

Nottingham Trent University
D29 English Language and Literature
Impact Case Study:
Establishing the Gay Canon

Evidence source:
Online survey conducted by Ergo Consulting
www.ergoclear.com

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Nottingham Trent University commissioned Ergo Consulting to run an independent survey to gather evidence of the impact of the critical research and poetry of Professor Gregory Woods.
- 1.2 An on-line questionnaire, with a mixture of quantitative and qualitative questions, was prepared in Snap software and posted on the Ergo website. Recruitment to the survey was via links and circulation on Facebook, Twitter, and Woods' website and blog. The survey ran for four months from July to October 2013.
- 1.3 After data cleansing there were 123 valid responses to the survey. No questions were mandatory, so that the number of responses to each question varies.
- 1.4 In summary, the survey elicited responses that mirrored the wide and diverse reach of Woods' impact: local, regional, national and international.

2 Findings about the reach of the impact

- 2.1 Participants were asked which of Woods' writings they had consulted or read. 82 respondents answered this question, with, on average, each respondent citing between three and four publications. Table 1 shows that the sample of respondents to the survey had read or consulted a comprehensive range of Woods' publications.

Table 1: Woods' publications that had been read or consulted by the sample of respondents

Type of publication	Number
This Is No Book: A Gay Reader (1994)	27
A History of Gay Literature: The Male Tradition (1998)	66
Historia de la Literatura Gay (2001)	2
May I Say Nothing (1998)	29
The District Commissioner's Dreams (2002)	28
Quidnunc (2007)	31
An Ordinary Dog, 2011	28
Very Soon I Shall Know, 2012	11
European Reference Index for the Humanities, 2011	7
Poems and essays online	32
Twitter (@woodsgregory)	14
Other	23

- 2.2 Participants were then asked if they had heard Woods read his poetry or talk about gay/queer culture. The responses to these questions indicate very widespread and diverse reach of the impact of his work.
- 2.3 Just over a third of the sample (n=43) had heard him at a poetry reading, and 36 gave specific details:

Mushroom Bookshop, 1994 Various, Nottingham Trent University

ON YOU TUBE

several

Launch of gay poetry anthology in Ljubljana, Slovenia

Festival of words, Nottingham

At Nottswords festival, Nottingham, February 2013

numerous including The Nottingham International Poetry Festival, Gay's the Word Book Launch and The Lowdham Book Festival

poetry cafe London

nottingham festival of words

Waterstones

various East Midlands events

mushroom

cannot recall - a long time ago

NTU MA Creative Writing Book Launch District Commissioner's Dreams (NTU Brown Bag reading) Ordinary Dog (NTU Brown Bag reading)

Beeston Public Library 2011

Organised by the Djanogly Art Gallery, Lakeside Arts Centre, University of Nottingham, in 2001 in connection with the exhibition 'Typical Men: Photography of the Male Body by Men'

Nottingham Contemporary Gallery David Hockney event 2009

At Gay's the Word, London and at the Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association, Conway Hall, London

At several launches of his books, at lectures, and in person

Many, including events Greg did for us at The Metro Centre in Greenwich, launches in Nottingham, London, Derby, Leicester

At Manchester Public Library and in Nottingham

24-8 writers' tour others but please, I can hardly remember what I did last week

Flying goose, Ntu seminar, Beeston literary society, others

Too numerous to mention. All his appearances in Nottingham in the last 10 years.

Waterstones Nottingham summer 2011

Manchester Commonwealth Writers Festival

States of Independence, Leicester

At his inaugural lecture (Professor) At a NATE meeting I organised At launches of his poetry collections At Lowdham book festival

presentation of gay anthology in Ljubljana, 2009

In Durham some years ago, where we shared a platform at a celebration of Queer writing. Also at his launch for the Male Tradition.

Lowdham Book festival 2012

think it was the ICA

many, over many years eg 24/8, Beeston Poets, States of Independence

He's read a number of times at Gay's The Word Bookshop in London

Online clips

Newham Library.

