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Institution: University of Lincoln
Unit of Assessment: 29 English Language and Literature
<p>a. Context</p> <p>The impact of the research undertaken in English Literature at the University of Lincoln can be specifically traced regionally, nationally and internationally. Eve's work on the Open Library of Humanities project produced a set of recommendations to the House of Commons Select Committee on Business, Innovations and Skills that fed into government policy on open access in the UK and into top-level academic and government bodies in Europe and Japan. Regionally, across the UoA, there has been increased participation by community groups in our research activities, and the development of new creative economies and perception-changing access to open archives and engagement opportunities, resulting in enhanced cultural visibility among the wider communities of Lincolnshire, East Midlands and South Yorkshire. The social and educational impact of our research includes education about contemporary writers and their writing, the involvement of the public in forging opinion about what is valuable in 21st century literature, and the development of community storytelling projects. Woolley's regular contributions to the 'People on the Move' strand for the openDemocracy website has focused on migration linked to aesthetics and issues of representation. The site attracts over 3.5 million unique views per year, with a regular core readership of around 150,000. SEOmoz, the web-ranking service, gives openDemocracy a 'visibility' score of 8.5/10.</p> <p>Since 2008, impact has resulted from three distinct research areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21st century literature and open access publishing (Adiseshiah, Blackburn, Edwards [-2013], Eve, Hildyard, Marlow, C. Redpath, P. Redpath, Woolley); • 19th century literature (Clayton, Culley, Field and Styler); • Voices from the margins, including women's life writing, testimony, memory studies (Adiseshiah, Culley, Styler and Woolley). <p>Research beneficiaries and types of associated impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact has taken political, educational, social, cultural capital and economic forms. Beneficiaries include: • local communities in Lincolnshire and South Yorkshire who have participated in AHRC-funded research projects ('Looking Back for the Future' [£25,000] Jan 2012-Dec 2012 and 'Telling our Stories' [£37,000] Feb 2013-Feb 2014). Impact takes the form of community members researching, writing and documenting their own life stories and community histories in response to their involvement in these projects. • public audiences in Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and London, whose own cultural capital has been enriched through active participation in debates about literature and drama and the events and themes represented therein. • national and international policymakers and publishers in relation to debates surrounding open access and the humanities. <p>Commitment to impact</p> <p>The College of Arts at Lincoln has instigated an Impact Focus Group to ensure the ongoing impact agenda of current and future research projects. An Impact Coordinator for English represents the research area on this group. The staff appraisal process now places one aspect of its focus upon impact. Applications to the College Research Resources Fund require an outline of the work's impact and funding is available to help develop this aspect. All staff applying for research leave are required to develop an impact strategy. Further support is available from the College research administrator, the Business Development Manager and the University's Office for Public Engagement and Press Office.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>Impact plans</p> <p>A key objective of <i>Alluvium</i> (co-run by Eve) <i>Orbit</i> (run by Eve) and the forthcoming Open Library of Humanities projects (co-led by Eve) is to bridge the gap between academic discourse and public engagement with literature. Through these forums school students and teachers, as well as wider public audiences, engage with new debates about 21st century literature and canon formation in their school studies, pedagogic practices and online discussions. Other research is aimed towards alleviating experiences of isolation, particularly amongst older people, and facilitating new</p>

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communities of interest around 21st century writing while engendering feelings of self-worth. To achieve these, future work across the UoA will include:

1. The establishment of a Centre for 21st Century Research to place increasing focus on public engagement in relation to book clubs, community storytelling and women's writing projects. An early project connected to this is 'Engaging Older Readers in 21st Century Literature', in collaboration with Age UK Lincoln, due to begin in 2014, funded by the central University research pump-priming initiative;
2. Further development of cross-period and cross-disciplinary research projects focusing on voices from the margins/life writing/testimony/memory studies;
3. Launching the Open Library of the Humanities, a trans-humanities open access mega-journal, for which Eve has received international press coverage and political impact. Eve's specific impact on policy debates can be traced most clearly in his unveiling of the anti-competitive practices of publisher non-disclosure agreements. This resulted in a recommendation of negotiation and, if no resolution, a referral of publishers to the Competition Commission.

Staff impact

Assessing and improving impact is embedded in the practices of the UoA, enabling staff to develop relationships with potential beneficiaries and end users. When writing research bids to external funders, researchers are mentored in developing the impact potential of projects by the Professors (Barker to May 2013; Armit and Rowland from September 2013).

Evidence of relationships and interactions

Our 21st century literature public engagement initiatives include yearly contemporary playwrights festivals (Adiseshiah), co-organised with the Lincoln School of Performing Arts. The Caryl Churchill (April 2011), Sarah Kane (March 2012) and Mark Ravenhill (March 2013) festivals included performances followed by post-show discussions aimed at non-HE audiences. The main meeting place for 21st century literature scholars, including events aimed at involving non-HE publics in discussions, is the 'What Happens Now' biennial conference (2010, 2012, 2014) (Adiseshiah and Hildyard; also with Eve and Woolley in 2014). These received coverage in *The Guardian*, for example. Events included public talks and readings by Will Self, Carol Ann Duffy, Iain Sinclair, Don Paterson (July 2010) and Geoff Dyer, Kathleen Jamie and Tishani Doshi (2012). Eve's cross-institutional co-organisation of International Pynchon Week 2013 (with Durham University) also included a public audience and engagement with lay readers of Pynchon's work. Woolley's regular articles for openDemocracy have involved an international, largely non-HE readership with research into issues of representation, marginality and the politics of migration.

