

Institution: Brunel University
Unit of Assessment: 29 – English Language and Literature
<p>a. Context</p> <p>Aligned with the University's 1966 charter that established Brunel to promote research 'for the benefit of individuals and society at large', English and Creative Writing seeks to be outward looking and engaged with contemporary cultural, social, and political debates. Our impact focuses on new ways of thinking that shape creative practice, informs and influences policy, helps organisations adapt to changing cultural values, and revises and interprets our cultural heritages. Our research provides expert advice to government and NGOs in work on ageing (Tew / Hubble) and young British Muslim identities (Mondal). By articulating revised understandings of racism, sexual / gender, and age discrimination our research has enhanced wider public understandings of wellbeing and human rights, especially sexual and ethnic identities, and our work contributes to major changes in social attitudes and national policies.</p> <p>In creative writing our leading staff, formerly Weldon, now Evaristo, Self, and Zephaniah are major and influential public creative intellectuals. Our initiatives have reshaped the opportunities available to writers: Evaristo's role in the Arts Council's <i>Spread the Word</i> (2006) and the subsequent national development programme for black and Asian poets (http://thecompleteworks.net/), led to the establishment of the Brunel University African Poetry Prize (http://www.africanpoetryprize.org/), funded by the University, the Africa Centre, and the Commonwealth Foundation. The prize attracted 655 entrants, and the first winner, Warsan Shire, has described its transformational impact: 'Since winning the prize I have travelled to six different countries to teach poetry and read my work. I was appointed the first Young Poet Laureate for London, (awarded by Carol Ann Duffy with a residency at the Houses of Parliament) and I am definitely sure that the last one wouldn't have happened had I not won the prize.'</p> <p>Our contribution to the current debates about revising and interpreting British heritage and culture has included the active engagement of Self who has regularly appeared on <i>Question Time</i> and Radio 4, and Zephaniah has also appeared widely on radio and television. Self was nominated for the Booker Prize (2012) for <i>Umbrella</i> while Zephaniah's <i>Hurricane Dub</i> (BBC Young Playwrights Festival Award, 1988) was repeated in the 'BBC Radio Young Writers: 25 Years On' series (2013). Contributions as advisor (Eviden) and contributing editor (Gerzina) for 'The Written Word' (BBC, Radio 4) and <i>The British</i> (Sky TV, 6 episodes, 2012) illustrate our revisionary cultural impacts. Betteridge's association with Historic Royal Palaces in the production of historic performances (more recently Historic Scotland for the 'Staging and Representing the Scottish Court' project, see http://www.stagingthescottishcourt.org), has, in the view of Michael Day, the HRP Chief Executive, reshaped HRP's research. Betteridge now serves on HRP's Research Strategy Board.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>Our approach to impact develops internal and external collaborations with NGOs, cultural organisations, and industry, applies new methods and approaches to urgent social issues, and pursues new forms of creativity. These interactions are structured through Brunel Centre for Contemporary Writing (BCCW) and the Creative Enterprise Centre (CEC), part of the university-wide Collaborative Research Network on 'Creative Industries'.</p> <p>BCCW makes a major contribution to the discipline through its seminars and conferences, through its Decades publication series, and through its work on ageing, 'Fiction and the Cultural Mediation of Ageing', in collaboration with the University of the Third Age (U3A), the Mass Observation archive, and DEMOS (the think-tank). Supported by two grants from the ESRC New Dynamics of Ageing programme, Fiction and the Cultural Meanings of Ageing Project (FCMAP) explored how narratives about ageing and reading groups could be used to develop a more subtle approach to policy developments directed towards older people. In tandem with important new evidence, the project has made significant new methodological contributions by bringing together social science and humanities methods in the study of narrative, published as <i>Ageing, Narrative and Identity: New Qualitative Social Research</i> (2014).</p> <p>The application of research to benefit of the cultural industries is directed through the CEC which recruited the publishing analyst Danuta Kean as a knowledge transfer secondee (see below). Kean</p>

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conducted interviews with all the major London publishing houses, literary agencies and author organisations to establish graduate career paths and identify skills gaps in the current publishing industry and how universities could develop courses to meet those needs. The report, *Making It Work*, was delivered in August 2011. CEC also inaugurated the Ogilvy Scholarship Programme, a reciprocal relationship with the global advertising group which provides an induction day for 25 UGs, shadowing weeks for up to 6 UGs, a scholarship worth £7,500 for a Brunel student, and an in-house creative writing course for Ogilvy London run by Brunel graduates.

Our archival holdings, especially the Burnett Archive (working class autobiographies) and South Asian Diaspora Literature and Arts Archive (SALIDAA, see www.sadaa.co.uk), have been used to generate new creative outputs alongside more traditional scholarship. The quality of the library's Special Collections room was identified by the Heritage Lottery Foundation as instrumental in its award of £63,400 to develop the Asian Women Writers Collective (AWWC) archive (2012-13). This project engages the local community in Slough in activities that interpret and disseminate the heritage significance of the AWWC, and involves partnerships between Brunel, SALIDAA, Slough Borough Council, community organizations, local libraries, and primary and secondary schools. The Mummyji Project encouraged primary school children to respond through creative writing to the memories from their communities, and using the South Asian Diaspora Literature and Arts Archive, three Brunel creative writers have recently contributed to the anthology of South Asian women's writing, *Against the Grain* (2013). The archive, supported by both University-led investment and community engagement, demonstrates how a dynamic research environment can be sustained for the benefit of both academic and external communities.