2.4 18% of the sample had heard Woods at a conference, and 18 gave specific details:

At Crewe and Alsager, 1994

English Research Seminar 2013

At XIII CONGRESSO DE ESTUDOS LITERÁRIOS (13^o Literary Studies Conference) in Espírito Santo, Brazil, 7th October 2011.

Berlin 2011

Organised by the Djanogly Art Gallery, Lakeside Arts Centre, University of Nottingham, in 2009 in connection with the exhibition 'Life Less Ordinary: Contemporary Photography and lens-based media from South Africa'. Gregory gave a paper on gay performance artist Steven Cohen

Poetry and Sexuality Conference in Stirling, Scotland

English Society Conference at St Anne's College, Oxford

Conference for Alan Sinfield, University of Manchester, 2004

Manchester, probably 2002?

Several conferences on literature

Meetings of the ERIH - European Reference Index for the Humanities

Teaching English in a Changing World, Varenna (Italy) 10-17 September 1994

Romosexuality: the reception of Rome and the construction of Western homosexual identities (Durham University, April 2011)

Queer People V1, Christ's College, Cambridge, 2012

Agenda conference on Thom Gunn, 1999

one of the US gay/lesbian studies conferences, I forget which

Queer People VI: Art & Lives, Studies in the History and Representation of Sexualities (2012)

professional meetings through our joint participation in the European Science Foundation Committee meetings.

2.5 18% had heard Woods at another kind of public event, and 22 gave specific details:

A reading with the novelist Alan Hollinghurst in the 1990s

several

States of Independence, Leicester

as above

Notts festival of Words

Waterstones, Nottingham

Research symposia at NTU

at States of Independence at the Nottingham Writers Festival

A lecture in Italy

At Broadway Cinema introducing a film; giving a talk at the Nottinghamshire's Rainbow Heritage 2013 awards celebration in February 2013

Gregory's professorial inaugural lecture

At this year's Nottingham Festival of Words and Leicester's States of Independence book fair.

Metro Centre AGM, inaugural lecture

Queer Up North, Manchester

Nottingham Festival of Words Feb 2013

At many film screenings at Broadway, Nottingham

See answer above

Broadway Film Screening of 'Milk' and a workshop of gay literature at the Nottingham City Council readers day.

various I'm guessing

Lowdham Book Festival

Gay's the Word bookshop readings

Invited Speaker talk, Bishop Grosseteste University, Lincoln, 2011

2.6 4% had heard Woods on the radio, and two gave specific details:

Radio 3's 'Night Waves'

Radio 4 news interviews concerning Professorship in Gay Studies

2.7 Participants were asked whether they had engaged with Woods' work in a number of different roles or capacities. 94 answered this question. Again, the responses as illustrated in Table 2 show the very wide reach of his impact across different areas of public and cultural life.

Table 2: Engagement with Woods' work in a number of capacities

Engagement with Woods' work as...	Number
a teacher in a school	3
a teacher in higher education	41
a student	10
a writer	45
an arts administrator	6
a critic	33
in a gay community organisation	10
a reader not professionally involved in literature	11
in some other capacity	19

2.8 The other capacities that respondents cited included the following diverse range.

As a scholarly publisher interested in broadening minds and breaking down prejudices in the educational sector.

Through online interaction.

in connection with the poetry magazine Anon.

Publisher

Gregory Woods was the external examiner for my Phd. thesis in 2001.

in post graduation studies.

His work as Chair of the European Science Foundation's ERIH Gender Studies panel was excellent and important, establishing consensus from a panel with very different perspectives.

Worked together in Gender Studies, European Reference Index for the Humanities, European Science Foundation, 2011

As his editor in The Gay & Lesbian Review, a bimonthly magazine.

As a gay person interested in poetry

I have collaborated with him quite a few times in editing major reference works in gay literature.

Because of his scholarly distinction, I solicited and edited a chapter on gay writing that has been published in The Cambridge History of the English Novel (2012).

He wrote a blurb for my poetry collections and my gym book.

