

Institution: Ulster University		
Unit of Assessment: English Language and Literature (27)		
Title of case study: Widening Access to Literature by Providing New Insights into the Lives of Writers.		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2000 – 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Elmer Kennedy-Andrews	Professor of English	1988 - 2014
Richard Bradford	Professor of Literary History & Theory	1987 - present
Frank Ferguson	Lecturer in English Literature	2005 - present
Willa Murphy	Lecturer in Irish Writing in English	2003 - present
Pól Ó Dochartaigh	Professor of German	1994 - 2014
Kathryn White	Lecturer in Irish Literature	2006 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2015 – 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Researchers at Ulster exploited their research strengths in literature and literary biography to widen access to new audiences who traditionally did not engage with universities through interaction with museums, archives, local councils, associations and the public. The impacts on widening access are articulated in four main ways:</p> <p>I1 Production of new cultural artefacts through research-led engagement with public venues, curators, editors and publishers.</p> <p>I2 Increasing cultural participation of marginalised and under-engaged audiences.</p> <p>I3 Developing stimuli to cultural tourism and contributing to the quality of the tourist experience through engagement with festivals and symposia.</p> <p>I4 Increasing understanding of local traditions leading to enhanced cultural preservation.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The English Language and Literature UoA at Ulster has a rich history of research in the areas of literature and literary biography with particular focus on writers and writing associated with the island of Ireland and its wider diaspora.</p> <p>Professor Richard Bradford in the current REF cycle has produced six major single authored books and two edited collections, published by academic and trade presses, which have had a major impact on our perceptions of key authors as individuals and our conception of literary biography as a means of interpreting and evaluating literature. Between 2001 and 2013 he published well-reviewed trade biographies of Kingsley Amis, Philip Larkin, Alan Sillitoe, Martin Amis, and John Milton, each of which was designed to widen access to literature for the general reader. The Amis and Larkin books were serialized in the <i>Mail on Sunday</i> and the <i>Sunday Express</i>.</p> <p>Researching in the Hull Larkin archive in 2014 Bradford discovered un-catalogued material which shows that Larkin's verse is closely connected with his previously unrecognised obsession with photography; the resulting book, <i>The Importance of Elsewhere</i> (2015) (R1) was praised as having shown a new dimension of Larkin. The book was reviewed in <i>The Times</i>, <i>The Sunday Times</i>, <i>The Daily Telegraph</i>, <i>The Observer</i> ('Photography Book of the Month'), <i>Prospect</i>, <i>The TLS</i>, <i>The Independent</i>, <i>The New Yorker</i>, <i>The Evening Standard</i> and <i>The London Review of Books</i>. All reviews emphasised that the research and the book has had a significant effect on public perceptions of Larkin, one of the most popular poets of the late 20th century. <i>The Times</i>: 'Larkin's photographs not only illustrate the poems – they explain them... a superlative, succinct and subtle biographical commentary.' <i>The Independent</i> [it provides a] 'rare animation of the writerly life by means of the replication of 200-odd photographs taken by the poet.' <i>The Observer</i>: 'A fascinating and tantalising book... and one that sheds light on a great poet and a tricky human being.'</p>		

His biography of Hemingway, *The Man Who Wasn't There* (2019) involved research into unpublished archives of the writer's correspondence and notes, mainly in the JFK Centre, Boston, and was praised by the *Sunday Times* as '**a bombshell...a blistering, rollicking, horribly convincing account of a compelling literary monster**' and in the *Irish Independent* as an '**astute analysis of previously unpublished letters from the Hemingway archive.**'

Bradford's *Orwell: A Man of Our Times* (2020) (R2) looked at Orwell's life, work and ideas in terms of contemporary issues such as political extremism and populism, radical nationalism and authoritarian states such as China, and was described in the *Telegraph* as '**five star... excellent.**' In *Literary Rivals* (2014) he explored the ways in which literary friendships since the 18th century are often underpinned by notions of envy, even contempt, and the *Financial Times* reviewer said that '**it doesn't get much better than this.**'

In 2018 he edited the *Companion to Literary Biography*, the first comprehensive account of the history and techniques of the genre within and outside academia and its capacity to widen access to literature for the non-academic reader. In 2018 the *THE* asked him to write an article on the neglect of literary biography in academia, in contrast to its popularity outside universities, and in the same year the *Spectator* commissioned him to write an article on how the controversies raised by literary biography ensure its attraction for the general reader.

