). It was a bright evening in spring and the chapel was full. The evening light was glinting through the glass-stained windows, a welcome change from the dark winter nights. I had attended the concert with Paula. The audience members were all huddled closely together on the wooden benches facing the stage, and the familiar sound of chattering and laughter quickly turned to silence as Gwenan pulled the harp towards her, adjusted the pedals and lifted her arms, poised and ready to begin playing. The silent anticipation as we waited for Gwenan to play the first note was striking, and even unusual. She sang and played simultaneously with an ease that made the complex tones and rhythms of the traditional Welsh Cerdd Dant appear effortless to her. Her fingers flew across the strings of the harp, landing in the perfect position each time, and her feet moved naturally on the pedals to change the key for each piece. I was sitting near to the front of the stage, transfixed by the clarity, sweetness, and tonality of Gwenan’s voice combined with the dulcet tones of the harp.

Listening to her singing, I was transported back to several moments during fieldwork. The music reminded me of the joy of watching my interlocutors dance enthusiastically in their Welsh traditional outfits, and of the happy moments of rehearsing, performing, and competing with Gaiman mixed choir, Gaiman girls' choir, or Gaiman string group. The imagery of "sailing to an adventure" and of arrival was reminiscent of the regular – almost daily – arrival of tourists from Wales to the Chubut Valley and visitors to the museum who had been sold – and were being performed – exactly that image, a once-in-a-lifetime "adventure", by both the tourist companies, the other tourists, and the Welsh Patagonian community. Their "prize for the brave" was their sheer astonishment at being seven thousand miles from home but still hearing the Welsh language. The tinkling sound of the harp reminded me of the sound of the lapping waves as I spent an afternoon on Puerto Madryn beach with Amy, a tourist from Wales who had visited for a few days. I remembered the feeling of a real sense of community and belonging whilst singing *Cân y Wladfa* and really *meaning* the words that we were singing with Gaiman mixed choir – "I sing to you my sweet colony, I will always greet you this way...I love you like another country of my heart" as tourists from Wales filmed, clapped, and cried. I remembered the feeling of surprise at the goosebumps on my arms as we sang in that rehearsal and in other concerts, reflecting the development of the understanding that I too was being interpellated by the music – *we all were*. Fieldwork was soon coming to an end, and I felt suddenly nostalgic as I thought about laughing and talking with friends as we shared mate and put the world to right at their kitchen tables or sitting by the river. As she finished performing, the audience erupted into enthusiastic applause which only lasted for a few seconds before everyone rose to stand – a standing ovation. Elena, who was sitting to the left of me, leaned over and said, "I really felt as though I was at Madryn, then."

The lyrics of the song, and the memories that they invoked, reflected closely the romanticised image of Patagonia that was so prominent throughout fieldwork, and the image that has been explored through the various media of interpellation and the encounters presented in the thesis. The romanticised image of Patagonia as a faraway, magical land that circulated in the media, literature, and some academic work was what attracted so many tourists to Patagonia, and it was simultaneously the image that was so often performed to the tourists by the Welsh Patagonians before, during, and after their visit. It was also, however, a political image that was critical in maintaining a narrative of the establishment of Welsh Patagonia, in which the heroic Welsh settlers arrived at an empty land “beyond the horizon” and with courage and perseverance built a life for themselves. Ynys Afallon (‘Afallon Island’) referred to in these song lyrics is significant in this respect, as it is a mythical island that features in Arthurian Welsh legends. It is a magical island often described as being the land of eternal youth, fertility, and feasting. Drawing on the mythical island of Ynys Afallon in the song has two outcomes. Firstly, and perhaps the most explicit or intentional outcome, is the comparison of Patagonia with Ynys Afallon in terms of both being places full of promises. In this sense, Ynys Afallon and its associated imagery is similar to the change that the Welsh settlers sought, away from the influence and oppression of the English. Welsh Patagonia, for those 153 settlers on board the *Mimosa*, was concerned with building a better future, where their language and culture could thrive. Secondly, a more subtle interpretation of the reference to Ynys Afallon here is in terms of both Ynys Afallon and Patagonia being constructed places – Ynys Afallon quite literally so, in that it is a mythical place, but Welsh Patagonia too in that, as Ortner (2005: 41) puts it, “actors are always at least partially ‘knowing subjects’ ...they have some degree of reflexivity about themselves and their desires”. In other words, there was a reflexive awareness on behalf of my interlocutors of the

performed image that was so attractive to tourists being exactly that – an image or a performance.

