

Section A		
Institution: Durham University		
Unit of Assessment: 27 - English Language and Literature		
Title of case study: Heroism and Expeditionary Archives		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: Between 1 February 2015 and 31 December 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Dr Abbie Garrington	Role(s): Associate Professor of Modern and Contemporary Literature	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 01/02/2015-present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: Between 1 February 2015 and 31 July 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
Section B		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>Three interconnected projects have allowed Garrington and curator, artist, and archivist collaborators to develop new audiences for the rich expedition-related archives and art collections of the UK. Together they have used the concept and talking point of 'heroism' to shift the ways that archives and collections are accessed, displayed, and understood. Research regarding expeditionary history and its literary records led to events and exhibitions that changed public perception of and engagement with British exploration, with impact in the areas of (1) curation, (2) conversation, (3) careers, and (4) communities. The projects created new artistic and curatorial practices and paradigms with lasting effect on National Galleries Scotland, Royal Geographical Society and Mountain Heritage Trust; they provided new ways for young people to tackle difficult conversations regarding body image and identity, particularly in Personal and Social Education (PSE) contexts; they influenced the practice and career trajectory of two commissioned artists; and they facilitated local community involvement in the interpretation of archive acquisitions. Beneficiaries therefore included: museums, galleries, and archives; practising artists; and public audiences of all ages, but in particular the 16 to 18 age group. This work attracted commercial sponsorship from the outdoor brand Montane in addition to funding from Arts Council England (ACE) and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Consideration of how expeditionary mountain experience might best be rendered in written forms led to R1, the first academic piece to study in detail the mountaineer George Mallory's letters to Marjorie Holmes, held at the Royal Geographical Society (RGS). Garrington was invited to write more about letters as a vehicle for mountain narratives for the <i>Alpine Journal</i> (established 1863), part of a drive to return literary scholarship to its place in the Alpine Club's journal of record (R2). R1 and R2, as well as the wider body of mountain work outlined below, led to a more nuanced appreciation of heroism 'on the hill' (i.e. in mountaineering practice and its literary record) and thence the ways in which heroism is depicted and recorded in archives and portrait collections. Briefing senior staff at National Galleries Scotland (NGS) about this research led to the co-curated 'No Heroes Any More?' online exhibition (2018) and its related schools workshops and PSE classes, focusing on issues of gender identity, body image, and bravery. R1 and R2 also provided the underpinning research for a 'pop-up' exhibition in the Great Hall of the RGS, considering 'The Heroic Body on Expedition' (2016), which displayed prints made for the first time from 1920s Everest expedition glass plates that were not previously available for public viewing. A sold-out Durham Book Festival event with poet/author Helen Mort brought consideration of the anti-heroic and sensory engagement with mountain environments to a broad public audience (2018). New archive/artist/gallery connections were made, using mountain archives that were crucial to the preparation of R1 and R2, forming long-term collaborations in 'The Hero Project,' 'Savage Arena,' and 'Scaling</p>		

the Heights' exhibitions and related events (below), directly influencing the sites of artistic interventions by Stephen and Kate Livingstone. S. Livingstone's multi-year engagement with mountain cultures has been the result, while K. Livingstone has developed new artistic techniques in response to time in the archives (E10). Garrington's research regarding the British Everest expeditions of the 1920s (R1; R2) resulted in the incorporation of Bentley Beetham's photographic collection in S. Livingstone's practice, including the reinterpretation of some images previously mislabelled (E10). Garrington's research into George Mallory and his posthumous reputation (R1; R2) also shed light on Tasker, whose renowned expeditions with Pete Boardman have frequently been compared to Mallory and Sandy Irvine c. 60 years before. Tasker's own interest in mountain literature was revealed by Garrington's research to be rooted in early twentieth-century writing; topics central to the 'Savage Arena' exhibition, and the re-evaluation of Tasker as a consciously literary writer of mountain accounts, as attendees observed (E5).

Garrington's wider mountain work in the 2015-2020 period, which has led towards her forthcoming monograph *High Modernism: A Literary History of Mountaineering, 1890-1945*, includes: a presentation at Kendal Mountain Festival (2015), where she has also contributed to programming (2015,'16,'17); the 'Writing Mountains' third-year undergraduate module at Durham University (2016-present); work on the advisory committee for the 'Performing Mountains' (AHRC) project led by Prof. Jonathan Pitches (Leeds) (2017-2019); 15 academic and public engagement talks around the world, including a broadcast for the BBC Proms (2018); and an interdisciplinary panel on 'Performing the Archive' at the 'Performing Mountains' conference (2018). She was the first academic to complete a joint Visiting Research Fellowship between the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at the University of Edinburgh, and the Mountaineering and Polar Collections of the National Library of Scotland (2014-2015). Garrington has been consulted by the BBC on mountain- and exploration-related programming, including the recent BBC2 'Icons' series.

