

Impact template (REF3a)

<p>Institution: University of the West of England, Bristol</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 29 - English Language and Literature</p>
<p>a. Context The major beneficiaries of the Unit's research are 'intelligent non-specialists who have an interest in the arts and cultural life'. These include, in particular, teachers, professionals and administrators but also a broader public. The Unit's staff has employed various forms of public engagement – public lectures, reading groups, master classes, edited collections, DVDs, blogs and strategic partnerships (for instance with the Royal West of England Academy (RWA)) in order to place their work – particularly in Romantic, Gothic and contemporary literature and culture – at the disposal of readers and audiences outside the academy in order to contribute to the 'cultural enrichment' and 'quality of life' impact indicators.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact A consciousness of communicating the Unit's research beyond the academy is now firmly embedded in colleagues' thinking and planning of their research activities. The principal focus of the Unit's public engagement and outreach activities is with non-academic audiences and readerships in Bristol and the wider SW region. We have increasingly sought to develop activity which engages and reflects aspects of the literary and cultural life of this region, drawing on the expertise of individual academics whose specialisms cluster within the period 1750 to the present day. Through feedback from the activities described below, the Unit's staff understand that audiences and readerships outside the academy derive considerable cultural and personal enrichment through exposure to and engagement with their subject knowledge and scholarship, developed, in several cases, over lengthy careers.</p> <p>'Mapping Literary Bristol' (2011-), co-ordinated by Mulvey-Roberts exemplifies an exciting 'fit' between our academic specialisms and the literary cultures of Bristol and the South West. The project seeks to investigate the relationship between place and the literary imagination by linking over 70 novelists, poets, playwrights and essayists from a 250-year period, with sites and spaces within the city of Bristol and the immediate surrounding area. This is a collaborative project to which a number of staff, both within and outside the Unit are contributing. The outcome of the project will be a website facility and an app, available to the general public.</p> <p>Long Nineteenth-Century Network (LNCN)</p> <p>Disseminating the Unit's work to wider audiences, particularly those in Bristol and the South West, and thus enabling cultural enrichment is a key objective of the <i>Long Nineteenth-Century Network</i>, established in February 2011. The formation of this research group has enabled us to focus our planning of a range of prospective public engagement activities. We intend to strengthen this work through developing further links with the Bristol Festival of Ideas (through its Director, Andrew Kelly, Visiting Professor at UWE) and through the Bristol Cultural Development Partnership. This Network has delivered the following activities:</p> <p>Involvement in an international event: 'Writing the West' in collaboration with UWE Regional History Centre, Bristol Festival of Ideas and M-Shed Museum, Bristol (11-12 May 2012) at which Ballinger, Brennan, Greenslade, Jarvis and Marks gave papers; Mulvey-Roberts delivered the keynote lecture, 'Bristol - Gothic City'.</p> <p>'Dickens Day 2012' (Arnolfini, Bristol, June 2012), part of the international 'Dickens 200' celebrations in 2012, attracted 30 members of the public who attended presentations given by Ballinger (lead), Davis and Greenslade. 'Thomas Hardy's Poems 1912-13' (Arnolfini, Bristol June 2013) attracted 26 members of the public who attended a presentation by Greenslade (lead) and participated in seminar-style discussion led by Greenslade and Davis. Both events were aimed, specifically, at the general public and the feedback from attendees at each events was gratifyingly positive; one respondent stated that 'this opens up new horizons', with another claiming that these events 'do more good for the mental health of participants than a roomful of psychiatrists'. Similar LNCN events – 'Jane Austen's <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> - 200 years on', 'The Golden Age of Children's</p>

Impact template (REF3a)

Literature' and 'Englishness and the First World War' – are planned for late 2013 and Summer 2014, all of which will have an international reach.

UWE English Reading Group

In 2008 **Robertson** inaugurated a reading group for the general public based upon monthly meetings and the coverage of both classic and non-canonical texts. The meetings have taken place in Bristol Central Library, with varied membership – from bank and corporation employees to those involved in administrative roles. **Robertson's** expertise is vital in both running the discussions and in bringing literary criticism and theory to bear on the texts. Her experience indicates that a broad public is keen for academic guidance on new areas of reading, particularly because bookshops/ recommended reading lists are often heavily dictated by publishers and profit.

Additional Activity by Members of the Unit

Mulvey-Roberts's work affords an excellent case of how international editorial research can be used to promote activity to non-academic audiences. *Choice* has praised her collection of writings by Death Row prisoners: 'anyone seeking to make an informed, balanced decision on the issue [of the death penalty] should read this book'. Her work for the Open University teaching prisoners serving life sentences has sprung from this important editorial initiative. In addition, she has given invited lectures, 'Branding the Gothic Genre: A Tale of Transgression' at a symposium for the Society of Young Publishers (Oxford Town Hall, 2012) and 'A paroxysm of abnormal excitement: *Dracula* and the Castrating Doctors' for the Bram Stoker Birthday Symposium (University of Hull, 2012). Members of the public were invited to these free events and numerous school teachers attended. **Mulvey-Roberts** has been a member of a panel discussion on Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*, short story festival, Shortstoryville, (Arnolfini, Bristol 2012), which focused on an 'A' level text. She was a speaker on women's literary heritage at the Bristol Women's Literature Festival (Watershed, Bristol 2013), and has given a lecture on the film, *Shadow of the Vampire* as part of the Version Control Screenings programme (Arnolfini, Bristol 2013). Other staff who have disseminated their scholarship beyond the academy include: **Ballinger** – a paper, 'Jane Austen's Topographies', for the Regional History and M-Shed Bristol seminar series (2013); **Greenslade** – invited participant in reading group evening and weekend events (Midlands Arts, Birmingham, 2009, 2010, 2012; Durdham Down Bookgroup, Bristol 2011-13) and addressed the George Eliot Fellowship (Bedworth, 2011). **Jarvis** – interviewed by the *Guardian* about his travel writing research project (2009), gave invited lectures to the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institute (2012) and has written on De Quincey for the emagazine, *Public Domain Review* – 'aimed at an intelligent, non-specialist audience'. **Ballinger** and **Martens** gave invited lectures to the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution (BRLSI) (2009), the Thomas Pennant Society (North Wales, 2012 – to forty members of the public) and to the BRLSI in 2013.