As the chief executive of an LGBT mental health charity

Publisher and anthologist

a reviewer

scholar

2.9 Participants were asked whether they had been involved in any academic courses which included Woods' work. Ten respondents between them identified a very wide range of impact through their use of his work in their teaching in Higher Education Institutions (other than the Unit of Assessment) across the world:

i have taught many cultural courses in the University of the Arts, London and have drawn on his work extensively. I now draw on his work for courses at Istanbul University.

I teach 2 courses on sexuality and gender studies which attract some 40 to 50 students a year. In this context I use Gregory Woods's book on Gay Male Literature. I also teach a poetry course in which I have used poems from We Have the Melon.

Studies in Queer Literature class at State University of New York at Fredonia. I believe it was 13 students. It must have been 2006? I used the book, May I Say Nothing, for the poetry selection.

We discussed the collection We Have the Melon on a course on Sexual Dissidence that I taught for about five years at the University of Manchester.

University of Venice Ca' Foscari, Course title: East Asia Cultural Studies (China), since 2006, 100 students (average). History of Gay Literature is among the recommended readings

I did use Woods's piece on Italian camp in the book collection (PopCamp, 2 volumes) I edited in 2008 in a course I taught (Wilde Goes Pop, about 120 students) at the university of Bergamo in 2011-12. I also often referred to his History of Gay Literature in my classes, during these years.

In an undergraduate course on Catullus' poetry (Durham University, 2010-11), as part of the reception of Catullus, we studied some of Gregory's poems that respond to Catullus.

I set A History of Gay Literature as required reading for the undergraduate module Sexuality and Modernity which I taught on in the spring 2012 at Birkbeck College, University of London

I've used poems including 'A Blind Man Looks at a Boy' in creative writing workshops.

I coordinate the only Erasmus Mundus Master in Women and Gender Studies in Europe. This is taught simultaneously at 7 European Universities in 6 different countries (Bologna, CEU, Hull, Granada, Lodz, Oviedo, Utrecht) and 8 non-European universities (Buenos Aires, Campinas, Nacional de Colombia, Central de Chile, Florida International University, INTEC Santo Domingo, Rutgers the State University of New Jersey, UNAM). His works are included in the master module programmes at all these universities.

2.10 Five respondents had been involved as students in academic institutions other than the Unit of Assessment in courses which included Woods' work:

MA European Studies (Manchester)

Can't remember

I used his work to widen my knowledge on gay culture, and to cite his work in my research.

I used his material in an independent study and research.

I did my undergraduate dissertation on Gregory Woods' poetry.

3 Quantitative findings about the significance of the impact

3.1 Participants were asked about the significance of Woods' impact in a variety of ways. First, they were asked to rate how much they thought Woods' writings had affected their understanding and appreciation of various aspects of gay/queer culture. Table 3 shows that more than four fifths of the sample said that his writings had affected very much or quite a lot their appreciation of gay/queer literature (80%), as well as their sense of the breadth and complexity of gay/queer literature (81%). About three quarters said that his writings had affected very much or quite a lot their view of what openly gay poetry can achieve (75%) and their view of homophobia in literature and the culture at large (70%).

Table 3: significance of Woods' impact on a various understandings or views

	Very much	Quite a lot	A little	Not at all	No response
appreciation or understanding of gay/queer literature	65%	20%	6%	2%	7%
sense of the breadth and complexity of gay/queer literature	61%	20%	6%	2%	11%
view of what openly gay poetry can achieve	47%	28%	11%	7%	8%
view of homophobia in literature and the culture at large	42%	28%	15%	6%	10%

3.2 In addition, participants were invited to say in their own words what they understood to be the significance and depth of the impact of Woods' work on their work and lived experience.

3.3 The remainder of this summary report sets out some of the most telling responses in detail.

3.4 What these show is very significant impact on poets and prose writers, gay and non-gay readers, education beyond the Unit of Assessment, cultural life more generally and even public services.