Professor Elmer Kennedy-Andrews, sadly deceased in 2015, was a highly respected researcher of Irish and American literature. His collaboration with Professor Pól Ó Dochartaigh in exploring the significance of Jewishness in Irish literature led to the publication of '*Representations of the Jew in the Modern Irish Novel since Joyce*' (2013) (R3). In this article he uncovered evidence of how the representation of Jewishness by five major Irish writers was considerably more ambivalent, rather than hostile, than had been hitherto imagined. He also argued that there were broad and rich differences in how Jewishness was depicted and imagined and that this had many underexplored consequences for comprehending Irish and Jewish identity in Ireland. These findings helped shape the research project '*Representations of Jews in Irish Literature*' that secured funding from the AHRC to create a wider survey of Irish literature for a monograph, exhibition and lecture series.

Professor Pól Ó Dochartaigh is a scholar of German, Jewish and Irish cultural studies. The collection of essays which he edited and to which he contributed, *Jews in German Literature since 1945: German-Jewish Literature* (2000) (R4) is a landmark text that recovers the history of post-war Jewish writing in German, rescuing the stories of numerous authors and putting them back into the literary and cultural history of Germany (East and West and unified). The development of this text led him to question if a similar re-evaluation was needed of Jewish writers and the representation of Jewishness in Irish studies. This led in turn to the collaboration with Kennedy-Andrews that resulted in the AHRC project.

Dr Willa Murphy has explored the Irish connections of a number of American writers. Murphy's research on historical figures and writers with links to the North West of Ulster were initially focused on Archbishop Frederick Hervey; during her literary survey, '"Satisfied with Marrow and Fatness": The Epicurean Theology of Frederick Hervey, Bishop of Derry' (2103) (R5), she discovered the connections that major American writers Willa Cather and John Steinbeck had to the north of Ireland and the Limavady/Coleraine area in particular.

Her research on Willa Cather, led to an invitation to co-host with the Willa Cather Society its annual conference in Ireland in 2018. Murphy became editor of the proceedings of the conference and published her essay based on a number of years' worth of research in the Protestant aesthetics of American writers, 'Throwing the Furniture Out of the Window: Ulster Protestant Plain Style and Cather's Aesthetic'. In this essay Murphy traced how ideas about plainness, decorum and neatness formed part of a cultural association between Ulster-Scottish ideals and behaviour which had crossed the Atlantic and been retained within the diaspora.

Dr Kathryn White has explored the theme of 'decay' in Samuel Beckett's writing. Her monograph *Beckett and Decay* (2009) (R6) argued against the rather simplistic notion that Beckett's work merely focused on decay, to suggest that it was, in fact, driving the aesthetic, linguistic and artistic components of his literary career. Her work has proved very important for the understanding of what motivated Beckett.

3. References to the research Outputs can be provided by Ulster University on request. The following outputs have been subject to blind peer review practice by internationally-based editorial boards for publication in internationally accredited presses.

- R1.** Bradford, R. (2015) *The Importance of Elsewhere. Philip Larkin's Photographs*, Frances Lincoln.
- R2.** Bradford, R., (2020) *Orwell. A Man of Our Time*, Bloomsbury Caravel Trade.
- R3.** Kennedy-Andrews, E., (2013) 'Representations of the Jew in the Modern Irish Novel since Joyce', *Irish University Review*, November 2013, vo. 43, No. 2.
- R4.** Ó Dochartaigh, P., (2000) *Jews in German Literature since 1945: German-Jewish Literature?* Brill Rodopi.
- R5.** Murphy, W., (2013) "'Satisfied with Marrow and Fatness": The Epicurean Theology of Frederick Hervey, Bishop of Derry'. *Field Day Review*, 9(13).
- R6.** White, K., (2009) *Beckett and Decay*, Continuum International Publishing Group.

G1. Elmer Kennedy-Andrews, Frank Ferguson, D MacRaild, 'Representations of Jews in Irish Literature', AHRC, (October 2012 – October 2013), GBP408,376

4. Details of the impact

I1: Production of new cultural artefacts through research-led engagement with public venues, curators, editors and publishers.

Engagement with **Bradford's book on Larkin's photographs, *The Importance of Elsewhere*, (R1)** prompted the Chair of Hull's 2017 'City of Culture', to invite Bradford to **'be taken on as advisor on Larkin and Hull'**. **(C1)** As part of Hull City of Culture 2017, an exhibition of Larkin's photographs was mounted at Hull University and the Hull History Centre, which drew on the previously unrecognised relationship between his verse and visual culture, which Bradford was praised in the press as disclosing. Bradford gave a public address at the exhibition. The book received unanimously excellent reviews in the national and international press (see 'Underpinning research' for quotations).

