



Section A		
Institution: University of St Andrews 		
Unit of Assessment: UoA 26: Modern Languages and Linguistics		
Title of case study: Transnational Scotland: Changing Practice and Raising Awareness of Imperial Legacies in Scottish Museums		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2014 - 31 December 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name: Emma Bond	Role: Reader	Period employed by submitting HEI: 01 January 2013 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2017 - 31 December 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
Section B		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>Bond's research in transnational studies and the resulting 'Transnational Scotland' network have shed new light on the interconnected material legacies of imperial trade and colonial exploitation which underpin the interpretation and display of Scottish history in 6 key museum and heritage sites (Watt Institution, Verdant Works, Fisheries Museum, V&A Dundee, Wardlaw Museum and New Lanark, combined total annual visitors approximately 1.34million people). This research has led to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) a change in practices among curators and staff at three of these organisations (combined total annual visitors approximately 940,000 people), resulting in better-informed interpretation and new displays. It has also helped them adapt to changing cultural values relating to decolonization; (b) raising the profile of five of these museums and heritage sites through the formation of a new, collaborative network that shines a spotlight on collections with links to colonial histories held outside Scotland's central belt (Edinburgh/Glasgow); (c) new creative expression in the shape of two co-created historical video games and sensory learning materials, which have increased engagement with one museum amongst 'hard-to-reach' school children audiences; (d) an increase in awareness of histories of empire and slavery amongst audiences at nine public venues across Scotland, including the V&A in Dundee, and capacity building amongst teachers to help tell these stories in twelve schools in Inverclyde and Edinburgh. 		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Bond's research in transnational studies and the 'Transnational Scotland' project have helped fill a gap in existing knowledge by focusing on the material commodities that underpinned Scotland's historic participation in systems of empire, colonialism and slavery, and particularly on their interconnections. Dundonian sacks made from Indian jute transported sugar from Caribbean plantations; coarse linen from the East Coast was used to clothe enslaved peoples producing goods for British consumers, and the lowest quality Scottish herring was exported to the West Indies to feed enslaved people – a fishing route that vanished after abolition in 1833 (shrinking from 82,000 tons in 1824 to just 2,000 in 1845).</p> <p>Moving beyond the scope of other works which use 'transnational' as a simplistic adjectival term that is interchangeable with 'global',</p>		
		

or 'world', Bond has published original work on how to engage the transnational as both theory and methodology (R1; R2), and how to communicate transnational histories using innovative creative methods (R3; R4).

The focus of much work to date has remained very much on the linear links forged between Scotland and the Caribbean through the Transatlantic Slave System, and on Scotland's major cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow (e.g. Tom Devine's *Recovering Scotland's Slavery Past* (2015); BBC Scotland's series 'Slavery: Scotland's Hidden Shame', 2018; University of Glasgow's GBP20,000,000 reparations, 2019). What Bond has shown is that from the 18th to the 20th century, Scotland operated as a much wider transnational trade hub of huge global significance. The sugar refineries of Greenock, fisheries of the long East Coast, cotton mills of New Lanark and Paisley and jute mills of Dundee attracted raw materials from the West Indies, Brazil, North America, Mauritius, India, Indonesia and beyond. Scotland then exported her finished products back across the world, creating an elaborate network of interconnected routes, objects and peoples (R5).

The methodological framework used in 'Transnational Scotland' to explore these histories of trade objects and to respond to the complex, intricate interconnections of their legacies today is based directly upon Bond's work on theorizing the transnational. Using the term 'transnational' to indicate a 'stretching or going beyond the confines of national boundaries (be that in cultural, spatial or temporal terms)' (R1) helps us to understand and represent the ties, interactions and exchanges that take place across borders, and explains lingering connections between past and present (R2).

- **R1** (2014) was the first thorough theorization of the transnational in the field of Italian Studies and is now a touchstone reference across the field of Modern Languages and beyond. It argues that using a transnational methodology allows us to better understand global networks through focusing on local sites, individual bodies, or cultural artefacts which embody relations of proximity and interconnection.
- **R2** (2016) offered a new perspective on transnational memory (memories that move beyond the nation-state). It demonstrated the inventive strategies used by diasporas to 'access' histories located elsewhere, and the co-existence of different 'pasts' within national contexts. This work shows how interconnections with other histories beyond national borders can emerge through memory-sharing and narrative elaboration.
- **R3** (2018) shows how transnational histories can be engaged in digital games designed for school-age children.
- **R4** (2020) theorizes modes of audience and visitor engagement with stories of displacement, migration and slavery through immersion and virtual reality experiences. Both R3 and R4 increase our understanding of how to engage diverse audiences and visitors effectively through innovative expressions of transnational histories of mobility.
- **R5** (2020) showcases Bond's research into Scotland's transnational history and ideas for ways in which this can be incorporated into heritage displays, with a focus on the V&A Dundee.

