

<b>Institution:</b> University of Chichester
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> English Language and Literature
<b>Title of case study:</b> Deepening and broadening the public understanding and engagement with Folklore, Fantasy and Fairytales.
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Gray's research has broadened and deepened public access to Folklore, Fairy-tale and Fantasy (=FFF) studies. It focuses on popular contemporary and past authors such as Pullman, Tolkien and Stevenson, and has resonated with a growing public interest in FFF. Gray created the Sussex Centre for FFF (=SCFFF) as a vehicle for furthering excellent international research and engaging with non-academic audiences. The SCFFF facilitates dissemination to a wide range of publics (age, gender, nationality) via public events (conferences, exhibitions and public lectures), consultancy and collaboration (Universal Pictures, Royal Opera House, National Theatre, Folklore Society), regular media engagement (e.g. BBC Radio 2 and World Service, Daily Mirror, ELLE) and active online presence (web, twitter, blog). Through each of these pathways Gray seeks to broaden and deepen the quality of debate, and highlight the relevance of FFF to contemporary society.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>The trajectory of Gray's research on fairy-tale and fantasy literature builds on articles and monographs in previous RAEs developing into his REF2014 entry including his widely and positively reviewed book <i>Fantasy, Myth and the Measure of Truth</i> in 2009. Gray's central theme is that the current high profile of fantasy literature is not merely the result of media 'hype' (though there is truth in that claim, as especially Jack Zipes argues), but that fantasy's current (and perennial) fascination relates to basic human needs (psychological, political, religious). Specifically Gray argues that the roots of modern fantasy go back to (especially German) Romanticism, which through George MacDonald influenced a range of important fantasy writers (Carroll, Tolkien, C.S. Lewis) who in turn influenced modern fantasy writers (e.g. Rowling, Pullman) who continued the 'serious' undertone of fantasy even when they explicitly rejected the Christian 'propaganda' of Lewis et al. (the implicit 'religiousness' of Pullman is a recurrent theme in Gray's work). It was this depth that Gray seeks to discover in fantasy that drew Universal Studios to invite him to help impart a degree of symbolic resonance to its film <i>Snow White &amp; the Huntsman</i>, in contrast to a trivialisation and commercialisation ('Disneyfication') of fairy tales (the success of this attempt at a 'darker', more serious version of 'Snow White' is a matter of critical dispute). Gray has sought to bring into fruitful contact 'high' and 'low' culture, with conferences, exhibitions, lectures and media interventions, always arguing for a 'catholic' or 'broad' approach to cultural production, and never assuming that what seems merely light is therefore without a more serious message—cf. MacDonald's fairy tale 'The Light Princess', a version of which is currently in production at the National Theatre, and about which Gray was interviewed (with Philip Pullman) for a NT film: 'An Introduction to Fairy Tales'.</p> <p>With previously published books on C.S. Lewis and R.L. Stevenson, Gray has published within the REF2014 period <i>Fantasy, Myth and the Measure of Truth: Tales of Pullman, Lewis, Tolkien, MacDonald and Hoffmann</i> (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) and two collections of his essays: <i>Death and Fantasy</i> (CSP, 2008) and <i>Fantasy, Art and Life</i> (CSP, 2011). He co-edited <i>Persona and Paradox: Issues of Identity for C.S. Lewis, his Friends and Associates</i> (CSP, 2012) - his own chapter is on fantasy writer E.R. Eddison - and is currently editing Stevenson's <i>Fables and Fairy Tales</i> (vol 18 of EUP's New Edinburgh Edition of Stevenson). Gray wrote the introduction to a special edition of Stevenson's <i>Fables</i> (published by the Association for Scottish Literary Studies) made available as a free download on the first RLS Day on 13 November 2012 <a href="http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/scotlit/asls/Fables.html">http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/scotlit/asls/Fables.html</a>. Gray also selected (with Peter Winnington) the content of, and wrote the introduction to, <i>Miracle Enough: Papers on the Works of Mervyn Peake</i>, the illustrated book of the 2011 Mervyn Peake Centenary conference at Chichester. Gray's other relevant publications include four entries in the <i>Encyclopedia of Folklore and Fairy Tales</i> (ed. Donald Haase) (Greenwood Press, 2007), with two further - and larger (2,500 word) - entries (on 'Romanticism' and 'The Victorian Tale') in the forthcoming revised and expanded 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.</p> <p>As Editor of the SCFFF's journal <i>Gramarye</i>, he writes the introduction to each issue and organizes articles and reviews by relevant international specialists (e.g. Cristina Bacchilega, Ruth Bottigheimer, Maria Nikolajeva, Diane Purkiss, Jacqueline Simpson, Andrew Teverson, Francisco Vaz da Silva, Naomi Wood). Securing relevant expertise for the Advisory Board of the SCFFF, and for the Editorial Board of <i>Gramarye</i>, has provided an unrivalled assembly of world-leading scholars</p>

