

## Impact case study (REF3b)

<b>Institution:</b> York St John University
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 36 Communication, Cultural, and Media Studies, Library and Information Management)
<b>Title of case study:</b> Power, Identity and Difference in Caribbean and Black British Contexts
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Dr Lawson Welsh's research is concerned with questions of power, identity and difference in the Caribbean and its diasporas as evidenced in theoretical, literary, culinary and wider cultural contexts. There are four main areas of impact to this research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Impact on the public understanding of Caribbean history and culture via the creative sector (television);</li> <li>(b) Impact on pedagogic strategies and curriculum development in the field of Postcolonial Studies and Anglophone Caribbean literature;</li> <li>(c) Impact on the production and interpretation of Black British Women's Writing;</li> <li>(d) Impact on widening awareness of food studies, Caribbean and other ethnic minority culinary practices in a regional context.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>(a) (b) Welsh's interests in this field developed out of her research at Warwick University 1987-1991 and were consolidated in <i>The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature</i> (1996), a key text in the field which brings previously unknown or inaccessible primary and secondary texts to greater attention and draws more familiar texts into a range of new contexts.</p> <p>(b) (c) Welsh is a founding member and co-editor of the leading international journal, <i>Journal of Postcolonial Literature (JPW)</i>: Taylor and Francis), launched in 2005 and devoted to the study of global literature in English. This Journal explores the interface between the postcolonial writing of the modern global era and the economic forces of production which increasingly commodify culture, as well as the reshaping of inner maps of the metropolis through the ethnic, diasporic voices and the alternative and interstitial modes of writing associated with the new margins.</p> <p>(b) (c) Welsh has published one monograph (2007), co-edited two books (1996, 2010), edited two special issues of international journals (<i>World Literature Written in English</i> and <i>JPW</i>) and a cluster of shorter publications exploring themes of power, identity and difference. Her co-edited book, <i>Rerouting the Postcolonial</i>, explores future directions for Postcolonial Studies including theories of globalization, cosmopolitanism, terror, ecocriticism and the ethical and aesthetic turn in postcolonial studies.</p> <p>(d) Welsh's most recent research focuses on performances and representations of food in Caribbean and diasporic contexts, with particular interests in cookery writing and questions of 'authenticity', culinary versions of nation and food hierarchies and social order in early accounts.</p>
<p><b>3. References to the research</b></p> <p>3.1 Donnell, A. and Lawson Welsh, S. (eds), (1996) <i>The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature</i> (Routledge).</p> <p>3.2 Lawson Welsh, S. (2007) <i>Grace Nichols</i> in the 'Writers and Their Work' Series (British Council and Northcote Press).</p> <p>3.3 Wilson, J. Sandru, C. and Lawson Welsh, S. (eds), (2009) Special issue of <i>Journal of Postcolonial Writing: Rerouting the Postcolonial</i>, 45:2 and (2010), <i>Rerouting the Postcolonial</i>:</p>

## Impact case study (REF3b)

*New Directions for a New Millennium* (Routledge).

- 3.4 Lawson Welsh, S. (2012) 'Texts, Bodies, Theory: Teaching Gender in Postcolonial Studies' in *Teaching Gender* (Palgrave Macmillan, 'Teaching the New English Series'), edited by Fiona Tolan and Alice Ferrebe; General Editor, Ben Knights, Director of the English Subject Centre.
- 3.5 Lawson Welsh, S. (2013) 'A Table of Plenty: Representations of food and social order in early Caribbean writing, Caryl Phillip's *Cambridge* (1991) and Andrea Levy's *The Long Song* (2010)', *Entertext*, Caribbean Special Issue edited by Sandra Courtman and Wendy Knepper.
- 3.6 Lawson Welsh, S. (2013) 'Performing Cross-culinary discourse: residual orality and the invention of 'tradition' in the cookery writing of Levi Roots' in Anne Bruske ed. *Caribbean Food Cultures: Performances of Eating, Drinking and Consumption in the Caribbean and its Diasporas* (Transcript Press).

#### 4. Details of the impact

##### (i) 'Impact on the public understanding of Caribbean history and culture via the creative sector (television)'

Welsh's research has had impact via the re-presenting of her expertise in Caribbean history and culture to non-academic, popular audiences. She acts as a specialist advisor to researchers for BBC radio and television programmes which have connections to the Caribbean and Caribbean diaspora. Most recently she was consulted by researchers on series 10 of the popular BBC 1 series, 'Who Do You Think You Are?' for a programme on Black British footballer John Barnes. This explored his Jamaican ancestry and the key political and cultural contribution of his grandfather, Frank Hill, in the 1930s, 40s and 50s. This ninth episode of the series was aired on 17th October 2012. The series regularly attracts viewing figures of 6 million. Welsh's consultancy thus has had wide impact in creating and interpreting cultural capital and in contributing to a wider public understanding of Caribbean history and culture via the creative sector (television).

##### (ii) 'Influencing pedagogic strategies and curriculum development in the field of Postcolonial Studies and Anglophone Caribbean literature'

Welsh's 1996 publication, *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature* quickly established itself as a Routledge bestseller and as a template for subsequent collections. It has never been out of print and is widely recommended as a core text on Caribbean, Black Studies, World Literature and Postcolonial programmes globally. For example, it is currently required reading on modules at Stanford, Chicago, Cornell, Illinois, Iowa, Santa Cruz, Michigan State, Miami, Texas Christian, Florida, Toronto, Manitoba, Albany, Victoria, Auckland, Queensland, Brisbane, the University of the West Indies in Jamaica and Barbados, Puerto Rico, Hong Kong, Lyon, Liege, Aarhus, Marburg, Freiberg, Saarland, London, Oxford, Cambridge, Warwick, Kent, York, Leeds and Newcastle.

