

<b>Institution: Bath Spa University</b>
<b>Unit of assessment: UoA29: English Language and Literature</b>
<b>Title of case study: The novels, stories and literary journalism of Tessa Hadley</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Tessa Hadley's, novels and stories have reached a public audience, been listed for prizes, and led to prominent literary journalism, public debate, and appointments to prize-awarding panels. Hadley's work is an example of the cultural and economic impact of the Creative Writing research community at BSU, which includes novelists, poets, dramatists and non-fiction writers, who have reached public audiences, contributed to public literary culture through journalism, broadcasting and award-judging, and contributed to the economic viability of publishing and related industries. Hadley exemplifies the strategy of using the research base to enhance the quality of published creative writing and literary debate.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Hadley was appointed in 1997 (having been a student on the MA in Creative Writing and taken a PhD at this institution). She has published five novels and two collections of stories. <i>Accidents in the Home</i> was published by Jonathan Cape in February 2002, and by Holt in the USA. <i>Everything Will Be All Right</i> was published by Holt in 2003, and Cape in 2004. <i>The Master Bedroom</i> was published by Cape and Holt in 2007. <i>The London Train</i> was published by Cape and Harper Collins in the USA in 2011. Hadley has stories published regularly in <i>The New Yorker</i>, <i>Granta</i> and <i>The Guardian</i>; a collection, <i>Sunstroke and other Stories</i>, was published in January 2007. A second collection, <i>Married Love</i> (2012), was longlisted for the Frank O'Connor prize and shortlisted for the Edge Hill Prize 2012. Her most recent novel, <i>Clever Girl</i>, appeared from Jonathan Cape in May 2013.</p> <p>Two research questions to which Hadley's creative writing provides an original and significant answer are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How can the moral insights implicit in the tradition of realist close observation running from Henry James through Elizabeth Bowen to Alice Munro be applied to the changes in family life that have occurred in the last fifty years?</li> <li>2. How can the structures of the realist short story in the tradition of James, Chekhov and Munro be integrated into novel-length narrative structures without losing their special qualities?</li> </ol> <p>Throughout her career, Hadley's writing has been supported by the research environment at BSU, which has produced and nourished so many literary authors. She took her MA in Creative writing at BSU, has frequently been given support in the form of teaching relief and travel money, and has benefited from a culture in which writers regularly read and comment supportively on each other's manuscripts.</p>
<p><b>3. References to the research</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <i>Accidents in the Home</i> (Jonathan Cape, 2002); longlisted for the Guardian First Book Award.</li> <li>2) <i>Everything Will Be All Right</i> (Jonathan Cape 2004); shortlisted for the Encore Award.</li> <li>3) <i>The Master Bedroom</i> (Jonathan Cape 2007); longlisted for the Orange Prize and the</li> </ol>

Welsh Book of the Year Award.

- 4) *The London Train* (Jonathan Cape 2011); longlisted for the Orange Prize.
- 5) *Sunstroke and other Stories* (Jonathan Cape 2007); shortlisted for The Story Award in the USA.
- 6) Articles in *The Guardian* and *The London Review of Books*

Deborah Treisman, Fiction Editor of *The New Yorker*, quotes a letter from a reader:

'Thank you very much for these past two works of short fiction, Tessa Hadley's "Honor" and Alice Munro's "Axis." As a child of the eighties, I have been given very little idea what women's lives were like mid-century, before the women's liberation movement. These two stories have allowed me an intimate window into the subtleties of women's roles and what was expected of them. I believe that many females of my generation take for granted the travails of those who preceded us.'

Reviewing Hadley's pair of novellas *The London Train* in *The Sunday Times* in 2011, Peter Parker wrote:

'*The London Train*' also offers a sharp portrait of contemporary Britain. This, being the work of a woman, is of course far better observed, more subtly conveyed and a great deal less preening than those "state-of-the-nation" novels to which so many male writers aspire. Admirably concise and attentively detailed, it outshines them all.' (2 January, 2011).

*Sunstroke* and *The London Train* were both chosen (2007, 2011) as New York Times Notable Books of the Year.