3. References to the research

R1: Garrington, Abbie. 'The Line that Binds: Climbing Narratives, Ropework, and Epistolary Practice,' in Julie Taylor (ed.) *Modernism and Affect* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), pp. 75-93.

R2: Garrington, Abbie. "'Write me a little letter": The George Mallory/Marjorie Holmes Correspondence,' *Alpine Journal* 120 (2016), pp. 123-133.

Quality indicators: The research, collaborations, and online exhibition of 'The Hero Project,' for which Garrington was PI, was funded by the AHRC, July 2015-July 2016, GBP44,200. This funding supported R1/R2. R2 is considered the definitive statement on this correspondence, cited when these letters were put up for sale (Bonhams catalogue, November 2015). R2 was nominated by the editors for an award at the international Banff Mountain Book Competition 2016. Garrington has been invited to talk about R1/R2 at a total of 15 events, including major international conferences, and a mountain-themed Proms broadcast on BBC Radio 3 (2018). As a result of this research and related exhibitions, Garrington was invited to become a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society in 2016.

4. Details of the impact

The projects considered here include:

'The Hero Project' (funded by the AHRC) in collaboration with the RGS and NGS, including the online exhibition 'No Heroes Any More?,' co-curated with young people aged 16 to 18, which reinterpreted the NGS's newly digitised collections, as well as a major international conference (including the 'The Heroic Body on Expedition' exhibition, above) at the RGS.

'Savage Arena: The Legacy of Joe Tasker' (funded by the HLF) in collaboration with the Mountain Heritage Trust (MHT), which interpreted and displayed a newly acquired archive relating to the renowned mountaineer, leading to exhibitions at Ushaw College, Durham (Tasker's former seminary), Keswick Museum in the English Lakes, and Preston Park Museum, Stockton.

'Scaling the Heights' (funded by ACE), in collaboration with artists Stephen and Kate Livingstone, which staged artistic interventions at 11 major mountain/geological archive collections around the UK, leading to an exhibition at the Oriental Museum, Durham, touring

to Keswick Museum, accompanied by a programme of public events and 'pop-ups' to bring mountains to the widest possible audience.

Impact was achieved in the following areas:

1. CURATION: Developing new models

'The Hero Project' team (PI Garrington, with politics and history colleagues from Aberdeen and Birmingham universities) worked with NGS to formulate a new model of curation, holding workshops in five Scottish schools to debate and to make art about the concept of the 'hero' (E1), drawing out the attitudes of young people aged 16 to 18, and co-creating with a team of those pupils an online exhibition, 'No Heroes Any More?' (E4). Deputy Director and Chief Curator of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery (SNPG), Edinburgh, Imogen Gibbon stated that this project 'was invaluable for NGS in exploring the historical and contemporary significance of the idea of the "hero" in relation to the national collection of portraiture,' and that '[Garrington's] research on mountaineers and adventurers established a framework' for the project (E3). The exhibition displayed pupils' artwork alongside the newly digitised collections of the NGS that had inspired them, while the questions, surveys, and links for further information were informed by topics raised in workshop discussion. Pupils were also involved in image selection, tone, labelling, and the design/look of the exhibition itself, which was then produced by a commercial third party – the first time that the NGS had consulted young co-curators in this way (E3). Gibbon notes that 'The Hero Project' has 'helped serve as a model for subsequent outreach projects and exhibitions which have sought young people's views,' including *The Art of the Future* (2018) and *Beings* (2019) (E3). The exhibition now functions as a resource for teachers (in PSE, art, geography, history, and beyond) or young people browsing independently, and has been accessed by 500 school users since launch (E3). Gibbon reported that the project 'delivered the aims of the NGS Audience Framework: to grow, broaden, engage and retain our audiences,' and further that 'all elements of the project will have a lasting legacy on our continued research into the collection,' citing recent work on a 'Heroes and Heroines' gallery at the SNPG, NGS advisory work on the 'Hall of Heroes' at the National Wallace Monument (Stirling), and the intention to use a hero-focused approach in forthcoming work on the historic SNPG Great Hall and its murals (E3).