3. References to the research

The research listed below was supported by peer-reviewed funding (Royal Society of Edinburgh, British Academy, Leverhulme Trust) and/or is published in peer-reviewed journals and presses.

R1. Emma Bond, 'Towards a Trans-national Turn in Italian Studies?' *Italian Studies* 69:3. 2014. DOI: [10.1179/0075163414Z.00000000080](https://doi.org/10.1179/0075163414Z.00000000080).

R2. Emma Bond, "'Let me go back and recreate what I don't know": Locating Trans-national Memory work in Contemporary Narrative'. *Modern Languages Open*. April 2016. DOI: [10.3828/mlo.v0i0.134](https://doi.org/10.3828/mlo.v0i0.134).

R3. Robin Sloan, Gordon Brown, Emma Bond, Marisa Wilson, 'Designing Sugaropolis: Digital Games as a Medium for Conveying Transnational Narratives'. Proceedings of British DiGRA 2018. https://rke.abertay.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/15479654/Sloan_DesigningSugaropolis_Published_2018.pdf.

R4. Emma Bond, 'Displacements of Experience: The Case of Immersion and Virtual Reality'. In *The Handbook of Displacement*, eds. Peter Adey et al., New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020. ISBN 978-3-030-47177-4.

R5. Emma Bond and Meredith More, 'Decolonising Our Galleries: An Introduction', V&A Dundee Stories, 2020. <https://www.vam.ac.uk/dundee/articles/decolonising-our-galleries-an-introduction>.

4. Details of the impact

Bond's research in transnational studies has led to positive change in the way that heritage professionals at key sites tell the story of Scotland's past to include acknowledgement of underpinning legacies of colonialism and empire, and has influenced how diverse audiences and museum visitors understand that story. The significance of that change can be seen in the following areas:

(a) 'Transnational Scotland' has changed professional practices amongst curators and museum staff, resulting in better-informed interpretation and new displays, and has helped organisations adapt to changing cultural values around decolonization.

Having set up 'Transnational Scotland' in 2018 with four original museum partners, Bond and co-investigator Michael Morris were approached by the V&A Dundee (annual visitor numbers: approximately 830,000 people). V&A Dundee asked Bond to design and deliver a workshop there to address the lack of acknowledgment of systems of exploitation that underpin the history of Scottish design. As a direct result of this workshop (August 2019), the professional practices of the museum curators there have changed. The narrative they tell about Scottish design now includes the linked histories of slavery and empire that were shared at the 'Transnational Scotland' workshop and in follow-up consultations. They have **rewritten the main gallery panel and individual labels of 14 key objects on permanent display in the Scottish Design Galleries**, including Turkey Red fabrics, Paisley patterns, jute and linen objects, to reflect Bond's decolonial and transnational approach to Scotland's history (R1; R5; S1, pp. 3-13). They have also committed to a wider process of decolonization involving curatorial interventions and new commissions and residencies. Bond is part of a new Decolonisation Advisory Panel helping to embed this process. The V&A stated that engagement with 'Transnational Scotland' was "*totally enlightening, allowing us to focus on what we need to improve and how to do this*" (S1, p. 1). V&A also wrote to Bond and Morris: "*your expertise was instrumental in enabling us to write better, more honest accounts of the objects on display*" (S1, p. 2). Following this, one curator and Bond co-wrote an article published on the V&A website ([12 August 2020](#)) outlining the work done by 'Transnational Scotland' and the changes made by the V&A in response, which was viewed over 1,800 times in the first two weeks after publication, around twice the average number of readers for articles on their website. The changes in object labels brought about by 'Transnational Scotland' were also covered in detail by *The Guardian* ([27 August 2020](#), S2) [monthly digital readership 24,000,000 people] and *Design Week* (28 August 2020).

In autumn 2020, Bond mined the stores and catalogues of the Watt Institution, Greenock (annual visitor numbers: approximately 60,000 people) for previously undisplayed items relating to sugar. She discovered and brought to the museum's attention eight new objects which highlight the transnational nature of Greenock's sugar history, thereby shifting the museum's focus away from local industry alone. These include a 19th century Jamaican cutlass, a ship permit, 18th century Dutch gin bottles used as currency in the transatlantic slave trade, a ship carpenter's diary, and West Indian chocolate tins. Watt staff have now assembled these objects into a **prominent new visitor display highlighting the role of slavery and colonialism in local sugar production** (S3).

