

Writing Aloud: Voice and the Writer



A NAWE conference in association with
York St John, College of the University of Leeds,
Lord Mayor's Walk, York YO31 7EX

Conference Programme: Friday 29 – Saturday 30 October

Friday 29 October

18.00 Registration

19.30 **VOICES:** Reading event at Temple Hall in conjunction with riverlines
with Ros Barber, Joe Coelho, Linda Hoy and Naomi Wallace
*Please note: we are planning to open this event to the paying public but delegates are warmly
welcome free of charge.*

Saturday 30 October

09.00 Registration and coffee

09.30 Welcome and introduction – Paul Munden, Director of NAWE

09.40 Seminars and workshops – a choice of:

Seminar 1 **Finding a Voice: the importance of oral delivery in undergraduate and postgraduate writing courses – Rose Atfield**

Students on creative writing courses are often initially inhibited when asked to read their work, yet this is essential for them to understand inflection and tone and is a great way of explaining the importance of punctuation (a la Lynn Truss!). This paper will outline ways in which undergraduate and postgraduate students can be encouraged to verbalise their ideas; to read their work and that of others with sympathy and understanding.

A Critical-Creative Voice – Dr Amanda Boulter

This paper will explore the relationship between the critical and the creative when developing a writer's voice. Many university courses are now flagging up the notion of 'critical-creative writing' – but what does it mean? This paper will work through some of the implications of the critical-creative connection to consider both the possibilities and the problems for writers.

Learning to Swim - Will Buckingham

This paper will be an attempt to throw some light on the process often spoken of as 'finding a voice'. Using the distinction made by the German philosopher Franz Rosenzweig between 'thought thinking' and 'speech thinking', Will Buckingham will explore the role of creative writing teaching as a means of developing thinking skills that are perhaps insufficiently addressed within the classroom.

Seminar 2 **Little Shop of Stories - Jean Edmiston**

Jean Edmiston, a writer and storyteller with many years' experience working in primary schools and other educational settings, shares her process. A particular interest is the way that verbal storytelling can be used to stimulate and shape story-writing, unlocking a confident creative voice in the children.

Radio Ravo - Andrew Wright

As writing development consultant for a Merseyside LEA, Andrew Wright worked on a half-term

project with Year 5 students in a Kirby primary school to research, write and produce a weekly programme for the school radio station. The project was a great success and Andrew will share what he learnt from the experience.

Seminar 3

Synthesis and Synthetics: authors and authenticity on-line - Rebecca O'Rourke

In this paper, Rebecca O'Rourke will explore issues around the potential of on-line environments to de-stabilise identities and decentre the self. She will examine the ethical and aesthetic dilemmas involved in on-line environments using case studies from the trAce on-line writing community, and in particular the work of Tim Wright and the Oldton project.

A Clamour of Voices: managing on-line community and educational writing projects - Helen Whitehead

An on-line project is an excellent choice these days to give a voice to a community, from helping people cope with a time of change to celebrating their diversity. Helen Whitehead will use examples from recent projects including the Dawn Quilt and Dragonsville to show how an on-line project can bring together and contextualize a wide variety of voices, young and old.

Workshop 1

Devising Text – Meg Harper

Through this practical workshop, Meg Harper will demonstrate a successful youth theatre project. Using the same story - that of the Willow Pattern - and devising exercises, you will create text. You will be able to try out drama education conventions useful in a variety of educational contexts, and have the opportunity to consider the success of the texts that emerge. Participants will need to wear comfortable clothes and bring writing materials.

Workshop 2

Exploring Inner Voices – Jess Curtis

In her role both as voice and speech trainer and therapeutic counsellor, Jess Curtis has found that on the way to 'finding their voice' people can discover 'inner voices'. It is this area that can reveal a wealth of characters for a writer to draw on. This workshop will use therapeutic approaches – such as awareness of opposing 'parts' - and will include writing dialogue towards exploring this rich territory.

11.10

Coffee

11.30

Seminars and workshops – a choice of:

Seminar 1

Poetry Aloud: Reading vs Performance - Ros Barber

In this presentation, Ros Barber will explore the territory between poetry readings and performance poetry: why the gap between page and stage? She will look at the arguments for and against making poetry more accessible through its delivery: the tensions, snobberies and pre-conceptions on both sides of the page/stage divide.

