

<p>Institution: Keele University</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 29 English Language and Literature</p>
<p>a. Context</p> <p>English at Keele conceives literature, literary history, theatre and film to be vital and life-enhancing components of people's cultural existence, not least in their capacity to offer complex, searching commentaries on the varied historical situations of multiple audiences. The audiences that we engage to this end range from students in schools and colleges, to consumers of culture regionally, in the North of England, in London, and internationally. Researchers have engaged the audiences of significant cultural institutions, with theatres in particular, where they have developed expertise and deep working relationships regionally and nationally with the New Vic Theatre, North Staffordshire, and the Globe Theatre, London. Through creative writing and film making, researchers from English have made a direct impact on audiences through the cultural industries. English takes advantage of a variety of occasions, communication platforms and dissemination opportunities to reach a variety of audiences. In order to communicate research-led findings and insights, researchers in English use broadcast media, literary festivals, public conversations with authors, public lectures at literary societies, and a variety of opportunities to deliver public readings of new and creative work. The types of impact created thus derive from, firstly, new creative work and the affective and economic impact that this generates; secondly, researchers from English use the appeal of cultural heritage and artistic traditions to reflect on and shape present practice. For instance, over time, and given the framework we have established for exploring culture and community, the unit has the potential to develop impacts that will enhance community resilience.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>English at Keele's approach to impact begins with a genuine openness and commitment to research-led communication and public engagement. For example, we can demonstrate involvement in commemorations that relate research expertise to topics of wide, indeed international, public interest. This is evidenced in Harris' extensive work on the 50th anniversary of the publication of <i>The Naked Lunch</i> in the UK, France and US in 2009 which went on to develop into interviews on Radio 4 (2012), and interview contributions to two documentary films in 2012 and 2013.</p> <p>It is also evidenced in Amigoni's role in the Darwin bicentenary festival, Cambridge, when he conducted a public conversation with Booker Prize winning author Ian McEwan, in front of an audience of 500, about the uses of Darwin in his fiction. Amigoni also delivered a keynote lecture that drew on his research on Victorian biological inheritance at the 150th anniversary conference of <i>The Mill on the Floss</i> (2010) organised by the George Eliot Fellowship. Shears capitalised on the interest in the bicentenary of Byron taking his seat in the House of Lords and the publication of the first two cantos of <i>Childe Harold's Pilgrimage</i> with a public lecture at the Rochdale Regency Festival. Amigoni delivered a talk on Dickens's impact on the nation between 1812 and 2012 at the Wellington Literary Festival, Shropshire; Shears delivered a talk on two hundred years of <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> at the same festival in October 2013. Thus, some of the impacts have been planned, but the overarching ethos of public engagement is enterprising and serendipitous – taking advantage of opportunities generated to share expertise, as, for example, when Johnson was interviewed on the subject of 'video nasties' in the award-winning documentary film <i>Video Nasties: Moral Panic, Censorship & Videotape</i> (Dir, Jake West, 2010); and when Peacock posted his two research-led interviews with the writer Jonathan Lethem on YouTube in 2012-13.</p> <p>Key relationships with partner organisations and institutions are enabling us to consolidate, with the very active support of the University, public engagement as a pathway to impact. Thus in the case of the New Vic Theatre, the relationship between the University and Theatre is longstanding,</p>

going back to the 1960s: it has been practically manifest in the writing of programme notes for new productions and workshops on key works, authors and genres for the Theatre's adult learner group. The partnership's approach to impact was given a new focus and impetus by the opportunity that was presented through the New Dynamics of Ageing cross-Research Council programme. A team comprising expertise in critical gerontology, where Keele has a particular strength, social psychology, theatre history, literary theory and Victorian cultural history, but also, and crucially, the Vic Theatre's Head of Education, Jill Rezzano, was led by Professor Miriam Bernard and Amigoni, who were at the time both Research Institute Directors. Thus, there was very active institutional support for this partnership which resulted in 'Ages and Stages: the place of theatre in the representation and recollections of ageing', funded by the NDA programme (2009-2012). Bernard had already worked with the New Vic on a gerontology and drama project in 2005 and Munro's experience of working with the Globe in London was a valuable source of further guidance. In addition to producing conventional academic outputs, the collaboration resulted in a public exhibition about the Vic's fifty year history in June 2012, mounted in the theatre and coordinated by Amigoni. The project and the partnership received extensive institutional support at all stages but especially during the planning and display of the exhibition. The University enables us to achieve impact in a variety of ways. Venues and administrative support are provided for outreach events such as public lectures, or workshops with practitioners. A recent Faculty Research Office appointment focuses on ensuring impact and public engagement are embedded in all our routine practices, grant applications and strategic planning, and the creation of a new Directorate of Marketing and Communications (MAC) in 2011, and consequent specialist PR advice, has led to increased external profile, together with the creation of a new Arts Officer appointment in 2012. The RI Humanities stages an annual 'Impact Showcase' to share practice across disciplines. The institution crucially provides flexibility in the working day to enable such activities to take place.