Bond has also made a vital contribution to kick-starting a process of decolonization at the Wardlaw Museum in St Andrews (annual visitor numbers: approximately 50,000 people). Building on her publications in transnational studies and the formation of the 'Transnational Scotland' network, Bond proposed a major exhibition to be held there in 2022 (*Re-collecting Empire*). Bond has provided staff with reading and resource lists, designed a residency-commission with Turner prize-winning artist Alberta Whittle, and co-designed and hosted a series of public-facing events on decolonization. She has also helped staff draft a statement of purpose detailing their new commitment to researching and acknowledging object provenance, decolonizing displays and interpretation, transparent commissioning, and staff training. The Collections and Exhibitions curator states that Bond's work has been "**invaluable to the Museums' strategic programme of decolonisation**" and "**informed our professional practice [to] support[s] the re-interpretation of the Museums' collections to explore narratives relating to colonialism and empire**" (S4).

(b) 'Transnational Scotland' has raised the profile of the five museums and heritage sites through the formation of a new, collaborative network that shines a spotlight on collections relating to colonial histories held outside Scotland's central belt.

Bond's work theorizing transnational studies led to the design and establishment of a new network of museums and sites with shared transnational heritage in Scotland outside the major cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow (where most attention has historically been focused): Watt Institution (Greenock), Verdant Works (Dundee), Fisheries Museum (Anstruther), V&A Dundee and New Lanark (combined annual visitors: approximately 1,290,000 people). The focus of the 'Transnational Scotland' network activity built on Bond's research prioritizing interconnections and proximities (R1; R2) in order to redraw a fuller, transnational map of Scotland's heritage landscape. The network has 65 members, and conducted 5 workshops between 2019 and 2020, each with approximately 25 people (general-public attendees). Pathways for new collaborations between members were ensured by holding guided visits to each collection, and 'show and tell' sessions for partners to learn more about each other's collections and make new links between them. Over half of the 10 people (partner museum participants) surveyed said that they felt **more connected to other Scottish museums with shared histories**, and **100% said they were more familiar with other collections that shed light on transnational histories** as a direct result of their involvement in the project (S5, p.4). The Dundee Heritage Trust stated that the network *"has given [us] an opportunity to **raise the profile of our museum and collections** to people who undoubtedly did not have our organization on their radar"* (S6, our emphasis). The Heritage Outreach Officer at the Watt Institution says that their participation: *"allowed us to make contacts with other Scottish museums, explore new and creative ways of communicating shared histories to visitors, and to **raise the profile of the Watt**"*. (S3, our emphasis) Additionally, 20 objects shared by partners at workshops are now included in a permanent digital [gallery](#) of transnational objects on the project website.

(c) 'Transnational Scotland' has stimulated creative expression in the shape of two co-created historical video games and sensory learning materials, which have increased engagement with one museum amongst school children audiences.

Bond's work on improving audience and visitor engagement through diverse modes of creative storytelling such as digital games, immersion and virtual reality (R3; R4) has generated new ways



of telling transnational histories for hard-to-reach museum audiences. The project team (Bond, with Marisa Wilson and Robin Sloan), in collaboration with students at Abertay University, produced two interactive video games which have engaged different groups with local heritage collections. Both games built on Bond's original archival research (R5). The first game ("Sugaropolis 1", April 2016) was made by student team [FolkTales Entertainment](#) to target primary age children and young teens. The game was presented by the team at the Digital Games Research Association (DiGRA) annual conference and was shown at the Indie Fest, Caird Hall, Perth (2016). Bond was contacted by the curator of the Watt Institution after she had seen the game at DiGRA and identified it as a means of increasing young people's

engagement with the museum. The second game ("Sugaropolis 2", April 2017) was made by student team [Saccharine Games](#) to target older teens and adults, and focuses on the sugar history of Greenock through objects in Scotland and the Caribbean (letters, maps, cane knives, hogshead barrels).

