

Institution: University of Cambridge
Unit of Assessment: UoA28
Title of case study: Advancing Public Awareness and Understanding of Ukraine
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words) <p>Dr Finnin's research has raised and enriched the profile of Ukraine as a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional cultural space bound together by projects of inter- and intra-national solidarity. His scholarly work has inspired and informed a high-profile public engagement programme, which has centred on an annual film festival launched in 2008, an annual evening of literary readings begun in 2010, and two exhibitions in 2009 and 2010. In Ukraine these outputs have in turn garnered extensive media attention, contributing to the preservation of a beleaguered cultural tradition and to the reconciliation of national communities (Ukrainian, Russian, Crimean Tatar) all with traumatic pasts.</p>
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words) <p>Dr Finnin has been University Lecturer in Ukrainian Studies in the Department of Slavonic Studies at the University of Cambridge since 2008. Since then his research has had two central, interrelated objectives: a) to uncover, in Ukraine's fraught history of internecine violence and colonial oppression, forgotten or ignored projects of solidarity that promoted cross-cultural understanding, particularly between Ukrainians, Crimean Tatars, Poles and Russians; and b) to demonstrate how the literary aesthetic made these projects of solidarity uniquely effective and resilient.</p> <p>A series of peer-reviewed publications addressed these objectives. Finnin's research revealed, for instance, the peculiar ways in which the celebrated nineteenth-century 'bard of Ukraine' Taras Shevchenko exploited the power of lyric address to invite diverse readerships to forge solidary relationships across borders and to self-identify as 'Ukrainian', irrespective of their ethnic (Polish, Russian) or religious (Muslim, Jewish) backgrounds. Finnin also deconstructed Shevchenko's image as an anti-colonial, even nationalist rebel and fundamentally recast him as a post-colonial artist committed to free exchange and play between Ukrainian and imperial cultures.</p> <p>In his scholarship on the twentieth century, meanwhile, Finnin presented the historical and literary figure of the Crimean Tatar as a central concern of Ukrainian culture. Indeed, his research into the significance of Ukraine's Muslim legacy offered a corrective to what might be called the predominant 'Orthodox East Slavic' paradigm in Ukrainian Studies and foregrounded Ukraine's complex ethnic and religious inheritance as a critical object of knowledge. Finnin's work on coded and forgotten Ukrainian and Russian literary responses to Stalin's brutal deportation of the Crimean Tatars in 1944 also modelled a new solidarity-based approach to the study of Stalinist violence and historical trauma.</p> <p>Finnin also showed how and why Soviet dissidents used poetry to combat what he calls the 'discursive cleansing' that accompanied the ethnic cleansing of Ukraine's Crimean Tatars. Moreover, he has argued that the legacy of the Stalinist practice of 'discursive cleansing', which he defined as the process of disciplining speech through coordinated epistemic and physical violence that is both retrospective and prospective in its application, was uniquely responsible for the vigorous afterlife of the memory of historical traumas in Eastern Europe. Finnin has therefore foregrounded various texts, literary and documentary, that speak against the silence that has shrouded Stalinist terror. He has also brought to light the stories of Ukrainian dissidents and cultural figures who used poetry to expose the Katyn tragedy, the Vinnytsia massacres, and the Holodomor (the 1932-22 Terror-Famine) as interconnected crimes of the Soviet regime. This work on the legacy of historical traumas like Katyn and the Holodomor also involved a critique of 'monumental' commemorative practices in Ukraine, which can invite strict national metaphorical readings.</p>

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

- a) Finnin, Rory. "Nationalism and the Lyric; or, How Taras Shevchenko Speaks to Compatriots Dead, Living, and Unborn." *Slavonic and East European Review* 89:1 (2011): 29-55.
- b) Finnin, Rory. "The Poetics of Home: Crimean Tatars in Nineteenth-Century Russian and Turkish Literatures." *Comparative Literature Studies* 49.1 (2012): 84-118
- c) Finnin, Rory. "Forgetting Nothing, Forgetting No One: Boris Chichibabin, Viktor Nekipelov, and the Deportation of the Crimean Tatars." *Modern Language Review* 106.4 (2011): 1091-1124.
- d) Finnin, Rory (with Alexander Etkind et al). *Remembering Katyn*. London and Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012.