19th century literature scholars (Culley and Styler) have a history of public engagement activity in the inter-disciplinary 19th Century Research Group and have been keen to maximise the educational benefits of their research beyond HE. Styler delivered invited lectures to public audiences of over 100 for the Leicester Secular Society (LSS), the first in February 2011, on 'Secularising the Sacred: Women Writers in the Nineteenth Century', the second on 'God as Mother in the Long Nineteenth Century' in November 2013:

http://www.leicestersecularsociety.org.uk/newsletter/secularist_201103_27.pdf.

A key exchange between the 21st and 19th Century Research Groups has focused on voices from the margins, life writing, testimony and memory studies. Researchers involved include Adiseshiah, Culley and Styler (now joined by Woolley [May 2013], Armit, Charnock and Rowland [September 2013]). Two inter-disciplinary AHRC-funded projects led by Leslie Hicks (UoA 22) support this impact. The first, a £25,000 AHRC development award, 'Looking back for the future: the value of the past in developing the lives of young people' (2012), helped young people's organisations bid for funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund to facilitate the research, writing and documentation of life stories. The second, 'Telling our stories' (2013-14, £37,000), involves Adiseshiah, Culley and colleagues from Media, History and Health, helping community groups in Lincolnshire and South Yorkshire to research, write and document their stories through research-based knowledge and skills transfer.

The results of impact

Teachers and school children using *Alluvium* have engaged with the literary criticism in the

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magazine in their pedagogic and learning practices (see case study); the public events within the annual contemporary playwrights festivals have resulted in school children, teachers and other members of the public engaging in new ways with contemporary drama and the social and political issues represented therein (see case study).

'Telling our Stories' forged relationships between English academics and local community groups that have led us to planning a further collaborative project focused on telling the stories of women's experiences during WWII.

c. Strategy and plans

Increasing impact is a tangible goal for several of our research projects. Growing the scope and reach of our research is a strategic priority, and building a consideration of impact into all research projects is a key objective. Seven new appointments within the census period (two Professors and five ECRs) have been strategically selected to enhance the research and impact-related activities already underway. English's strategy and plans for the future include investing in and building on existing research strengths and impact activities in **21st and 19th century literature**. A key thematic focus for this impact is the emerging **life writing, testimony and memory studies** research group (**Rowland**). **Woolley's** work on contemporary refugee literatures straddles the UoA's interest in **21st century literature** and its focus on **voices from the margins**. **Woolley** will use her extensive experience of working with refugee and asylum organisations to inform future impact-focused projects that involve third-sector migrant groups. **Rowland's** work on poetry has led to his interest in the National Poetry Archive, and to a dialogue with the head archivist about the accessibility of the archive to non-HE users. **Armitt** brings with her a history of engaging with community storytelling groups in the fields of Memory, Text and Place, through her previous work on the 'Salford Sampler' project (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7JgiTqO7Ual>). **Field** plans to exploit the archive at the local Tennyson Research Centre with a view to making the research therein accessible, meaningful and beneficial to non-HE users, enhancing visitor experience. A key immediate priority is to establish a **Centre of 21st Century Research**, with projects focused on connecting academics, authors and the public in new dialogues aimed at involving non-HE readers in the shaping of opinion about literary value. The second impact-related aim in this area is to deepen relationships with schools through both *Alluvium* and the yearly playwrights festivals (a fourth on David Greig is in 2014 and a fifth on Debbie Tucker Green in 2015).

Developing strategy

Building on good practices in mentoring, we aim to make the benefit-creation approach to research central to the culture of the UoA. We have implemented a system for mapping the impact trajectory of projects developed in the Unit, identifying potential impact, effecting strategies to maximise impact, and establishing an evaluation mechanism to gauge impact outcomes. The College-wide Impact Focus Group acts to facilitate and steer our approach to impact throughout the next five years. An impact lead will work with researchers in understanding and tracking the impact of projects. In addition to monitoring individual projects and their impact, this will enable us to build a coherent 'map' of networks and partnerships, allowing outside communities to view the University as proactive and supportive to 'real world' needs.

d. Relationship to case studies

The two case studies arise from the context and approach outlined above. '**Engaging the Public in 21st Century Literature**' involves members of the 21st Century Research Group (**Adiseshiah, Eve and Edwards**) and the 'Stories of our own' includes members of both the 21st (**Adiseshiah**) and 19th (**Culley and Styler**) Century Research Groups. The '**Engaging the Public in 21st Century Literature**' case study illustrates how 21st century literary research at Lincoln has raised the profile of contemporary authors, texts, plays and literary criticism through public events, performances and open access literary criticism. In making the research highly visible and relevant these outputs, events and activities have impacted upon school teachers and students, as well as wider public engagement with 21st century literature, have enhanced its reception and consumption, and have involved the public in the shaping of critical opinion about contemporary literature. The '**Stories of our Own**' impact case study demonstrates how cross-period literary research in voices from the margins, testimony and life writing has enabled Heritage Lottery Funded community groups to research, produce and document their stories, resulting in stronger local histories, greater community self-knowledge, improvements to tourism, and enhanced levels of community cohesion.