Psychology and literature: Nottingham Writers’ Studio at the British Psychological Society Conference

Purpose
To illustrate how local writers address psychological issues in fiction and creative non-fiction and to promote dialogue between psychologists and writers on mutually interesting themes.

Background
Psychology and literature occupy similar territory in addressing what it means to be human. Nottingham has a vibrant literary community and was recently designated UNESCO City of Literature (one of only three in the UK). The selection of Nottingham as the venue for this year’s BPS conference provides an excellent opportunity to explore potential interconnections.

A brief overview of the city’s literary legacy will be presented, followed by examples of the work of contemporary writers from Nottingham and the surrounding areas. There will be short readings from novels and memoir, and discussion of writing well about well-being and the use of writing workshops to empower marginalised communities.

All members of the panel are published writers and three have a background in applied psychology.

Conclusions
In an informal, entertaining and thoughtful manner, the presentation will demonstrate that psychologists and writers have many areas of common interest.

Panel
Sarah Dale is an occupational psychologist and author of non-fiction books – *Keeping Your Spirits Up* and *Bolder and Wiser*. She is an active member of Nottingham Writers’ Studio.
[www.creatingfocus.org](http://www.creatingfocus.org)

Anne Goodwin is a former consultant clinical psychologist with a quarter-century of experience working in NHS mental health settings. Now a writer and reviewer of fiction, her debut novel, *Sugar and Snails*, about a psychology lecturer with a secret past, was published in July 2015.
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Pippa Hennessy is Development Director of Nottingham Writers’ Studio, a community of 200 professional writers living and working in Nottingham. She also works for Five Leaves Publications, a small independent press, and has published poetry, short fiction, graphic fiction, articles and essays in many magazines and anthologies. [www.nottinghamwritersstudio.co.uk](http://www.nottinghamwritersstudio.co.uk)
Andy Miller is a Fellow of the BPS, honorary professor at the Universities of Nottingham and Warwick, and former Programme Director for initial and post-experience training of educational psychologists at Nottingham University. Winner of the international Yeovil Literary Prize for Poetry, he has published a range of academic/professional books and articles, as well as creative non-fiction and a memoir, The Naples of England. www.andycmiller.co.uk

Alison Moore’s debut novel, The Lighthouse, won the McKitterick Prize and was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize and the National Book Awards. Her second novel, He Wants, was an Observer Book of the Year. Her third novel, Death and the Seaside, will be published in August 2016. Her short fiction is collected in The Pre-War House and Other Stories. www.alison-moore.com

Victoria Villasenor is the director of Global Wordsmiths, CIC, a company dedicated to working with marginalized communities throughout the midlands, which has included people with depression, the LGBTQ community, and veterans. She is also an editor and author with a publishing house in New York. www.globalwords.co.uk