All outputs can be supplied by the University of Cambridge on request.

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

Dr Finnin has channelled his scholarly work in and through a comprehensive public programme of exhibitions, film screenings, and literary readings, which have reached thousands around the world. As the Ukrainian daily newspaper *Den'* (25 May 2012) reported, 'Dr Finnin's fresh approach to the study of Ukrainian culture... has made Ukraine an accessible cultural and social space for the European public' [1].

In 2009 his research into the artistry of Taras Shevchenko led him, in partnership with the University's Department of History of Art, to organise an exhibition at Cambridge's Michaelhouse Centre of over twenty prints of the poet's paintings. Entitled 'Verse in Vision', the event explored commonplaces in Shevchenko's poetic and painterly languages and presented his self-portraits as visualised forms of lyric address. The exhibition was attended by an estimated 2,000 local residents, students, and tourists, all of whom received informational pamphlets about Shevchenko's life and work, written and designed by Dr Finnin. In May 2009, Dr Finnin invited over twenty students from the Cambridge Russian School to the exhibition, where they recited Shevchenko's verse in Russian translation to celebrate his penchant for cultural and linguistic exchange. According to the Director of Studies at the Cambridge Russian School, 'Dr Finnin's exhibition and literary reading allowed our students and parents to encounter Shevchenko as a complex artist committed to exchange and dialogue between national groups' [2]. This positive response led Dr Finnin in 2010 to launch the annual Vsesvit Readings in Celebration of Literary Translation, which feature student recitations of literary texts in various languages. In 2013 Dr Finnin built on this momentum, discussing his research on the significance of Shevchenko's lyric address in a Ukrainian-language interview with Radio Liberty (14 March 2013) [3]. The interview elicited an enthusiastic response from the public, with over 9,000 downloads and 272 likes on Facebook in one week alone.

In 2008 Dr Finnin's work on the historical and cultural position of the figure of the Crimean Tatar in Ukrainian culture, which the Crimean Tatar community has described in the Russian-language media as 'breathtaking' (11 May 2012) [4], led him to organize the film festival 'At the Crossroads', which premiered documentary and feature films about Ukraine's Muslim Tatar legacy. Held at the Cambridge Arts Picturehouse, the event met with a very enthusiastic response from the public. Over 250 people attended the sold-out screenings, which were accompanied by pre- and post-screening discussions with Dr Finnin. An attendee remarked: 'Before attending this event, my partner and I knew almost nothing about Ukraine and its religious diversity. We discovered an amazing country with a turbulent past and a multi-ethnic culture' [5]. The event's success prompted Finnin to establish an annual Cambridge Festival of Ukrainian Film, which has since become a leading international showcase for contemporary Ukrainian cinema, winning praise from many Ukrainian civic organisations and news outlets, including the popular newspaper *Komsomol'skaia pravda* (16 November 2011) (circulation: 1 million) [6]. Over 1,100 members of the public attended these screenings between 2008-12. As celebrated Ukrainian filmmaker Volodymyr Tykhii remarked, 'The Cambridge Film Festival has helped me understand my own work within an international cultural context.'

