

'Mediating Marginalities': Written Narrative and Immigrant Identity in Greater Manchester since 1960

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The 'Mediating Marginalities' project will explore the processes whereby specific immigrant communities in the Greater Manchester area have employed – and continue to employ – written narrative (e.g., fiction, poetry, autobiography, drama, screen-play, multi-media installations) to define and affirm their identities. In close collaboration with The Arts Council, local publishers and writers' groups, museums and holders of archives, the project will survey and catalogue the output, since 1960, of individuals and groups associated with Greater Manchester. The project will also support the commissioning and presentation of new writing that employs narrative to 'mediate' immigrant identity within the region, including that produced by the 'Creative Writing' PhD student attached to the project. During the life of the project - from April 2005 to September 2008 - Lancaster University, together with the various publishers and agencies associated with the scheme, will host a series of workshops, seminars and conferences in which academics, writers, publishers, arts' workers and members of the public will be invited to participate.

Publications resulting from the project will include an edited anthology of writings, a single-authored creative work and a full-scale academic study in which the development of narrative as a form of 'cultural mediation' will be reviewed and analysed. The project will also produce a data-base that will serve as an important historical record of immigrant writings in Greater Manchester during the period 1960 to the present and will be accessible to both academics and the general public. Given the inter-disciplinary nature of much contemporary art production it is also likely that some of the work associated with the project will take the form of an art gallery, or museum, exhibition. The project leaders will work to ensure that the project involves the people of the North-West at every available opportunity.

The project has been funded by the AHRB (Arts and Humanities Research Board) to a total of £356,547. This money will be used to employ a full-time post-doctoral Research Assistant for the life-time of the award, two PhD students working on projects associated with the award, and a 0.5 secretary.

