

Institution: Leeds Trinity University
Unit of Assessment: English Language and Literature
Title of case study: Creative writing and the professional development of aspiring authors
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>The creative writing produced at Leeds Trinity has led to, through numerous public engagement activities, a very considerable impact on the professional development of aspiring authors (both adults and young people). The English subject area has actively developed community links to foster creative writing locally, nationally and internationally. The research on which this is founded relates to two members of the UOA who have published fiction and poetry, respectively, and have engaged aspiring authors with their work through public readings, internet and broadcast media, workshops and readings in schools, Writers' Festivals, and residencies, as well as using their expertise in judging competitions. In doing so they have nurtured the joy and meaning of reading and creative writing amongst young people and adults, in the context of a contemporary culture that values technology/media and computer games.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Leeds Trinity University has a growing reputation as a centre for creative writing. It has links with the Royal Literary Fund dating back to 1999, through which it has hosted the following Writers in Residence: Jack Mapanje, David Kennedy, Louise Page, Ray French, Ian Duhig, Neil Hanson, Martyn Bedford, Stephen Wakelam, Peter Guttridge, Susan Barker and Debjani Chatterjee.</p> <p>Key researchers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Martyn Bedford: positions held - 2008-2010, Royal Literary Fund academic writer-in-residence, Leeds Trinity. 2009-present, Associate Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing, Leeds Trinity. (ii) Professor Paul Hardwick: positions held - 2000-2011, Lecturer in English, Leeds Trinity. 2011-present, Professor of English, Leeds Trinity. <p>Martyn Bedford, an internationally renowned novelist, has written five mainstream literary novels for adults. More recently, in his role as Lecturer/writer in residence at Leeds Trinity, he has written for teenage and young adults, publishing <i>Flip</i> (2011) and <i>Never Ending</i> (forthcoming January 2014). <i>Flip</i> is about a boy whose psyche or soul switches from his body to that of another boy. It explores themes of self-identity in adolescence, providing further insights into the meaning of the soul in an accessible way for young people. This theme is supported by research Bedford undertook into scientific, cultural and theological theories on the psyche, consciousness and the migration of the soul. Bedford's research findings resulted in his invention of "psychic evacuation", a pseudo-scientific process that accounts for the body-switch experienced by the main character. In the process of writing <i>Flip</i> Bedford researched narrative and stylistic approaches adopted by authors of contemporary teenage fiction, studying the treatment and range of subject matter and themes and ideas. This has broadened Bedford's range and versatility in relation to narrative tone/voice, pace, structure, characterisation and dialogue.</p> <p>Professor Paul Hardwick has published three well-received collections of poetry (as Oz Hardwick), <i>The Kind Ghosts</i> (2004), <i>Carrying Fire</i> (2006) and <i>The Illuminated Dreamer</i> (2010), plus numerous other poems and short stories. Hardwick's poetry is underpinned by his research expertise in medieval literature and the appropriation of myths. <i>The Kind Ghosts</i> primarily explores form, with particular emphasis on the line, in order to consider questions relating to the voice. The poems in this collection are a response to the suggestion that the rhythm and duration of natural speech has shifted from the pentameter to the tetrameter. Particular poems in the collection are linked to Hardwick's research on medieval literature, offering a different perspective on this work. <i>Carrying Fire</i> offers a more unified collection in terms of subject. Drawing upon Hardwick's interest in the</p>

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myth, research which is explored in two co-edited essay collections, *Carrying Fire* is concerned with cultural and personal myths and their shaping of individual identity. The 'fire' of the title represents/reflects the protean force that is passed between generations and which we internalise. Similar connections between his research and creative writing are evident in *The Illuminated Dreamer*. This collection was written in parallel with the completion of Hardwick's monograph, *English Medieval Mercies*, and shares that volume's interdisciplinary approach, as well as its concern with the borders between the sacred and the profane. Bracketed by overtly 'medieval' poems – the first an appropriation of the erotic metaphors of visionary literature, the last a take on an Anglo-Saxon elegy – popular cultural elements from music and film carry the same weight as medieval iconography, the whole responding to the crowded, fragmented nature of the dream vision.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- Martyn Bedford, *Flip*, (London: Walker Books, 2011; New York: Wendy Lamb, 2011; Toronto: Doubleday, 2011) ISBN: 978-1-4063-2989-6

Prizes and Nominations: Winner of the Sheffield Children's Book Award; Calderdale Book of the Year Award; Bay Book Award, Immanuel College Book Award. Shortlisted for the Costa Children's Book Award. Longlisted for the Carnegie Medal and named as a Red House Children's Book Awards *Pick of the Year* title. US nominations include: Junior Library Guild Selection; School Library Journal – Best Books of 2011; Young Adult Library Services Association – Readers' Choice Nomination; American Library Association – 2012 Quick Picks list; International Reading Association – Young Adult Reading List 2012.

