

Institution: University of Gloucestershire		
Unit of Assessment: 27 - English Language and Literature		
Title of case study: Mythogeography as Poetry and its Impact on Cultural Life		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2015 - 2017		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Angela France	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Senior Lecturer, Course Leader MA Creative and Critical Writing	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 2009 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: July 2017 – October 2019		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Angela France's practice-led research has been disseminated through poetry book sales, performances, talks, reviews and articles. The impact is in three main areas: 1) the influence on creative practice through artistic quality and new approaches to psychogeography, of which mythogeography is a sub-set. 2) generation of interest in a historical event and its setting in a specific place; 3) changing attitudes to poetry outside of traditional poetry audiences.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The underpinning research was conducted by Dr Angela France into a little-known but significant instance of civil unrest that took place on 15th July 1902 at Leckhampton Hill in Gloucestershire, England. The historical research was conducted concurrently with Dr France's research in the poetry of place. The research outcomes are expressed through a collection of poetic works by Dr France, titled <i>The Hill</i>, which was published by Nine Arches Press and which Dr France developed into an innovative live multi-media poetry show.</p> <p>The works were based on two inter-related approaches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical research through studying primary sources in Gloucestershire County Archives: letters, court records, legal documents, photographs, and newspaper reports from 1902 – 1904 relating to disputed rights of way on Leckhampton Hill and resulting riots. • Practice-led research to explore how a historical narrative may be blended with contemporary experience of a specific place to create poetry incorporating mythogeography on the page, in live multi-media performance, and in film. <p>Dr France's historical research generated insights about the extent of civil unrest generated by a land rights dispute, and a realisation of how little is generally known about a significant event in social history.</p> <p>Dr France's practice-led research developed concurrently with, and was driven by, the historical research. It consisted of creative experiments to discover how local history might be blended with contemporary experience of the setting without resorting to versified history or co-opting the language found in the documents to use as the poet's voice. The challenges were approached through experiments with form and language on the page. A second strand of practice as research developed in the innovative use of multi-media, blending both areas of research, which</p>		

resulted in a live multi-media performance, funded by Arts Council England, and which toured various venues from September 2017 to October 2019.

The poems generated by the research are published in *The Hill* (Nine Arches Press 2017). The research and practice for *The Hill* further develops France's poetic concerns found in *Hide*, (Nine Arches Press 2013), *Lessons in Mallemaroking* (Nine Arches Press 2011) and *Occupation* (Ragged Raven Press 2009). All four have generated invitations to read at many festivals and reading series. This body of work contributes to France's practice-led research through poetic development and study of poetics, creativity, and technique.

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

France, Angela. *The Hill* (Nine Arches Press, 2017) Poetry Collection

The Hill, (2017) Film of the Dr France's live poetry performance, commissioned from Elephant's Footprint Poetry Films DVD supplied and available online at <https://vimeo.com/234425113>

France, Angela, 'Stratigraphies: The Long Poem of Place' (October 2018) Article in Long Poem Magazine, Issue 20.

Ledbury Salon podcast (discussion about the poetry and research) <https://tinyurl.com/y4b7xp8e>

Dr France's previous poetry collections: *Hide*, (Nine Arches Press 2013), *Lessons in Mallemaroking* (Nine Arches Press 2011), *Occupation* (Ragged Raven Press 2009).

