



Experimental approaches to writing research

Birmingham City University, 9th June 2017

Welcome

We are extremely pleased to welcome you to our one-day workshop, 'Experimental approaches to writing research'.

This event is an opportunity for doctoral students to expand their horizons in terms of writing style and postgraduate publications, benefitting from the expertise of internal and external speakers from a range of backgrounds applicable to Arts, Design and Media, in addition to Sociology and English.

Today you will have an opportunity to take part in interactive sessions run by researchers and practitioners who critically and creatively engage with writing forms from a range of disciplines, and to put this into practice during the writing workshop this afternoon. The day will end with a panel of Birmingham-based postgraduate journals and time to network over a glass of wine or juice.

We hope this workshop will be greatly beneficial to PhD students from across BCU and further afield, with each session aiming to provide interdisciplinary writing approaches encouraging emerging researchers to consider communicating research as an essential element of doctoral experience, and the form and purpose of academic writing more generally.

By bringing together doctoral students and members of staff from several Schools within BCU, and from external institutions and organisations, we aim to foster the sharing of cross-disciplinary ideas and methods, and to provide an opportunity for you to establish links with postgraduate journals at BCU and the University of Birmingham.

We hope you enjoy your day!

Craig Hamilton & Sarah Raine

#ExperimentalWritingBCU

Schedule

09:30 - Registration

10:00 - Welcome - Sarah Raine, Craig Hamilton, Dr. Jacqueline Taylor (BCU)

10:20 - Session 1: Dr. Tom Perchard (Goldsmiths) – *Experiments in critical writing*

11:20 - Session 2: Anisa Haghdadi (Poetry Jam) - *Fuelling The Poetry (R)evolution: How convening young people in coffee shops made space for a new wave of poetry in Birmingham*

12:20 - Coffee Break

12:30 - Session 3: Dr. Jacqueline Taylor & Khulod Albugami (BCU) – *Weaving/Writing/Thinking: Visualising research and methodology as object?*

13:30 - Lunch

14:30 - Session 4: Ashleigh Watson (Griffiths University, Brisbane) – *Social Science and Fiction: Fiction writing as a method and analytical tool*

15:30 - Session 5: Writing Workshop - Professor Nick Gebhardt (BCU) – *Crazily Fast Writing*

17:10 - Break

17:20 - Session 6: PG Journal Panel *Riffs: Experimental writing on popular music* (BCU); *Birmingham Journal of Literature and Language* (University of Birmingham); *Furnace* (University of Birmingham)

18:00 - Drinks Reception

19:00 - Ends

Session Info

Session 1: Experiments in critical music writing

Dr. Tom Perchard, Goldsmiths, University of London



In this presentation I'll address some of the themes, problems and outcomes of my recent teaching and research around popular music criticism. I currently lead an MA module that explores that critical tradition, and encourages students to experiment with modes of written expression and argumentation in response. The thesis is that pop criticism – like much journalistic writing, often looked down upon by the academy – might have something to teach academics about musical meaning. This idea also inspired 'The Critical Imperative', a recent special issue of *Popular Music* that I co-edited with Devon Powers. Here I'll look at that project's aims, the editorial difficulties it presented, and the writing that resulted

Biography

I teach in the Department of Music at Goldsmiths, where I am Director of Research, convenor of the BMus Popular Music programme, and, with Prof. Keith Negus, co-director of the Popular Music Research Unit. My work centres on the history and historiography of jazz and popular music. My most recent book is *After Django: Making Jazz in Postwar France* (University of Michigan Press, 2015), and an edited anthology, *From Soul to Hip Hop*, was published in 2014 as part of Routledge's Library of Essays on Popular Music. My first monograph was *Lee Morgan: His Life, Music and Culture* (Equinox, 2006). My research articles appear in *American Music*, *Popular Music*, *Jazz Perspectives*, *Popular Music and Society*, the *Journal of the Society for American Music* and *Popular Music History*.

Session 2: Fuelling The Poetry (R)evolution: How convening young people in coffee shops made space for a new wave of poetry in Birmingham

Anisa Haghdadi, BeatFreaks

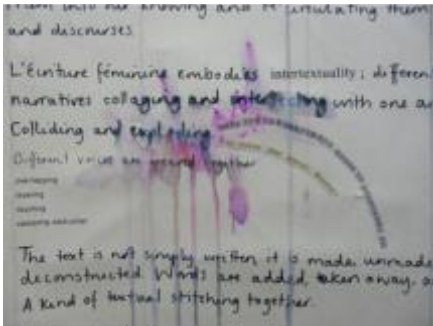


Poetry Jam started as an experiment in February 2013. Consistently reaching audiences of 80-100 every month since, it is now a staple in the poetry diet of Birmingham. Discovering, amplifying and empowering new voices, ideas and artists to have their say on the issues of our time, Poetry Jam is a modern day 'town hall' catalysing community change through the power of the word.