4 Prologue: Articulate Flesh

4.1 Although not named in the survey, a number of respondents identified Woods' first book, *Articulate Flesh: Male Homo-eroticism and Modern Poetry* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1987) as having had a significant, and continuing, impact on them

— as gay poets:

Articulate Flesh had a very decisive impact on the route my own poetry has taken. Years later when I started reading his poetry, it was a revelation to see that he practises what he preaches. This only deepened my appreciation for him as a person of integrity. He is a valuable resource which I hope we'll continue learning from. The kind of scholar which is NOT the rule when it comes to gay theory, but the exception. **[poet, S. Africa]**

When I discovered *Articulate Flesh: Male Homoeroticism and Modern Poetry* during my graduate studies, it was a revelation and affirmation of a poetic tradition I was just discovering for myself. His critical insight taught me how to read Hart Crane properly, and introduced me to the work of Thom Gunn. I probably know how to write—or how to write a better—love poem because of that book.

Since I live in a very repressive homophobic society, I had had few encounters with a fair discussion of homoerotic literature and writers, until I discovered Woods's book, *Articulate Flesh*. It was the first, and for a long time the only, work available to me about people—writers—who were like me. It proved to me that homosexuals can be valuable artists and that they—we—have something valuable to say, and that I could be one of this brave and culturally important group. I became dedicated to writing serious homoerotic poems because of the liberating and encouraging effect of Woods's book.

— and as readers with a gay identity:

Reading *Articulate Flesh* when it first came out, when I was 25 years old, and understanding that deeply intelligent, reflective and human analysis of gay subjects was now tenable, appreciated and publishable. And that such work could be of equal stature - perhaps greater in being braver and more inclusive - to the literary criticism I'd studied at university. I didn't realise then how much of that preceding criticism had been inflected by the political positions of those who had produced it. Gregory Woods' work is part of that deconstruction and reconsideration of the literary canon and its criticism represented by insights provided from minority positions - through LGBT studies, postcolonial studies, feminism and minority literatures. These critiques as a whole have moved contemporary British culture to a more self-reflexive and egalitarian understanding. This has been useful for me as a gay man living in this culture.

5 Qualitative finding about the significance of Post-1993 Research

Impact on Education

5.1 Woods' more recent research has broadened and deepened this effect, having particular impact on scholarship in gay studies:

Gregory Woods's work demonstrated to me the length, complexity, and richness of the tradition of gay male writing in literature. This was an especially important achievement, given that so many other scholars and critics in the 1990s and early 2000s (when gay, lesbian, and queer scholarship became widespread in academia) were insisting on the opposite—that gay culture, and even the idea of homosexuality itself, are a distinctly modern phenomenon, arising only in the late nineteenth century. Gregory Woods's work was, and is, a crucial example of what literary criticism and literary history should be.

Mr G. Woods' work has helped me enhance my view on gay culture, so that I was able to cite his work in my doctoral research; moreover, his work has brought me a perspective of gay life in History which also helped me in my own life as a gay individual. **[academic, Brazil]**

Inspiring and path-breaking scholarship, which has a liberating intellectual effect. **[academic, USA]**

Gregory Woods has been pioneering in his writing on gay culture, and I've been aware of his work for many years, having bought and read his *Articulate Flesh* in the late Eighties. It would be true to say that his work helped me in forming my own identity as a gay man. Importantly, the work on the history of gay literature informed research I undertook on the gay British artist Keith Vaughan (*Keith Vaughan: The Mature Oils* by Anthony Hepworth and Ian Massey, Sansom, 2012). Woods's *History of Gay Literature* is in the bibliography of my recently submitted PhD thesis. Crucially, during the research and writing stages of my book on the gay artist Patrick Procktor (*Patrick Procktor: Art and Life*, Unicorn Press 2010), Gregory's mentorship was of great help to me. His generous and insightful comments on the research ideas and early drafts were truly beneficial, particularly to myself as novice author.

