

Institution: University of Roehampton		
Unit of Assessment: 27 - English Language and Literature		
Title of case study: Connecting Creative Communities: Enriching Cultural Life through Creative Writing Collaborations		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2014-2020		
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:
Tim Atkins	Senior Lecturer	2017 - present
David Harsent	Professor	August 2013 - August 2020
Jeff Hilson	Reader	April 1995 - present
Peter Jaeger	Professor	April 2003 - present
Zachary Leader	Professor	September 1977 - December 2019
Fiona Sampson	Professor	August 2013 - February 2021
Isabel Waidner	Senior Lecturer	September 2015 – present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Since 2014, the distinctive corpus of scholarship and practice generated by researchers from English and Creative Writing (ECW) has informed writers and creative practitioners, cultural sector institutions, audiences and publics, expanding and enhancing the role of the writer in creative, cultural and heritage settings. The research of prize-winning poets and literary biographers (David Harsent, Zachary Leader, Fiona Sampson), experimental poets (Peter Jaeger, Tim Atkins, Jeff Hilson) and an avant-garde LGBT fiction writer (Isabel Waidner) has influenced:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> practitioners who have collaborated on projects which have advanced creative practice in the UK, Canada, France and the USA; writers, audiences and cultural sector professionals through co-created public-facing projects at cultural institutions in the UK, Europe and North America; public audiences for literature by expanding its reach and creating new and inclusive spaces for experimental writing. 		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Researchers in ECW utilise a rich range of practices and genres to address the role of the writer both past and present for a diverse body of audiences, working across biography, poetry, librettos, fiction and in innovative, genre-expanding and richly experimental modes, to provide a substantial contribution to literary heritage, poetics, translation, adaptation, music and the boundaries of text, genre and performance. For Leader and Sampson, this has been achieved through the publication of seminal literary biographies which examine and enhance the role of eminent literary figures from the past, whilst for Atkins, Harsent, Hilson, Jaeger, Sampson and Waidner, this work is embodied in their writing practices, across a range of modes including librettos, poetry and fiction.</p> <p>Sampson is a renowned poet and literary biographer whose recent work includes the biography <i>In Search of Mary Shelley</i> (R1) and the poetry collection <i>The Catch</i>. Sampson was a Co-I on the translation-focused AHRC Network Grant 'PoetTrios' (G1), which examined how experts translate poetry in order to improve practice. Leader is a biographer whose two-volume <i>Life of Saul Bellow</i> (R2) built on the success of his Pulitzer Prize shortlisted <i>The Life of Kingsley Amis</i> (2006) and was acclaimed by Ian McEwan for bringing 'supreme intelligence to the relation of the art to the life'. Harsent is an award-winning poet and librettist, who specialises in adapting poetics for musical performance and whose collection <i>Fire Songs</i> (R3) won the T.S. Eliot Prize in 2014. Harsent's work with Harrison Birtwistle, arguably Britain's greatest living composer, includes operas <i>The Minotaur</i> (2008), <i>The Corridor</i> (2009) and <i>The Cure</i> (2015). Atkins is an experimental poet and translator, renowned for his pioneering translation methodologies, who has been a member of the summer faculty at The Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics at Naropa University, a member of Carla Harryman's Poets' Theatre in San Francisco and The</p>		

Boulder (Colorado) Museum of Contemporary Art, and the SWOON foundation International Artist for 2019. **On Fathers < On Daughtyr** (R4) blends his distinctive translation techniques into a voice in which 'original' writing co-exists with translations of multiple texts. Hilson is a poet and Co-I on the AHRC Network Grant 'Expanded Translation' (G2), which explores the 'radically experimental' nature of translation and its ability to challenge physical/geographic borders; this research fed into his book of poetry **Latanoprost Variation** (R5). Jaeger is a poet whose peripatetic collection of poems **Midamble** (R6) innovates on the traditional narrative of the pilgrimage. Waidner is a fiction-writer and cultural theorist, interested in the intersections of gender studies, queer studies, embodiment, subjectivity, and radical publishing. **Gaudy Bauble** (R7), longlisted for the Republic of Consciousness Prize 2018, challenges notions of 'literal translation' and queers the genre of the detective novel (*Times Literary Supplement*).

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

R1 Sampson, F. (2018) *In Search of Mary Shelley: The Girl who Wrote Frankenstein*. London: Profile. ISBN 9781781255292

. Listed in REF2.

R2 Leader, Z. (2015 & 2018) *The Life of Saul Bellow* 2 vols. London: Jonathan Cape. ISBN 9780224084673, ISBN 9780099598152. Listed in REF2.

R3 Harsent, D. (2014) *Fire Songs*. London: Faber & Faber. ISBN 9780571316083

Listed in REF2.

