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## Introduction

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*Writing in Practice: The Journal of Creative Writing Research*

**Volume 6 (May 2020)**

**Issue Editors:** Celia Brayfield, Francis Gilbert and Andrew Melrose

**Introduction:**

**Principal Editor:** Derek Neale

Volume 6 of *Writing in Practice* offers an exciting blend of exegetic reflection, essential and individual research approaches that consider the writing process both in minute detail and in multiple and far reaching contexts, including cultural, experiential, educational and publishing settings. The essays reflect wide-ranging engagement and critical analysis in considering what it is to write, what it means to encourage and teach others to write, and how it might be possible to seek different ways of investigating the creative process. The angles of focus brought to bear in this issue reveal the subject area to be alive and healthy. Writing is an activity that demands many hours, days and weeks of lockdown-type solitude. Yet it is an activity, as we are aware, that also demands a working knowledge of social, emotional, artistic and every-day spheres. Writing as an activity, in this sense, seems to speak to and of our times.

This volume's guest article comes from Australia: Jen Webb discusses the material, linguistic and physical elements of narrative, the philosophical provenance of such perspectives, and how we might lead writing students towards an intellectual as well as a creative approach to their work. Joanne Reardon's article considers material along with visual aspects, in revealing the interplay between collaboration and ekphrasis in a site-specific work. Sean Fitzgerald critically examines scientific knowledge via a combination of critical

reflection and a type of fiction which is science-informed, specifically focused on genetic science. Leanne Bibby uses the prism of a ghost story and its setting, along with her own writing practice to explore the painful history of Roman Catholicism in England during the Reformation, also referring to literary and cultural theories to examine fiction's relationship to historical discourse and the idea of the archive. More recent history comes in Edward Hogan's subject, the impact of oral accounts on the development of a novel, specifically in relation to 20<sup>th</sup> century police history; his article also reveals a history of cinema-going during the same period and how the rolling film programmes of the time might echo a contemporary novel's narrative disruption.

Liz Mistry investigates diversity, considering inclusion and representation in the genre in which she writes, crime fiction, scanning publishing statistics and writing approaches for more expansive narratives. Graham Mort emphasizes the inherent diversity of our discipline's research possibilities, focusing on the methodology of a funded, multilingual writing project in South Africa, with antecedents in several other international practice-led initiatives; he reflects on the inter-disciplinary research potential of Creative Writing as a subject. Rose Michael, Ronnie Scott and Michelle Aung Thin share fascinating insights into their research and editing processes, approaches that inform ethics and aesthetics in relation to point of view and voice; they offer three case studies: a literary speculative fiction, a novel concerning sexuality and a young adult novel set among Rohingya children experiencing the 2016-17 military operations in Myanmar.

Megan Hayes and Sophie Nicholls examine the web of related roles encountered by the modern writer; within the contexts of writing and wellbeing, combining interests in writing, researching and facilitating can be essential and require integrative approaches. Kevan

Manwaring investigates experiential research, advocating location visits but also oral history and song in the creation of a transmedia fantasy novel. Michael Fox explores folktale types and motifs as aids to identify the building blocks of stories, further deploying such research and reference points to inform teaching; he focuses on the story features and shapes underlying both *Beowulf* and *The Hobbit*. Another approach to solving the blank page is addressed by Amina Alyal and Oz Hardwick who consider visual hallucinations and pareidolia, while speculating that writers might, as part of their creative process, access pre-existing texts, as suggested in the testimony of a poem's evolution.

Such rich scope and flexibility of critical attention is to be applauded, as is the new format, colour and layout in the journal. You may note the addition of images and the potential to download a complete volume. These innovations are all thanks to Lisa Kronig, NAWE's new publications manager: Volume 6 is her first issue of *Writing in Practice*. Welcome, Lisa!

### **The Issue Editors**

Our three Issue Editors (all on the NAWE HE Committee) offered an expert eye and consideration throughout. My gratitude to:

Dr Celia Brayfield is Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing at Bath Spa University.

Dr Francis Gilbert is Senior Lecturer in Education at Goldsmiths University of London

Professor Andrew Melrose is Emeritus Professor of Children's Writing at The University of Winchester and occasional Editor, *Axon: Creative connections*, *Axon Capsule* (Special Issues).

## **Reviewers**

Thank you to all our peer reviewers for their excellent support, for the quality of their analysis, and for the positive manner in which they offered their judgement and suggestions for improvement. We are always looking for more reviewers. If you are interested, please be in touch via the email address on the *Writing in Practice* webpage.

## **The Next Issue**

The submissions deadline for the next issue, Vol.7, is 26th June 2020 – you will note that this will be a special issue focused on multimodal writing, but we are also accepting articles on other topics as usual. In Volume 6, we have again been delighted to showcase essays from Creative Writing PhD students. We welcome such work, along with work from the broader field of practice, research and scholarship. Creative work itself is welcome when integral to an article. *Writing in Practice* is not Creative Writing's only peer-reviewed journal but it is one of few internationally. By reading it, submitting work to it and joining its peer review college, you are helping to enrich your subject community.

***Dr Derek Neale, Principal Editor, Writing in Practice;***

***Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing, The Open University***