University of Glasgow

Inspiring Critical and Imaginative Learners: An Interactive Workshop on Creative Geographic Writing

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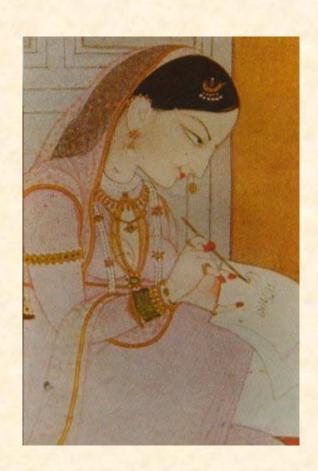# Aims and Intended Learning Outcomes

This workshop aims to highlight the benefits of creative and inter-discplinary writing methods in the undergraduate and postgraduate classroom through a discussion and demonstration of their use in Geography. By exploring the concept of creative geographical exercises through interactive exercises we hope to demonstrate the potential this approach has to empower students in their learning, and also generate new and creative working relationships between staff and students.

● Understand the aims of creative geographic writing;
● Identify key learning and teaching concepts that underpin creative geographic writing as practised;
● Have written creatively and experienced a 'taster' of the sessions used for undergraduate and postgraduate students;
● Discussed the development of the concept within your own discipline and teaching situation.

Level 4 Geographic Writing Pilot 2010

Aims:
- To provide opportunities for students to explore geographic writing in a creative setting, drawing on science and the humanities;
- To allow for the development of a personal writing style;
- To improve students' confidence as writers;
- To provide one-to-one feedback;
- To cultivate a supportive and creative atmosphere in which to write and to experiment with writing;

Graduate Attributes

- **Confident, Effective Communicators**
- **Reflective Learners**

Enhance transferable skills

INTERVIEW

We've noticed you're not on Facebook, what have you got to hide?

JON & MICK / MODERN TOSS

Private Eye, 6-19 April, 2012

Learning Outcomes

Throughout the course, students will:

- Be given opportunities to write creatively;
- Explore geographic ideas and concepts through a series of exercises;
- Be given the opportunity to develop as writers;
- Be asked to evaluate the process and content of the course
- Be encouraged to explore other writing avenues outwith the class;
- Hear extracts from published works as examples of geographic writing and will also have the opportunity to evaluate and discuss these works;
- Share their work with other course members and a wider audience at a public reading event;
- Have the opportunity to polish and prepare writing for a portfolio.

The Mavis Cheek Rule:

NEVER, EVER, apologise for your writing

1. Warm up exercise
2. Longer piece of writing:
   ❖ Background
   ❖ Writing
   ❖ Reading
3. Samples of writing on theme
4. Discussion

One-to-one feedback throughout course

Workshop Themes

- **Descriptive writing**
- **Personal experience.**
- **Statistical narrative.**
- **Framing the map. Marrying the visual with the text.**
- **Reporting.**
- **Opinion piece. From rant to rhetoric.**
- **Turning points. Moving the narrative on.**
- **Open session – student choice.**
- **Cultivating curiosity and polishing writing.**
- **Presenting.**

"In a single year recently 8,600 farmers abandoned farming with a loss of 15,000 jobs. The fields now have numbers and change their names with every sale. Who will tell our stories when we're gone?"

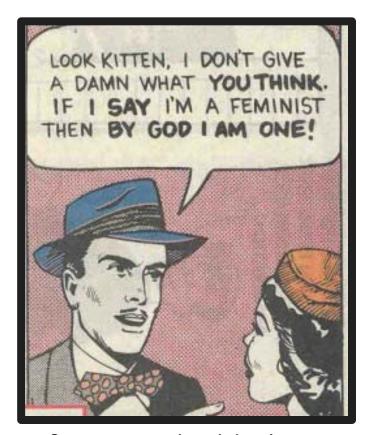Katherine Swift, The Morville Hours (2008)

For sale: Baby shoes; never worn

MRes in Human Geography: Space, Politics and Power

Course consisting of 16 postgraduate students.

Intended Learning Outcomes
Knowledge and Understanding

● **a knowledge of certain key philosophers and social/cultural theories associated with contemporary human geography (and related disciplines);**
● **a knowledge of key research methodologies, techniques and ethical concerns associated with contemporary human geography (and related disciplines);**
● **a practical understanding of how to use appropriate theories and methods in independent research.**

'Other geographies': feminism, post-colonialism and identity politics

Using creative writing as a tool to inspire new ways of thinking about complex issues, such as feminism and identity politics.
 - exercises such as "Feminism is …" and "Identity is not …".
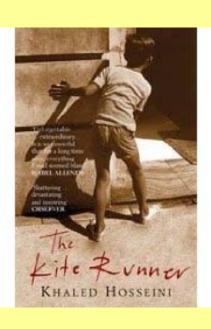
Designed to enhance students ability to discuss these issues in an intellectually engaged and personal way.

Writing seen as inherent to the process of creating ideas and not restricted only to the final product (for example, essays and exams).

Creative Writing: Exercise 2

Geography matters. … Coal resources. In mining towns where life is tough, where men are men, where shifts are long, where women's jobs are scarce, the meanings and possibilities of women's lives take on certain forms.." (Watson, 1989, p.7)

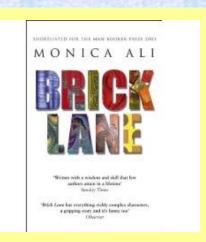**What happens next? Please spend 10 mins writing the following part of the story ...**

Never mind academia, to understand the world read a novel

The Daily Telegraph, Friday, 7.11.2008

The Fiction of Development: Literary Representation as a Source of Authoritative Knowledge, **David Lewis, Dennis Rodgers & Michael Woolcock,** Brookes World Poverty Institute, University of Manchester; London School of Economics

"- it is arguable that *Brick Lane* has contributed to wider public understanding of development in ways that no academic writing has."p.13

Conclusions

If you would like a copy of our slides or any further information about today's discussions please get in touch:

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References:

Creative Writing
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