Creative Writing has been enabled by Keele-hosted summer schools to engage more widely with producers of new writing, hosting and judging local writing competitions. The CW team also mentors and develops a range of 'student ambassadors' to work with a variety of local organisations in which creative writing is embedded. Sheard's expertise in the dissemination of creativity and the personal-political in writing is called upon by local projects seeking to embed creative practice into therapeutic, medical and oral history projects with excluded groups. For instance, he is a Creative Partner in the Emergency Poet project, an Arts Council Funded performance/event described as 'A mix of the serious, the therapeutic and the theatrical'. Using a vintage ambulance, the Emergency Poet visits schools, libraries, town centres and festivals, with the express purpose of reconnecting non-traditional audiences with poetry and its therapeutic value. In the period 2012-13, this project delivered poetry 'prescriptions' 'pills' and 'potions' to over 2300 people via one-to-one encounters. Sheard's roles in the project include creative input; managing the poetic 'pharmacy' attached to the ambulance; maintaining the website; and co-managing social media (website: <http://emergencypoet.com/>).

Sheard's year-long role as Poet in Residence at The Dorothy Clive Garden (from August 2012) enabled him to engage non-traditional audiences in the role and relevance of poetry, provoking imaginations and sensory enlivenment through poetry. In this role, Sheard has recited his work (including *Dammtor*), lectured on poetry, and led workshops to enable those from the local community to create their own work, inspired by both Sheard's writing and the garden itself. Dorothy Clive Garden have explained Sheard's purpose as connecting the garden to new and wider audiences through poetry, and as enhancing the experience of the garden specifically, and horticulture more generally, through the creative expression in poetry. Further, Sheard has recited his work to public audiences at the Ilkley Festival (2012) and the Anthony Burgess Institute in Manchester (April 2012). He has recently introduced new work (from a new poetry project, 'The Abandoned Settlements') at Much Wenlock Poetry Festival (April 2013) and the Lichfield festival, as well as performing the results of his current Residency at the Dorothy Clive Garden at three recitals. This work, largely 'public and accessible', will form the basis of a publication of 12 poems in the Autumn of 2013. Institutional support is practically manifest in 'Poetry Live', which brought high profile poets (for example, Simon Armitage) to the University to perform their work.

c. Strategy and plans

The REF period has seen a step change increase in our levels of engagement with external groups. This is consistent with the impact agenda of the REF, but goes well beyond it, and reflects a longstanding commitment by English at Keele to viewing academic research as a contribution to the public sphere. What has changed is that we now have a systematic set of procedures, supported by expertise and resources from the wider University, that builds in planning to maximise impact as integral to research (through regular review of the plans of individuals, the School and the Research Institute), and recognises work with non-academic groups and impact as elements in calculating time for research, plans for research leave, annual appraisals and promotions. Staff promoted in this period for whom the impact of their research beyond academia made a significant contribution included Sheard, Stretch and Munro (to Senior Lectureships).

Impact and public engagement will be a high priority in the coming period. Work on culture and gerontology, in particular through follow-on projects to embed training on creativity in the local community, has the potential to make a major contribution to consolidating the place of theatre, culture and literature in a more resilient community. There are plans, with the critical gerontologists, to develop a local Festival of Age, based on an international model successfully mounted in Edmonton, Alberta. We also aim, over the longer term and through our work on ageing and culture, to engage local government and policy-makers. A range of projects already have public engagement dimensions built in, so that McCracken's major new AHRC-funded Dorothy Richardson project (2013-2018) will involve a public exhibition. Other projects have the capacity to engage urgent public interest and debate; Palladino's work on migratory routes between Africa and the 'postcolonial' Mediterranean will intervene into an area of intense current media coverage and international public concern. Increasingly, public engagement as a pathway to impact will be embedded in the postgraduate community, and this has been demonstrated by success with AHRC-funded 'Crossing the Bar', a PGR student-led public engagement project in partnership with the University of Liverpool. The website of that project will be sustained as a lasting resource and a means of enabling PGRs, ECRs and cultural institutions to meet and form partnerships. This is one of the crucial ways in which pathways to impact can be embedded in postgraduate training.

d. Relationship to case studies

The pioneering activities of Munro at the Globe have enabled us to develop new partnerships with other theatres: this is expertise that we are keen to embed and sustain within the group, particularly with new appointments (so Yearling is already beginning to work with the New Vic Theatre, and brings experience of working with a theatre from her previous post in Bristol). Similarly, Stretch's unusual reach through his range of creative skills and creative networks provides us with a model for the possibilities of furthering the impact of creative endeavour. Thus, though in part serendipitous, and dependent on the distinctive skills and attributes of gifted individuals, the case studies we have presented inform and shape our strategies for the future.