Seminar 2

From the Far Side of Silence - Angela Morton

How does someone find a voice for writing about coming back from what seemed like a burial? Angela Morton will give a paper describing how the process of exploring various voices, including that of the character Lazarus, helped her to write following severe depression.

Finding a way to write about desperate experiences - Alicia Stubbersfield

"The dark heart of the story that is all the reason for its telling?" Mary Oliver. This paper will examine the difficulties involved in writing poems about extreme experiences: cancer, alcoholism, adultery, divorce. It will explore the possibilities of the poetic voice and how these experiences can become public as well as private.

Voicing schizophrenia: writing recovery - Sarah Wardle

This paper will explore issues of art v therapy, voicing a minority, and the inextricable link between ways of seeing and the language in which we voice our thoughts.

Seminar 3

Writing Outside The Personality: the heteronym and the decentred poetic voice - Margaret Anne Clarke

This paper will explore the concept of the heteronym; a term coined and defined by the modernist poet Fernando Pessoa as "an author writing outside his own personality". Using examples from Pessoa's own work, Margaret Anne Clarke will discuss how the idea of the splintered human persona can be applied within the hypertextual medium of the internet and other virtual environments available to today's writers and poets.

Persona, the Prose Poem, and Contemporary Poetry – Dr Carrie Etter

Mainstream lineated poetry has long been rightly accused of dwelling on autobiography, with the result that most undergraduates come to the poetry workshop solely writing and interested in personal narrative. In this paper, Carrie Etter will investigate the prose poem's ability to facilitate the adoption and development of newly constructed personas, thus promoting a greater inventiveness in contemporary poetry overall.

Voice as challenge and illegitimacy – Paul Mills

Voice creates a sense of the moment, responds to the conditions of its production in ways more formal verse cannot, challenges what D.H.Lawrence called the 'fore-ordaining Mind'. Is this true? Does the presence of speech qualities in poetry imply a greater immediacy, more drama and story? It all begins with Edmund's speech in King Lear: 'Now, gods, stand up for bastards!' (Act 1, Sc 2), where Edmund's natural voice is his argument. Paul Mills explores these issues and others: the speech-contexts of writing, writing workshops, writing, drama and performance.

Workshop 1

Dramatext – Phil Emery

Dramatext is a hybrid teaching process making use of the techniques of performance poetry, poetry or prose reading, public speaking and literary analysis. It has been developed by Phil Emery to give students fresh pathways into assessing and revising their own writing. This taster workshop will introduce you to the process.

Workshop 2

The Accent is On – Philip Burton

Philip Burton works in secondary schools responding to young people and their rhythms of speech to develop a new poetic voice. The emphasis of the workshop will be on writing poetry with regard to the cadence, style, vocabulary, actuality and interests of young people whom we wish to turn on to poetry. Participants are encouraged to bring one of their own poems.

Scots language in schools – Matthew Fitt

Itchy Coo is a publishing company run by writers Matthew Fitt and James Robertson. The Scottish Arts Council has given Itchy Coo the remit to encourage and develop the confidence of young people through the medium of the Scots Language. As Education Officer, Matthew delivers workshops and in-service training to teachers and their pupils and this session will give you an insight into this work.

13.00

Lunch

13.45

NAWE AGM

14.15

Seminars and workshops - a choice of:

Seminar 1

Writing a Novel in Two Voices At Once – Dr Heather Beck

Using her experience of writing a recent novel *Home is Where* (Carcenet /Comma Press 2003), Dr Heather Beck will discuss Bakhtin's view that a voice actually consists of a myriad of other, intertwined voices. The novel interweaves a third and first person voice, and neither of these voices is Heather's. The paper will explore the challenges of writing, and reading publicly from, a novel of this kind.

The Voice of the Scientist in Literature - Clare Dudman

Clare Dudman's first novel was a fictionalised autobiography of a male German scientist living at the beginning of the twentieth century, ten years her senior. In this paper, Clare will describe how she used research to derive his voice and how his scientific work helped her with this process.

The Writer's Voice: culture and displacement - Qaisra Shahraz

In this paper, Qaisra Shahraz will talk about the challenge of straddling cultures in her novel writing. Writing characters from a different culture speaking a different language than the writer's own, and using a character to voice authorial concerns and opinions about topical events and social issues will be explored, as well as issues around translation.

