

Institution: Leeds Trinity University
Unit of Assessment: English Language and Literature
Title of case study: Impact on public appreciation of Victorian literature and culture
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>The literature of the Victorian era has an enduring popular interest, as evidenced by the plethora of film and television adaptations of novels and authors' biographies. Though this popularization has brought Victorian literature to the foreground, there is a need for the public to be better informed about this literature. Members of the English UOA are engaged in research into Victorian literature and have drawn on this research to help members of the public gain better understanding and deeper appreciation of this literature. They have achieved this through public lectures, seminars, and poetry readings, as well as at events organized through links fostered with local galleries.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Leeds Trinity has an international reputation for research in the area of Victorian Studies. The Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies (LCVS) is a flagship interdisciplinary research centre based at Leeds Trinity with close links to the British Association for Victorian Studies and University of Cergy-Pontoise, Paris. Several staff members in the English unit work within this research centre. The key researchers within this case study are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Dr Richard Storer: 1995-present Lecturer in English (now Associate Principal Lecturer), Leeds Trinity University. 2007-2008, Acting Head of Department of Humanities, Leeds Trinity University; 2009-present Director of Programmes in English, Leeds Trinity University. (ii) Dr Nathan Uglow: 2002-present, Lecturer in English (now Associate Principal Lecturer), Leeds Trinity University. (iii) Rev Dr Jane de Gay: 1999-2012, Lecturer in English, Leeds Trinity University; 2012-present, Reader in English Literature, Leeds Trinity University. <p>Dr Richard Storer has a reputation for research on F. R. Leavis, most notably his volume on <i>F. R. Leavis</i> in the Routledge Critical Thinkers series (2009). The 2009 book is the most up-to-date introduction to F. R. Leavis available – and the first published since 2000. It is not just a synthesis of previous studies of Leavis (though it does fulfil this function) but includes lots of information (bibliographical and contextual) not found in other books on Leavis, and also highlights some key passages from his writings which have not been analysed or discussed in any previous studies. It is not designed to be just a student guide but an authoritative resource for any reader wanting to get past the often caricatured way in which this controversial figure is usually mentioned in public debate (e.g. debates on ideas of culture and the 'two cultures', on the place of theory in literary study, on canon-formation, or on higher education – there are chapters on all these topics in the book). This work highlights the importance of key figures from the Victorian period for Leavis's perspective on literature and society. Storer has developed this idea in further research by highlighting striking parallels between Leavis's work and that of some late Victorian figures with whom he is not normally linked – for example, Oscar Wilde and Sir Henry Irving.</p> <p>Dr Nathan Uglow's research is in Victorian literature and ethics, covering authors as diverse as Robert Browning, John Ruskin, Thomas Carlyle, Charlotte Brontë and Elizabeth Gaskell. His research on Elizabeth Gaskell's novel <i>North and South</i> argues that this work is unusual for a mid-C19 industrial novel because it refuses the typical Romantic attitude of rejecting the city as the corrupt artificial alternative to Nature. Through the plotting of the novel and its reconciliation of city (North) and Nature (South) Mrs Gaskell takes a more Aristotelian stance toward this opposition (the mean is the best position balancing against extreme alternatives). Aristotle's idea of the balance of opposites, mediated through reasoned discourse, provides both the political and moral</p>

basis for the novel. In further research on Ruskin, Uglow counters a prevalent view of Ruskin's work that his career trajectory took him from Puritanism to paganism and back to spiritualised Christianity. Through a close examination of Ruskin's enthusiasm for Fra Angelico's religious painting, the paper traces Ruskin's consistent desire to seek a balanced stance toward life: mixing 'feminine' subtlety and spirituality with 'masculine' resoluteness and self-control. Against previous interpretations the paper demonstrates that Ruskin did not drop Fra Angelico in the late 1850s, when he 'un-converted' from Christianity, but repeatedly used his work as a symbol of the kind of marriage of wisdom and grace that was central to his moral and social message.