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

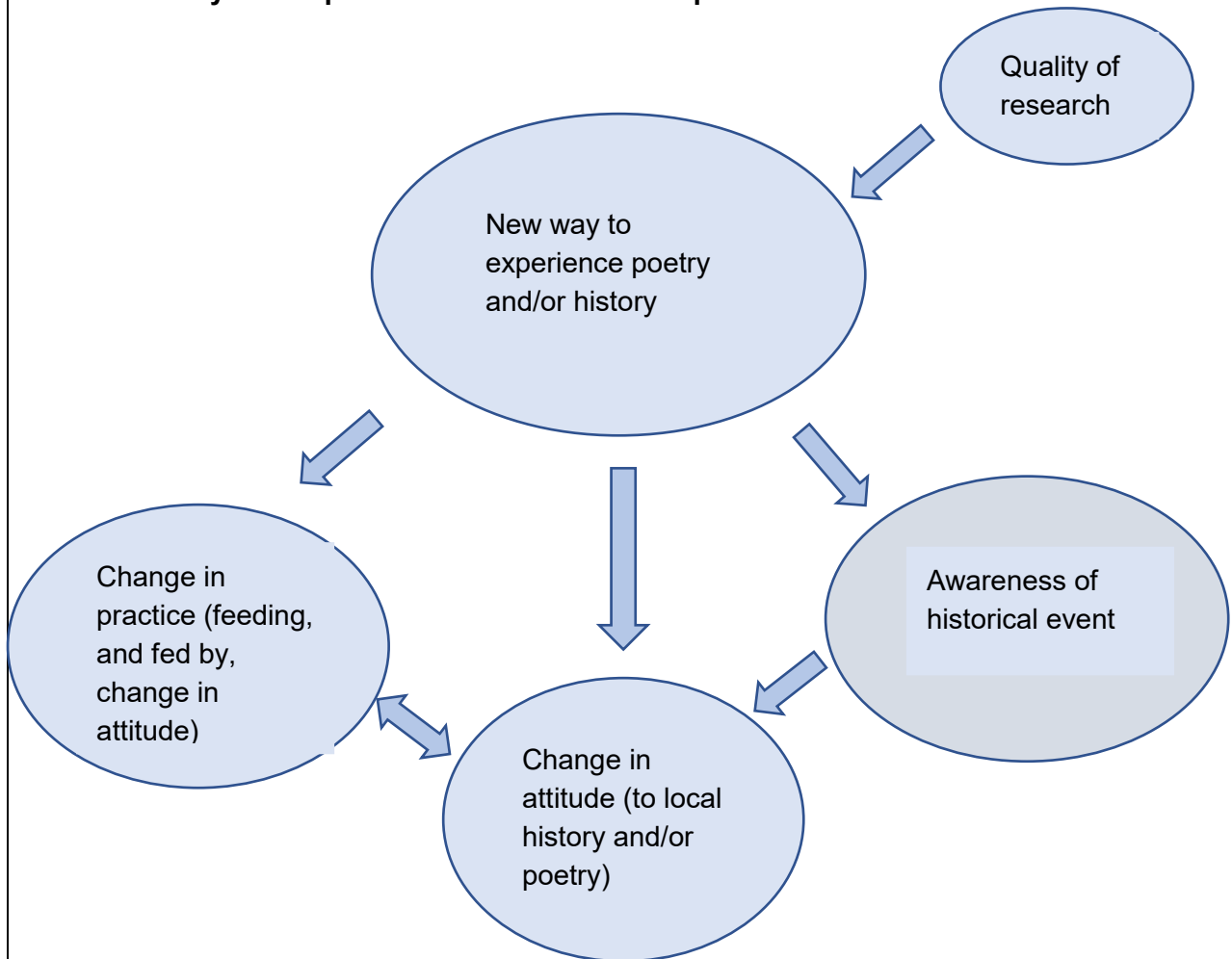
The creative work has been widely disseminated through publication, performance, and online film, while the reach and reputation of the work has generated requests for mentoring, workshops, interviews, and lectures, The BBC commissioned a poem which was filmed and broadcast for National Poetry Day 2018.

