

# Through the Looking Backwards Glass: Editorial, Volume 8, Part 4

Gareth J Johnson

Institute of Advanced Study, University of Warwick, UK

Correspondence: [gareth.johnson@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:gareth.johnson@warwick.ac.uk)

Twitter: [@llordllama](https://twitter.com/llordllama)

ORCID: [0000-0003-3953-6155](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3953-6155)



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*In some ways, writing gets easier the more you do it, because the more you do it, the more you learn that it's really not as risky as you fear. You have a history on which to draw for self confidence, you have a believable reputation among a wider number of people whom you can call on the phone, and best of all, you have demonstrated to yourself that taking the risk can be worth it. (Richards, 2020: 108)*

## Introduction

Welcome to the nineteenth edition of *Exchanges: The Interdisciplinary Research Journal*, and our second special issue of 2021. If this is your first issue of *Exchanges*, then welcome, it is always lovely to have new readers. Conversely, if you are one of our growing number of regular readers, then you are equally welcome back with us once more.

## Back From the Future

Unusually enough this is the third issue of *Exchanges* published this year, which considering we are only halfway through 2021 at the time of writing, is somewhat of a delight. That at least one further issue is anticipated to appear this calendar year forms an equally appetising prospect for myself and the editorial team. This edition you are currently reading represents the latest in our continuing series of special issues. Each special issue of *Exchanges* was initiated by an approach from an academic or academics external to the journal, as a route to celebrate, champion or otherwise highlight a particular domain of scholarship to our readers (**Exchanges, 2021a**).

For this issue we are for once firmly in the hands of scholars associated with our publishing institution of the University of Warwick, somewhat of a happy eventuality. As with all our special issues, this publication has followed a moderate incubation period during which answering questions concerning author recruitment, necessary editorial labour and post-publication promotion have formed as much a part of its gestational matrix as discussions concerning its scope and contents. Those eager to learn more about this process are encouraged to listen to an episode of

*The Exchanges Discourse* wherein I tackle the genesis of special issues in some greater depth (**Exchanges, 2020**).

Now, those who have heard me speak about our associate editors will already know how proud I am of this development in recent years. This is both in respect to the journal helping to develop early career scholars along with the particular insights and practical contributions associate editors bring to the journal's operations (**Johnson 2021a & b**). This time I am especially pleased to note we have been dipping our editorial toes into the waters of supporting a mixed community of scholars and students firmly based at Warwick. While the remit for *Exchanges* continues to be to invite and embrace the scholastic world as contributors, it feels deeply gratifying on those occasions when we are able to support initiatives at our primary host institution. Even if, under normal circumstances, it denies any opportunity for any exotic trips abroad for your Editor-in-Chief!

Looking back today it feels, appropriately enough, that this issue was first initiated in the *Then* of a different historical epoch: the pre-COVID-19 pandemic period. Way back in January 2020, not long after *Exchanges* had relocated to its new campus offices, I participated in a preliminary meeting with the original lead for the *Then & Now* project, Dr Kathryn Woods. Reflecting back to that very positive encounter, hosted within a crowded university refectory, it is curious to consider how the vast bulk of this issue was conducted in the *Now* where further physical encounters were effectively *verboten*. Certainly, it has been some time since I have personally been at any gatherings of more than a mere handful of close associates. This is a shame, as characteristically I prefer to celebrate special issue launches with social gatherings. Perhaps this is something to aspire too on that happy future date when *Exchanges* is working once more in the heart of Warwick's beautiful campus!

That there has been a roughly eighteen-month period from this meeting to publication is perhaps worthy of minor note. My rule of thumb for the production of special issues from past experience suggests a period of between twelve to eighteen months from instigation to publication within *Exchanges* current resource. Certainly, this issue's production seems to have strongly adhered to this normative standard, although there were moments when I thought we might have it produced sooner. Such a lead time to production standard is worthy of note for any readers who might be contemplating any such future collaborative endeavour.

