



The German Society for Contemporary Theatre and Drama in English
Deutsche Gesellschaft für das englischsprachige Theater und Drama der Gegenwart e.V.

26th Annual CDE Conference, Reading, UK, 29 June – 2 July 2017

The German Society for Contemporary Theatre and Drama in English (CDE) is pleased to announce its 26th Annual Conference (29 June–2 July 2017). It is organized by the Department of Film, Theatre & Television at the University of Reading (UK) and will be held as a residential conference at the University of Reading, Whiteknights Campus.

Nation, Nationhood and Theatre

With the referendum on Britain's EU membership on June 23, 2016 – 'exit or remain' – definitions of both nation and nationhood are being stretched on both sides of the question. As the EU undergoes severe difficulties – such as the economic imbalance between the constituent countries, the increasing clamour for the re-recognition of smaller nations within larger entities, and controversies about migration - now seems a very good time to take a fresh look at the representation of issues of nation and nationhood in contemporary theatre and drama in English.

This is not an area of debate exclusive to the UK. The ever-growing refugee crisis is creating pressure on western governments and governments worldwide to effectively close borders, or at the very least severely curtail the movement of the thousands of people seeking to find a new life. It is a pressure that is frequently xenophobic, sometimes patriarchal and homophobic and it can be related to the emergence and re-emergence of strongly nationalistic movements. They seek to define 'nation' and 'nationhood' in ways that oppose all pluralistic policies, and any programme of multi-cultural aspirations, in particular. At the same time immigrants tend to find themselves in the conflicted position of engaging with the cultural assumptions of their adopted country even as they also wish to hold on to cultural values of their nation of family origin.

It is not long since the 'state of the nation' play was declared a thing of the past. More recent evidence suggests that its obituary notices were somewhat premature, and that it has re-emerged – as it is always prone to do in periods of crisis - albeit in very different theatrical forms and deploying very different theatrical voices. As the theatre continues to search for ways to consider questions of nation, nationhood and national identity, this conference will seek to explore the voices and topics as well as the politics and dramaturgies contemporary plays and performances bring to the stage.

We invite proposals for papers in English of 20 minutes length, with possible topics including (but not being limited to):

- the Dis-United Kingdom and its nations
- national aspirations in Western Europe
- the global rise of nationalisms and populist movements
- borders, mobility and national identity
- the representation of national stereotypes in theatre and performance
- nations within nations: seeking to find a voice: seeking to find an audience
- issues of race/class/gender in defining the nation
- whose 'state of the nation' plays?
- National Theatres?

In accordance with CDE's constitutional policy, papers should deal exclusively with contemporary (i.e. post-1989) theatre and drama in English.

Abstracts: Abstracts (300 words) for papers proposed (20 minutes maximum delivery time) should be accompanied by a short biographical note, plus full address and institutional affiliation.

Deadline: 16 December 2016

Send to: John Bull (jbull@lincoln.ac.uk)

N.B. Only paid-up members are eligible to give papers at CDE conferences. Membership subscriptions may be taken out or renewed during the conference. For details, please contact CDE's treasurer Monika Pietrzak-Franger (monika.pietrzak-franger@uni-hamburg.de).