Giving Voice to the Unspoken - Yinka Sunmonu

This paper will examine the concept of giving voice through fiction to those who are marginalized with an emphasis on the privately fostered child. Yinka Sunmonu tackled this sensitive and secretive topic in her novel *Cherish*, and many people have responded with thanks that their story has been told at last. Writing it brought many challenges, including that of conveying the voices of West African parents and cockney fosterers in the 1960s truthfully and with empathy.

- Workshop 1 **The Story Workshop – Randall Albers**
 Students at the Fiction Writing Department, Columbia College Chicago take courses in core fiction and creative non-fiction using the Story Workshop approach originated by former chair John Schultz. The Story Workshop takes as fundamental the use of voice and is highly interactive. Randall will run a demonstration class and then lead a discussion about the process, with some attention to Story Workshop theory and practice.
- Workshop 2 **Character In Drama / Prose to Performance - Michael Culkin**
 As a working actor and writer, Michael Culkin is fascinated and perplexed by the writing, and indeed acting, challenge of creating character. This workshop will focus on writing for film, television and theatre, and will explore how best to present well-lived and fully realised characters, ready for a production process over which the writer may have very little control.
- Improvisation into Text - Georgina Lock**
 This workshop will use actors' improvisations to release ideas for dialogue and monologue and develop them into scenes/story. It is aimed at all writers, especially those working with any sort of script, so that they experience some of what it is to act and speak their own texts. Another outcome is likely to be an increased understanding of pace and how much dialogue/monologue need not be written but may become/transfer to action.
- Workshop 3 **Finding Your Voice - Maggie Freeman**
 This practical writing workshop will explore finding one's voice as a writer; discovering what one wants to write about, and experimenting with developing that into fiction. Maggie is an experienced teacher of writing-related subjects in community education and believes that the issue of helping would-be writers to find their own voice is utterly crucial to enabling them to write well.
- Writing Yourself Out Of The Scene – Sue Wood**
 This practical writing workshop will address the issue of producing writing that is true to your own 'voice' but reflects the voices of others. She will draw on her experience as a collaborator with a drama facilitator and use, as a starting point, material collected in the course of various projects - including one with 'Gifted and Talented' students who dramatised stories gathered from an over-60s Club.
- Workshop 4 **Dream time: where do I go from here? - Anne Caldwell**
 A chance for NAWE members to consider their own future direction – in their writing and in their work with an educational focus. The session will take people through a step by step approach that looks at creative planning for the future, resources needed, blocks that might get in the way, and considers ways to overcome them. This session will also provide information and advice on NAWE's 2004/5 professional development programme.
- 16.15 Tea
- 16.30 Plenary session:
- Furnace - Monika Neall of performance poetry organisation Apples and Snakes and poet and course graduate Joe Coelho**
 This final of the conference will be a presentation about the Furnace project, which aims to move young people from writing in their bedrooms to making themselves heard. The young people (16–26) are taught writing and performance skills, producing brilliant pieces of work that are good enough for the stage with the confidence to perform them.
- 17.30 Drinks

one-to-one sessions with literaturetraining

literaturetraining is a group of eight leading literature organisations (including NAWE) working in partnership to provide information, advice and guidance on professional development for the literature sector.

literaturetraining will be at the conference manning an information point for professional development with reference publications, magazines, information sheets and partner leaflets. In addition, 20-minute one-to-one sessions will be available during Saturday for delegates looking for information and advice on specific professional development matters. You can either book in advance on your booking form or book on the day (subject to availability).

Biographies

Randall Albers chairs the Fiction Writing Department at Columbia College Chicago, where he directs one of the largest graduate and undergraduate writing programmes in the US. His work has appeared in *Prairie Schooner*, *Chicago Review*, *F Magazine*, and elsewhere.

Rose Atfield is course convenor of Creative Writing in the English department at Brunel University and has established the popular M.A. in Creative and Transactional Writing.

Ros Barber's debut collection *How Things Are On Thursday* will be published by Anvil this autumn. Her work has been published widely in magazines and anthologies. Ros has been a creative writing tutor for the University of Sussex since 1997.