BBC TV's 'Through the Lens of Larkin' was inspired by Bradford's Larkin book; he was employed as advisor (particularly on the relationship between the photography and the poetry) and was interviewed in the programme. **(C1)**

The Sunday Times, *The Irish Times*, and *The Independent* reproduced photographs and text from Bradford's 'The Importance of Elsewhere', in their supplements, with the *Sunday Times* Arts Editor stating that features on the book **'will change people's perceptions of L[arkin].'** **(C1)**

Bradford's *Orwell: A Man of Our Time* prompted BBC TV's *Politics Live* to invite him as special guest to discuss Orwell and such contemporary issues as Brexit, Trump, and China (averaging 700,000 viewers). He was also interviewed on these matters by LBC's Iain Dale's Book Club (averaging 360,000 listeners); Radio 4's *Front Row* (av. 2.2 million); BBC Radio 5 Live (av. 1.3 million); BBC's Robert Elms Show (av. 500,000); and Julia Hartley Brewer on Talk Radio (av. 340,000). The Publicity Director of Bloomsbury states that **'the invitations from these producers and editors were issued...on their perception of his book as having created a new forum for debate on the significance of Orwell today.'** **(C2)**

The editors of *The Irish Independent*, *The Jewish Chronicle*, and *The Big Issue* read the Orwell biography, recognised its relevance for general readers and asked Bradford to write essays for them comparing Orwell's experiences with the present day on, respectively: the politics of the British working classes, antisemitism, and homelessness. Each was published in Jan/Feb 2020. **(C1)**

Bradford's success as an author of trade published biographies, evidenced in **R1** and **R2**, prompted publisher Wiley-Blackwell to commission him as General Editor for a series of literary biographies (at least 75 books), 'The Life of the Author' series, which seeks to bridge the divide between academia and the general reading public. Bradford's Wiley-Blackwell series involves an initial £250,000 investment from the publisher, which aims to consolidate his work on transforming perceptions of literary biography within and outside academia and build upon his track record of projecting academic expertise into the non-university community. **(C2)**

The Publishing Director of Bloomsbury Trade states that his five most recent biographies have had **'an enduring impact on perceptions of significant authors and their works, particularly for readers who would not purchase or read specialised academic publications. ...his reviewers agree that he has either changed opinion or moved the debate forward'**. The Editorial Director of Biteback Press, judges him as **'capable of influencing, sometimes changing, public opinion on key cultural issues'**. One prizewinning biographer, novelist, reviewer and journalist comments that **'In terms of impact beyond the seminar room he**

occupies an extraordinary place in contemporary literature and culture.' Another author, journalist and reviewer states that **'lead reviewers in the national and international press... confirm that Bradford's work importantly changes common perceptions of central issues and classic authors'**. These comments on the reach and significance of Bradford's work are reinforced in testimonials by the Commissioning Editor, Little, Brown; and the Promotions Director, Bloomsbury Trade. Parsons, Drake, Beattie and Campomar also state that their companies consult Bradford on publishing strategies for literary biographies aimed at the general reader. (C2)

The research of **Kennedy-Andrews and Ó Dochartaigh** on Jews and Jewishness in Irish literature generated a new archival network that included the Royal Irish Academy, the Irish Jewish Museum, Dublin and the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI). The network drove the creation of a touring exhibition, 'Representation of the Jews in Irish Literature' curated by **Ferguson and Ó Dochartaigh**, which was hosted in the UK, Ireland and the US, drawing substantial audience numbers. For example, the exhibition at PRONI had over 5,500 visitors between September and November 2016. (C3)

The Director of the John Steinbeck Festival was inspired by **Willa Murphy's** articles and subsequently commissioned her to draw on her research to generate a range of cultural events which included **'assisting musicians with creating musical interpretations of Steinbeck's works, themes and ideas'**. (C6)

The Director of the Stendhal Festival, based in the North West and one of the largest summer music and arts festivals in Northern Ireland, with over 8,500 attendees each year, was prompted by Murphy's research to invite her to curate a series of **'very popular'** talks and performances. These events **'brought the study of literature, history, art, music and drama to a wide audience, the majority of which came from outside the university world'**. (C8)

Murphy's research underpinned an exhibition created as part of The Willa Cather Symposium which was hosted in Limavady Library. (C7)

As part of **Kathryn White's** ongoing role as advisor on Samuel Beckett to the Metropolitan Arts Centre (MAC), Belfast, she was invited to host a colloquium and record a podcast with Harvard Professor and Director of the Poet's Theatre in Boston as part of his production of four of Beckett's plays in Belfast. He stated **'the full recorded interchange with [White] had a large positive impact on the development of future relations between the scholarly and artistic communities of Belfast and Boston/Cambridge'**. This podcast was also found to be **'of immeasurable value to the local Belfast audience'** and **'decisive in creating better ties for us all abroad'**. (C9)

I2: Increasing cultural participation of marginalised and under-engaged audiences.