In terms of this issue's theme, you can read more about the *Then & Now* project in our articles, as detailed below, alongside the myriad of supplementary materials available online (**Warwick, 2020**). I would be remiss in my interlocutory role were I not to heartily commend all of our readers to do just that. Hence, I will not belabour these elements here.

Instead, what I would like to briefly stress was the excitement of opening up our journal to a wider scholastic range of potential contributors than is typical for our title.

*Exchanges* idealised target contributor audience remains, as always, early career researchers, however they might self-identify or perceive themselves (**Exchanges, 2021b**). Indeed, I enjoyed a spirited debate during my recruitment interview with the panel on the importance of appealing to as broader a contributing audience as possible for the long-term prognosis of the journal. I stand by my comments today as I did then, that *Exchanges* should embody an *inclusivity* rather than *exclusivity* in terms of the pools of authorial talent in which it fishes. Consequently, we have, before and during my own tenure, certainly published work from far more established researchers. This is most commendable, and perhaps even thrilling for the less-seasoned authors we publish to see their work appearing alongside these more luminary figures.

What was different about the call though for this *Then & Now* associated special issue, was how for the first time we explicitly extended an invite to taught students. Naturally, during my engagements with the potential contributors I stressed their work would need to undergo the same degree of scrutiny and review as any contributor. I note this in case anyone reading this was concerned we might have considered lowering our quality bar. We most certainly did not! Disappointingly though, fewer students took us up on the offer to contribute and I hope the ‘fear of review scrutiny’ was not chief among the barriers. Perhaps, as Stone’s piece suggests, the project continues in some form, a future issue of *Exchanges* may be graced by future participants’ contributions. Certainly though, lessons will be drawn from these editorial experiences and applied within any future special issue collaborations reaching out to the more junior ranks of the academy.

Nevertheless, I am exhilarated that some students did respond positively to our invitation. Accordingly, you can enjoy what will for some comprises their first professional, scholarly publications in this issue. I am also hopeful that some of the students who did not feel able to contribute to this particular issue might feel inspired to perhaps submit a piece to our ‘sister’ journal *Reinvention*. I am almost certain they would be very warmly welcomed contributions there.

Now, since I am sure few of our readers are breathless with anticipation for a more prolonged editorialising, let us move along to the articles contained in this special *Then & Now* issue.

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## Papers

The journal's main contents begin, appropriately enough, with an introduction to the project behind this special issue, by two of the key figures involved. Kathryn Woods and Pierre Botcherby offer us an overview of the project and its activities, alongside considering how it relates to research into the student experience. In this latter respect the piece also provides a brief historiography in this field. Notably, this piece resonates with some of the analyses which follow (1).

## Articles

We move on to our first peer-reviewed article, in which Josh Patel considers the *Breadth, 'National Needs', and Reimagining the Role of the University in Society*. Within this Patel explores the external influences which shaped and informed the University of Warwick's design of studies and original physical presence. Focussing on the leadership of its founding Vice-Chancellor, Lord Butterworth, Patel examines the reorientation of a higher education establishment to align more closely with pragmatic, business needs, than contemporary organisations. Patel argues how this underlying ideological alignment with the corporate was emblematic in Warwick's operations and external relationships and continues to resonate with the institution today (9).

Our second paper is from Lauren Sleight, and is entitled *Towards Inclusivity at the University of Warwick*. In this article, Sleight takes a deeper look at oral history interviews conducted with past staff and students from Warwick from earlier decades. Their experiences are then contrasted with the evolution of Warwick and the emergent institutional culture extant today. Sleight exposes how these experiences can contribute to current crucial discussions concerning inclusivity and accessibility, especially resonating within themes of gender, race, ethnicity and class. The paper contends that it appears while strides have been made with respect to gender equality, conversely aspects of class and race have seen fewer sustained changes. Hence, the paper postulates how further oral history endeavours could help to positively inform, enlighten and enable ongoing efforts towards greater institutional inclusivity and participation in the future (34).

Our final peer-reviewed piece is once more from Woods and Botcherby and considers the Then & Now Student Project as an act of *Co-creation in the COVID-19 crisis*. Alongside providing a project overview, the paper explores the underlying pedagogic practice and method deployed within its operation. It goes on to consider both the value and challenges emerging from an activity enmeshed within a student co-creation

framework, alongside offering some evaluative insight into the student experiences and project outcomes (55).