including D.L. Ashliman, Cristina Bacchilega, Ruth Bottigheimer, Donald Haase, Maria Nikolajeva, Diane Purkiss, Maria Tatar, Marina Warner, Terri Windling and Jack Zipes. This array of distinguished writers and scholars has given the SCFFF a powerful impetus in its mission to disseminate the best fairy tale scholarship (*Gramarye* is widely sold through a variety of outlets); all but two of these international scholars have spoken at a SCFFF event.

### 3. References to the research

- 2004 *Robert Louis Stevenson: a Literary Life* (Palgrave Macmillan), 208pp. ISBN 9780333984017
- 2008 *Fantasy, Myth and the Measure of Truth: Tales of Pullman, Lewis, Tolkien, MacDonald and Hoffmann* (Palgrave Macmillan), 248pp. ISBN: 978-0-2302-7285-9;
- 2008 *Death and Fantasy: Essays on George MacDonald, C.S. Lewis, Philip Pullman and R.L. Stevenson* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing), 126pp. ISBN 9781847188717
- 2011 *Fantasy, Art and Life: Essays on George MacDonald, Robert Louis Stevenson and Other Fantasy Writers* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing), 155pp. ISBN 978-1-4438-2899-4
- 2012 (edited volume with Suzanne Bray) *Persona and Paradox: Issues of Identity for C.S. Lewis, his Friends and Associates* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing), 264pp. ISBN 978-1443839662
- Gray also selected (with Peter Winnington) the content of, and wrote the introduction to *Miracle Enough: Papers on the Works of Mervyn Peake* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing) (Ed. Peter Winnington), 242pp. ISBN-13: 978-1443844116

### 4. Details of the impact

Gray's research projects have enabled a broad access to, and engagement with, FFF Studies, which 'cross over' boundaries of age, gender, class and nationality. Gray's consistent advocacy of FFF and their relevance to all in society (rather than simply Disney fairytales for children) is evident throughout each of the three main pathways to impact i.e. events, consultancy and collaboration, media engagement. The main beneficiaries are:

- Public, not-for-profit and commercial arts/creative media organisations
- General public of various age, gender, class and nationality

#### Universal Pictures and the viewers of *Snow White and the Huntsman*

Gray's work was consulted by the Film Director Rupert Sanders, who then appointed Gray as a Mythic and Folklore Advisor to the production of *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012) (which took an estimated \$170M at Box Office; IMDB). In this role, Gray built upon his own research outcomes to help the filmmakers ensure they presented a nuanced and sympathetic interpretation of the source material, free from 'Disney-esque' inheritances (the darker/grimmer nature of the film was picked up by some reviewers and commentators although this cannot be directly attributed to Gray). Specifically, Gray's impact can be identified in the naming of the dwarves in the film, wherein the choice led directly from his consultation. They were related to Ogham, the ancient Celtic 'Tree Alphabet' in which letters are associated with certain trees and have a symbolic value) these are names used in the film and identified by Gray's original research and picked up by reviewers.