The 'Scaling the Heights' exhibition used innovative creative practices, centred upon vintage Action Man figures restaging Himalayan mountaineering expeditions of the twentieth century on the shelves of significant mountain archives (in doing so, 'performing' the archive), and being filmed and photographed for later exhibition display in the form of artists books. This offered a model of how the work of an artist might be used to engage with archival material in unprecedented ways, in turn encouraging audience interest in the resulting art works, the archives, and their literary holdings, as well as developing the artist's practice in new directions (see below). At the Oriental Museum and Keswick Museum sites, Garrington and S. Livingstone curated a historically informed art exhibition in museum contexts. They presented their findings via a 'Performing the Mountain Archive' panel at the international 'Performing Mountains' conference (2018). 'Scaling the Heights' was a featured image in the UK Government's The National Archives annual poster summarising innovative national activity in 2019. Visitors to the Oriental Museum called the exhibition 'beautifully displayed'; 'informative and fascinating'; 'a neat way to link climbing with literature'; 'a new way of looking at mountaineering and [...] journeying' (E9). At Keswick Museum, the exhibition attracted 14,127 visitors (E9).

2. CONVERSATION: Initiating 'difficult' discussions in the classroom

'The Hero Project' established heroism as a vital launching-point for discussion in school subjects including PSE, pedagogical approaches for which are currently under review by the Scottish Government as part of its 'Mental Health Strategy 2017-2027.' Both pupils and teachers reported the value of the 'hero' topic, encouraging discussion about national and personal identity, body image, celebrity culture, and our relationship to historical figures at a time when 'hero' discourse is again on the rise. Frances Moffat, Head of Art at The Gordon Schools (Huntly) praised the 'No Heroes Any More?' exhibition as a discussion-prompting resource that 'creat[ed] a dynamic debate linking historical figures' to those currently in the

'public eye,' and remarking that 'many of the issues [raised] have become almost prophetic' (E3). Pupils asked to reflect on their use of the exhibition in 2020 noted that it made national collections accessible on your phone; 'gives people a greater understanding of the reasons behind things in galleries'; through displaying pupil-produced artwork, offered the chance to see other young people 'progressing in their skills'; and 'was a good way to modernise art and include [...] young people' (E2). This helped the NGS to respond to the 'key strategy driver' of Partnership (with collaborators and schools), contributed to its ongoing Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Review of the national collections, and led towards the prioritisation of 'identity and portraiture' in the current NGS Research Framework (E3).

3. CAREERS: Shaping artists' skills development and trajectory

The 'Scaling the Heights' exhibition sought to introduce play and imagination into the presentation of mountain stories, suggesting that climbing, if only in the mind, is available to all, a concept that united Garrington and collaborating artists Stephen and Kate Livingstone (E10). The exhibition appeared at the Oriental Museum, alongside archive material and ephemera borrowed from the MHT and RGS, in Autumn 2018, toured to Keswick Museum between February 2019 and January 2020, and appeared in 'pop-up' form at several climbing walls and health centres in the North East between 2018 and 2019. The visual appeal of the miniature mountaineers, promoted through an Instagram account, influenced other artists, and in 2018 *The Guardian's Review* magazine featured a front cover of doll figures mountaineering on book stacks, under the title 'Scaling the Heights.' The outdoor kit company Montane promoted the Action Men 'climbing' in one of their stores, and in 2018 used them at a trade show to provide the centrepiece to their display, featuring them on their own social media accounts, showing that artistic interventions in the history of mountaineering can support commercial aims. S. Livingstone had not worked on mountain topics prior to his collaboration with Garrington, but in response to her research he developed 'Scaling the Heights,' a supplementary project for Keswick Museum ('The Lost Tent'; funded by ACE) that used her work on Everest 1924 photography of Bentley Beetham, and a wider practice of mountain-inspired artists books. He states Garrington's research had 'a big impact upon my own ideas and upon the scope and ambition of the project.' In addition, 'the question of heroism shaped the way I began to examine the relationships [...] occurring within two-man high altitude climbing teams' (E10).

As well as creating pathways to funding via ACE and Montane (his first commercial sponsorship), collaboration with Garrington resulted in 'a multi-dimensional piece of work which enabled me to develop a wide range of new skills and creative methods,' as well as supplying inspiration 'to carry out in-depth reading and research into new and very fertile subject matter' (E10). S. Livingstone reports that he will continue to work on mountain topics as a result of this project, including a substantial forthcoming collaboration with The Bowes Museum and the Bentley Beetham Trust to commemorate the 1924 Everest expedition centenary (E10). K. Livingstone developed a new printmaking technique, based on Japanese Suminagashi, inspired by a trip with Garrington to the Mountaineering and Polar Collections of the National Library of Scotland, viewing Everest-related scrapbooks, and the marbled endpapers of their historic Graham Brown mountain collections. Her prints, picking up colour palettes from Garrington's research materials, were displayed as part of 'Scaling the Heights' at the Oriental Museum. Although not advertised for sale, the set of ten prints were all purchased during the exhibition run, showing the commercial appeal of her new mountain archive-influenced art practice, which she calls 'a new and exciting direction' (E10).