### *Critical Reflections*

Moving to our selection of critical reflective pieces we begin with Madeleine Snowdown's *Reflections on an artistic response to site and community*. The article takes as its centrepiece the *Afterimage* series of artworks, illustrated throughout, created by the author as part of their history of art degree programme. Snowdown's piece provides an insight into the creation and conceptualisation of these pieces, within their personal perceptual framework. The author continues by considering, in the light of the COVID restrictions and other external developments, how these eventualities have impacted on perceptions of the artworks themselves, and the statements they present concerning the built, institutional environment (76).

The next piece provides an insider's critical view on *Arts and cultural management and the shortcomings of student-led research projects*. Adopting an arts student's perspective, Elena Ruikytė explores the *Then & Now* project from a personal standpoint. Focussing especially on the project management processes, the author provides a contextual exploration concerning the role and deployment of art and cultural managers. In this way, they argue the *Then & Now* project demonstrably provides a framing for a deeper reflection and examination on the significance of this profession. Moreover, the value of the project in providing a crucible within which to consider issues such of these is spotlighted by the author (87).

Our third piece comes from Rebecca Stone, and is entitled *Scaling Up: The pedagogical legacy of Then & Now*. The article considers the impacts from the project, especially in terms of offering greater student opportunity. In this way it proposes routes to expand on the project into a recurrent programme of activities championing student-led arts and humanities research. Alongside this horizon-scanning view of the future, the paper also touches on the challenges delivering on the original project's envisaged range of activities, in the light of the COVID-19 operational restrictions (99).

Our special issue concludes with a final critical reflection. In this critical methods appraisal, Pierre Botcherby considers *Best Practice versus Reality* concerning remote interviewing in oral history, with respect to the Arts and the coronavirus restrictions. Botcherby considers how the unanticipated shifts to fully remote working have impacted on the acquisition of oral history subject interviews. The author explores their reconsiderations emerging from personal experiences have helped

demarcate an emergent remote-interviewing best practice during the pandemic era. They argue how such a method contrasts favourably with previously dominant physical 'face-to-face' practices. Hence, the piece proposes a greater flexibility should continue be embraced by practitioners even as physical interviewing becomes more accessible once again ([113](#)).

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### **Open Calls for Paper:**

If all these papers have whetted your appetite to consider contributing to *Exchanges* then you will be pleased to know that the journal welcomes submissions throughout the year on any subject, with no deadline. Articles which are accepted for publication will be subsequently published in the next available issue of the journal. Readers may also be interested in our currently open call for early career researchers to participate in *The Anthropocene and More-Than-Human World Writing Workshop Series*. One of the major outcomes of this project for participants will be the opportunity to contribute to a future special issue of *Exchanges* to be published in 2022/23. The call for participation in the workshops is open through to mid August, so there's still time to get involved (**Exchanges, 2021c**).

### **Initiating Special Issues**

As this is a special issue, I should add, if you are an established or early career academic, seeking a suitable home for a dedicated volume of the journal we do welcome outline discussions for the ways in which *Exchanges* could become your publication partner. While our facilities are modest, we have been excited to work with the various scholars on this and prior special issues, and looking already to 2022 and 2023, there is certainly capacity for us to embrace new special issue developments. How to contact myself as Editor-in-Chief is given at the end of this editorial. You may also wish to listen to a past episode of *The Exchanges Discourse* (**Exchanges, 2020**) wherein I discuss the thinking and pragmatic concerns around initiating a special issue collaboration with our journal.

### **Peer-Reviewed Articles**

Nevertheless, for our regular published issues, we continue to be especially happy to consider research focussed or review articles which will undergo peer-review addressing any topic, ideally incorporating some element of interdisciplinary methods, methodology or thinking. Alternatively, we are delighted to receive pieces which are written to address their topic to a wide and general academic audience, written from within a disciplinary domain.