In terms of the viewer response, the University's research office conducted an open online survey promoted through Twitter and relevant online forums. Out of 156 responses 86.8% indicated they were more likely to read Grimm Fairy Tales after having seen *Snow White and the Huntsman*, 81% believed films based on Fairy Tales encouraged people to engage with the originals, and 50% of all respondents believed that the Academic Advisor helped make the film better.

#### **The Folklore Society, Association of Scottish Literary Studies, South Downs Society**

Promoting the generic crossover of FFF is crucial to enabling greater access and engagement, as demonstrated by the joint conference hosted by The Folklore Society and the SCFFF on 'Folklore and Fantasy' (April 2012). This built upon the annual event staged by the long-established Folklore Society and doubled the number of speakers and attendees, the surplus (£1.2k) was covenanted to SCFFF to fund future public events; FLS described the event as "a great success academically as well as financially". The Association of Scottish Literary Studies (educational charity that aims to promote the study, teaching and writing of Scottish literature) marked the first RLS Day on 13 November 2012 by making available a free ebook of Stevenson's *Fables* with an Introduction by Gray (hard copies were also distributed at the 2013 MLA Convention in Boston). Gray was an invited consultant on the Heritage Lottery Funded 'South Downs Songs Project'.

### **National Theatre, Royal Opera House, Pallant House Gallery and Bishop Otter Gallery**

Gray's position as a valuable academic commentator on the public interpretation and reproduction of fairytales is further secured by separate invitations from the Royal Opera House (ROH) and National Theatre to contribute to their online commentary. Gray was invited by the ROH to write a piece on Massenet's fairytale opera *Cendrillon* (June 2011). More significantly perhaps, in July 2013 the Digital Content Producer at the National Theatre invited Gray to appear in a short film alongside Phillip Pullman 'looking at the elements of a fairytale, its history and the appeal of this type of storytelling' designed to coincide with the stage adaptation of *The Light Princess*, based on George MacDonald's story. Filming was in July, however broadcast and subsequent press attention falls after 31/7/2013 and outside of the REF period. In 2011 Gray was instrumental in bringing the illustrations of Mervyn Peake to an exhibition at Pallant House Gallery and the Otter gallery (attracting on average 55,000 and 16,000 visitors a year respectively). These exhibitions coincided with the Peake conference held at the University in July 2011 which attracted 70 participants (including 45 from outside the University as well as Sebastian Peake, Mervyn Peake's son and inheritor of the Peake estate). The exhibitions received positive reviews from *The Argus* (purports to reach 48,212 readers daily), and was covered by *BBC South Today* (estimated 600,000 viewers daily based on 2010 figures) (Gray gave an interview and reading in this piece).

### **Impact on public understanding and awareness: National media coverage**

Gray's public impact resonates with a growing public interest in FFF. In the first instance the media occasionally sought a soundbite from Gray. Now he occupies a role as a significant public commentator on matters relating to FFF and is increasingly someone to whom media writers and producers (repeatedly) go to for an in-depth/academic perspective on a whole range of FFF matters and projects and thus enriching the quality of the piece and stimulating further response. The SCFFF's JISC Mailing List, website, Facebook and Twitter pages all facilitate engagement with the general public. Often the catalyst for engagement is an interview with Gray in a newspaper or radio programme, e.g. his interviews about folklore on the Simon Mayo show (*BBC Radio 2*; 15.1M listeners per week in Dec 2012; 17<sup>th</sup> Dec 2012 and 15<sup>th</sup> Jan 2013) prompted an email exchange with a practising fantasy author seeking advice, while his role as Mythic and Folklore advisor to Universal Pictures '*Snow White & the Huntsman*' (see below) prompted an email correspondence with a group of teenagers in Houston, Texas, about a project on 'Cinema and Fairy Tales' (there are other similar examples, with correspondents from Glasgow to Sydney –see evidence base). The interviews and media pieces themselves constitute impact as they extend the range and quality of evidence typical in public discussion about FFF: for example, Susie Measure in her *Independent* article reflected on an interview with Gray, writing, "..... *the scramble for grim entertainment reflects a growing desire for escapism, drawing parallels between today's uncertain economic climate and the period 200 years ago when the Grimms were writing.*" Similarly, Gray's views were elicited to provide greater depth to an article about 'Bogeymen' (*BBC online News Magazine*, 24/12/12). The widening public interest is apparent in newspaper coverage such as the globally syndicated *Guardian* piece on Gray's latest research, a first fresh reading of Stevenson's manuscripts since the 1890s), which restores the form that Stevenson had vainly demanded. Progress on this edition is regularly published online through the EdRLS blog which not only *informs* scholars and the general public *about* developments in RLS research, but also *involves* them through online discussion responding to Gray's commentary on the Stevenson manuscripts.