R4 Atkins, T. (2017) *On Fathers < On Daughtyr*. London: Boiler House Press. ISBN 9781911343202.

R5 Hilson, J. (2017) *Latanoprost Variation*. Norwich: Boiler House Press. ISBN 9781911343189.

Listed in REF2.

R6 Jaeger, P. (2018) *Midamble*. Manchester: If P then Q . ISBN 9781999954703. Listed in REF2

R7 Waidner, I. (2017) *Gaudy Bauble*. Manchester: Dostoyevsky Wannabe. ISBN 9781546386216.

Listed in REF2.

G1 Sampson, F. Co- I on AHRC Network Grant 'Poetry translation in poet-advisor-poet trios: collaborative, cross-language and creative processes', £332,145, Dec 2016 - Dec 2018.

G2 Hilson, J. Co-I on AHRC Network Grant 'Poetry in Expanded Translation', £35,548, Jan 2017 - July 2019.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

i. Informing collaborations with practitioners which have advanced creative practice in the UK, Canada, France and the USA

Research by scholars from ECW has influenced the development of international, critically acclaimed productions across a range of artistic genres, including opera, documentary and theatre, consequently shaping the development and artistic growth of creative practitioners. In some instances, this has been through long-established relationships or projects with collaborators and communities whose practices have been in close dialogue with those of an ECW scholar; in others through new partnerships forged as a result of creative research discoveries around writers, writing practices and audiences.

The work of both Harsent (R3) and Leader (R2) has informed creative collaborations that have shaped the practice of the four creative practitioners involved – two composers, a film director and playwright – reaching, through the presentation of these collaborations on both stage and screen, 74,330 members of the public. Harsent's poetry (R3) has informed collaborations with several award-winning composers on the development and production of highly acclaimed operas and oratorios. Harrison Birtwistle, the composer of the chamber opera *The Cure* for which Harsent wrote the libretto, has described Harsent's verse (R3) as absolutely crucial to his process of composition: 'without David's lines, nothing compositional (in terms of music) can begin...David gives me words that I know I can set' (IMP1). In 2015, *The Cure* was performed at the Aldeburgh and Holland festivals and The Royal Opera House to a combined audience of 4,800 (IMP2). In 2018, Harsent wrote the libretto for composer Sally Beamish's oratorio *The Judas Passion*; Beamish has noted that Harsent's 'sparse, lyrical' writing has inspired her to pare back her music to match (IMP3). The oratorio was performed at five sold-out venues in the UK and USA, reaching

a combined audience of over 3,550 (IMP2). Finally, *Fire Songs* (R3) inspired a collaboration with a third composer, Christian Mason, in 2018 on *Man Made*, a verse triptych. The piece was performed to a full house at the 2,700 seat Royal Festival Hall in the same year (IMP2). Leader's authoritative biography of Saul Bellow (R2) has led to collaborations on a number of Bellow-focussed productions, where his research has informed the creative practice of directors and producers involved in adaptations of both Bellow's work, and Leader's own (R2). Asaf Galay, producer and director of the first ever feature-length documentary film about Bellow, referred to Leader's biography (R2) as his 'bible' for understanding the novelist, and affirmed its centrality to the completion of the project (IMP4). In addition to identifying '*many sources, letters and the like*' that the film made use of, Leader's biography helped the director to '*understand the issues and events that shaped and revealed Bellow's character*' (IMP4). Featuring interviews with Leader, the film premiered at the Toronto Film Festival in 2020, reaching the 48,280 ticketed guests, before general release on PBS. Leader's biography was also an '*indispensable text*' for David Auburn, a Pulitzer-winning playwright and Charles Newel, the Artistic Director of the Court Theatre, who collaborated to adapt Bellow's novel *The Adventures of Augie March* for the stage. Leader worked closely with the director and playwright on the play's development, '*guiding and informing the choices of the playwright, the actors, the set and costume designers and above all, the director*' (IMP5). The play premiered in May 2019 and the Court Theatre credit much of the project's success to Leader's research on Bellow (R2). Both productions have reignited Bellow's literary reputation (a reputation which had, as pointed out by both *The Spectator* and *The New York Times*, significantly fallen since his death in 2005). Media mentions of Bellow have increased by 10% since the publication of Leader's biography, further indicating the rise of Bellow's cultural reputation (IMP2).