Articulate Flesh and *A History of Gay Literature* were major influences on my thinking and writing when I began my doctoral research in 1996, as the citations in my book testify (*Gay Male Fiction Since Stonewall*, Routledge 2009).

His work on W.H. Auden was vital to my research for my latest book, which has a chapter on Auden. Woods treats the relationship between sexuality and cultural production with more finesse and depth than anyone since the late Eve Sedgwick. **[academic, USA]**

In terms of consolidating studies of gay studies and providing all elements to my research in this field, improving my knowledge and experience. [...] We have exchanged e-mails and he always showed a spirit of sharing his knowledge in the queer/gay studies. It was very important for my studies during the mastering of Literature here in Brazil. **[writer, Brazil]**

As part of my research on an article devoted to the recent French novel by Jonathan Littel, *The Kindly Ones*, I wrote Gregory Woods with a query about homosexual stereotypes about Nazis in post-war literature (those stinky, kinky Nazis- to use George Steiner's phrase). He responded immediately and kindly gave me considerable help in order to integrate my discussion (written in German) into the larger international discussion. More power to him! [...] I'm an American teaching in Germany, and LGBT issues are still largely taboo in German academe. For this reason, it was quite refreshing being able to exchange mails with Gregory Woods about issues which he has dealt with for many years. **[academic, Germany]**

5.2 His critical work has been used in academic courses far beyond his own host institution:

Teaching in the English Department at California State University, Long Beach, I found Woods's work on gay male literature [A History of Gay Literature] very useful. [...] His book on gay literature is essential.

Professor Woods's study A History of Gay Literature has been incredibly influential in my career. It was the first study of gay literature I had read when I was a MLitt student and it encouraged me to pursue research in gay and lesbian literature and culture. I've come back to the book again and again over the years, and it continues to offer insight and guidance. [...] I set A History of Gay Literature as required reading for the undergraduate module Sexuality and Modernity which I taught on in the spring 2012 at Birkbeck College, University of London.

Gregory Woods's work has been really groundbreaking: it opened paths for critical thinking on gay, lesbian and queer cultures. Having worked in that field myself, I did benefit indeed from his work. I also had the pleasure to host one of his essays in a collection of essays I edited in Italian, back in 2008. [...] I did use Woods's piece on Italian camp in the book collection (PopCamp, 2 volumes) I edited in 2008 in a course I taught (Wilde Goes Pop, about 120 students) at the University of Bergamo in 2011-12. I also often referred to his History of Gay Literature in my classes, during these years.

As a Sinologist, I have always focused on Chinese or Asian gay literature. Prof. Woods' work helped me re-evaluating and understanding Western gay literature in a much deeper fashion. [...] University of Venice Ca' Foscari, Course title: East Asia Cultural Studies (China), since 2006, 100 students (average). History of Gay Literature is among the recommended readings. **[academic, Italy]**

I coordinate the only Erasmus Mundus Master in Women and Gender Studies in Europe. This is taught simultaneously at 7 European Universities in 6 different countries (Bologna, CEU, Hull, Granada, Lodz, Oviedo, Utrecht) and 8 non-European universities (Buenos Aires, Campinas, Nacional de Colombia, Central de Chile, Florida International University, INTEC Santo Domingo, Rutgers the State University of New Jersey, UNAM). [Woods'] works are included in the master module programmes at all these universities. **[academic, Spain]**

5.3 His creative work has also been used in an educational context:

Personally I think of Gregory Woods as one of our leading contemporary poets, whose work I find both a challenge and a genuine pleasure. I greatly enjoy reading his work myself, and have also recommended it to my own students. **[academic, UK]**

— and some respondents have used both his critical and creative work as educational texts:

As Gregory Woods is both a poet and a literary scholar, his work has been immensely useful for my own work on understanding how responses to ancient Rome have shaped gay literature and culture, and more generally the gay experience as expressed in literature. [...] In an undergraduate course on Catullus' poetry (Durham University, 2010-11), as part of the reception of Catullus, we studied some of Gregory's poems that respond to Catullus.