In his 1996 review of *The Routledge Reader* in *The Observer*, Caribbean/ Black British writer, Caryl Phillips, noted the 'ample space [given] to authors who have been previously underestimated', especially early, out of print and non-canonical and/or critically neglected figures. More importantly, he anticipated the Reader's impact in shaping understanding of Anglophone Caribbean as a whole by influencing curricula and encouraging re-publication of lost or out of print texts: 'It may well have paved the way for the republication of some of them. This is true of H.G. de Lisser and Roger Mais and is certainly the case with Una Marson.' Since 1996, this impact has been realized with the launch of the Faber Caribbean Classics series edited by Phillips and Macmillan and Peepal Press's republication of important early Caribbean texts including, as predicted, Mais and Marson. Welsh is currently writing critical introductions for the 'Caribbean Classics Series' (led by writers Derek Walcott and David Dabydeen) which reprints Caribbean texts with the aim of widening access to local Caribbean audiences.

Welsh's 2012 pedagogic research on teaching gender in Postcolonial Studies also has impact as part of an English Subject Centre/ Palgrave Macmillan publication designed to influence design and delivery of curriculum in international as well as national HEI contexts. Although too recent a

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

publication to have significant citation figures for, it has led to a number of invitations, including an invitation to join a new Black British Women's Network (BBWN), initiated at an international expert meeting to promote Black British Women's Writing at Vie Universiteit Brussel in March 2013 and funded by the Flemish Research Council (Fonds voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek Vlaanderen).

**(iii) 'Creation and interpretation of Black British Women's Writing'**

Welsh is a recognised expert on Black British writing and her 2007 monograph, *Grace Nichols* (British Council and Northcote Press), was the first book length study of this important author, included on UK GCSE and A Level syllabi. Her international reputation has led to invitations to be area consultant to the prestigious online resource, *The Literary Encyclopaedia*, to join the editorial board of *The Journal of Contemporary Literature* (India), and to act as specialist peer reviewer for major publishers such as Routledge (US), Taylor & Francis (US) and Palgrave Macmillan (UK). Welsh's research directly led to the invitation to join BBWN as a targeted expert. BBWN has impact via: a new online annotated bibliography of criticism of Black British women's writing aimed both at scholars and students; a special issue journal publication which will explore the current state of Black British Women's Writing and criticism by means of a genre-based approach; targeted conference panels (for example at the international 'AfroEurope' Conference in London, October 2013, and at the Postcolonial Studies Association Conference, Kingston University, September 2013) and an international conference, 'Black British Writing: Tracing the Tradition and New Directions' will be held at the University of Brighton in July 2014. Popular dissemination of network research takes place via dedicated BBWN groups on LinkedIn and Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/378188258946761/>  
[http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=4834285&trk=hb\\_side\\_g](http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=4834285&trk=hb_side_g)

**(iv) 'Widening awareness of food studies, Caribbean and other ethnic minority culinary practices in a regional context'**

Welsh's latest research into Caribbean food studies and food writing has impact by increasing public understanding of food studies, Caribbean and other ethnic minority culinary practices in an international and regional context. Her research has led to invitations to speak both in the UK and abroad. For example, at the International Conference, 'Caribbean Food Cultures: Performances of Eating, Drinking and Consumption in the Caribbean and its Diasporas' held at the Centre for Transcultural Research, the University of Heidelberg (September 2012), and at a public event on 'Food and Storytelling' in the Studio Talk Series hosted by the International Centre for Arts and Narrative (ICAN) at York Theatre Royal (October 2013). She also presented papers on food at the International Conference, 'Narrating The Caribbean Nation' at Leeds Metropolitan University (April 2012) and at the 'Caribbean Studies in the North' seminar series, at Leeds Metropolitan University (October 2011).

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

- 5.1 Dr Lawson Welsh has research contacts in broadcasting, including a Junior Researcher at Wall to Wall for the BBC series 'Who Do You Think You Are?', who would be able to provide information on Dr Lawson Welsh's projects and consultancy.
- 5.2 In academic publishing, a former Editorial Assistant in Education and Research at Routledge/Taylor & Francis (New York), and a Commissioning Editor in Research at Routledge/Taylor & Francis (New York) would be able to provide information on commissioning/ peer reviewing projects.
- 5.3 For Black British Women's Writing Network (BWWN), Prof. Dr. Bekers of Vrije Universiteit Brussel, would be able to provide information on the network's activities.  
See also <https://www.facebook.com/groups/378188258946761/>  
[http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=4834285&trk=hb\\_side\\_g](http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=4834285&trk=hb_side_g)

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

5.4 For *The Literary Encyclopaedia*, see <http://www.litencyc.com/editors.php>. The Managing Editor can give details about Dr Lawson Welsh's (Anglophone Caribbean) area editorial consultancy for this online resource.

5.5 Food Consultant and Managing director of Inspirational Indian Cuisine,  
<http://www.sharmini.co.uk/mambolive/home/>