ECW scholars have further developed the practice of numerous poets, translators and artists across the globe through two UK research-council funded poetry translation projects. The sold-out PoetTrios workshops (held in the Netherlands and the UK), for which Samson was Co-I, brought together a variety of different poetic practitioners, encouraging innovative collaborative translation practices amongst both participants and audience members (G1). Workshop participants have described the featured poet-advisor-poet methodology as successfully shifting the focus of their creative practice. PoetTrio's Artwork Call invited visual artists, musicians and filmmakers to incorporate the project's collaborative translation methodologies into their own distinct practices. The call generated much excitement across social media (over 10,000 impressions on Twitter) and 76 entries were received. This response – together with the innovative feat of the final commissioned piece ('Alternating Currents: Transmissions from the North Sea' by composer and digital artist Martin Heslop) shows that many practitioners were inspired by the project's methodologies. 'Alternating Currents' features recordings of project source poems and their translations read by project poets, along with specially-composed music and visuals, thereby inscribing PoetTrios' collaborative methodology directly and uniquely into an audio-visual format (further illustrating the methodology's adaptability and reach). Similarly, the 'Expanded Translation' Network, for which Hilson was Co-I, brought together practitioners and critics of poetry and translation, visual and sound artists, and members of the poetry-related public to participate in a variety of co-writing and rewriting projects that informed creative development and new creative practices (G2, R5). These projects helped to enhance practitioner understanding of translation as a radically 'experimental enterprise'. At the project's 'Translating Translation' Symposium held at the National Poetry Library in April 2017, approximately 60 poets and translators from the UK, USA and France gathered to consider translation as a means of revealing international contexts and connections. Participants in the symposium praised the impact that the collaborative exercises had on developing the 'improvisatory capacity' of their practice. ECW scholar's work on experimental translation is further underscored by the research of Atkins, whose book (R4) has informed and shaped the work of professional practitioners and emerging poets. For example, Laura Wetherington, an award-winning poet, attributes '*much of [my] success*' to the '*foundational knowledge*' acquired by encountering and engaging with Atkins' translations and methodologies (R4), informing choices she made when writing a manuscript that went on to win the Bateau Press Hybrid challenge (IMP6).

ii. Enriching culture through co-created public-facing projects and creating creative opportunities for emerging writers at cultural institutions in the UK, Europe and North America

ECW researchers have, through Sampson and Jaeger, further supported several writer development agencies and programmes in enriching their provision for emerging writers across Europe, Canada and the USA. Such influence is demonstrated by Sampson's use of her research in linguistic philosophy and collaborative poetry translation (**G1**) in the development of a new kind of residential stay for the Museum of Language and Letters during a residency at the House of Writers in Trsic, Serbia in July 2018. This innovative residential encounter aims to bring together two poets from different countries to meet and translate each other's poetry, with a view to the Museum publishing their translations and recording their conversations for the sound archive. The founder of the House of Writers sees this as a 'valuable' contribution to the *'development and especially the enrichment'* of the Museum's activities and holdings (**IMP7**). Extending the international reach of ECW impact is Jaeger's longstanding partnership with Canada's Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. The Director of the Centre has praised Jaeger's work (**R6**), which explores the interstices of poetry, music and theory – for introducing the organisation to *'new ways of teaching and bringing poetry to non-poetic audiences'*, and also for developing his own practice by teaching him new ways of *'listening to a text'* (**IMP8**). During a 2019 residency, Jaeger helped hone the focus of Banff's Literary Arts Programme (annual intake of 250+ students), and opened the Centre to new modes of understanding, specifically working with emerging composers on a 'Music into Language' translation project to enhance confidence in working across disciplines. Amplifying ECW's work across North America further, Atkins was the first poet invited – based on the strength of his translation research (**R4**) – to participate in the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art + Swoon 2019 International Artists Residency in Colorado. According to Boulder's Special Projects Coordinator, Atkins's innovative poetry performances inspired new forms of interdisciplinary collaboration amongst their creative community (**IMP8**).

Since 2014, ECW scholars have co-created public-facing projects with major heritage organisations. In a collaboration with the Wordsworth Trust, Sampson co-curated an exhibition based on her biography of Mary Shelley to enhance institutional knowledge of the author and to help showcase the Trust's collection to 24,300 visitors (**R1**). Sampson's research enabled the curatorial, marketing, education and visitor experience teams to develop *'a deeper understanding of specific items within the Wordsworth Trust's collection'*, and to therefore *'share knowledge with audiences through a variety of means'* (**IMP9**). Additionally, working with Sampson enabled the Trust to develop their 'co-curation model' for future projects. The unique exhibition panels that Sampson created have been incorporated into the design of subsequent exhibitions and have helped shape the Trust's thinking around their major Heritage Lottery Funded redevelopment project *Reimagining Wordsworth*. Sampson's biography also provided the interpretative vision that enabled the Trust to commission a new portrait of Mary Shelley for display in the exhibition space, bringing Mary Shelley *'to life for visitors in a new and visual way'* (**IMP9**).

