

Institution: Edinburgh Napier University
Unit of Assessment: 29 – English Language and Literature
<p>a. Context</p> <p>The research carried out in this submission relates to staff interests in literary studies from the early nineteenth century to the present day. English was first established as a suite of programmes at Edinburgh Napier in 2006, with the Centre for Literature and Writing (CLAW) – which hosts the majority of the research-active staff entered in this submission – formed in 2008 to underpin and consolidate research in the subject area. Areas of research interest and expertise are: gothic literature, imperialism, modernism, Scottish literature including Stevenson studies, Indian literature, science fiction, crime and prison writing and film studies. CLAW’s overarching aim is to demonstrate how such literature is relevant to the modern world. Research student numbers have expanded from one when CLAW began in 2006 to six currently.</p> <p>Strategy focuses on employing the activities of staff and research students in CLAW to benefit the wider public through cultural outreach. For example, the Prisons Project has been of direct benefit to the inmates of regional penal institutions through its focus on prisoners’ literacy. The Robert Louis Stevenson (RLS) Project benefits literary groups in Edinburgh and beyond through RLS Day and the RLS Website and also seeks to benefit school pupils by facilitating access to the life and work of Stevenson as a Scottish author of note. Specifically, the Schools pages on the RLS website exist to encourage schools to study and discuss RLS using the downloadable study packs on the works of RLS. In addition to the English group of staff, two members of social science staff (Burnett, Neill) are attached to CLAW owing to the literary focus of their research and one performing arts member of staff (Soto-Morettini) is also a member of CLAW.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>The approach to impact is largely through public engagement and collaboration with literary and other external organisations. Edinburgh Napier’s physical location in the City of Edinburgh offers significant advantages linked to the city’s function as a cultural centre. CLAW has formed a close relationship with the Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature Trust, with measurable benefits to both parties. In addition to working jointly on RLS day, three public events have been organised for the Trust, notably the ‘One Book/One Edinburgh’ initiative, in which the general public is encouraged to read a designated book during a particular week in February. CLAW has been responsible for arranging a public panel session in which literary experts discuss the importance and impact of the designated book with an audience of some fifty people. High profile figures such as science fiction writers China Miéville and Adam Roberts have participated in these panels. This type of project achieves significant local impact and, by involving the general public in literary activities, contributes to fulfilling the aim of making literature relevant in the wider community.</p>
<p>c. Strategy and plans</p> <p>Our strategy for impact is to focus our energies on enriching the quality of cultural life for both society at large and for its diverse communities by engaging the public in literature, attracting media attention and arousing general curiosity about the nature of literary research. Good working relationships formed with well-known local writers such as Ian Rankin, James Robertson, Louise Welsh and Ron Butlin provide the basis for future collaborative public events.</p> <p>Developing the Stevenson website demonstrated the value of creating such outward facing, public-</p>

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oriented projects. The Ernest Mehew RLS collection and the Gelius Leopold RLS collection were donated to the University in consequence of the growing impact of the University in the area of Stevenson studies. Once these collections of books have been catalogued and housed in a bespoke location at the University's Merchiston campus, situated in an inner suburb on a main public transport route, it is the intention to ensure public access to a collection which will represent the largest Stevenson library of any university in the UK.

CLAW in general and RLS in particular continues to have a strong internet presence through the website and plans are in place to grow RLS Day and make it a genuinely international celebration. A Stevenson menu is currently under discussion with a local celebrity chef with a plan to use his restaurant and an RLS-themed menu for an evening event for potential sponsors whose donations will support the housing and cataloguing of the RLS collections. Further plans for the public dissemination of Stevenson research include an annual Stevenson lecture, a Stevenson film festival and a writing competition for Scottish school children in collaboration with the Edinburgh-based RLS Club.

Building on the success of the Stevenson Project, CLAW also now hosts an emergent Scottish Centre of Tagore Studies (ScoTs), co-directed by Fraser and Dryden, to celebrate the life and work of the Indian polymath Rabindranath Tagore. The Tagore Project arises from research of Fraser's and is receiving considerable interest from India. For example, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations has endowed a Chair of Tagore Studies at Edinburgh Napier University, currently occupied by Professor Indra Nath Choudhuri, who is with ScoTs for three years from February 2013. A public lecture on Tagore given by Professor Choudhuri in October 2013 represented one of a series of cultural outreach events, including dance, music and film, which have either taken place or are planned to do so during the three-year initial tenure of the chair. A website for Tagore is currently under development.

The Prisons Project, which builds on Schwan's research into prison narratives, is an initiative which involves students working with prisoners on literacy projects. We intend to continue this initiative over the coming years as a means of demonstrating the benefits to a marginalised and vulnerable sub-section of the community of an initial engagement with reading which can subsequently access the means to self-development, re-integration within society and potentially employment. Soto-Moretini, based on her research into script writing and her work with television companies and with Andrew Lloyd-Webber, has been working closely with the Edinburgh Literary Pub Tours team to refresh their materials for visitor consumption. Achieved via the Scottish Government Innovation Voucher scheme, this initiative offers the potential for further development of street theatre as part of the tourist experience.

d. Relationship to case studies

Case studies presented as part of this submission are derived from activities within CLAW:

1. *Enhancing the Literary Reputation of Robert Louis Stevenson*
2. *Promoting Literacy and Creative Writing Skills at HMP Edinburgh*

The projects and plans mentioned above map directly on to the two case studies, namely the RLS study and the Prisons Project. These Impact Case Studies have arisen out of research into the life and works of Stevenson, and research on prison narratives, respectively.

The RLS study has directly impacted on the local environment in Edinburgh by bringing to the general

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public a greater awareness of the literary reputation of Robert Louis Stevenson, through RLS day and its associated activities; and through the Robert Louis Stevenson website, which impacts on a global audience. These initiatives illustrate the intensity of focussed research that is taking place in the area of Stevenson studies and how this is impacting upon the wider community, both locally and internationally.

The Prisons Project demonstrates the new ways in which our literary research can benefit the community, in this case, the local prison population. The project is a direct result of research into prison narratives and illustrates how research in the area of narratives has the capacity to cross over into the actual lives of today's population. This kind of activity is informing how we move forward with impact, particularly in terms of how we might interact with local schools and libraries in the future.

These public-facing activities exemplify the UoA's approach to impact and the commitment to demonstrating the value of literature in the community. Collaborations with the City of Literature on the One Book/One Edinburgh events enabled the development of this community focussed approach to literary research. The experience gained in staging these events, along with events also sponsored at the Edinburgh International Book Festival has been utilised in developing RLS Day and will inform future initiatives.