Media Appearances and Activity

In order to disseminate the Unit's research as widely as possible staff have accepted a number of media invitations: **Ballinger** was interviewed about the Charles Dickens Bi-Centenary by BBC Radio Somerset, BBC Radio Bristol and BCFM Community Radio (all 2012), while **Butler** gave an interview to BBC Radio Bristol on 'Children's Literature and the South West' (30.5.12), took part in 'The Philosopher's Arms' (BBC Radio 4, 7.8.12) on the subject of 'Theseus's Ship' and was interviewed for the *BBC History Magazine* Podcast (published 4.10.12). **Mulvey-Roberts** was interviewed by Tom Geoghegan for 'Frankenstein: 10 possible meanings', *BBC News Magazine*, March 2011, by BBC Radio Bristol about the 'Writing the West' conference (May 2012) and by Bristol Community FM about women writers on International Women's Day. **Butler** has been consultant to the *Guardian* columnist, Lucy Mangan and is a frequent contributor to the popular blog *The Awfully Big Blog Adventure*.

Work with Schools and Colleges

Several of the Unit's staff have given seminars to or acted as advisors to schools and colleges. **Boccardi** gave a lecture (on Pat Barker) to Wells Cathedral School; **Ballinger** has been adviser to Somerset College, Taunton; **Greenslade** has given two talks (on Victorian Literature and Thomas

Impact template (REF3a)

Hardy) to post-16 students at Cotham School, Bristol; **Robertson** is American Literature Advisor to Redland Green School, Bristol; **Ballinger** and **Greenslade** gave presentations on Tennyson and Ibsen to post-16 students at Cabot Academy; **Ballinger**, Brennan and **Mulvey-Roberts** have made a DVD (Train of Thought Productions) for sixth formers about the fiction, poetry and lives of the Brontë sisters, involving hour-long interviews; **Mulvey-Roberts** held a master-class for GCSE English school students, organised by UWE.

c. Strategy and plans

The Unit's plans for supporting impact revolve principally around the Long Nineteenth-Century Network tasked to encourage and support individual and collaborative initiatives from staff whose work affiliates with this broad area of literature and culture. Two public engagement events were held in 2013: 'Thomas Hardy's Poetry 1912-13', (coordinated by **Greenslade**) and 'Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* – 200 years on' (coordinated by **Sinanan**). 'The Golden Age of Children's Literature' (**Alston** and **Butler**) is planned for February 2014. The success of these initiatives has encouraged staff to plan further reading groups for 2013/14 situated at key locations across Bristol and designed especially for workers in Bristol creative industries who wish to engage with literary and other cultural texts in critical and creative ways.

A successful partnership has been established between staff from this unit (**Mulvey-Roberts** and **Brennan**) and The Royal West of England Academy. In 2008 it hosted a multi-media event, 'Night: A Time Between' (2008) in conjunction with UWE's writer in residence; our students performed a successful drama piece for this event. **Mulvey-Roberts**, Brennan and **Greenslade** will be contributing to a further multi-media international event, 'The Power of the Sea' (April-June 2014), featuring lunchtime readings and workshops; a symposium (with Leeds Metropolitan University) is also planned. A further example of the Unit's intention to develop public engagement activity alongside other arts providers is our involvement in a commemorative international event, 'The Life and Work of Angela Carter', to be held at the Bristol City Art Gallery in 2017.

The Unit's strategy is consistent with the University's mission to make 'a positive difference to our students, business and society' through 'genuine partnerships', whether from research, learning and teaching, or community, public and employer engagement. Impact is at the forefront of UWE's research strategy, which aims 'to enhance our reputation for excellent research that has a positive impact on the economy and society'. This is fostered through investing in research that is excellent, relevant and engaged, reflecting a long tradition of user-led research at the institution. To support its research and innovation strategies, the University has a well-established Research, Business and Innovation unit (RBI) tasked with facilitating partnership and impact through a wide range of activities, including knowledge and technology transfer, commercialisation, consultancy, enterprise, professional development, and public engagement. RBI works closely with researchers across the University to identify how best to involve users and beneficiaries in projects from the outset as a means of facilitating co-production and catalysing impact. Unit staff have used RBI's expertise to help plan some of the aforementioned activities and intend to work more closely with them in the future to ensure that a sense of the wider audience and how to achieve impact are embedded in future projects from their inception.

d. Relationship to case studies

The authors of the two case studies submitted for this unit, **Butler** and **Mulvey-Roberts**, have developed a public-facing dimension out of their own considerable scholarship prosecuted over many years. They exemplify how public engagement and impact can be nurtured, for the most part, through the traditional culture of our subject – that of the 'lone' researcher. As such, their respective records of public-facing achievement, which pre-date the advent of the Impact agenda, stand up well in their own terms.

However, both **Butler's** specialism in Children's Literature and Culture and **Mulvey-Roberts's** expertise in the Gothic are strongly supported by other staff in the Unit and, through the LNCN, they have collaborated actively with other staff in public-facing events, such as 'Mapping Literary Bristol'. The University has recognised the achievement of **Butler** as both a respected scholar and successful disseminator of her expertise through promotion to Associate Professor in 2012.