### **5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

- **Letter from the Folklore Society (FLS) about the joint SCFFF/FLS conference**
- **Consistent invitations to interview and comment in national media**

Interviewed for article 'It's Grimm in Hollywood' for *The Independent on Sunday* (13/2/2011); Interviewed for article 'Robert Louis Stevenson gets his revenge on sneaky literary agent 120 years later' in *The Observer* (24/4/2011) [syndicated in *Samoan Observer*, *New Zealand Herald*, *India Times* and elsewhere] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2011/apr/24/robert-louis-stevenson-fairytales>; Interviewed for 2pg. feature in *The Argus* (15/4/2011) on the Peake centenary events [http://www.theargus.co.uk/leisure/events/weekendevents/8977164.Mervyn\\_Peake\\_Centenary\\_Pallant\\_House\\_Gallery\\_Chichester\\_until\\_July\\_17/?ref=rss](http://www.theargus.co.uk/leisure/events/weekendevents/8977164.Mervyn_Peake_Centenary_Pallant_House_Gallery_Chichester_until_July_17/?ref=rss) and Peake's blog <http://mervynpeake.blogspot.co.uk/2011/04/centenary-celebrations-begin.html>; Commissioned Royal Opera House blog article 'Folklore, fairy tales and feminists: *Cendrillon*' (29/6/2011) <http://www.roh.org.uk/news/folklore-fairy-tales-and-feminists-cendrillon>; Interviewed for item on Chichester Mervyn Peake events on *BBC South Today* (dvd of *South Today's* coverage of the

Mervyn Peake exhibitions is available) (2011). Interviewed by *ELLE-Québec* for feature on 'Blanche-Neige Contrattaque!' (Issue 4/2012), Interviewed by Nick Clark of *The Independent* for article 'Philip Pullman to publish new adaptations of Grimm's Fairy Tales' (22/3/2012) <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/news/philip-pullman-to-publish-new-adaptations-of-grimms-fairy-tales-7579274.html>; Interviewed by Nick Webster of *The Daily Mirror* for article 'Cannibalism, murder, rape...when fairy tales were really grim' (2/6/2012); <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/weird-news/cannibalism-murder-rape-fairy-tales-859257>; Interviewed by Simon Mayo on BBC Radio 2 about origins of 'Santa's Christmas Elves' (17/12/2012) and invited back to talk about 'Toad doctors, Charmers, Cunning Folk' (15/1/2013); Interviewed by Mike Williams on BBC World Service 'The Why Factor' about bogeymen and other scary folklore figures (programme also included Prof Maria Tatar of Harvard University) (21/12/2012) podcast at [http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p0120dwz/The\\_Why\\_Factor\\_The\\_Sackman\\_%28and\\_other\\_stories%29/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p0120dwz/The_Why_Factor_The_Sackman_%28and_other_stories%29/) Also in BBC online magazine <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-20799889> Interviewed by Émilie Folie-Boivin for *Le Devoir* (Québec) for feature on 'Princesses, préparez un plan B' (daily circulation of 29,812) (on exhibition 'Fallen Princesses' by Canadian photographer Dina Goldstein) (8/3/2013), <http://www.ledevoir.com/culture/actualites-culturelles/372685/princesses-preparez-un-plan-b>; Interviewed by Michael Peers for National Theatre's film about George MacDonald's 'The Light Princess' (July 2013) <https://nationaltheatre.sharefile.com/d/s3bca494f239442aa>).