The AHRC-funded **'Representation of Jews in Irish Literature'** project enabled partner institutions to engage with the Jewish community in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The Head of Public Services at PRONI commented that this **'was a particularly important project for PRONI to participate in, as it facilitated engagement with both the Northern Ireland Jewish Community and equally as important – it highlighted and showcased the extraordinary legacy and contribution of that community to wider NI audiences. This exploration of the community memory also supported Department for Communities priorities around reaching audiences who do not traditionally use record offices or visit museums or libraries.'** (C3)

'For a public institution like PRONI, media coverage plays a significant role in emphasizing our relevance and 'Representation of Jews' featured in articles in the Belfast Newsletter, the Irish News and the Irish Times. This led to interest by the [NI] Minister of Finance, who arranged a personal visit with the Rabbi of the Belfast Hebrew Congregation. This cemented the beginnings of a relationship between PRONI and the Rabbi who would later address an audience at PRONI for Holocaust Memorial Day on 22 January 2018.' (C3)

The Minister of Finance added **'I was particularly pleased that our joint visit was promoted by the communications unit of the Department of Finance and reached a wide audience at a time when racist attacks on the Jewish community of Belfast were continuing. I was impressed by the exhibition's aims to preserve an underexplored area of Irish and Jewish cultural history and how this has been shared with the public across venues in Belfast and elsewhere. From my connections with the elders of the Jewish community of Belfast, I know that the creation of this exhibition was much appreciated and helped bolster that community's position in our society. The exhibition also permitted me to share my own**

experiences of growing up in Belfast during a time of conflict with the Rabbi and to provide examples of the great Irish language traditions of the area which I was pleased to discover have links to the Jewish traditions of Ireland also.' (C4)

Murphy has been praised for her success in promoting **'the connections John Steinbeck has with the local area. This heritage has been known for some time but had been all but forgotten. The Steinbeck Festival has raised the profile of Steinbeck and his local connections, reaching local, provincial, national and international audiences.'** (C6)

She has helped build links with groups not usually connected with Steinbeck research such as primary and secondary schools, the Men's Shed movement and disability group Autonomie.

Murphy's work with the Willa Cather Symposium enabled cross-community engagement in the Limavady area and provided opportunities for festival goers from a range of religious and socio-economic backgrounds to engage with **'the culture of the Orange Order and Ulster-Scots traditions'** through facilitating talks by the former NI Minister for Social Development, and curating visits to events held in the Orange Heritage Centre, Limavady. (C7)

I3: Developing stimuli to cultural tourism and contributing to the quality of the tourist experience through engagement with festivals and symposia.

For both the Steinbeck and Cather Festivals, **Murphy** curated the development of tourist trails and walking tours of the area alongside a series of events that stimulated local and international tourism in the borough. **Murphy** in association with the Cather Symposium facilitated attracting 60 international speakers to the area and linking these with a series of events geared towards a public rather than an academic audience. (C7)

As a result of **White's** research on Samuel Beckett, she was invited in 2017 by the MAC, Belfast to convene a symposium, 'Beckett, Ireland and the Biographical Festival' an event that encouraged the management of the John Hewitt Summer School, one of the major arts festivals in Northern Ireland, **'to consider how our Festivals ... could develop and to re-examine how they had started and developed... we embraced the importance of being rooted, extending it to include the importance of ideological roots. This has in turn influenced the development of our programme of activities. In addition to the International Summer School, held in Armagh, we are now planning a weekend Festival - Celebrating North Belfast'**. (C10)

I4: Increasing understanding of local traditions leading to enhanced cultural preservation.

The 'Representations of Jews in Irish Literature' project was praised by the *Times of Israel* for its capacity to provide a means for new, young audiences to comprehend the impact of Jewishness upon Irish life and history. They reported the response of one 16-year-old who was **'most excited to discover that the biblical [actually extra-biblical] Wandering Jew was the inspiration for Stoker's Dracula. "I had no idea about any of the writings about Jews that contributed to things like Dracula. I thought that was so interesting," she said.'** Every venue that hosted the exhibition highlighted local Irish-Jewish heritage. In Waterford, the librarian at the Luke Wadding Library used the Ulster University exhibition to create a special exhibition on Waterford Jewish history. The exhibition was open to local schools and one student remarked. **'I never knew that there were a lot of Jews once in Waterford. Sixty-two — that's such a huge number because you really never hear about it nowadays.'** (C5)

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

C1. Emails from Chair of Hull City of Culture, BBC Researcher and Arts Editor of the Sunday Times; interview schedule for TV and radio from Bloomsbury Trade Publishers.

C2. Testimonials from Wiley-Blackwell, Bloomsbury Publishers, Biteback Publishers, Little Brown and two major non-academic writers.

C3. Testimonial from Public Record Office NI (PRONI).

C4. Testimonial from Minister of Finance, NI Executive.

C5. Testimonials, The Times of Israel.

C6. Testimonial from Director, Steinbeck Festival.

C7. Testimonial from Director, Willa Cather Symposium.

C8. Testimonial from Director, Stendhal Festival.

C9. Testimonial from Director, Poet's Theatre Boston.

C10. Testimonial from John Hewitt Society.