

Institution: Newcastle University		
Unit of Assessment: 27 English Language and Literature		
Title of case study: Poetry, Place and National Belonging: Expanding the Curriculum and Diversifying Cultural Institutions		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2007-2019		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): James Procter	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Professor of Modern and Contemporary Literature	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 2006-present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: August 2013-December 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>Race remains largely divorced from questions of place and national belonging in Britain, as recent events such as the Windrush scandal and Black Lives Matter movement testify. Working with place-based poetry by black and British Asian artists, research at Newcastle has shaped and expanded public debate around Britishness through its work to decolonise curricula and diversify the content of cultural institutions. This has involved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At least 250 schools and over 5,000 students/teachers across mainland Britain who have benefitted from its collaborations and co-produced resources, enriching how young people understand the imagination of national belonging; expanding the curriculum of available texts, and informing educational practice. 2. Commissions from and collaborations with libraries, museums and arts organisations which have informed the curation of national exhibitions and events, while enriching their permanent holdings and online content. 3. Wider media uptake of the research within the national press (e.g. the <i>Independent</i>, the <i>Guardian</i> and the <i>Scotsman</i>), radio and television (e.g. BBC and PBS), and online (e.g. Windrush.org.uk), which has helped inform a public conversation on black settlement in Britain. 		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>The underpinning research was led by a team of academics at Newcastle and Stirling Universities, and funded by both the AHRC and the Leverhulme Trust (GRANTS 1-3). On the one hand this research challenges prevailing understandings of postwar black settlement as a story of transnational dislocation by recovering stubborn attachments to place, locality and region within the African, Caribbean and South Asian imagination. On the other, it questions the logic of racism which posits post-colonial immigration as an external problem that is essentially <i>outside</i> domestic narratives of the nation.</p> <p>The research was initiated in the AHRC-funded 'Devolving Diasporas' project, which examined local and transnational audiences of multicultural literature beyond established metropolitan networks (GRANT1). Working with readers across four continents, <i>Reading Across Worlds</i> became the first geographically-grounded study of how place determines a literature that available scholarship characterises in terms of 'deterritorialised' global audiences (PUB1). Reviewers praised the way it, 'brilliantly challenges and expands the field' by examining 'locally situated readerships' (<i>Interventions</i> 18(5), 2016).</p>		

A second output from this project was *Out of Bounds* (2012, hereafter OOB), a critically-acclaimed anthology of black and British Asian place-poetry organised geographically across the UK and stretching from the Scottish Highlands to the Isle of Wight (PUB2). The volume was dubbed 'an alternative A-Z of the nation' by the Caribbean poet, Fred D'Aguiar, and was reviewed by Kwame Dawes as 'the most comprehensive gathering of Black and Asian British poets in any single volume.' Including a substantial critical introduction and notes, OOB gathers 130 poets from the 1920s to the present. It draws upon extensive archival research to combine previously unpublished or out-of-print poetry with canonical work (e.g. by Derek Walcott, Wole Soyinka and Claude McKay). Structured geographically around 4 sections - 'Scotland'; 'North'; 'Midlands', 'South' – across 365 pages, it provides a newly *grounded* framework for rethinking and remapping the black and British Asian diaspora's cultural contribution to Britain's shores.

More recently, new archival findings from Procter's Leverhulme-funded (G2) study of the BBC has revealed the extent to which many of the poets first gathered in *Out of Bounds* (including Una Marson, Louise Bennett, George Lamming and John Figueroa) were reshaping British national culture as empire came home to roost during the mid-twentieth century (PUBS 3, 4). It demonstrates that the BBC was both a central metropolitan institution *and* a significant home to an otherwise 'peripheral' late colonial literature. Recovering the wider cultural contribution of African-Caribbean poets at the corporation it argues that imperial history did not simply unfold overseas, but intimately re-shaped domestic British identity and cultural geography from the inside.

3. References to the research

The following research has been confirmed as meeting at least 2* quality by a process of rigorous external peer review for publications and grants and/or becoming a reference point for further research beyond Newcastle University. Outputs are available on request.