#### 4. Details of the impact

##### Impact on Literary Culture

In addition to her books, Hadley has been invited to write fiction and non-fiction for the radio, newspapers, and journal and magazine publication. It is clear from testimonials that the positive reception of the primary research, the novels, led directly to these further commissions. For several years during the census period she has held a standing-contract for short stories with *The New Yorker*, and is one of very few writers who have been given this privileged contract. She reviews other contemporary fiction writers regularly both for *The Guardian* and *The London Review of Books*, as well as contributing non-review articles on literature, for example in the 'Author' column in *The Guardian's* Saturday review, where she has written about writing about the contemporary ('In Praise of the Present Day Novel', 6 November 2010), and about a position of self-doubt as a preparation for writing (5 June 2010).

She was invited to write a long essay on Love in Literature for *Guardian Review* (7<sup>th</sup> May 2011) as well as being featured in the double page spread 'A Life in Writing', 28<sup>th</sup> Feb 2011. She wrote a Diary for *The Spectator* (17<sup>th</sup> March 2012). She was also invited to choose her Private Passions for Radio 3 (May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012), and has made numerous contributions to radio programmes for Radio 3 and 4: e.g. an Essay on Dickens's fictional technique and how it influences a contemporary writer (19<sup>th</sup> December 2011), and a story as part of BBC's Earth Music Festival December 2011. She has in the last year appeared on *The Verb* (reading commissioned story), *Open Book* (discussing short story form), and *Night Waves* (discussing Elizabeth Bowen), on Radios 3 & 4. Five of her stories from *Married Love* were broadcast on Radio 4 Xtra (March 2012). *The London Train* was chosen for the Waterstones book club (January 2012). *Married Love* was an Amazon Book of the Month in the US December 2012. She contributed an essay on judging the short story magazine in Mslexia, with guidance for short story writers (June 2012).

Hadley's impact on the writing and publishing of contemporary literary fiction has been described by Sophie Scard of United Agents Ltd as follows. "She has, in a very short amount of time, gained a reputation as one of the finest British novelists writing today. Her quietly powerful scenes of domesticity and personal relationships have helped redefine the genre and restore its validity. She has demonstrated that it's possible to be a woman writing about men and women, marriage and motherhood, in a way that retains all of the hallmarks of excellent literary fiction whilst also proving a commercially sound proposition for publishers. This is a great achievement, one with longstanding benefits for writers, thinkers and all those concerned with matters of women, family and the human condition in the 21<sup>st</sup> century."

In the summer of the London riots, 2011, she was asked by *The New Yorker* to write a comment piece for their online version of the magazine. In 2012 she was invited to contribute a long paper of reflections on contemporary Wales for a collection to be published by the Institute of Welsh Affairs (Wales 20:20). She was a guest speaker in April at the National Museum, Cardiff, launching a new programme of Literary Tourism; the only other invited speaker was the Archbishop of Canterbury. She ran a master class on short story writing for the Royal Society of Literature (November 2012). Her books have been chosen by numerous book clubs: most recently by Topping's Bookshop reading club in Bath (May 13<sup>th</sup> 2013).

The reach of Hadley's contributions to the *New Yorker* is demonstrated by data provided by Deborah Triesman, Fiction Editor of *The New Yorker*. "Circulation for the magazine is over 1.2 million. The numbers double if you count everyone who visits the website. The *New Yorker* Fiction Podcast averages 200,000 to 250,000 downloads a month. The readings of your own work that you do go out with our digital editions, and unfortunately we don't have a way to track how many people listen to them, but anecdotally that number is high. It seems fair to say that your stories (combined with the web Q&As) are shared/linked to via social media somewhere between 300 and 400 times each. That number doesn't include re-tweets and re-shares—so the real number could be exponentially higher. With 17 stories published here since the start of 2003, you win the prize for most frequently published fiction writer in the magazine."