Revd Dr Jane de Gay has an international reputation as a Virginia Woolf scholar, most notably for her research into Woolf's intellectual heritage (including the influence of Victorian writers, critics and thinkers such as Sir Leslie Stephen, Anne Thackeray Ritchie, Julia Margaret Cameron, John Ruskin, George Eliot and the Brontës). Dr de Gay's book, *Virginia Woolf's Novels and the Literary Past* (Edinburgh University Press, 2006) was the first to explore Woolf's preoccupation with the literary past and its profound impact on her novels. The monograph provides the most wide-ranging account to date of Woolf's reaction to Victorian writings, analysing her responses to the Brontës, William Cowper, Charles Darwin, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, Coventry Patmore, Anne Thackeray Ritchie, and John Ruskin, among others. In particular, it shows that Woolf's father, Victorian man of letters Sir Leslie Stephen, was a more significant and more positive influence than critics had recognised.

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

- Storer, R. *F. R. Leavis* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009)

Reviewed in *Style*, 45(3), as a work that, even for a reader with considerable knowledge of Leavis, provides 'new insights' due to 'Storer's comprehensive knowledge of Leavis's writings and their reception', and which contains 'carefully-balanced considerations of (and challenges to) what have sometimes become mechanically orthodox ways of placing Leavis' (pp. 552 – 553). According to Chris Terry (*Times Higher Education*) *F.R. Leavis* is 'informative, succinct, circumspect; an exacting introduction to Leavis as an incisive master critic'. Favourably reviewed in *Use of English* (2010), 61(2).

Cited by: Hilliard, C. *English as a Vocation: the 'scrutiny' movement*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Parry, J. & Simpson, E. (2012) 'David Pocock's *Contributions* and the legacy of Leavis', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 46, pp. 393 – 397; and Gardiner, M. *The Return of England in English Literature*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

- de Gay, J. *Virginia Woolf's Novels and the Literary Past* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press/New York: Columbia University Press, 2006; paperback 2007), 288pp. ISBN: 0 7486 2349 3 [peer reviewed]

Reviewed in the *Times Literary Supplement* as a study with numerous 'interesting and powerful themes' and that the 'strong account of Woolf's relation to tradition in *Virginia Woolf's Novels and the Literary Past* will surely facilitate further study of the gender politics of Modernism'. Professor Laura Marcus (University of Sussex) described the work as 'an important intervention at a time in which there is particular interest in Woolf's relationship to the past' and Professor Vara Neverow (University of Connecticut) assigned the book to be 'essential and intellectually provocative reading for Woolf scholars and for common readers alike'.

The work is frequently cited in conference papers and articles on Virginia Woolf, and it is listed in a survey of significant criticism in Susan Sellers (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.175). Published in both the UK and US, *Virginia Woolf's Novels and the Literary Past* is available in libraries worldwide.

- de Gay, J. 'Behind the Purple Triangle: Art and Iconography in *To the Lighthouse*', *Woolf Studies Annual 1999* (New York: Pace University Press, 1999), pp. 1-23. [peer reviewed]
- Uglow, N. 'Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*: the industrial city and the moral self', in François Baillet and Odile Boucher-Rivalain (eds.), *Parcours Urbains* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2011), pp.97-118. [REF entry]
- Uglow, N. 'But Humble – Ruskin and Victorian Spirituality' in Jane de Gay (ed.), *Victorian Spiritualities* (Leeds: Leeds Trinity University College, 2012), pp.236-47. [REF entry]

Key grants

£200 from British Association for Victorian Studies for Victorian Spiritualities colloquium (2012)

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

The body of research detailed above has contributed towards a better informed public on Victorian literature, through public talks, events and publishing in accessible formats. Collectively they have engaged with an estimated 100 members of the public (through public talks and events) and up to 222,000 people who have accessed research published in an accessible format (including readability).

De Gay has reached a wide audience with her research on Virginia Woolf. Her monograph (which was published in hardback and paperback) has had a wide readership that includes general readers as well as academics and students. It has had particular impact through its influence on subsequent publications of Woolf's novels. De Gay's research has been acknowledged by at least one editor of the new, definitive edition of Virginia Woolf's novels from Cambridge University Press (*Mrs Dalloway*, edited by Anne Fernald (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming)), so her research has the impact of providing general readers with a more accurate and informed edition of Woolf's work.