### *Critical Reflections & Conversations*

We especially welcome submissions of interviews with key scholars or critical reflections on important scholarly events, conferences or crucial new texts, which undergo internal (editorial review) scrutiny only. Along with their briefer wordcounts this permits the submission of timely pieces which usually see a more rapid progression to publication. As can be seen in this issue, they are a very popular type of article for authors old and new, and often have particularly high readership, due to their innate wider accessibility.

### *Deadlines*

There are no deadlines for these submissions, which may be on any topic, theme or discipline of prospective interest to our readership (see below for more guidance). Note that the periodic thematic calls for special issues or themed sections of the journal produced normally will include a deadline within their outline information. A new themed call for contributions will appear in the Autumn 2021 issue of the journal.

### *Advice for Prospective Authors*

As an interdisciplinary journal with a wide scholarly readership, authors should seek to write their manuscripts to be suitable for a general academic audience. Wherever possible, consideration should be given to unpack, delineate and expand on any potentially 'disciplinary niche' language, terms or acronyms used. Ideally, authors should seek to incorporate some element of interdisciplinary thinking or perspectives, or outline the broader scholarly relevance of their work, within the manuscript.

*Exchanges* has an expressly multidisciplinary, global and largely academic readership, and as such, have strong interests in work which encompasses or straddles disciplinary boundaries. Manuscripts providing an introduction, overview or useful entry point to key disciplinary trends, discovery and discourse are often among the most frequently accessed publications in the journal. Therefore, prospective authors are strongly encouraged to consider tailoring their manuscripts, narrative, thought and analysis in a mode which addresses this broad audience. For interviews and critical reflections, authors are especially advised to highlight the importance of disciplinary discourse or interviewees' scholarly contributions to the global academy, society and the public at large.

The Editor-in-Chief welcomes approaches from authors via email, or video-call, to discuss prospective submissions. However, abstract submission or editorial discussions ahead of a submission are not a requirement, and authors are welcome to formally submit their full manuscript without prior

communication. Wherever possible, authors should include a note to editor indicating the kind of article they are submitting.

As *Exchanges* has a mission to support the development and dissemination of research by early career and post-graduate researchers, we are especially pleased to receive manuscripts from emerging scholars or first-time authors. All submitted manuscripts will undergo editorial review, with those seeking publication as research articles additionally undergoing formal peer-review by external assessors. Editorial decisions on manuscript acceptance are final, although unsuccessful authors are normally encouraged to consider revising their work for reconsideration at a later date.

More information on article formats, wordcounts and other submission requirements are detailed in our author guidelines ([Exchanges, 2021d](#)). All manuscript submissions must be made by their lead author via our online submission portal. *Exchanges* is a diamond open access, scholar-led journal, meaning there are no author fees or reader subscription charges (**Fuchs & Sandoval, 2013; Bosman, et al, 2021**). Authors retain copyright over their work but grant the journal first publication rights as a submission requirement.

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## **Forthcoming Issues**

The next issue of *Exchanges*, currently expected to see publication during late summer, will be our regular autumn issue (*vol 9.1*), which we hope to bring to you in late October/early November. Work on manuscripts for this issue will be continuing behind the scenes over the summer.

After that, in early 2022, we will finally be presenting our long awaited ‘cultural representations of nerds’ special issue (*vol 9.2*). Following the highly successful two-day workshop in mid-March (**Exchanges, 2021e**), we are as of writing awaiting the formal submission of the redeveloped manuscripts in the coming weeks.

Work is also advancing on our subsequent special issue based around ‘The Anthropocene and More-Than-Human World’ project and its associated writing workshops: the participation call for which is open through to mid-August (**Exchanges, 2021c**). As one of the workshops will be led by *Exchanges* you will be able to read more about this project and its development on our blog, and in a forthcoming episode of the podcast.

Consequently, as you can see 2021 and beyond continues to be a busy time for *Exchanges*, with hopefully plenty of interesting and varied discourse continuing to come your way.