Session 3: Weaving/Writing/Thinking: Visualising research and methodology as object?

Dr Jacqueline Taylor and Khulod Albugami, Birmingham City University



This workshop explores the potential of writing as a way of visualising research; both as a form of thinking and also methodology. It also explores and questions how writing and methodology might be considered as object. It is framed by our own approaches to writing research in the context of Fine Art. For Jacqueline, this is through the idea of writing//painting and the slippages and collisions in between, and how this manifests in and as writing, art, and method.

For Khulod, through the *al-Sadu* weaving practices of Bedouin women in Saudi Arabia and how this method of weaving spaces together by women in the desert has helped in the research process of writing her PhD thesis on contemporary art by women and empowerment in society.

Participants in this interactive session will experiment with different ways of writing in relation to the primary materials of their research, and consider how they might use the idea of the object as a methodology to approach or find an alternative way to write about their research.

Biographies

Dr Jacqueline Taylor is an artist, researcher, writer and Lecturer in Research Practice at Birmingham City University where she co-ordinates PhD training at the Faculty of Arts, Design & Media. She completed her practice-led PhD 'writing//painting; *l'écriture féminine* and difference in the making' at the Centre for

Fine Art Research, Birmingham Institute of Art & Design in 2013. Jacqueline's research examines interrelations between writing and painting in relation to intersubjectivity, signification and (non)representation, the ontological and epistemological dimensions of Fine Art research and doctoral pedagogy. Her writing takes the form of hybrid performative papers, performance-lectures, art-writing, academic writing and art practice itself and have been published, performed and exhibited internationally over the past decade.

Khulod Albugami is an artist and academic at the College of Art & Design, Princess Norah Bint Abdulrahman University (Saudi Arabia). She studied at King Abdu Aziz University graduating in 2005 with a BA (Hons) in Fine Art and Um alQura University in 2007 with an MA (Hons) in Fine Art. She is now doing her PhD in Fine Art at Birmingham City University. In her research, she is trying to formulate specific ways that art can be used by women for social empowerment in Saudi Arabia. By using the metaphor of traditional *al-Sadu* weaving performed by Bedouin women in the desert to describe her research process, Khulod hopes to make a contribution to help Saudi women attain higher visibility and a more audible voice in Saudi society through contemporary art.

Session 4: Social Science and Fiction: fiction writing as a method and analytical tool

Ashleigh Watson, PhD Candidate at Griffith University, Australia



Literature and social science share a long yet largely opposing history. English novel writing and early Western sociology both emerged during the Industrial Revolution. However, sociologists quickly turned to positivist analyses of the social world, aligning themselves with scientists and differentiating themselves from ‘mere’ writers with whom they shared a topic of focus. Despite this dichotomy, affinities between art and science have been recognised – from the early sociologists and novelists in Chicago schools to emerging forms of arts-based research today, the supposed divide between art and social science has been bridged in many ways.

This presentation explores fiction writing as a qualitative method and an analytical tool for researching the social. I draw on my own PhD project, involving the construction of a sociological novel, to demonstrate the value of creativity and art in research – especially for work focused on experiences of the everyday or seeking to make research more ‘live’ for audiences both in and outside the academy.

Biography

Ashleigh is a current PhD candidate with Griffith University and 2017 Endeavour Research Fellow at Goldsmiths, University of London. Her research explores fiction as a method for doing public cultural sociology and understanding the craft of sociological imagination. She is the founder of *So Fi*, a sociological fiction zine, and tweets at @awtsn.

Session 5: Writing Workshop – Crazy Fast Writing

Prof. Nick Gebhardt, Birmingham City University



In this workshop, you will produce a series of unedited, uncensored, spontaneous pieces that will help you to discover what you mean to say in your writing and to find new ways (and the words) to say it.