Institutional support, expertise, and resources: English and Creative Writing has benefited from extensive support. The University's Research Support and Development Office (RSDO) provides expertise and advice on networking, charitable organisations and industry (such as the HLF bid for SALIDAA). RSDO organises the Research Network system that encourages engagement with major areas of external collaboration, partnerships, and knowledge transfer. Other schemes directly support impact generation, so Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (which second staff to work in the University or send researchers into non-academic environments) provide unique opportunities for staff to engage with non-academic groups directly, developing networks with industry, government departments, charities, and other heritage and cultural organisations. Kean (2011) was brought into CEC through this scheme.

Penny's recent research on female genital mutilation (FGM), using creative practices to address controversial issues from Africa, that also effect lives in the UK, illustrates how these support mechanisms foster impact in research. The initial stages of Penny's FGM research involved a KT secondment from a Kenyan NGO to the UK (2013) leading to a larger project funded by the Winston Churchill Trust and Wellcome (2013-14). Using drama therapy and creative writing to counter female genital mutilation through narratives that reinforce the rejection of FGM Penny's research builds on work with Tasaru Girls Rescue Centre, Narok and Samburu Girls Foundation (Kenya), but has been deployed by Voluntary Action, Camden, Trust for London, and Project Azure (Metropolitan Police).

The establishment of a formal Concordat for career development of researchers in 2010 has, as a crucial principle, increased emphasis on impact. BRIEF, the funding scheme for new staff (offering up to £15k in support) includes an assessment of research impact, applications for research leave requires a similar consideration of impact. Impact has been incorporated into the academic promotion process, at all levels. Colleagues undertaking the University Future Research Leaders scheme require evidence of impact-related research and engagement, and 'Understanding Impact' and the 'Impact Planning and Review Toolkit' form part of the training course for all new staff.

The unit has benefitted the increased visibility of research through the Open Access Publishing Fund and BURA (Brunel University Research Archive) initiative so that any research can be viewed/followed up by non-academic interest groups. From 2007 BURA has provided an on-line archive of all research outputs, in line with our Open Access Mandate (2010) and aided by the Open Access Publishing Fund (2011 onwards). These measures support the free access to our research by potential users, and help promote the serendipitous creation of impact.

c. Strategy and plans

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We are well placed to develop our research impact. We operate in the context of an industry-led university where impact is embedded in the research 'lifecycle'. So, up to 2020 we plan to be more aware of the need to exploit research in diverse ways both individually and collectively. The strategy has two directions: structural and cultural.

New impact structures. the Research Committee will include an impact champion (Professor Tom Betteridge) tasked with raising the quantity, quality, and effectiveness of our impact. A 'research impact strategy' will articulate to staff how to approach impact, drawing on *A Holistic Approach to Valuing our Culture* by Claire Donovan of the Health Economics Research Group for the Department of Culture Media and Sport (funded by DCMS, AHRC and ESRC) on assessing 'cultural value'. Third, a new research partnership plan will identify our strategic partners, the ways in which we can embed cultural engagement, and define purposeful and long-lasting relationships with key stakeholders. Partnership will draw together our more traditional forms of networking (visiting professorships, fellowships, staff and student exchanges) with more industry-led placements (such as funded by RSDO or by AHRC), with newer forms of interaction with user-groups, and the broader range of partners needed to implement a stronger impact and co-design ethos. An impact advisory group to access expertise from across the University and from our partners will inform the development, implementation, and monitoring of policies.

Building an impact culture. An enhanced mentoring scheme that will include impact as a cornerstone of developing research projects. RSDO has commenced a programme of creativity and collaboration workshops to seed new cross-disciplinary connections, encouraging extra-mural partnerships and co-design strategies that generate novel and 'impactful' research in emerging areas such as 'Big Data'. We will identify individuals and projects with potential for further impact development, such as two recent BRIEF award recipients (Knepper, Lynch), and we will establish a new co-designed and community project with English Heritage using the good practice established in Betteridge's 'Staging and Representing the Scottish Court'. A series of workshops on new methods of dissemination and new research processes will draw upon the School's expertise in performance as research; we shall use expertise from Social Sciences to explore how we might better influence policy; and we shall seek out experts in data visualisation and new dissemination methods to raise awareness of different approaches to engagement as well as publication.

d. Relationship to case studies

The three case studies provide a benchmark which establishes our current impact and maps out our future directions for the School, including areas for expansion and improvement. **Mondal's** case study develops from work undertaken during study leave, and illustrates how we can use such schemes, especially given the availability of KT funds to expand such projects. The work of BCCW and CEC respond more directly to national research priorities as established by RCUK and illustrates how such projects can lead to innovative interactions with industry and key sectors of society, but also how such work generates new academic work and innovative methodology in the case Fiction and the Cultural Mediation of Ageing (**Tew/Hubble/Morrison**). They evidence the ways in which humanities subjects can shape policy and our expert testimony and research has been used by the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism (Home Office), the Community Cohesion Unit (Department for Children, Schools and Families), the Wilton Park Conference (ACPO / OSCT, 2009), and the Department of Work and Pensions, a pattern which can be traced in other work from the unit (e.g. Spurlin gave expert testimony to the All Party Group for Debt, Trade, and Aid, House of Commons, 2009, on development and sexuality). Finally, these strategies of deep public engagement and collaboration and co-design (led by **Self**) have also worked through into our creative outputs, such as *Kafka's Wound*, the 'digital essay', where a wide range of disciplines and skills have contributed to an innovative, creative form with widespread cultural, critical, and intellectual impact.