## Acknowledgements

As always, my thanks to our authors and reviewers for their vital intellectual labour contributions towards creating this issue. Without you, producing a quality-assured, peer-reviewed, scholar-led publication would quite simply not be possible. Thanks also to our reader community, who play a key role in developing the debates and insights raised in each issue. I hope you find this issue as informative as usual.

I would especially like to thank **Dr Kathryn Woods** for her efforts on the *Then & Now* project, and for initiating this special issue's development. My thanks too to Kathryn, along with **Pierre Botcherby** and **Josh Patel**, who joined us as our associate editors for this special issue. I would like to tip the editorial hat especially to Pierre for being the driving force behind the project in the wake of Kathryn's departure for pastures new.

My continued thanks to the members of our Editorial Board community, especially in recent months for their insights on matters of publishing policy and ethics. Naturally, also a big thanks to them for their operational editorial labour on behalf of the journal and ongoing interaction with authors and reviewers alike.

My gratitude as well to **Rob Talbot** and **Dr Julie Robinson** at the Warwick University Library, and the members of the Warwick Journals Editorial Community for their continued insights, technical support and conversations. My thanks as well to the IAS' **Dr John Burden** for his role as an invaluable source of positivity and moral support, along with effective line management and pragmatic insights too.

Finally, my grateful thanks to our publisher, the [Institute of Advanced Study](#) at the University of Warwick for their ongoing financial and strategic backing for *Exchanges* and our related activities.

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## Continuing the Conversation

*Exchanges* has a range of routes for keeping abreast of our latest news, developments and calls for papers. In-between issues you may wish to listen to our growing range of podcasts or read our regular blog posts, to continue the interdisciplinary exchange of experience underlying our operations. Please do contribute to the conversation whenever and wherever you can, as we always value hearing the thoughts of our author and readership communities.

Editorial Blog: [blogs.warwick.ac.uk/exchangesias/](https://blogs.warwick.ac.uk/exchangesias/)

Linked.In: [www.linkedin.com/groups/12162247/](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12162247/)

Twitter: [@ExchangesIAS](https://twitter.com/ExchangesIAS)

As Editor-in-Chief I am also pleased to discuss potential publications, collaborative opportunities or invites to talk further about *Exchanges* and our activities. Contact me via the email or via the social media platforms if you would like to arrange a video-consultation.

### *The Exchanges Discourse*

Since our last issue, four more episodes of the companion podcast series to the journal, *The Exchanges Discourse*, have been published. Two of these episodes have featured conversations with authors who have published with the journal, discussing their own research and publication experiences. In particular, these episodes also focus on advice for first time authors in overcoming the hurdles to publication and are certainly worth a listen.

Various future episodes are currently in various stages of pre-production, and we hope to bring you conversations with some of the authors in this issue too. We heartily encourage all readers of the journal, and especially first-time authors, to seek out past and future episodes: available on all major podcast platforms, and specifically hosted on the *Anchor.fm* site. All episodes are free to stream or download and listen to at your leisure. Naturally, we also welcome approaches from potential guests who might wish to contribute to future episodes too.

Podcast: [anchor.fm/exchangesias](https://anchor.fm/exchangesias)

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Gareth has been the Editor-in-Chief of *Exchanges* since 2018. Along with a doctorate in cultural academic publishing practices (Nottingham Trent), he also possesses various other degrees in biomedical technology (Sheffield Hallam), information management (Sheffield) and research practice (NTU). His varied career includes extensive experience in academic libraries, project management and applied research roles. Currently, he is also the Chief Operating Officer of the Mercian Collaboration academic library consortium, and a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. His professional and research interests focus on power-relationships within and evolution of scholarly academic publication practice, viewed from within



social theory and political economic frameworks. He is an outspoken proponent for greater academic agency through scholar-led publishing, and an expert in distributed team management and effective communication practices. He is also the creator and host of a number of podcasts, including *The Exchanges Discourse*.

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**To cite this article:**

Johnson, G.J., 2021. Through the Looking Backwards Glass:  
Editorial, Volume 8, Part 4. *Exchanges: The Interdisciplinary Research  
Journal*, 8(4), i-xiii. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.31273/eirj.v8i4.850>.