Translations: published in the Netherlands (Haarlem: Gottmer, 2010); Germany (Munich: DTV, 2011); Thailand (Bangkok: Tawansong, 2011); Italy (Milan: Mondadori, 2011); Russia (Moscow: Kariera, 2012) and Taiwan and China (Taipei: Global, 2012). Two audiobook editions (Bath: AudioGO, 2011) and (Grand Haven, Michigan: Brilliance, 2011).

Reviews: Reviewed in: *The Times* as 'Bedford's taut style and psychological insight make Flip a gripping thriller' (London: Mar 12, 2011); the *Sunday Telegraph* 'a serious contemplation on what constitutes the soul' (London: Apr 26, 2011); starred review, Kirkus 'Bedford packs so much exhilarating action and cleanly cut characterizations into his teen debut that readers will be catapulted headfirst into Alex's strange new world' (New York: kirkusreviews.com, Mar 1, 2011).

- Oz Hardwick, *The Kind Ghosts* (Bristol: bluechrome, 2005)

Reviewed in *The Black Mountain Review* as 'The more one reads Hardwick's poems the more they have to say; like lovers with their arms initially closed across their chests, the nearer one approaches, the more they open up, the warmer the embrace'.

- Oz Hardwick, *Carrying Fire* (Bristol: bluechrome, 2006)

Reviewed in *Envoi* as 'A strong and articulate voice with compassion and humour... Hardwick's ear for rhythm is consistently persuasive'.

- Oz Hardwick, *The Illuminated Dreamer* (Kingsbridge: Oversteps, 2010) [REF2 entry]
- Oz Hardwick, (2013) *An Eschatological Bestiary* (Batley: Dog Horn Publishing, 2013) [REF2 entry]

Key grants

Bedford: Publishers' advances for **Flip* (2011-2012): UK - £75,000; US - \$110,000; Italy – €7,000; Germany, €6,000; Canada - CN\$6,500; Netherlands – €3,500; Thailand – US\$1,000; Russia – US\$2,000; China/Taiwan – US\$1,800; Audio (UK) - £420; Audio (US) - \$7,500.

* The UK and US advances are for a two-book contract for *Flip* and *Never Ending* (forthcoming 2014); the other advances are one-book deals for *Flip* only.

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Hardwick: Arts Council grant for £450 for attendance at Poetry on the Lake Festival, Orta, Italy, to launch *Carrying Fire* (October 2006).

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The reach of Bedford's and Hardwick's creative writing has been wide through their teaching (in schools and residential workshops), critical feedback to aspiring authors and poets, and public readings and talks. Collectively they have engaged with over 3,000 young people (aged 11 – 17 through Bedford's work with schools nationally), approximately 1,500 adults (through public talks, readings and critical feedback), and potentially up to 3-400,000 members of the public who accessed Hardwick's poems published online at *The Poetry Kit*. These activities have had an impact on the professional development of aspiring authors and nurtured the joy and meaning of reading and creative writing. Bedford has had notable successes with numerous authors who have gone on to gain publishing deals as a result of his feedback.

Implementing his understanding, knowledge and experience of teenage fiction (gained through researching and writing *Flip* and the forthcoming *Never Ending*), Bedford has run more than 100 sessions in visits to 46 schools since 2011. These sessions have taken the form of talks and readings to groups of 30-150 and running writing workshops for groups of 15-25, ranging in age from 11 to 17 years. Assuming an average of 30 students per session, this equates to 3,000 young people, though the total number Bedford has engaged with is likely to be greater than this as numerous sessions involved up to 150 students. Bedford has visited schools all over Britain (dates and locations available on request). Feedback from these events includes the following from one parent: 'My daughter recently attended your creative writing workshop. She really enjoyed meeting you and taking part, in fact she was buzzing with ideas when she came home and it was great to hear her talking about developing her imagination and creative side again' (Guiseley School, Leeds); and from a senior librarian, 'The students all had a brilliant day and all the feedback has been really positive. They loved your workshop and found your answer to their questions about *Flip* and writing fascinating' (Great Baddow High School, Chelmsford).

