



# Y GOFALWR (THE CARETAKER) CEFIN ROBERTS



In 1990, Cefin Roberts (with his wife Rhian) established Ysgol Glanaethwy in Menai Park, Bangor. This was the first performing school of its kind in Wales.

He joined the production crew of Rownd a Rownd in 1995, and was mainly responsible for sketching storylines for the series. He was an artistic director for Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru between 2003 and 2010. In 2013, he won the Prose Medal (Y Fedal Ryddiaith) in the Eisteddfod Genedlaethol in Montgomeryshire for his novel Brwydr y Bradwr (Traitor's Battle).

Listen carefully to Cefin Roberts' interpretation of Naturalism. Discuss his interpretation.

In addition to what Cefin Roberts says during the interview, he also says this:

"Another point I forgot to discuss is the '-istic' – 'naturalistic' is not natural and I think that's important; for example, there's a difference between 'naturalistic' and 'naturalism'. Sometimes young people think that being natural on stage is 'naturalistic' – but the '-istic' is something I discuss in detail with my pupils. You give the impression that everything seems natural, not actually being natural. All of the stage techniques and skills of pronunciation, energy, intonation, posture, feeling, emoting, communication, believing, interpretation and reacting are all as important as they would be in any other type of staging – the basic essentials are still the same thing."

In 2009, he directed a Welsh adaptation of the play The Caretaker by Harold Pinter, which he called Y Gofalwr.

He says in his interview that Y Gofalwr can be staged completely naturalistically if that's the vision of the director. Any scene from this play can be taken and presented naturalistically.

At the same time, he refers to the set as a symbolic set, and by asking the question can a symbolic set be brought to a naturalistic play, his answer suggests this – if you believe that the audience will understand the play better, then you can mix styles.

## ACTIVITY

Cefin Roberts says during his interview that one of the themes of Y Gofalwr is 'Threat'.

Devise a scene based on this theme and present it completely naturalistically on the stage.

After doing this, consider what type of set would suit your scene. Would the set be symbolic or naturalistic?

## ACTIVITY

Read the following scene from The Caretaker and stage it as completely naturalistic, taking into consideration what Cefin Roberts said about a naturalistic performance.

Discuss as a group which elements adopted by Stanislavski you can use as a technique to 'get to know your character' in order to prepare for giving a completely naturalistic performance of the character.



# Y GOFALWR (THE CARETAKER)

## CEFIN ROBERTS

THE CARETAKER – HAROLD PINTER  
TRANSLATION BY J ELIS GWYN JONES

Adapted by Carys Edwards

### CHARACTERS

**Mick**                      **Late twenties**  
**Aston**                    **Early thirties**  
**Davies**                   **Old man**

*A house in a town in Wales. A winter's night.*

*A room with a window on the back wall, the lower half covered with a sack. An iron bed against the left hand wall and another one on the right under darkness. Boxes and jars containing nuts, screws etc., paint cans, a lawn mower, a shopping trolley, drawers etc. in a mess all over the room. An old electric fire, wooden planks, a small case, roll of carpet, a wooden chair on its side, an ornament, a clothes horse, old newspapers and a Hoover at the back. A bucket hangs from the ceiling.*

*Mick is on his own in the room, sitting on the bed. He wears a leather jacket and jeans.*

*Silence.*

*He slowly looks around the room, noticing everything in turn. He looks at the ceiling and stares at the bucket. Then he sits completely still staring expressionlessly in front of him.*

*Silence for half a second.*

*Door slams. Muffled voices are heard.*

*Mick turns his head. He stands, moving slowly to the door, going through it and closing it quietly after him.*

*Silence.*

*Voices are heard again. They draw nearer, and stop. The door opens. Aston and Davies enter, Aston first and Davies right behind, dragging his feet and breathing heavily.*

*Aston is wearing a big cloth coat and under that he wears a suit, shirt, tie and a 'pullover' all with an impoverished look to them. Davies is wearing a big coat which is a bit worn, shapeless trousers, a shirt, jumper, and messy cardigan, and sandals on his feet. Aston puts the key in his pocket and closes the door. Davies looks around the room.*

**Aston:**                      Sit down.

**Davies:**                    Thanks. (Looks about) Uh...

**Aston:**                      Just a minute.

*Aston looks around for a chair, sees one lying on its side by the rolled carpet, and starts to get it out.*

**Davies:**                    Sit down? Huh ... I haven't had a good sit down ... I haven't had a proper sit down ... well, I couldn't tell you.