- PUB1. Procter and Benwell (2014) *Reading Across Worlds* Palgrave, DOI: 10.1057/9781137276407
- PUB2. Kay, Procter and Robinson (eds) (2012) *Out of Bounds* Tarsnet: Bloodaxe, ISBN: 9781852249298
- PUB3. Procter (2018) 'Wireless Writing, World War II and the West Indian Literary Imagination' pp.117-135 in Gill Plain (ed.) *British Literature in Transition, 1940-1960* (Cambridge: CUP), DOI: 10.1017/9781316340530.008
- PUB4. Procter (2019) 'Transnational cultural exchange: The BBC as contact zone', in Nasta and Stein (eds) *The Cambridge History of Black and British Asian Writing* (Cambridge: CUP), DOI: 10.1017/9781108164146.011
- GRANT1. James Procter (PI), with Jackie Kay, Gemma Robinson, Bethan Benwell (CIs). 'Devolving Diasporas: Migration and Reception in Central Scotland, 1980-present'. 2007-2012. AHRC (AH/E508812/1), GBP336,748.
- GRANT2. James Procter (PI). 'Out of Bounds'. 2015-17. AHRC (AH/N003578/1), GBP77,380.
- GRANT3. James Procter (PI). 'Scripting Empire: West Indian and West African Literature at the BBC, 1939-1968'. 2013-14. Leverhulme Trust (RF-2013-359), GBP44,962.

4. Details of the impact

The underpinning research has generated a sustained programme of resources, activities and events that brought substantial benefits to young people's lives across the UK. The principal impacts are shaping school curricula and the enhancement of educational resources, resulting in more diverse and inclusive understandings of national belonging among teachers and young people aged 11 to 18. Partnerships with libraries (**British Library**; **Scottish Poetry Library**), museums (**Great North Museum**) and arts organisations (**Commonword**; **New Writing North**), along with wider media uptake of the research have further informed, in particular, public debate around the Windrush scandal.

In 2012, *The School Librarian* reviewed the print edition of *Out of Bounds* (OOB) as a 'superb, relevant, topical, crucial, important' book that 'should be in every secondary school and sixth-form library'. However, its sheer size (365pp) made it impractical for everyday classroom use. Between 2015 and 2017, AHRC follow-on funding (GRANT2) enabled researchers at Newcastle and Stirling to re-invent OOB as a multi-media resource for schools. Re-purposing the print edition of OOB involved:

(i) a filmed national poetry tour of OOB poets from the Shetland Isles to Chesil Beach, which became the raw materials for (ii) the co-creation of digital resources with schools, allowing students to create, share and 'map' poetic responses to place (using 'App Movement': a community-based initiative requiring support of at least 150 participants), and the co-production of a 42pp OOB activities pack containing 20 activities for classrooms: 'Poetry, Place and Identity in the 21st Century' (**IMP1**); (iii) a national poetry competition ('In My Country') generating over 230 entries in partnership with Scottish Poetry Library, Great North Museum, the publisher Bloodaxe Books and New Writing North; and (iv) School visits, CPD teacher training events and workshops with OOB poets.

These activities have had very significant nationwide uptake from schools across England, Scotland and Wales in subjects including English, Geography, History and Art. Since its release in 2018, the OOB activity pack has been used by over 250 schools across all regions of the UK, reaching over 5,000 teachers and students (**IMP2a/b**). Feedback from teachers (**IMP2c**) shows schools have used these resources in various ways: to mark large-scale national events (including Black History Month; National Poetry Day, World Poetry Day, International Migrant's Day); on geography fieldwork trips; to run intensive small group creative writing workshops; to promote global citizenship in working towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4.7; and to expand and diversify set texts on the curriculum (11% of teachers who contacted us were curriculum leads).