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### *Multisensory subjectivation*

The thesis has argued that in Welsh Patagonia, subjectivity was constituted through engaging in concrete, performative encounters with others. It has argued that the subjectivation that occurred in these encounters was a two-way, multisensory process, and that coming into being through the gaze and through sound co-existed, but that the processes were subtly different. Althusser (1971), Sartre (1958), Lacan (1966), and Foucault (1991) each in their own ways developed theories of subjectivation which each centred on looking or gazing and which each had an element of recognition as central (even whilst in some cases this recognition was implicit) to their argument. In Welsh Patagonia, key to the heightened performance under the gaze of tourists, was the recognition that they were being watched, and more specifically, a recognition of the type of performance that was expected of them. In choir rehearsals that were held in the presence of tourists, for example, the performance of Welshness appeared more engaged, more enthusiastic, and the choir appeared united. Further, in the anticipatory rehearsals that were held in the weeks prior to the arrival of visitors, my interlocutors reflected on the kind of image they needed to portray to fit with the expectations of Welsh tourists. Likewise, in the context of watching their own performances as Welsh during film nights organised in the settler colony, my interlocutors recognised their own performances of ‘ideal Welshness’ on the screen, and later reflected on the relationship between the images and the reality. Finally, when my interlocutors imagined the potential

tourist gaze at a distance, for example, when they considered what potential tourists in Wales would think of their images and videos posted on social media, this demonstrated a recognition of the imagined gaze, even if they were unsure when exactly – or if at all – they would be met by it (Foucault 1991).

However, Welshness in Welsh Patagonia was also about music, with the Welsh choirs, the *Cymanfaoedd Canu*, and the annual *Eisteddfod* all being central to the performance of Welshness. The thesis has argued that in contrast to subjectivation mediated through the gaze which required an element of recognition, subjectivation through music worked best when my interlocutors were able to reach a state of flow, that being a state of complete immersion in, and engagement with, the music. Whilst this state was viewed as the optimal state for a musical performance, it was not automatic, and neither was it accessible to everyone. At the moment of recognition or heightened self-awareness, such as might occur during moments of performance anxiety or in moments when my interlocutors were unable to engage or enjoy themselves, it was difficult to reach the state of flow, and the music lost some of its creative power. This is quite different, then, to an individual who is not yet a subject whilst he or she is absorbed in an activity, and who becomes a subject at the moment of recognition or heightened self-awareness (Sartre 1958). In a manner comparable to Butler's (1995) argument that in every act of subjectivation there is an element of desire, this state of flow was seen as being something to work towards. However, working towards the flow and ultimately manipulating the power of the flow through a self-induced musical therapy was a privilege, as it was embedded within a middle-class culture of which therapy was a central component. The thesis has further argued that an analytical focus on these specific moments in which flow was not successful, in which my interlocutors expressed their disgruntlement or lack of enjoyment, and in which interpellation did not work, had

implications for considering the broader power dynamics within which the community was embedded. In making this argument, my intention here has, of course, not been to suggest that sound and the gaze did not co-exist as media of interpellation. As evident in the context of the Eisteddfod, which was a large multisensory ritual performance, the two formed a consistent dialogue. Further, the encounters through the gaze and sound presented in the thesis have demonstrated how, in other ways, the two can have similar outcomes. In this case, subjectivation through sight and sound both shared the construction and maintenance of a coherent, harmonious image of Welsh Patagonia.

In making this argument, the thesis makes two distinctive contributions to the theoretical work on encounters, performance, performativity, subjectivation, and sound. Firstly, the thesis has moved beyond the allegories and metaphors of encounters developed by thinkers like Lacan (1966), Sartre (1958), Foucault (1991), and Althusser (1971) to consider the specificity of concrete encounters in the field, such as those which occurred between Welsh tourists and Welsh Patagonians, between Welsh Patagonians and their own image on screen, between music and the community, and between music and the self. The key contribution in this area has been to push forward the idea of performative encounters, which not only enables a consideration of the importance of specific, concrete others in performativity and performance (considered here as two interrelated concepts), but which also makes room in the concept of encounters to consider their creative potential in terms of subjectivation of self and community as well as the power relations in which they are inevitably embedded.