- **Evidence of impact on the movie *Snow White and the Huntsman***

Gray's role is confirmed here together with a summary of film reviews

[http://snowwhiteandthehuntsman.wikia.com/wiki/Snow\\_White\\_and\\_the\\_Huntsman](http://snowwhiteandthehuntsman.wikia.com/wiki/Snow_White_and_the_Huntsman)

The names of the dwarves, one of Gray's contributions, are cited in the transcripts here.

[http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1735898/trivia?tab=qt&ref=tt\\_trv\\_qu](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1735898/trivia?tab=qt&ref=tt_trv_qu); A.O. Scott of the New York Times wrote, "*Though it is an ambitious - at times mesmerizing - application of the latest cinematic technology, the movie tries to recapture some of the menace of the stories that used to be told to scare children rather than console them.*" (in line with Gray's work and his consultancy to the film).

- **Reviews of *SWATH* that resonate with Gray's input to the *SWATH* film**

[http://theindependentcritic.com/snow\\_white\\_and\\_the\\_huntsman](http://theindependentcritic.com/snow_white_and_the_huntsman) "However, the film fills a void by serving up a darker fairy tale amongst Hollywood's currently lighter, more cartoon-flavored action flicks."; <http://aisleseat.com/swhuntsman.htm> "This is not a sweet-and-sugary big-screen fairy tale."; <http://ianchadwick.com/blog/snow-white-and-the-huntsman-reviewed/> "Take one part Brothers Grimm and one part Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, add a dash of Tolkien, a pinch of Joan of Arc, a sprinkling of Robin Hood and a sprig of English folklore", and, "Disney gave the dwarves names and turned them into comic sidekicks. The movie makes them grim ruffians and thieves....and names them Beith, Muir, Quert, Coll, Duir, Gort, Nion, and Gus. Beats Sleepy, Grumpy and that lot...."; <http://www.bbcamerica.com/anglophenia/2011/06/why-are-all-of-snow-whites-dwarves-british/> "...and as if to rub salt into the wound, the dwarves' names have been changed, possibly to mock the decline of our imperial past."

- **Emails of individuals who have contacted Gray and asked for advice**

For example: Year 9 student at Pymble Ladies' College, New South Wales, Australia; Journalism student from the City of Glasgow College; journalist at City University; students at Ridge Point High School, Houston, Texas; BCBG productions (a Russian television production company inviting Gray to contribute to 'Encyclopedia of Myths for Russian channel TV3). In July 2013 Gray was invited and filmed by the National Theatre in their ('An Introduction to Fairy Tales') to accompany its production of 'The Light Princess', based on a fairy tale by George MacDonald:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YlkgcObAVBE> (the video was only published in Sept 2013 after the REF deadline). Evidence for all communications is available on request.

- **On Gray's engagement with the works of Stevenson**

Public blog on the development of the new Stevenson edition <http://edrls.wordpress.com/about-this-blog/>; Association of Scottish Literary Studies free ebook of Stevenson's *Fables* with an Introduction by Gray. <http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/scotlit/asls/Fables.html>

- **Peake exhibition as part of Gray's Peake 2011 conference**

Comments from gallery book – Otter Gallery 2011 (Peake Exhibition), including, 'Superb - still inspiring after all these years', 'Brilliant exhibition. A brilliant man with a talent for words and drawing', 'Delightful to see Mervyn P's works and this beautifully presented exhibition'.