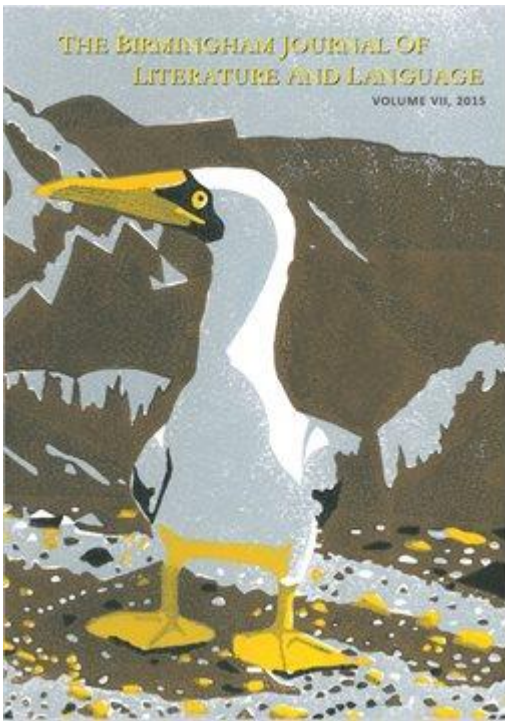
Biography

Nick Gebhardt is Professor of Jazz and Popular Music Studies at Birmingham City University in the United Kingdom and Director of the Birmingham Centre for Media and Cultural Research. His work focuses on jazz and popular music in American culture, and his publications include *Going For Jazz: Musical Practices and American Ideology* (Chicago), *The Cultural Politics of Jazz Collectives* (Routledge) and *Vaudeville Melodies: Popular Musicians and Mass Entertainment in American Culture, 1870-1929* (Chicago). He is the co-editor of the Routledge book series, *Transnational Studies In Jazz* and the forthcoming *The Routledge Companion to Jazz Studies*.

Session 6: PG Journal Panel

The final session editorial board members of the following Post-Graduate journals:
Riffs: Experimental writing on popular music (BCU); *Birmingham Journal of Literature and Language* (University of Birmingham); *Furnace* (University of Birmingham)

This session will consider questions of how journals can be successfully conceived, created and maintained by postgraduate students, and ask how and in which directions young journals can develop.



The Birmingham Journal of Literature and Language (BJLL)

Founded in 2008, *The Birmingham Journal of Literature and Language (BJLL)* is an interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed journal published annually, both electronically and in print.

It includes submissions from postgraduate students from a diversity of backgrounds, including specialists in Literature and Language from all periods and cultures.

Each issue features articles and notes from current postgraduates, alumni and external postgraduates, along with book reviews and original artwork. Original poetic compositions are also welcomed.

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/edacs/departments/english/research/journals/bjll.aspx>



furnace aims to provide an open and multidisciplinary journal relating to all aspects of international cultural heritage. Each biannual edition has a theme, specified on the website and in the call for papers, that offers authors some guidance on their submissions.

<https://furnacejournal.wordpress.com>

@furnacejournal



The first postgraduate student journal at BCU was launched in February this year. *Riffs* aims to publish experimental writing on popular music from PhD, MA and

outstanding BA students from universities within the UK and beyond. Contributions are invited through twice-yearly calls (which can be found on the *Riffs* website), in response to a prompt, and published online and in limited edition print.

The editorial team is made up of BCU PhD and MA students, and encourage contributions that take an experimental approach to communicating research on popular music: from photo essays to auto-ethnographic writing, audio recordings to experimental scores. These contributions represent a growing interest in how we communicate research and what form this can take.

<http://riffsjournal.org>

@popmusicjournal

Experimental approaches to writing research

With thanks to our speakers Coralie Acheson, Khulod Albugami, Ed Corless, Anisa Haghdadi, Prof. Nick Gebhardt, Dave Kane, Dr Tom Perchard, Joe Raine, Dr Jacqueline Taylor, Ashleigh Watson, and Tom White.

With thanks, also, to the funding committee for the PGR Studio Research Development Fund, and the BCU staff and students for their support, in particular Yvette Burn, Tony Cordell, Oliver Carter, Jacqueline Taylor, Tim Wall Adam Warden, and BCU Hospitality.

Finally, thanks to all the workshop attendees. We hope that this will spark something new at BCU and beyond.

Biographies

Craig Hamilton is an [AHRC Midland3Cities](#)-funded PhD research student at the School of Media at Birmingham City University in the UK, due to complete his thesis in September 2017. His research focus is the experience of contemporary popular music listeners, and specifically the relative and interrelated impacts of emerging technologies on the business and cultural environments of music consumption. He is exploring this through the development of The Harkive Project (www.harkive.org). Craig is the co-Managing Editor of *Riffs: Experimental Research on Popular Music*.

Sarah Raine is a funded PhD candidate in her final year of doctoral research at Birmingham City University's School of Media. She is researching the linguistic, kinetic and virtual narratives of the younger generation of the current Northern Soul scene in the UK. In order to engage with a wide range of ethnographic material, Sarah is developing a number of writing forms. She is the Review Editor for the IASPM Journal, the co-editor of the forthcoming *The Northern Soul Scene* (Equinox), and the co-Managing Editor for *Riffs: Experimental Research on Popular Music*.

This event was funded by a PGR Studio Research Development Fund (BCU).



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