Secondly, the thesis has contributed to theories of subjectivity and subjectivation to consider its multisensory dimension, through an ethnographic focus on how sound, and

specifically in this case, music, can play a key role in subjectivation. An elaboration of the subtle differences between subjectivation through sight and through sound has implications for our understanding of the subject, demonstrating the influence that our anthropological frameworks (and more specifically, whether they are based on visual or sonic bias) can have on our fundamental understanding of the human condition. The key question here is, if subjectivation through music occurs in the moment of engagement and flow, what does this mean for Althusser's (1971) 'discrete' subject, for whom he argued that recognition was key to subjectivation? Sound as a medium is more fluid and vaguer than the more objectifying and assertive mediums of gazing or looking. We hear sound, but it also acts on the body in ways that do not necessarily require recognition, making it difficult to ascertain how exactly it entered. Consider, for example, the moment of realisation that you are humming along to the radio whilst driving, tapping your foot to music as you sit in a café, or the moment that a song – perhaps one that you only fleetingly heard – becomes 'stuck in your head' days, weeks, or even months after you heard it. This image of the subject being interpellated by music suggests one that is porous, flexible, and open to change, an image which reflects the dynamic Welshness of Welsh Patagonia. In other words, a focus on the role of sound in subject formation suggests a subject that is more permeable and more porous than the subject objectified by the gaze.

This analysis may, at first sight, be reminiscent of the debate between the *dividual* and the *individual* in anthropology. This distinction was initially developed by Strathern (1988), who argued that the concept of the individual as being a separate entity is a particularly Western concept which was not consistent with the Melanesian people with whom she worked, who rather saw themselves as *dividuals*, that is, as persons made up of social relationships (see further Bird-David 1999). It may also be reminiscent of Taylor's (2007)

distinction that he developed in *A Secular Age* between what he called ‘porous’ and ‘buffered’ selves, which has been directly compared with Strathern’s (1988) distinction (see Smith 2012). Taylor (2007) argued that for the porous self, there exist few boundaries between the self and other, meaning that the porous self is enchanted – in other words, open to cosmic, religious, and spiritual forces that shape him or her. The buffered self, by contrast, is disenchanted – here we have a bounded and modern individual who has a clear distinction between the self and other. This dichotomy, for Taylor (2007), maps onto a distinction between ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’, with the process of change from one to another being a process of disenchantment. However, the Welsh Patagonian context challenges these distinctions in that subjectivation through sound and sight – though the specific means by which they occur differed – co-existed and interplayed, demonstrating that subjects are both bounded and porous simultaneously, with each element being more or less prominent at different times, ultimately suggesting that the elements of porosity, boundaries, malleability, agency, and desire all intermingle, with this complexity being fundamental to performative encounters.

### *“Of course I feel Welsh”*

Several years before this project came into existence, one of my aims with this work was to de-romanticise the image of Patagonia with which I opened the conclusion – the image of joy, harmony, and adventure that had become so prevalent in popular media and the press. However, this aim was based on my own bias, however subtle, that cultural performance was not ‘real’, or grounded in a presumption, as it has been argued in much of the literature on the anthropology of tourism, that the performative daily activities and larger performances must be connected to some other underlying reason. It would have been too simplistic to argue that Welsh Patagonia is not the ‘little Wales beyond Wales’ or the ‘small

slice of Wales in South America' that has been depicted in the popular imagination. As has been demonstrated throughout the thesis, for my interlocutors, an awareness of the element of performance of this image was not in conflict with their feelings of belonging. As Paula simply stated, "Of course I feel Welsh." Ultimately, the thesis has outlined the ways in which performing Welshness was multifaceted and flexible, the ways in which a place can be both romanticised and political at the same time, the ways in which people can feel emotions of belonging whilst also being acutely aware of, and able to reflect on, the power dynamics at play, the ways in which performance can be both real and staged, the ways in which individuals taking part in performances can be aware of that duality without impacting their feelings of belonging, and the ways in which individuals can be brought into being in relation to power structures whilst also exercising their own will and even manipulating these power structures for their own advantage.

By way of conclusion, let us return to the original ethnographic puzzle posed in the introduction to the thesis – what does it mean to be Welsh in the Chubut Province? Being Welsh, feeling Welsh, speaking Welsh, and *performing* Welshness in the settler colony in the Chubut Province meant different things to different people, and changed and fluctuated over time. Whilst this meaning changed and fluctuated, however, what remained consistent was that Welshness in the Chubut Province was continuously created, reproduced, and maintained through a series of performative and multisensory encounters that created self and community, in doing so challenging the reliance on visual tropes that has dominated theories of subjectivation, whilst also creating and consolidating the harmonious narrative of Welsh Patagonia. These performative encounters – in their successes and failures – generated feelings of belonging and community, moments of flow and enjoyment, moments of disgruntlement, and moments of reflexivity for my interlocutors, in addition to revealing

underlying power dynamics and value systems. In the midst of this complexity, there was no discrepancy between feeling Welsh, performing Welshness, and being aware of the performance. Ultimately, then, in exploring these different dimensions of being Welsh in the Chubut Province, the thesis contributes to enriching our understanding of how exactly this Welshness came about, what it looked like, what it actually *felt* like for the individuals involved, how it changed over time, and how agency and subjectivation were navigated, accepted, manipulated, and challenged throughout these multisensory processes.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A**

#### **Full statement from Wales's First Minister after his visit to Patagonia in 2015:**

“I visited Argentina from 26 – 29 July to participate in some of the of 150th anniversary celebrations of the arrival of Welsh settlers in Patagonia. Some events were hosted by the Government of Chubut and others were hosted by the local Welsh communities.