4. COMMUNITIES: Reaching and involving diverse audiences

The three projects aimed to celebrate mountain archives and expedition-connected art collections and to widen and diversify their audiences using heroism as a point of debate. The innovations of 'Scaling the Heights' supplied a 'way in' for those interested in mountain topics, but unsure whether mountain culture was 'for them.' 81% of responding visitors to 'Scaling the Heights' at the Oriental Museum stated that they had learnt something new about mountains and mountaineering. 86% of visitors answered 'yes' or 'maybe' when asked if they would now be more likely to visit one of the archives used in the creation of the exhibition. Meanwhile, 81% of visitors would be more likely to seek out books about the expeditions

depicted; 82% of visitors planned to read more about mountains/mountaineering; 82% of visitors were more likely to head outdoors for an adventure of their own, inspired by the Action Men. Most importantly, 84% of visitors recorded feeling that 'the history of mountaineering is relevant to me,' although, as one respondent put it, 'I didn't think it would be before I came!' (E9). Interviews with visitors at the Oriental Museum registered the value of researcher/artist collaborations ('by working with somebody else who's in a different field from you, you suddenly discover all these new and amazing things so [to] see the way they've worked together was very interesting'), and commended the opportunity to access such an exhibition in the North East ('I think it's just very special to have it here in Durham. [...] It's quite unusual to have something which is obviously three years in the making [...] [I'm] very grateful.') (E9).

The 'Savage Arena' exhibition allowed the Joe Tasker Collections, newly acquired by the Mountain Heritage Trust, to be supplemented and clarified via information from family members, Ushaw College (where Tasker trained for the priesthood prior to his mountaineering career) and its alumni, and the local North East community, which in turn informed revisions to labelling and accession information (E8; pp. 6-7). Combined with Garrington's research regarding Tasker's place in a lineage of mountain literature (see above), these efforts change our understanding of his body of work, and contribute to a forthcoming biography of Tasker by leading mountain writer Ed Douglas. 'Savage Arena' was the MHT's first substantial academic collaboration, demonstrating that their extensive holdings could be brought to public audiences, and strengthening their relationship with Keswick Museum (E8; p. 11). The collaboration between Garrington and the MHT also provided a mobile exhibition to assist in promoting the work of the Trust in 'non-traditional' exhibition spaces such as climbing walls and festivals (E8; p. 12). 36,059 visitors saw the exhibition during its tour (E7) assisted by BBC radio coverage (E6), with visitors saying 'the reminiscences of those Joe influenced [...] were too beautiful. I cried several times'; 'a great homage to his life'; 'loved the connection with the storytelling' (E5). Further, it allowed Ushaw College to commemorate one of its most famous alumni, and school friends, staff, and family members to mourn a mountaineer whose body was never found.

The three projects of this case study have therefore curated, discussed, performed, made, and interpreted innovatively, with benefits for individuals (including creative practitioners), lasting changes for newly diverse audiences, and long-term strategy shifts for major expeditionary and cultural institutions.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

E1: 'The Hero Project' questionnaires, completed in workshops with Scottish school pupils, in collaboration with National Galleries of Scotland.

E2: 'The Hero Project' school pupil reflection questionnaires, considering 'No Heroes Any More?' online exhibition.

E3: 'The Hero Project' testimonial letter from Imogen Gibbon (Deputy Director/Chief Curator), Scottish National Portrait Gallery/National Galleries of Scotland.

E4: 'The Hero Project' exhibition screenshots and web link, for 'No Heroes Any More?' online exhibition, co-produced with Scottish school pupils and National Galleries of Scotland.

E5: 'Savage Arena: The Legacy of Joe Tasker' exhibition visitor feedback, Ushaw College and Keswick Museum.

E6: 'Savage Arena' exhibition visitor feedback, Preston Park Museum.

E7: 'Savage Arena' project visitor numbers, supplied by Mountain Heritage Trust.

E8: 'Savage Arena' project report for Heritage Lottery Fund, written by Kelda Roe, Mountain Heritage Trust, with contributions from Garrington.

E9: 'Scaling the Heights' exhibition visitor feedback and numbers, Oriental Museum (Durham) and Keswick Museum.

E10: 'Scaling the Heights' project testimonial letters from artists Stephen Livingstone and Kate Livingstone.