**Aston:**                      (Placing the chair). Here you are.



# Y GOFALWR (THE CARETAKER)

## CEFIN ROBERTS

- Davies:** Ten minutes off for a tea-break in the middle of the night in that place and I couldn't find a seat, not one. All the Greeks had it, Poles, Greeks, Blacks, the lot of them, all them aliens had it. And they had me working there.... They had me working.
- Aston reaches under the bed for a box and opens it, stretching a plug and a screwdriver and starts to work on the plug connected to a toaster.
- Pause
- All them Blacks had it, Blacks, Greeks, Poles. When he came at me tonight I told him.
- Pause.
- Aston:** Take a seat.
- Davies:** I'll get him. One night I'll get him.
- Aston crosses to the plug box to get another plug.
- I wouldn't mind so much but I left the bag in that place. Everything I had in a bag down there. In the rush of it.
- Aston:** I'll pop down sometime and pick it up.
- Davies:** What's that?
- Aston:** A toaster. Some problem with the plug.
- Pause.
- Davies:** Anyway, I'm obliged to you, letting me ... letting me have a bit of a rest, like ... for a few minutes. (He looks about.) This your room?
- Aston:** Yes.
- Davies:** You got a good bit of stuff here.
- Aston:** Yes.
- Davies:** Must be worth a few bob, this ... put it all together.
- Pause
- There's enough of it.
- Aston:** There's a good bit of it, all right.
- Davies:** You sleep here, do you?
- Aston:** Yes.
- Davies:** What, in that?
- Aston:** Yes.
- Davies:** Pause
- You got any more rooms then, have you?
- Aston:** Where?
- Davies:** I mean, along the landing here ... up the landing there.
- Aston:** They're out of commission.
- Davies:** Get away.





# Y GOFALWR (THE CARETAKER)

## CEFIN ROBERTS

- Aston:** They need a lot of doing to.  
Short pause
- Davies:** What about downstairs?
- Aston:** That's closed up. Needs seeing to ... the floors ...  
Pause
- Davies:** This is your house then, is it?  
Pause
- Aston:** I'm in charge
- Davies:** You the landlord, are you?  
Pause  
Well, you've got some knick-knacks here all right, I'll say that. I'll tell you what, mate, you haven't got a spare pair of shoes?
- Aston:** Shoes?
- Davies:** Yes, a spare pair of shoes.
- Aston:** (Looking under his bed) I might have a pair. You've got to have a good pair of shoes.
- Davies:** Shoes? I had to go all the way to Carmarthen in these.
- Aston:** (Offering a pair of shoes) See if these are any good.
- Davies:** (He looks over to the shoes) I think those'd be a bit small.
- Aston:** Would they?
- Davies:** No, don't look the right size.
- Aston:** Not bad trim.
- Davies:** I can't wear shoes that don't fit. Nothing worse.
- Aston:** Try these.  
Davies takes the shoes, takes off his sandals and tries them on.
- Davies:** Not a bad pair of shoes. (He trudges round the room.) They're strong, all right. Yes. Not a bad shape of shoe. The leather's hardy, en't? Can't beat leather, for wear. Good shoe this.
- Aston:** Good.  
Short pause. Davies waggles his feet.
- Davies:** Don't fit though.
- Aston:** Oh?
- Davies:** No. I got a very broad foot.
- Aston:** Mmnn.
- Davies:** These are too pointed, you see.
- Aston:** Ah.



# Y GOFALWR (THE CARETAKER) CEFIN ROBERTS

- Davies:** I mean these ones I got on, they're no good but at least they're comfortable. (He takes them off and gives them back.) Thanks anyway, mister.
- Aston:** I'll see what I can look out for you.
- Davies:** Thank you.
- Aston:** (Attending to the toaster) Would ... Would you like to sleep here?
- Davies:** Here?
- Aston:** You can sleep here if you like.
- Davies:** Here? Oh, I don't know about that.  
Pause  
How long for?
- Aston:** Till you ... get yourself fixed up.
- Davies:** (Sitting) Ay well, that ...
- Aston:** Get yourself sorted out ...
- Davies:** Oh, I'll be fixed up ... pretty soon now ...  
Pause
- Aston:** Where were you born then?
- Davies:** (darkly) What do you mean?
- Aston:** Where were you born?
- Davies:** I was ... uh ... oh, it's a bit hard, like, to set your mind back ... see what I mean ... going back ... a good way ... lose a bit of track, like ... you know ...
- Aston:** Mmnn  
Aston moves to the door and puts on his coat  
Well, I'll be seeing you then.
- Davies:** Yes. Right  
Aston goes out and closes the door

\*\*\*





# Y GOFALWR (THE CARETAKER) CEFIN ROBERTS

## ACTIVITY

Cefin Roberts suggests that *The Caretaker* can be performed naturalistically by using a symbolic set.

Discuss your ideas as a designer for *The Caretaker*. Try to think about the themes of the play and create ideas for a set which is symbolic.

Perhaps you'd like to discuss the following:

- Aston lives in a room full of odds and ends – how would you convey that?
- How could you convey the idea of 'threat' in the room?
- What type of furniture would you put in the room?