

HEA SUBJECT CENTRE REPORT

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Introduction

On 21-22 July, 2009, the University of Aberdeen held its 6th annual Arts and Social Sciences Postgraduate Conference, *Moving Forward*. Financial assistance for visiting delegates in the areas of History and Archaeology was generously provided by the HEA Subject Centre for History and Archaeology. The funding contributions of the Subject Centre were passed on in whole to visiting delegates, who accepted the support with sincere appreciation. The following is a report on the proceedings of the conference, the use of the funds provided by the Subject Centre, and a brief outline of our plans for future developments.

Event Report

As in years past, the 2009 *Moving Forward* postgraduate conference proved a success. Building upon the work of previous committees and their organisational skills and achievements, the 2009 conference organising committee was proud to have attracted a record number of delegates from across the World to this year's *Moving Forward*. We also are pleased to report that this year we received a record number of applicants (over 150 abstract submissions), and the number of submissions in History, Archaeology, & associated areas were significantly greater than in previous years (29 abstract submissions). Due to the high quality of most of these applications, we offered 27 presentation positions to delegates in History, Archaeology & associated areas (7 more than initially planned).

Over the two days of the conference, we hosted over one hundred postgraduate students of the arts and social sciences disciplines, with representatives from Australia, USA, Istanbul, Italy, France, Canada, Germany, Japan, Ireland, New Zealand, Portugal, Rwanda and the United Kingdom. Around one-hundred papers were presented by students at various stages within their PhD and research programmes during a variety of themed parallel sessions, which were chaired by eager colleagues from across the College of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Aberdeen. We were also pleased to offer four plenary sessions, featuring esteemed speakers from the University of Aberdeen: Professor Timothy Ingold, Professor Christopher Fynsk and Professor Peter Stollery and our guest plenary speaker, Dr Elizabeth Stokoe, University of Loughborough. They offered their insights into 'interdisciplinarity', specifically talking to 'Fields of Study and Lines of Interest', 'The Idea of the Centre for Modern Thought', 'Sound Travels; A Journey From Lone Acousmate to Sonic Collaborator' and 'Interactions Across the Disciplines', respectively. The feedback received from delegates for both was most complimentary.

During proceedings, we were pleased to welcome musicians from the School of Music; Ross Whyte, Claire Singer and Bill Thompson, who performed a closing piece to the conference. In addition, throughout both days, an exhibition of 'Drawing the Social', a collection of art work curated by Katy Fox, was on display. This work is a collaboration of art produced by anthropology students in the course of working with Gray's School of Art, Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, in order to develop academic representations

through alternative media. We also hosted two installations of music/visual presentation, which were available through headphones/on display during both days. These were provided by Ross Whyte, Claire Singer, Bill Thompson, James Wyness, and Patrick Keenan.

Within the programme, of course, there were multiple opportunities for delegates to participate in less formal elements of the conference. In order to encourage delegates to forge connections and to discuss the papers and purpose of the postgraduate conference in a relaxed manner and setting, the conference hosted a dinner reception on the first night. During the course of the evening, good food, wine and company was shared by all. Indeed, for their hospitality and good service, we owe thanks to Manzil, King Street, Aberdeen. Further, to end the conference on a 'high' note, we also hosted a drinks reception accompanied by music from the Elphinstone Institute, featuring Frances Wilkins (a previous organiser of this conference 2006-07).

Feedback

Feedback was solicited from delegates through anonymous feedback forms. We received a number of forms, the majority of which were exceedingly positive. In addition to these forms, we have also received many emails from delegates. Some of the comments made in these two forms include:

- "It has been such a successful conference. Thanks... thanks for organising it and taking care of us so well."
- "I really enjoyed being a part of *Moving Forward 2009*."
- "Once again, thanks for an extremely enjoyable and worthwhile conference, superbly organised with a noticeably light touch."
- "It was really stimulating and very pleasant."
- "It was the very first time I have presented my work. Even though I was nervous at first I was made to feel at ease."
- "Nice groupings of topics and mix of disciplines."
- "Most useful plenary sessions."
- "Thank you for a very positive experience."
- "Superb organisation and information flow. Excellent format. Good opportunities for cross-pollination of ideas."
- "Keep the conference going every year!"

Use of Funds

The Subject Centre generously pledged 550 GBP toward delegate bursaries. One award was to be valued at 250GBP for a non-UK-based delegate, and two valued at 150GBP for UK-based delegates.

There were 3 applicants for the non-UK-based bursary valued at 250GBP. This was awarded to José-Shane Brownrigg-Gleeson Martínez, who is studying for his PhD at the University of Salamanca (Spain).

Brownrigg-Gleeson Martínez graduated in History ("Licenciatura", equivalent to B.A.) at the University of Salamanca (Salamanca, Spain) in June 2007, and took the official postgraduate Teaching Certificate at the end of that same year. He is currently in the second year of his doctoral studies in the field of Latin American Late-Colonial and Early-Independent History. In September 2008 he entered the Department of Modern History at the University of Salamanca as a member of the research staff team. He has

recently presented the developments of his research at the University of Salamanca and at Queen's University Belfast (Northern Ireland). His presentation at the conference was titled "A Shade of Melancholy, a Degree of Quiet Sorrow": Exploring Spanish autobiographical writing in exile, ca. 1825-1845'.

There were five applicants for the two UK-based bursaries valued at 150GBP each. These were awarded to Anna Sandaker Glomm, who studies for her PhD at the University of St. Andrews and Benjamin Bacle, who studies for his PhD at Aston University.

Glomm is a PhD Candidate in Art History at University of St Andrews. She is due to finish her thesis by the end of 2009, entitled 'A comparative study of early 1970s political poster art in Scandinavia - GRAS, Folkets Atelier and Røde Mor'. Her thesis assesses three collectives from Norway, Denmark and Sweden respectively and comparing these to contemporary international developments to explain why this period in poster design was so varied across Scandinavia, even if motivated by similar ideologies. Her research interests are Scandinavian 20th and 21st century art, political artists located in Northern Europe, street art/graffiti as revolt, Scandinavian groups/workshops since WWII, and politics and art. Her paper was titled 'Marx says No to the EEC – Nordic artists against the 1972 EEC membership campaigns'.

Bacle studied French and International Law at the University of Lille, and has obtained a Master 1 and a Master 2 at the same University, both in Political Thought. His two dissertations were respectively on John Stuart Mill and Edmund Burke. He is currently pursuing the study of the late XVIIIth and early XIXth centuries period in his PhD on the Conceptions of Will in Maine de Biran's and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's works. He is primarily interested in the study of human nature, and particularly in its implications in terms of (self) knowledge. Bacle's paper was called 'The Inner Way Forward: Maine de Biran, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the Will'.

Future Developments: Publication

The conference has, for the second time, attracted numerous publishers who are interested in working with us to prepare a volume of papers (four publishers have made contact to date). We are presently in the early planning stages for this publication, and will begin to submit our proposals accordingly in Autumn 2009. We will keep the Subject Centre informed as to the progress of this publication and acknowledge the support of the Subject Centre within the volume. We hope to have the volume complete for Winter 2010.

Conclusion

Although work continues for the 2009 organising committee, we will look to reform a new organising committee for 2010 and begin to make plans in due course. We hope the conference is beginning to gain importance across disciplines as a valuable research training exercise and opportunity for professional development. We hope to accept and include many more of the delegates' papers for what will be the seventh annual *Moving Forward* postgraduate conference in 2010.