I've been enlightened by his writings. I've also recommended his work to Creative Writing students who I teach. They have not only appreciated his writings and attended his readings but have approached him informally for advice on ways of writing about their own experience creatively. Working in a very small department where it happens that the full-time academic staff are straight, it's been great that Professor Woods has been willing to answer questions from gay students in an informal and friendly way, drawing on his wealth of knowledge as poet and critic. I know from the students how much his responses have helped them. **[academic at other UK HEI]**

His history of gay literature is superb as was his book on gay poetry. [...] I have taught many cultural courses in the University of the Arts, London and have drawn on his work extensively. I now draw on his work for courses at Istanbul University. [...] He is one of the major writers in his field and a great poet too. **[academic, UK/Turkey]**

Impact on Cultural Life

- 5.4 Woods' research, both interpreting and creating cultural capital, has enriched the lives of gay individuals, whether readers or writers, and broadened non-gay people's understanding of not only of them but of human relationships in general.

Sensitive and very creative analysis of homo-erotic themes in poetry – placing homoeroticism at the very heart of poetry not in some peripheral area of minority – suggestivity, sensitivity and wit in his style. **[academic, Hungary]**

Gregory Woods' critical writing shows a deep understanding of the history of gay literature and the ways new gay writing is in dialogue with those literary works as well as the current social and cultural changes in the gay community. **[arts administrator, writer, UK]**

He has been a pioneering and pivotal figure in gay literary and historical research. In my work / research as a dealer in rare gay books, his History of Gay Literature has been invaluable. **[bookseller, UK]**

His unique insight has been a valuable resource to us as an educational charity and public cultural venue. **[arts administrator, UK]**

- 5.5 Both his creative and critical work have had a significant impact on gay poets:

Way off here on the rim of the Pacific Ocean in San Francisco where I've lived since 1970, Gregory Woods is a glowing name as an accomplished city-landscaped conversational image poet and particularly in the recent years with his academic publications from Yale on our other coast. **[Edward Mycue, poet, USA]**

He is the most important poet writing on gay issues outside the USA. He was a literate voice that corrected many of the stereotypes of gay men in popular culture. His poetry demonstrated the 3D nature of the gay identity...wit, intelligence, humour.

His poems have made an impact on the way I write my own poems. **[poet, Singapore]**

He has made me realise the huge complexity and richness of gay literature and its centrality within Western culture. H[is] work as a poet has given me a starting point from which to explore my own queerness as a poet. He has been invaluable to my recent creative and intellectual development. **[poet, UK]**

As a queer Native American poet of the U.S., it was great to share internationally with other queer writers. Mr. Woods wrote a blurb for the jacket of my seventh book of poetry. His critical worth has been inspirational just in reassuring me that queer writing and studies is well worth studying and celebrating. [...] Studies in Queer Literature class at State University of New York at Fredonia. I believe it was 13 students. It must have been 2006? I used the book, May I Say Nothing, for the poetry selection. **[poet & academic, USA]**

— and on other writers, gay or not:

It has confirmed in my mind the power and impact of poetry - the mastery (not economy) of words leaves me as a prose writer scrabbling for ver[b]age in awe.

His incomparable contribution to Gay / Queer literature has influenced my thinking and my practice as a writer. **[writer, UK]**

[Woods] opened my eyes to how poetry could be analyzed along sexuality lines eschewing the general biographical approach that had been used. This led me to the question of how formal approaches could be used in gay studies. As a poet myself I have appreciated the wit and precision of Gregory Woods's poetry. His half sonnets are a particularly interesting formal invention. [...] There are relatively few people in England and virtually none in America who are concerned with gay writing as literature, rather than as sociological phenomenon or as means of theoretical development. His work has been invaluable. **[poet & academic, USA]**

His poetry has given me the greatest experiences. Then his hist[ory] of gay lit[erature]. Both inspired my own work. **[poet, USA]**

As a gay poet who can often feel isolated in contemporary British poetry, I go to Gregory Woods as a voice of affirmation and challenge, both as a poet & critic. He helps me feel less alone in my work. His example helps to show me not only what another, very different, gay poet can explore; but also that gay and lesbian poetry can celebrate our differences, our clashing and blending voices, the excitement of our conversation as gay poets writing today. Of course he also has a tremendously affirming sense of how our contemporary voices contribute to, change and develop the LGBT tradition we're part of.