The poetry collection sold out of its initial print run of 500 in October 2018 and a second print run was produced. It has garnered good reviews in print and online

This book is a wonderful project; it explores all of the richness and all of the many-faceted nature of place, and France shows herself to be just the versatile and devoted poet who is needed to do the subject justice. (The Poetry School) [3]

The multi-media live show has been performed in 20 different locations around the country so far. Audience reactions have been favourable to both the historical research and the poetry. The impact has been generated by different areas of the research. Impact mainly falls into three interrelated areas of interest. Dr France conducted thematic analysis on collated responses to the book and the live performance. The thematic coding tables are available from the HEI. An independent thematic analysis report was commissioned from a consultant [1]

Thematic analysis: response to The Hill book and performance



1) Awareness of historical event. Awareness raised of a little known but significant episode of civil disobedience. Much of the interest has been focused on this being a working-class protest.

‘As the historical footnotes and the extraordinary witness statements she unearthed contained material I’d never found elsewhere, I have referenced ‘The Hill’ in the history of Leckhampton on my website.’ (Martin Horwood, MEP)

‘Enjoyed learning about an unknown history – the struggle of the working class informed with an awareness and love of nature’ (audience comment)

‘The mass trespass on Kinder Scout is fairly well-known but “The Hill” has created widespread awareness of a relatively little known, much earlier fight for countryside access.’ (audience comment)

Lectures about the research have been given, by request, to local history groups, social groups and a conservation group.

2) New way to experience poetry leading to change in practice. Audience comments have noted the effectiveness of the audio and visual components, and the vitality of the historical voices bringing the narrative to life. Some poets have stated that they are now inspired to try

multi-media work for their own poetry while audiences outside of the traditional poetry constituency have commented on changes in their perception of poetry.

'Angela's skill as a poet has evoked that special emotion which only poetry can give to a story. In "The Hill", Angela France has encapsulated this story and done justice to the fight of those men and women who couldn't walk over the hill freely until 1929. Walter Ballinger will be tipping his bowler in thanks to Angela' (Historian and author).

'I shall watch this on her website over and over as I explore my own place – and hope to record it through archives, and people who walked there and so on' (audience comment)

A performance for Birmingham City University MA Creative Writing course led to a request to record a podcast interview about the project's genesis, research, and creative process. '[poetry as psychogeography] one of the most important ideas in contemporary poetry' (podcast interviewer) <https://tinyurl.com/y68bk49b>

3) Change in attitude. Published reviews, audience comments, emails and social media (available in the portfolio) have commented on the innovative blending of historical research and contemporary lyrical poetry and how that has changed attitudes.

'Definitely has changed my understanding of local history and got me interested in it.' (audience comment)

'I don't know how to express it, but I was very taken with this way of doing history entwined with something like social ecology. You expressed something about how the past shapes the present both physically and culturally that no essay or other one-dimensional approach could convey' (audience comment)

The Performing Arts course at University of Gloucestershire used the book as a basis for a module on immersive theatre where 66% of the students who gave written feedback stated some change in their thinking, leading to change in their artistic practice as a result of working with *The Hill*.

'I hadn't really thought about using poetry to stimulate theatre before, and now it is something I am interested in bringing to life.' (performing arts student)

Further evidence of impact is available in a portfolio, held by the HEI, in the form of audience comments, social media screen-shots, emails and links to blog posts.

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

Independent report:

Thematic analysis of responses by Mariana Rocca (M.R. Language Services), [1]

Reviews:

Impact case study (REF3)

Review in *Msllexia* [2] <https://mariacastrodominguez.com/the-hill-by-angela-france-nine-arches-press-july-2017-reviewed-by-maria-castro-dominguez/>

Review at *The Poetry School* [3] <https://poetryschool.com/reviews/review-hill-angela-france/>

Review at London Grip [4] <https://londongrip.co.uk/2017/12/london-grip-poetry-review-france/>

Review on Sheenagh Pugh's blog [5] <http://sheenaghpugh.livejournal.com/119406.html>

Blog review of the live performance [6] <https://awritersfountain.wordpress.com/2017/07/25/the-hill-angela-france-book-launch/>

Individuals:

Director, Cheltenham Poetry Festival

Organiser, 'Poets Uncut' reading series, Exeter

Emeritus Professor, Plymouth University

Member, Friends of Leckhampton Hill (conservation organisation)