In 2009 Dr Finnin's scholarship on the public memory of Ukraine's history inspired him to mount an exhibition at the Wren Library (Trinity College, Cambridge) of the 1932-33 diaries of Cambridge alumnus Gareth Jones, the only journalist to stake his name in reporting the Holodomor to the world. The exhibition's methodology drew on Dr Finnin's scholarship into effective commemorative practices in Ukraine and Eastern Europe, advancing a documentary, text-based memorialization rather than a monumental one. The exhibition was visited by 2,789 guests in a two-month period, and the Wren Library Sub-Librarian remarked that 'there was more international interest and impact with this extremely powerful exhibition than with any of our other offerings' [7]. Over 180 world media outlets, including *The Daily Telegraph* (13 November 2009) and *The Guardian* (13 November 2009), covered the exhibition. Ukraine's national daily *Den'* reported that the exhibition exposed 'the entire world to the Holodomor'. *The Kyiv Post* (4 December 2009) quoted Finnin as saying that Jones's diaries 'refocus the attention from the political fighting [about the famine] to the voices of its victims' [8]. Finnin also launched an exhibition website and screened the UK premiere of a Ukrainian documentary (*The Living*, 2008) about Jones and the Holodomor to a capacity crowd at the Cambridge Arts Picturehouse. In addition he gave radio and television interviews with the BBC and leading Ukrainian and Russian media outlets, speaking live on BBC World News (13 November 2009) (global audience 97 million) [9]; on the BBC World Service (13 November 2009) (global audience 145 million) [10]; on BBC Wales (13 November 2009) (weekly reach 486,000) [11]; on BBC Look East (12 November 2009) [12]; and on Inter (8 December 2009), Ukraine's most watched television channel [13]. He spoke in Russian on Radio Liberty (26 November 2011) (audience 4 million) [14] and in Ukrainian for an interview with the Ukrainian newspaper *Den'* (18 November 2009) [15]. In the words of journalist George Carey, creator of *Newsnight*, 'Finnin's work has done much to widen public interest in this important but hitherto neglected aspect of twentieth century history.' According to John Sweeney of BBC's *Panorama*, 'Dr Finnin's exhibition helped direct national media attention to the Holodomor and offered the British public a new and better understanding of Ukrainian history.'

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

1. News feature addressing Finnin's research and activity. In Ukrainian. 'The Universe between Ukraine and Israel', *Den'* (25 May 2012), <http://www.day.kiev.ua/uk/article/ukrayinci-chitayte/vsesvit-mizh-ukrayinoyu-ta-izravilem>
2. Testimonial from Person 1 (Director of Studies, Cambridge Russian School)
3. Interview with Radio Svoboda (Radio Liberty) on Shevchenko's lyric address. In Ukrainian. 'Shevchenko is alive today: Professor Finnin' (14 March 2013): <http://www.radiosvoboda.org/content/article/24929062.html>
4. Mubbeyin Batu Altan and the Crimean Tatar community describe the depth and breadth of Finnin's scholarship on Ukrainian-Crimean Tatar relations as 'breathhtaking'. In Russian. 'Cambridge professor', *QHA: Agentstvo krymskye novosti* (11 May 2012), <http://qha.com.ua/kembridjskii-professor-sravnil-russkuyu-i-turetskuyu-literaturi-o-krimskih-tatarah-111303.html>
5. Testimonial from Person 2 (film festival attendee, Bristol)
6. News feature. 'Ukrainian cinema in Cambridge', *Komsomol'skaia Pravda* (16 November 2011), <http://kp.ua/daily/161111/311200/>
7. Evidence of 2,789 visitors to Holodomor/Gareth Jones exhibition: testimonial from Person 3 (Sub-Librarian, Wren Library)
8. News feature in *The Kyiv Post*. In English. 'Nation remembers victims of the 1932-33 Holodomor' (4 December 2009), <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/nation-remembers-victims-of-1932-1933-holodomor-54348.html>
9. BBC World News live television interview with Jonathan Charles (13 November 2009). On file.
10. BBC World Service interview with James Kumarasamy (13 November 2009). On file.
11. BBC Wales radio interview with Oliver Hides (13 November 2009). On file.
12. News feature on BBC Look East (12 November 2009), <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=1194160094860&set=vb.49933117303&type=3&theater>
13. News feature including interview. 'Declassified diaries of a British reporter', *Podrobnosti*

Impact case study (REF3b)

- programme on Inter Channel, Ukraine (8 December 2009), <http://podrobnosti.ua/podrobnosti/2009/12/08/649994.html>
14. Interview with Radio Svoboda (Radio Liberty). In Russian. 'Holodomor: Stalin vs. all' (26 November 2011), <http://www.svoboda.org/content/article/1888615.html>
 15. Interview with daily newspaper *Den*'. In Ukrainian. 'A disturbing truth in Cambridge' (18 November 2009), <http://www.day.kiev.ua/uk/article/den-planeti/hvilyuyucha-pravda-v-kembridzhi>