Gregory Woods' critical work had a huge impact on me as a young, emerging gay poet. His early studies of homosexuality in literature more or less gave me the theme of my first collection. Since then his work in general has helped deepen my knowledge of the field and his poetry has been constantly inspirational. In my view his work—all of it—is of central importance to an understanding not just of the way gay sexuality may be inscribed in literature but of the development of poetry in 20th and early 21st century Britain. **[poet, UK]**

In the gay writing community, Gregory Woods is someone who is held in very high regard, and to communicate with him, to simply be able to ask his opinion or to have him review or participate in your work is something that helps one attain a sense of accomplishment. He broke down doors so that a new generation - and a newer generation - could walk through those doors easily. **[publisher, USA]**

5.6 A broader impact has been felt by readers in general, of both his critical and creative research:

I enjoy his poetry very much and have given copies of his books as presents to friends. His knowledge of gay literature is huge and his writings are both intelligent and accessible without being dumbed down. **[Bookseller]**

I think it is the authenticity of his voice in poetry, and the dedication he has shown to gay literature, history and politics in his academic publishing career and indeed the unique fusion of these two areas. Reading, and meeting him, you develop [a]n implicit respect for the integrity with which he evaluates and explores subjects. Gregory also leaves the tacit impression of a compassionate thinker, of a good man, whose interest as an academic and writer are intellectual but also pragmatic and accessible. **[Bookseller]**

Professor Woods is a meticulous scholar. His work combines theoretical sophistication with close readings of texts in their cultural and political contexts. What makes his work particularly useful is its accessibility. The breadth and depth of his knowledge are truly impressive and his prolificity is astonishing. His scholarly work has been intellectually enlightening to me and his creative work is a source of enjoyment. **[academic, USA]**

Greg Woods reads very thoughtfully and sensitively - and always with a searing honesty. His criticism, like his poetry, obliges his readers to re-read works that they think they know with greater awareness. [...] His work as Chair of the European Science Foundation's ERIH Gender Studies panel was excellent and important, establishing consensus from a panel with very different perspectives. [...] Greg

Woods is one of the UK's leading critics and theorists of gay studies and also a very fine poet.

Greg Woods has opened out the subject area of poetry and at the same time revalidated and developed traditional forms in relation to that area. He is a highly inventive formalist and a writer for whom candour is an aspect of integrity. He is also a remarkable critic who can bring together into a single narrative work that is on the face of it heterogeneous and disparate and reveal the qualities that inform and constitute a specifically gay tradition. **[publisher, UK]**

Woods' critical writing has enhanced my awareness of the range and richness of the work of homosexual writers, and transformed my appreciation of how and why they write. His poetry has moved me, and helped me understand the intellectual and emotional experience of gay men, and how they negotiate the world. Even though Woods is the first British scholar appointed to a chair in gay and lesbian studies, his contribution goes well beyond the parameters of sexual identity, revealing important things about artistic creativity more broadly. **[publisher, USA/UK]**

Gregory Woods' essays and poems have changed my view of the importance of a gay poets' sexual orientation to his/her poetry, and helped made me appreciate that poetry should sometimes be read in the context of the poet's politics, including gender politics.