Both games were on permanent display in the Inverclyde Heritage Hub (IHH, total visitor numbers: approximately 30,000 people) between 2017 and 2019 alongside project posters and materials, and **increased local community engagement (especially amongst school children) with the transnational history of the sugar industry in Greenock** (S3, p. 3). Nearly 350 local residents participated in events organized at the IHH and Watt Institution by Bond between 2017 and 2020. Inverclyde scores highest in most of the Scottish [index of multiple deprivation](#) categories, and the IHH and Watt have used Bond's events and materials to target 'hard-to-reach' audiences such as local school children. As an example, one of these events (February 2020) was attended by approximately 30 people (school children). Feedback showed that 89% of those who answered the survey question agreed that: *"Today's activity increases my pride in Inverclyde"* (S7). The Heritage Outreach Officer at the Watt Institution comments: *"Coming into contact with the activities*

of the network increased the children's engagement with the Watt collections, increased their awareness of colonial and imperial histories in Scotland, and increased their pride in the transnational history of their local area" (S3, p. 1, our emphasis).

(d) 'Transnational Scotland' has raised awareness of histories of empire and slavery amongst audiences at nine public venues across Scotland, and built capacity amongst teachers to help tell these stories in twelve schools in Inverclyde and Edinburgh.

Bond has disseminated research findings on Scotland's transnational history through a series of public talks and workshops, helping to transform cultural understandings of Scotland's transnational past and the legacies of colonialism in museum collections (R5). Bond has delivered public talks (e.g. Open Association St Andrews, October 2016; SOLAS Festival Perthshire, June 2018; Byre Theatre St Andrews, February 2020), written an online [blog piece](#) on Greenock's sugar history, and produced two YouTube videos ([June 2020](#); [November 2020](#)). In her sustained engagement with museums, Bond has organized 6 additional public events at 6 sites (Inverclyde Heritage Hub, Verdant Works, V&A Dundee, New Lanark, Fisheries Museum, Watt Institution) between 2018 and 2020. As indicated in an online survey, 89% of 30 people (participants) in Transnational Scotland network events are now **'more aware of the transnational imperial and colonial history of Scotland's trades'**, and over 50% have **changed their thinking** about the history of these trades **as a direct consequence of attending project workshops**. 100% of those participants also stated they were more familiar with museum and heritage collections that shed light on these histories as a result of attending Bond's events (S5, pp. 1-3).

Audiences at Bond's public talks and events at 9 venues across Scotland have gained awareness of Scotland's transnational history, its role in the transatlantic slave trade and imperial commodity trades, and how the traces of these histories can be located in museum collections and built heritage today. As an example, of the 25 people who left feedback at the Byre Theatre event in February 2020 (total audience: 60 people), 92% said that it had made them **more aware of Scotland's transnational histories and legacies** (S8). International public dissemination has also occurred through the network website (approximately 100 visitors per month; 320 views per month), Twitter (approximately 700 followers) and Instagram (approximately 300 followers) feeds (S9).

Bond has **built capacity in the teaching of Greenock's transnational sugar history** through the creation of a new suite of online resources, a teacher training session and sensory educational kits. A project [website](#) features 5 classroom activities and video tutorials relating to sugar that teachers can freely download and use. Bond also hosted a 'Being Human' Festival public event (sponsored by the British Academy) in November 2020, a teacher training session, and distributed over 400 innovative sensory kits to 12 schools across Inverclyde and Edinburgh (7 primary and 5 secondary, 10 of which are in deprived areas). Preliminary feedback reports that the training session and new materials have increased 4 teachers' capacity to 31 December 2020: one has included Greenock in an existing slavery topic at National 5 level to S4s; one will include 'Sugaropolis' on an existing topic on the Clyde; one will now cover Greenock's sugar trade (previously considered too complicated for primary age children); and one has used the materials to create a brand-new 'Sugaropolis' topic (S10). Teaching the next generations about Greenock's sugar history is vital to ensuring that Scotland's pivotal role in transnational history and its imperial legacies in heritage settings across the country are fully understood.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

(S1) Email testimonials: Curator and Director of Programme at V&A Dundee.

(S2) Article in [The Guardian](#) (August 2020).

(S3) Written testimonials: Heritage Outreach Officer and Co-ordinator, Watt Institution.

(S4) Email testimonial: Collections and Exhibitions Curator, University of St Andrews Museums.

(S5) Online survey of 30 network members and participants (November 2019).

(S6) Email testimonial: Heritage and Exhibitions Director, Dundee Heritage Trust.

(S7) Exit questionnaires: 29 primary school attendees of event, Watt Institution (February 2020).

(S8) Exit questionnaires: 25 attendees of public event at Byre Theatre (February 2020).

(S9) Statistics from monitoring of Transnational Scotland website and social media feeds.

(S10) Feedback emails from 4 teachers at primary and secondary schools (December 2020).