Bedford's teaching has extended to adults through his involvement with the Arvon Foundation. He has taught on five residential courses for the Arvon Foundation (2008 - 2012), one-week workshop-and-tutorial based courses for 16 adult participants on topics including Starting to Write; Fiction Writing; Starting a Novel; Novel Writing; Second Drafts; Writing for Teenagers. These workshops, particularly 'Writing for Teenagers', were grounded in Bedford's own research on teenage fiction. A prominent example of a developing writer who has gone on to become a published author following teaching from Bedford, is Mirza Waheed, who attended a tutorial based workshop run by Bedford (July 2008) with the Arvon Foundation, and has since published *The Collaborator* (Penguin, 2011).

Aspiring writers have also developed as authors through receiving critical feedback from Bedford. From 2006–09 Bedford was a consultant and critic-in-residence for the online writing forum *YouWriteOn.com*. YouWriteOn was established in 2006 with Arts Council funding to assist new writers to develop their writing. Bedford's role was to help devise the reviewing and ratings system used by site members to evaluate and provide feedback on one another's work. He also provided a detailed critique to the author of each month's highest-rated work (totalling 24 critiques during the period 2008-09). In addition, from 2002 to 2009, he co-founded and ran *Literary Intelligence*, a fiction-in-progress appraisal service for new and developing writers, providing critical overviews and annotated feedback on the texts of stories, novel extracts and full-length novels. During the period 2008-09, Bedford supplied appraisals to 22 clients using the Literary Intelligence service.

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Prominent examples of developing writers who have gone on to become published authors after receiving feedback from these sources include: Linda Green, who received feedback through *Literary Intelligence* (June 2008 and March 2009) has published several novels including *Things I Wish I'd Known* (Headline Review, 2010); and Guy Saville, who Bedford provided critical feedback to through youwriteon.com (December 2008), and has published *The Afrika Reich* (Hodder, 2011).

Both Bedford and Hardwick have promoted creative writing by giving numerous readings of their work to an estimated total of 1,500 members of the public. Bedford has taken part in panel events such as readers' days in Conwy (July 2008; audience 150) and Tyneside (May 2010; audience 200). Similarly, Hardwick has given readings at Sheffield *Off the Shelf* festival (2009), Ilkley Literature Festival (2010 and 2012), York Literature Festival (2008-12), Beverley Folk Festival (2008-2012), Glastonbury Festival (2009 and 2011), Poetry on the Lake (Italy, 2008), Ware Literature Festival (2012) and many smaller venues in the UK, Europe and USA. Audiences for these performances were generally 40-50, although at larger festivals (such as Glastonbury) this ran to hundreds. In addition to the public readings, Hardwick's creative writing has been promoted to the public through the publication of his poems online. In December 2012 Hardwick was featured in *The Poetry Kit's* 'Caught in the Net' which is mailed to 10,000 subscribers and is expected to be read by 3-400,000, the site attracting around 6,000,000 unique visitors per year. An email from the organiser of the site reveals that Hardwick's poems received a significantly greater number of responses than normal (24 compared to a usual 5) and all were positive, stating that they had enjoyed the poetry feature.

Hardwick also promoted creative writing to a wide audience when he was commissioned by York City Council as Poet in Residence for the Olympic Torch procession through York and on to Thirsk. As well as being interviewed on BBC Radio York (June 2012), the poems he produced for this occasion appeared in the council-sponsored anthology *York: poetry artwork and photographs*, published by Stairwell Books, 2012, a Small Press Publisher. Email communication with the publisher shows that they have sold 145 copies and that this project was 'very beneficial' for them, leading to several other projects, due in part to the contributions of the writers. The Olympic Torch poems, along with several other of Hardwick's poems, have also been published on the website yorkstories2012.com, a community project for York 800 celebrations which aims to encourage people to tell and share stories that are personal and unique to York. Hardwick's research into medieval literature and the influence of this on his work particularly fitted with the historical celebrations. The stories on the website, along with Hardwick's poetry contributions, are in the process of being archived. York Stories 2012 are still in discussions regarding the archiving process, though the emphasis is on inclusivity and accessibility. The project also plan to create a 'QR story' across the city where members of the public (with smart phones) will be able to scan the QR code and access a story. It is likely that Hardwick's poems will be included in this.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

Feedback provided by Bedford through *Literary Intelligence* and youwriteon.com available on request.

Email from Jim Bennett, Managing Editor of the Poetry Kit (May 2012)

www.yorkstories2012.com

<http://www.curtisbrown.co.uk/martyn-bedford/teaching/> Contains further quotes and feedback from Bedford's work in schools

<http://www.poetrykit.org/pki/CITN/citn%20113.htm>

Email communication from Rose Drew, Stairwell Books (June 2013).