For example, a school in Islington, London has now used the materials with over 400 students on its Year 8, 'Home, Belonging and Displacement' Unit, with teachers noting how OOB's 'distinctive' emphasis on 'Britishness and belonging helped inform and shape the design and delivery of this Unit ... allow[ing] us to enhance and expand the ways we address questions of poetry, place/displacement and identity' (**IMP3**). Similarly, Whitley Bay High School, which has used the materials with 370 students across 15 different classes noted, 'A key benefit of working with the Out of Bounds Poetry Project has been the opportunity it afforded our students to go beyond the GCSE Curriculum and the themes of the AQA Power and Conflict Anthology they will be studying in Year 10 and Year 11, to explore poets and themes they would not otherwise have encountered during their education. We have been able to see the effects of this project in both the students' appreciation of poetry, and in their development of a broader and more inclusive understanding of their regional and national literary heritage.' (**IMP4**). In both cases the schools have used the materials in consecutive years and plan to retain them within future course work. An unanticipated uptake of OOB materials (25%) came from trainee teachers, suggesting the resources will have a longer-term legacy (**IMP2b**).

Other key users included libraries. For example, the Head Librarian at New City College, Hackney (serving a student community of 7,000) used the resources in displays for Black History Month and World Poetry Day, while an OOB Continuing Professional Development event hosted by the British Library in 2019 was attended by AQA (the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance), which sets over half of GCSEs and A-Levels in England. Following consultation with OOB researchers on how to improve the content of current History qualifications with a view to 'decolonising the curriculum' (**IMP2c**), and further AQA stakeholder consultation in 2019-20, the OOB teaching resources are being incorporated into its free online course for GCSE English teachers: 'Building skills and confidence for unseen poetry'.

Beyond schools, arts organisations adopted OOB materials for workshops with children that went on to feature at major cultural venues. Commonword, an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation with a remit to engage with 'new voices – especially hard to reach

communities', worked with young people to produce a series of film-poems on the issues of place, identity, 'race' and nation in response to the OOB anthology which was presented at the Manchester Literature Festival (2016), alongside the work of established writers (**IMP5**). New Writing North commissioned the OOB team to contribute to its 'Social Action' programme with schools in Gateshead. It generated poems with Year 7 and 8 students that went on to feature in a showcase event ('Inside/Outside: A Celebration of Gateshead Young Writers', 20 January 2020) at the BALTIC, the UK's largest dedicated contemporary art institution.

The Great North Museum (GNM) in Newcastle identified a similar potential in the OOB project when GNM became a hub for the national 'Great Exhibition of the North' (2018; total visitors 3,800,000, including approximately 4,000 daily visitors to GNM). Building on a series of collaborative OOB/GNM poetry events for schools and teachers (2016-18), GNM commissioned Out of Bounds researchers to contribute to the GNM's 'Great Atlas of the North' initiative. OOB's award-winning poet in residence, Kayo Chingonyi (born in Zambia, schooled in Gateshead) worked with young visitors to produce new poetic word maps of the region that were subsequently exhibited in the museum itself. As the Director of Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums (TWAM) noted, OOB provided 'unparalleled opportunities to demonstrate TWAM as a critical regional resource' by 'allowing us to challenge everyday preconceptions about the role cultural venues and their collections can bring to poetry, identity and place in the context of young people's learning ... Out of Bounds' innovative work with place-based poetry has been of particular value to GNM and TWAM in helping us to articulate a more inclusive, diverse and outward-looking vision of the North East to local, national and international audiences' (**IMP6**).

OOB activities also helped shape the British Library's curation of its major exhibition to mark the 70th anniversary of the first arrival of SS Empire Windrush: 'Windrush: Songs in a Strange Land' (June–October 2018). Encouraging the British Library to think of the Windrush not just as a story of migration centred on London, but of settlement, place and belonging of regional relevance across the UK. In this context, the exhibition curator noted being 'particularly excited' by the 'regionally specific' possibilities of our underpinning research, adding OOB's inclusion of 'a variety of locations around the British Isles' will 'greatly enhance the exhibition': 'the fresh perspectives they offer on British landscape and English literature are really illuminating and important ... including the stories of Caribbean migrants who live outside of London' which 'address the equally important need to give space to rural writing from Caribbean poets' (**IMP7b**).