I am a very gay friendly, but probably very gay ignorant, man. My exposure to gay issues is limited to my interactions with gay friends and to my woolly liberal Guardian reading general cultural intake, and apart from being surprised and delighted at the way the mainstream political parties have got hold of gay equality issues in recent years, I know little detail about most of these issues. However when Gregory agreed to write an essay for the poetry magazine Anon [...], I remember feeling very conscious that it was a good thing that his official title—which was something like Professor of Gay and Lesbian Studies or the like—existed, that it was going in the magazine, and that it was one small contribution to making gay stuff uncontroversial, non-scary, normal. But overall, my brief experience of Gregory was not so much as a mover in gay cultural and social issues, but just as a man contributing his work for free to a tiny little magazine he believed in. In that capacity, I found him just about unequalled – I would say he was the most positive, helpful, supportive contributor I ever dealt with. I am sure he had many more important things to do, so I was and am very grateful for his time and his support. [...] My interaction with Gregory was limited to a few months, in connection with the poetry magazine Anon. My experience was that he went out of his way to go above and beyond what I might have reasonably expected of him in his role as contributor. I also found him generally very encouraging and positive and enthusiastic about the magazine. He wrote a long and very well researched, interesting essay for us, and was not paid, and wanted and asked for nothing in return. This is admirable. **[editor, UK]**

Public Discourse / Public Services Impact

- 5.7 Respondents asserted that Woods' work has had a positive, empowering impact on gay identity and the social conditions in which it is developed, whether by groups or by individuals. He has contributed to restoring the self-esteem of hundreds of vulnerable LGBT people through poetry readings which have helped them come to terms with societal homophobia by authenticating and validating their lived experience in accessible 'high cultural' art.

Greg Woods is an academic who is able to write both academically and creatively. His audience reach and impact is therefore wider than that of most academics. He is a hugely influential figure, and well regarded, in the local LGBT community, and is able to act as a 'broker' between academia and the local community.

Greg has helped me at events for the LGBT communities in south London. He read at the launch of a community art exhibition 'Who Am I?' which was all about the journey

for sexual minorities to understand and construct their identities. He also delivered a session on writing and identity for our LGBT disengaged youth arts residency. This targeted young people not in education, employment or training. More than 60 people attended these events. I found both these experiences highly moving as they exemplified a theme of Greg's work of how literature helps the marginalized come to terms with their experience and use it productively. This has been his impact on me. He gives voice to experiences which have often been silenced. He also captures the record of this silencing. **[charity CEO, UK]**

I have been affected more by Gregory's readings and lectures than his actual writing. I have particularly responded to the cogency of his arguments and interpretations, and the warmth and humour in which they have been delivered. As a gay man, I have found my own life and experience elucidated.

Like all good poetry, Gregory Woods's poetry has changed my life. There are certain poems of his which materially affect the way in which I see the world, my own place in it and gay sexuality as part of that. His survey of Gay Literature is one of the landmarks without which the subject would scarcely be articulate. [...] I teach 2 courses on sexuality and gender studies which attract some 40 to 50 students a year. In this context I use Gregory Woods's book on Gay Male Literature. I also teach a poetry course in which I have used poems from *We Have the Melon*.

Gregory Woods is a brilliant poet and writer whose work irradiates the body of gay literature in the world. He is also a powerful poet and a fabulous academic writer. He is much underrated by one the luminaries of gay writing in the world. His work has been, for me, a way of life and a mode of being. **[writer, India]**

Open and honest gay poetry is immensely important, and reading his poetry over the years has always been a revelation, giving voice to things so often still not voiced.

It has been good to read poetry by an openly gay man, some of whose verses express certain of my own feelings.

Since I am in social sciences (gender studies) Gregory Woods's poems and talks about poetry have been an eye-opener for me as to what poetry can be used for politically.

Gregory Woods is exemplary, not only [as] an academic, but, most importantly as a poet, putting queer theory into practice.

I read them and enjoyed them very much. His poems fill me with joy and happiness and an incredible sense of pleasure that I am one of those lucky enough to be reading such beauty. [...] He let me understand gayness should be more excepted [sic] in our society as a whole because it can be beautiful.

Gregory Woods stand[s] for the vitality of openly gay poetry and criticism, against forces that would keep gay authors and men in the closet. The breadth of his cultural knowledge and the sharpness of his poetic technique set high bars not just for gay writers, but for all writers. **[poet, USA]**