By invitation, de Gay gave the Virginia Woolf Birthday Lecture London January 2009, delivered to an audience of 100, including general readers. The lecture was published as a pamphlet entitled *Virginia Woolf and the Clergy* (Southport: Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain, 2009). This pamphlet has been circulated among church groups interested in the role of women in the church. De Gay demonstrates that Woolf, although not a Christian, offered a detailed critique of the religious structures that exclude women. This research therefore makes a contribution to current debates about Women Bishops.

To aid public engagement with their research, the unit have communicated their research outcomes in accessible formats, targeted at members of the interested public. Such publications have been on a national and international scale with articles in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB)* and *Literary Encyclopedia*. Both of these are online resources widely available outside the academy. Grounded in his research on Victorian and early twentieth-century writing, Storer's entries in the *ODNB* include the editor and publisher A.H. Bullen (1857-1920); Sheffield professor G.C. Moore Smith (1858-1940); and the Victorian Shakespeare scholar and controversialist C.M. Ingleby (1823-86). Similarly Uglow has also made an extensive contribution, based on his research in Victorian literature, to the *Literary Encyclopedia*, contributing 21 articles (whilst at Leeds Trinity), and to the *ODNB*, contributing two articles on Victorian artists. Since publication (2002), Uglow's articles in *Literary Encyclopedia* have been accessed over 222,000 times. It is not possible to break this data down by year, but it might be estimated that the articles were accessed around 101,000 times during the REF assessment period, assuming an even

number of hits per year.

The public have also been engaged in a deeper appreciation of Victorian literature through numerous public lectures and events hosted by the institution. Based on his research in Victorian literature and as Deputy Director of the LCVS, Uglow has shared his expertise and knowledge with public audiences through the coordination a seminar series from 2008 to the present. The seminar series drew in members of the public to hear papers and engage in debates on topics in Victorian Studies. There are six seminars each year with an average audience size of around 12, of which typically three are members of the public. This has resulted in a total of 40 members of the public attending these public lectures. Members of the unit have also moved beyond the physical location of the institution to deliver public lectures. Storer has presented his work on F. R. Leavis at the Leavis international conference in York, 2010, which was open to those beyond the academy. Storer's presentation was favourably mentioned in an article on the Conference in the *Times Literary Supplement*. In his presentation Storer played a rare recording of Leavis reading some of Eliot's poetry, an act that was described as 'sensitively choreographed', 'one of the highlights of the afternoon' and that Storer's 'introduction made it clear ... that this was the voice of a man whose engagement with Eliot's poetry ran deep' (*TLS* 19 November 2010).

The public's knowledge of the period has been influenced and enriched through inviting non-academic yet interested parties to events, hosted at the institution, broadly linked to Victorian literature. De Gay, for example, organised an interdisciplinary colloquium on Victorian Spiritualities (March 2012) which attracted 35 participants from around the world, including members of the public. The event featured an exhibition by the newly-founded Friends of Lawnswood Cemetery and a short talk from one of its members: they provided some positive feedback, commenting that it was useful to actually mount a display and as a consequence they have taken this, or a version of it, to various other events, thus raising their profile. They also found the level of interest in the display rewarding and they made useful contacts, including a member of the Friends of a cemetery in the south, who supplied them with a fundraising idea of producing sympathy cards using pictures of monuments from Lawnswood.

Establishing a partnership with the Mercer Art Gallery, Harrogate, and based on his research in 2009-11 Uglow organised a one-day conference on Leeds artist Atkinson Grimshaw (held at Leeds Trinity, May 2011). This coincided with the Gallery's hosting of the first major exhibition of Grimshaw's work for a generation. Speakers included artists, curators and poets as well as academics, and 27 people attended. An unpublished biography written by his descendants has been unearthed, revealing a sharp sense of humour, a love of art and a fierce dedication to his family. There are photographs and sketchbooks, letters and personal effects, creating stories that turn the paintings from fairytales into history. Feedback from members of the public (including a member of Grimshaw's family) afterwards expressed appreciation of the event.

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

Jane Sellars, Curator at Mercer Art Gallery, Harrogate

Email communication from contact at Friends of Lawnswood Cemetery

Email communication from Anne Fernald, Fordham University, New York

http://www.virginiawoolfsociety.co.uk/vw_publications.htm

<http://friendsoflawnswoodcemetery.co.uk/>