iii. Expanding public audiences for literature by widening its reach and creating new and inclusive spaces for experimental writing

Researchers are involved in the expansion of literary audiences both physically and digitally through creating new spaces for the dissemination and enjoyment of writing, strengthening the reach and reputation of experimental writers, and stretching and reinvigorating approaches to literary biography and the understanding of literary heritage. The seven members have reached a combined live public audience of over 27,512 since September 2013 (**IMP2**). These include Sampson's (**R1**) and Leader's (**R2**) major international book tours (reaching an aggregate of 200 venues), appearances at literary festivals across the globe, public lectures at national museums, libraries and galleries (including the National Portrait Gallery and Library of Congress), and keynotes at world-leading universities. The audiences for these activities have been further extended through digital spaces, using audio and visual recordings; these online media forums have also allowed for widened access beyond what might be seen as the conventional settings and audiences for the public discussion of literature. For example, Sampson's lecture at the Keats-Shelley Museum in Rome was live-streamed to hundreds in 2018, as part of the international *Frankenreads* initiative; a video of Leader has been viewed 7,800 times on YouTube; Harsent's

discussion of *The Cure* has been viewed over 3,400 times on YouTube. Coverage across various media forms – radio, television, blogs and podcasts – further augments the reach of the research. For example, Harsent, Leader and Sampson have reached a combined audience of approximately 59,184,000 through BBC radio features (**IMP2**).

In addition to enhancing the work of literary heritage groups, scholars also celebrate experimental writers who are otherwise overlooked by many established cultural institutions and mainstream media outlets, thereby significantly strengthening the reach and reputation of their work. In 2002, Hilson co-founded *Crossing the Line* (or *Xing the Line*), a monthly reading series based in London showcasing a range of UK-based and international linguistically innovative poets to a mixed audience of poets, publishers, academics and members of the public. The series regularly secures audiences of 70 people and has been responsible for the dissemination of a range of poetries to a wide and evolving demographic of practitioners and listeners. Over the years it has, as *3:AM Magazine* attests, become a dynamic ‘hub for poetry in the capital, for the proliferation of poetries that might not be palatable for certain poetry institutions’, continuing to build on the work of **G2**.

Research by ECW scholars has also expanded the audience for innovative fiction. Since 2018, Waidner has been the curator of the high profile quarterly public event series, *Queers Read This*, in collaboration with the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) London. Attracting an audience of more than 200 to each of its five events, this ongoing reading series has diversified literary audiences and communities in London and beyond, profiling innovative writing across literature, the arts, performance and film by marginalised writers. In early 2019, *Queers Read This* held a sold-out event at Tate South Lambeth Public Library which inspired the local community to come together and helped to expand and vary the library’s audience, attracting ‘new attendees who had not been to the library before’ and improving the audience’s overall ‘sense of well-being’ and ‘involvement’ (**IMP10**). Waidner’s research (**R7**) has also inspired the development of other community building projects, including *Close*, a literary newsletter focused on the topic of intimacy (first published in 2018), that provides a new platform for women and non-binary writers. Funded by the London Arts and Humanities Partnership, the newsletter’s curators were – as discussed in a 2019 *Vice* magazine interview – motivated by Waidner’s writing to find a way of ‘working against the grain of normative publishing’ to ‘do something a bit more diverse’.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

IMP1 Testimonial from the Composer of *The Cure*, dated September 2018, showing how Harsent’s work was developed into a chamber opera.

IMP2 Report on Public Engagement Events and Media 2013-2020.

IMP3 Testimonial from the Composer of *The Judas Passion*, dated 2019, showing how Harsent’s work contributed to a collaborative oratorio.

IMP4 Testimonial from the Director of Saul Bellow documentary, dated 2019, showing how **R2** informed the film-making process.

IMP5 Testimonial from the Resident Dramaturg at the Court Theatre, dated January 2019, showing how **R2** informed the development of an adaptation of *The Adventure of Augie March*.

IMP6 Testimonial from a poet, dated 25 September 2018, showing engagement with Atkins’ methodologies.

IMP7 Testimonial from the Founder of the House of Writers in Trsic, dated July 2018, showing how **G1** enabled the development of a new residential stay.

IMP8 Testimonial from the Director of Literary Arts at the Banff Centre, dated February 2019, showing how Atkins’ performances inspired new methodologies.

IMP9 Testimonial from Assistant Curator at the Wordsworth Trust, dated 22 July 2019, showing how **R1** underpinned an exhibition on Mary Shelley.

IMP10 Testimonial from Tate South Lambeth Public Library, *Queers Read This* spin-event, dated September 2019, showing that the event attracted new attendees to the library.