

BAFTSS POSTGRADUATE EVENTS FUNDING SCHEME: REPORT

New approaches to gender, film and television: Histories and futures in the digital age, De Montfort University, 22nd June 2013

New approaches to gender, film and television was the second annual postgraduate conference organised by the research students of the Cinema and Television History Research Centre at De Montfort University, following last year's highly successful *Rethinking Cinema and Television History*. The conference aimed to explore the effects of rapidly changing technologies and platforms on the study of gender in film and television. Delegates addressed some of the methodological challenges which face postgraduate researchers in a context of constant change, and asked how new approaches to film and television studies, and changes in the present, affect how we approach studies of gender, past and future.

The themes of the event were aligned with a number of wider research interests of the CATH research centre, an active participant in highlighting the efforts of women in the film and television industries through collaborative ventures such as 'Cine Sisters', in conjunction with the Cinema Museum, and the 'Adopt a Woman' campaign as part of the BECTU Oral Histories project. We believe that this conference repeated the successes of last year's event, both promoting the thriving postgraduate culture of the CATH centre, and contributing to De Montfort's wider reputation for organising outstanding postgraduate events and conferences. With the additional support offered by BAFTSS, we were also able to promote the Association's aims and its role in supporting film and television studies within the academy.

We were delighted that the conference attracted delegates who presented such a variety of papers, enabling and encouraging stimulating debate around a number of related themes. Our day began with a keynote talk by Dr Clarissa Smith, a Reader in Sexual Cultures at the University of Sunderland, on sexual representation and audience pleasure. Fifteen papers were then presented by postgraduate researchers from a number of institutions across five panels: 'Textual representations of gender, sexuality and sexism', 'feminist theories and female auteurs', 'the internet, fans and anti-fans', 'gendering digital archives', and 'pornography, sexualisation and desire'. All of the presentations showcased new approaches to researching gender, many on under-discussed topics. To close events, we held a roundtable discussion entitled 'Women in the film and television industries: Histories and futures in the digital age', featuring Clarissa Smith, Laraine Porter – a Senior Lecturer in film studies at De Montfort University – and Natalie Wreyford, a doctoral researcher at King's College with many years' experience in the film and television industries.

The BAFTSS funding was offered as five awards of £50 each to delegates who submitted strong abstracts for the conference and had expressed an interest in additional funding support. Final decisions as to how (and to whom) this funding was to be allocated were made by the CATH postgraduate team. The bursaries were offered as contributions towards the cost of travel and/or accommodation and registration fees. The support of BAFTSS via the events funding scheme award undoubtedly meant that postgraduates who may otherwise find it financially difficult or even impossible to attend were able to come along and present their research in a

supportive forum, as well as offering the opportunity to meet other researchers working in their field. We also believe that the association with the Association encouraged other postgraduate students to attend, meaning that the event was host to a number of visitors as well as the delegates themselves. In short, the BAFTSS events funding award greatly contributed toward the success of the event.

Further information on the conference, including a full programme detailing the papers and speakers, forthcoming details of podcasts of a number of the presentations which will be made available shortly, and any potential details regarding future collaborative publication opportunities (currently under discussion), can be found on the CATH postgraduate community blog *In Motion* at cathpostgrad.wordpress.com.

Laura Mee (PhD Candidate), CATH Research Centre, De Montfort University,
26/06/13