Dr Heather Beck teaches at Manchester Metropolitan University.

Dr Amanda Boulter teaches creative writing at University College Winchester.

Will Buckingham is a writer and creative writing tutor based in Birmingham. He is studying for a PhD in literature and philosophy at Staffordshire University, and runs Birmingham Words, a popular on-line community for writers and literary magazine.

Philip Burton has broad experience of working in education, both primary and secondary. His poems have appeared in a wide range of literary magazines, as well as anthologies for children including *Unzip Your Lips Again* (Macmillan) and *Puzzle Poems* (OUP).

Anne Caldwell is training manager for NAWA. She works one day a week for the company. She is a poet, who has many years experience of running writing projects in schools, community and health settings.

Margaret Anne Clarke graduated from the University of Liverpool with a PhD in Brazilian Literature. She is presently responsible for the Portuguese section at the School of Languages at the University of Portsmouth.

Joe Coelho is a performance poet and a graduate of Apples and Snakes' Furnace course.

Michael Culkin has worked extensively as an actor in all media and is currently rehearsing a new play at Birmingham Rep and working on a new film directed by Stephen Frears. He has lived in Hollywood where he had a deal with Columbia Tristar and wrote with Twyla Tharpe.

Jess Curtis is a voice and speech trainer, writes scripts for radio drama and is also a therapeutic counsellor.

Clare Dudman is a novelist. She is going to be teaching prose on the new MA in Creative Writing at University College Chester.

Jean Edmiston is a storyteller and writer. She has worked in many schools in the south-west as well as museums, libraries and colleges. Jean has been a storyteller-in-residence at the Horniman Museum, London and the Museum of East Asian Arts, Bath.

Phil Emery is a freelance writer and lecturer/tutor who teaches creative writing courses for various universities, colleges and educational organisations. He has a special interest in the uses of adaptation as a teaching tool.

Carrie Etter is Associate Lecturer in Creative Writing at Bath Spa University College. She has published numerous prose poems in both the US and UK and will be teaching a course on the prose poem for The Poetry School next spring.

Matthew Fitt is a writer and runs Itchy Coo with James Robertson. He is the company's Education Officer.

Maggie Freeman has published two children's novels and five factual primary literacy books. She has taught in community education for about fifteen years, writes poetry and started what became the Essex Poetry Festival.

Meg Harper is a children's fiction writer and teaches youth theatre in a community education setting, with a particular emphasis on devising. She is an ex-English teacher and is currently studying for an MA in Theatre and Drama Education.

Georgina Lock is an actor, writer and director. She is in charge of scriptwriting at Nottingham Trent University.

Paul Mills has published four books of poems. His play *Never* was performed at the West Yorkshire Playhouse. He teaches creative writing at York St John College and is the author of *Writing In Action*, and *The Routledge Creative Writing Coursebook*, forthcoming in Spring 2005.

Angela Morton runs a creative writing workshop for Cardiff University's Centre for Lifelong Learning. Her first collection of poetry, *The Holding Ground*, was published in 2002.

Monika Neall is Youth Poetry Development Officer at Apples & Snakes.

Rebecca O'Rourke has been a member of the trAce on-line writing community for several years.

Qaisra Shahraz is a novelist (*The Holy Woman and Typhoon*) and scriptwriter. Her work for television and film has been seen in Pakistan and the UK.

Alicia Stubbersfield has been involved with NAWE from its inception as an English teacher, a poet and a tutor of creative writing in settings such as Arvon, Ty Newydd, Aberystwyth University and the OCA. Her third collection *Joking Apart* is forthcoming.

Yinka Sunmonu holds an MA in Creative and Life Writing and is a freelance journalist.

Sarah Wardle is a former Poetry Review new poet of the year. Her first collection, *Fields Away (Bloodaxe)* was short-listed for a Forward prize. She is resident poet at Tottenham Hotspur Football Club.

Helen Whitehead is managing editor of *Kids on the Net*, trAce Online Writing Centre.

Sue Wood is a published poet and short story writer. She teaches on the Creative Writing programme at Bradford University's School of Lifelong Education and Development, as well as working as a writing facilitator with museums such as the Bronte Parsonage Museum and at West Yorkshire Playhouse.

Andrew Wright is the writing development consultant for Knowsley LEA on Merseyside.