Hadley has frequently been invited to judge prominent literary prizes, including the Rhys Davies Prize in 2007, the V S Pritchett Prize in 2008, the IMPAC Novel Prize in 2011, the BBC National Short Story Award in 2011 and the *Msllexia* Short Story Prize in 2012. Prizes such as these are an essential part of the contemporary literary publishing industry, bringing recognition and financial backing for authors and publicity to novels. In judging these prizes, Hadley was playing a vital role in the discovery and promotion of new literary talent. As the comments of the organisers indicate, she was invited to judge these awards because of the high esteem in which her research was held, and because of its perceived relevance to contemporary family concerns.

Hadley's engagement with and impact on creative practitioners is evident from the high praise she has been given by the organisers of literary prizes with whom she has worked:

"Finalisation of the judging team is based in the first instance on the undoubted high calibre of the team members in the literary world in their own countries. It also has regard to practical considerations related to individual availability in particular years, to geographic location and gender representation. We decided to ask Tessa if she would consider becoming a judge for the 2011 award because of her impressive CV! She had published a number of novels at that time that had been very well received, she was an experienced reviewer of fiction, and because of her position as senior lecturer in English and Creative Studies at Bath Spa University. Tessa was also involved with the Arts Council in Ireland at that time and came highly recommended. Tessa was very pleasant to deal throughout the process and she performed her part as a member of the judging panel conscientiously. We were delighted to have the benefit of her experience and insight on the 2011 Judging Panel." Di Speirs, Editor-Readings, BBC Radio.

“Tessa was indeed a member of the judging panel in 2011, alongside Geoff Dyer and Joe Dunthorne. We choose our judges for their literary skills and in the belief that they will support and champion the aim of the award, which is to celebrate and foster what has been an undervalued genre. Tessa, like the vast majority of our judges, comes with an impeccable pedigree as a writer – and with an impressive canon of her own work, including in the short story field. Tessa brought to the 2011 table not only forensic knowledge of the wider picture but also incisive critiques of the sixty plus stories we were considering. As we had expected she had read them all carefully, chosen her particular favourites which she defended with passion and intelligence and then debated with great good humour and sensitivity so that we could come to a cohesive final list. I can say that this particular panel was one of the most interesting, gracious and acute of all those I’ve served on (I judge this award annually so have done 8 and have also chaired other literary prizes). Tessa’s contribution was a huge part of that. In practical terms she had to attend three meetings in London plus reading the stories. We run the award on very little money and the judges get only the smallest remuneration. We were very grateful to her for all the time she put in and also for the extra press and publicity work that she did. For the BBC, someone of her academic rigour and artistic ability, coming from an institution that teaches creative writing and is fostering the next generation of writers, is an absolute boon. She was also great fun to work with.” Cathy McKenna, Senior Librarian / Award Administrator, International IMPAC DUBLIN Literary Award.

### Commercial Impact (indicative)

#### Sales figures for *The London Train*:

Hardback:	3,810	Paperback:	28,133	
E-Book:	3,043	EB (Kindle):	433	<b><u>Total sales: 35,419</u></b>

### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- 1) Individual: Literary Agent, United Agents. The impact of Hadley’s research on the writing and publishing of contemporary literary fiction.
- 2) Individual: Fiction Editor, The New Yorker. The reach and impact on readers of Hadley’s contributions to *The New Yorker*.
- 3) Individual: Editor, BBC Radio. Hadley’s impact on writers, in her capacity as a literary judge.
- 4) Individual: Senior Librarian / Award Administrator, International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award. Hadley’s impact on writers, in her capacity as a literary judge.
- 5) Individual: Jonathan Cape Editorial Assistant, Random House Ltd. Has provided a statement of sales figures, indicating the reach of Hadley’s work to over 35,000 readers.

Blog comments on stories by Hadley published in *The New Yorker*. Demonstrating Hadley’s impact on readers, in their own words.

- 6) <http://mookseandgripes.com/reviews/2013/04/01/tessa-hadley-valentine/>
- 7) <http://mookseandgripes.com/reviews/2013/01/14/tessa-hadley-experience/>
- 8) <http://mookseandgripes.com/reviews/2012/07/02/tessa-hadley-an-abduction/>
- 9) <http://www.newhavenreview.com/index.php/2013/04/im-taking-my-sharpie-and-im-drawing-a-line-tessa-hadley-and-deborah-eisenberg/>.