My official programme started-off with a bi-lateral meeting with the Governor of Chubut, Martin Buzzi during which we discussed the long-standing relationship between Wales and Chubut and how the Welsh community is valued by the Government in the Province. The meeting was followed by a signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Chubut and the Welsh National Orchestra which will be performing several concerts and delivering community work-shops in Patagonia later in the year.

The Government of Chubut delivered a wonderful concert which was a perfect tribute to the establishment of the Welsh colony 150 years ago.

The influence of the Welsh could be seen everywhere I visited in Rawson, Trelew, Gaiman, Esquel and Trevelin and the early Welsh settlers have left a long-standing legacy that has enabled the Welsh communities to live on and flourish. I visited four schools, three of which were bilingual Welsh Spanish schools, three museums and a historical farm (for which an entire town turned out in welcome). I laid a wreath at the tomb of Lewis Jones (founder of Trelew) and was treated to a Welsh Tea at Seion Chapel in Bryn Gwyn. I also attended the re-enactment of the original landing at Puerto Madryn, concerts in Trelew and Gaiman and spent two hours with the Andean Welsh communities in Western Chubut. It was wonderful to hear Welsh being widely spoken and to see first-hand the continuation of everyday Welsh cultural life in Argentina which in part is down to the success of the Welsh Language project funded by the Welsh Government and managed by the British Council.

I was warmly welcomed at every event and the strong links between Wales and the Welsh communities in Patagonia were firmly cemented during my visit. I concluded my official programme by hosting a reception to thank the Welsh of Chubut for their hospitality and continued commitment to keeping the Welsh culture alive for future generations.

I know that many other visits are planned over the coming months with lots of events taking place throughout the year. Based on my experiences, I am sure that everyone will be warmly welcomed and that the planned activities will be very well received. I am delighted that there will be a long-standing legacy for the Welsh community after the celebrations have concluded.

The Welsh Communities in Patagonia had appealed to the Argentine authorities not to politicise the celebrations during this election year and, together with the British Ambassador who accompanied me throughout this visit, we were pleased that this request was respected.

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Assembly returns I would be happy to do so.”

Welsh Government (2015)

## Appendix B

### **Original text in Castellano on the Eisteddfod Association of Chubut.**

La Asociación Eisteddfod del Chubut es una sociedad filantrópica que tiene como objetivo organizar el Eisteddfod de la Juventud y el Eisteddfod del Chubut, cumpliendo de esta manera con su propósito de contribuir al fortalecimiento del idioma galés y de enarbolar las artes como el camino hacia un mundo mejor. La Comisión Organizadora, que es elegida por los socios y trabaja ad honorem, cuenta con la invaluable colaboración de los coordinadores, un grupo humano que trabaja desinteresadamente durante todo el año en pos de un programa

de competencias variado, dinámico, atractivo y de calidad en todas las disciplinas. El programa de competencias se prepara con un año de anticipación. Ambos eventos se financian con aportes brindados por entidades públicas y privadas, como así también la colaboración de personas, familias, venta de entradas y programas.

### Appendix C

#### **The original Gorsedd opening speech in Welsh (October 2015)**

Mae'n bleser mawr eich groesawi chi yma, ac yn arbennig iawn i'r ffrindiau llu sydd wedi dod o Gymru i ymuno a ni yn ein dathliadau arbennig y flwyddyn yma, gyda'r Wladfa yn ganrif a hanner. Hefyd y mae'n ffrindiau aruthol i ni groesawi archdderwydd Cymru, Mrs Christine James gyda ni...archdderwydd Cernyw...a chynrychiolydd o Llydaw. Mae hon yn ffrindiau arbennig i ni eleni...hefyd mae Gorseddu Iwerddon a'r Alban wedi anfon cyfarchion arbennig i ni am nad ydyn nhw'n gallu bod yn bresennol. Mae'n ffrindiau i ni...yn y Gorsedd fach hon...mae'r cynrychiolaeth mor bwysig. Croeso mawr i chi. (Ivonne Owens Gorsedd speech 2015).