The British Library went on to commission (GBP2,000, match-funded by Newcastle University) OOB to produce a series of poetry films inspired by the OOB's own filmed poetry tour of 2016-17, extending it to include new locations. These new films included prominent GCSE poets John Agard and Grace Nichols performing their OOB anthology poems on location: Nichols travelled to Hull and Newcastle to perform her place-poems 'Outwards from Hull' and 'Angel of the North'; Agard travelled to Edinburgh to perform 'The Ascent of John Edmonstone'. The resulting seven films formed a bespoke installation within the Windrush exhibition, which attracted 154,813 visitors, and an additional 2,444 school visitors (**IMP7a**). Reviewing the exhibition in the *TLS*, Colin Grant picked up on the geographical dimension provided by OOB, referring to it as a 'dizzying, poignant' and 'timely exhibition', because 'it shows that although these West Indian pioneers were seen as strangers, in some ways they considered themselves to be coming home, proudly bearing British passports stamped "right of abode"'. Grant singled out the OOB installation as embodying the spirit of the exhibition, noting that the 'wit and humour, language, music, dance and myriad other forms of creative exuberance' is 'evident in the exhibit "Out of Bounds", a series of specially commissioned films featuring poets such as John Agard and Grace Nichols' (**IMP8**).

The OOB poetry films were subsequently included on the British Library's *Windrush Stories* website as part of a "legacy online exhibition", which means that clear long-term curriculum links have been identified and materials and resources have been curated for teachers, students and the public' (**IMP7a**). They are also incorporated within the British Library's downloadable Teaching Packs designed to support the UK Curriculum (6,630 unique users between October

2018 and December 2020, **IMP7a**). The wider public legacy of these resources is evident in the British Library's acquisition of the Out of Bounds Poetry Collection (2016) for its Sound Archive: one of the most significant collections in the world, with over 6,000,000 recordings in 40 formats, from wax cylinders to digital files. The British Library's lead curator explains that the OOB collection represents the 'Library's first sound collection to have a regional focus on black and Asian poets. This fills an important gap in our archive ... The [OOB] collection is significant in helping us fulfil our aim to represent the regionality of Britain and to avoid a London-centric bias in curation and collection development' (**IMP7a**).

The underpinning research (most notably **PUB3&4**) was widely discussed in the media during the Windrush anniversary of 2018, including by the *Conversation* (article reads 74,578), 'Diverse Magazine', 'Black History 365', 'Rice and Peas Radio', and BBC online (the most visited online service in the world with 1,500,000 monthly page views). The latter took a particular interest in the research's archival findings which showed the Corporation itself was a significant home for African and Caribbean poets during the decades of decolonisation. Commissioning several pieces for its online coverage, the Head of BBC History noted that this research 'not only helps the BBC communicate a more complex sense of Britain's past...it speaks to current concerns such as Black History Month, which Procter's article helped us to promote in 2018' (**IMP9**). In response to this media coverage, a member of the Windrush generation was inspired to contact Newcastle University after hearing of the 'fascinating' findings when attending the 'reception held by the Prime Minister at Downing Street' in 2018: 'the script you have uncovered was my father's' (a West Indian BBC broadcaster during the 1940s and 1950s). At her request, Procter has been able to re-unite the BBC broadcaster's daughter for the first time with her father's radio broadcasts (**IMP10**).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

IMP1 Out of Bounds Activity Pack (2018) co-created by V Capildeo, K Chingonyi, J Procter and G Robinson in conjunction with participating schools: 'Poetry, Place and Identity in the 21st Century' http://outofbounds.digital/data/Out_of_Bounds_Poetry_Booklet.pdf

IMP2 School Engagement Evidence, 2016-2020 [2a. school/student numbers; 2b. demographics and geographical reach; 2c. feedback]

IMP3 Testimonial letter from an Islington Comprehensive School, 28 November 2020

IMP4 Whitley Bay High School testimonial letter, 11 November 2020

IMP5 Commonword testimonial from Co-Artistic Director, 12 January 2021

IMP6 TWAM testimonial from Director of Tyne and Wear Museums, 5 January 2020

IMP7 British Library Communication, 2017-21 [7a. Testimonials from Lead Curator and Content Manager; 7b. email from Windrush exhibition co-curator]

IMP8 Colin Grant, 'Unfinished Histories' 28 August 2018, review of British Library Windrush exhibition, <https://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/public/unfinished-histories/>

IMP9 BBC Testimonial from Head of BBC History, 1 February 2021

IMP10 Letters from a member of the Windrush generation, August to November 2018