

Institution: Leeds Trinity University
Unit of Assessment: Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management
Title of case study: Theory into practice; practice into theory
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Research produced within the Media, Film and Culture team at Leeds Trinity University has led to an impact on production processes and film education. The research on which this impact is founded relates to the research leadership of Professor Graham Roberts, who particularly explores the relationship between the human 'producers' and the technology (becoming) available for production and distribution. Roberts' research has informed the practices of the institution's in house production company, Trinity Vision. Trinity Vision, supported by practitioners within the subject area, has engaged with local and regional businesses and social enterprises, producing work that has entered the public domain.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Leeds Trinity is gaining a reputation for research in the area of Media, Film and Culture and has future plans to create the research centre, Centre for Creative Media. The Centre for Creative Media would build on existing research within the Media, Film and Culture team into visual culture and cultural practices and seek to particularly explore the relationship between research, practice and practice-based research.</p> <p>The key researcher involved in this case study is Professor Graham Roberts (Visiting Lecturer, Jan 2011 – Sept 2011; Lecturer, Oct 2011 – Nov 2012; Director of Media, Film and Culture, Nov 2012 – present). Roberts' research focuses on the broad area of 'production studies' particularly from the position of participant/observer. Roberts is currently involved in the on-going research project 'International Cinemas' with the Institute of Communications Studies, University of Leeds. This project explores new forms of practice linked to the opportunities presented by digital production, with a particular focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) how we can write/shoot and produce films more predisposed to cross-national distribution; b) new technological opportunities in independent distribution/exhibition as well as production. <p>This group have focused on the effective use of subtitling and dubbing, and have recently started work on a long-term research/teaching project looking at the use of digital stills cameras for digital 'film-making'. This work will result in written and filmed outputs for the next REF. Roberts is currently working (as co-lead and executive producer) with colleagues in an international consortium consisting of the University of Bologna; Department of Italian, University of Durham; and the Calandra Institute in New York and Kent State University (USA). This is led by Delia Chiaro, Professor of English Language and Translation (University of Bologna). The aim of the project is to dub (as opposed to subtitle) an Italian screen product and test the dubbed series on English speaking audiences. Focus group work conducted by Roberts has shown that audiences express an emotional rejection of any 'dubbing', yet they are averse to attending subtitled films. This project, directly inspired by the work of the Leeds group (International Cinemas), has twin research aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) increase the prospect of facilitating audience reception to dubbing; b) create a more visual, less verbally driven, even more cinematic medium.

This research has led to research output 1 listed in section 3.

Roberts' research has also taken a more technologically driven focus on production, exploring the relationship between the human 'producers' and the technology (becoming) available for production and distribution. This research has resulted in creative outputs (both fiction and documentary productions) produced by Endgame Pictures (an independent film company dedicated to making documentaries and features in a digital environment) (e.g. output 1). As a result of his practice-based research, Roberts has come to question the 'black box' of film production. Reflecting on his own experience in production and drawing on the theoretical perspectives of several scholars, Roberts has argued for the formalisation of the discipline 'production studies' (see output 2 listed in section 3). This would involve taking a perspective from within the production itself, analysing and theorising cinema as a creative industry from within, utilising the tools of the social sciences.

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

- 1) Roberts, G. (2013) *Malentendu – cross purpose 1, French original*
 Roberts, G. (2013) *Malentendu – cross purpose 2, English dubbed*
 Roberts, G. (2013) *Malentendu – cross purpose 3, English subtitled* [REF entry]
 All available at <http://vimeo.com/rainfallpictures/videos>
- 2) Roberts, G. (2011) Opening Pandora's (black) Box: towards a methodology of production studies, *Wide Screen*, 3(1) (April) [REF entry]

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

The body of research detailed above has contributed towards research informed productions produced by the institution's in house production company, Trinity Vision. This has had secondary impacts on the charitable organisations that Trinity Vision work with, in that the organisations gained a higher quality promotional film or documentary. Roberts has also engaged the general public in his research through his involvement in a local film club (for young people) and a project with the University of the Third Age (U3A). The full impact of Roberts' *Malentendu* pieces has not yet been realised but through his development of more sympathetic dubbing techniques, an opportunity is created to make international culture available to monolingual audiences. Each of these impacts are now described in turn.

Trinity Vision have made use of Roberts' research into production practice through their work with numerous charities and community groups producing various promotional films and documentaries. This service is provided to such organisations for free and is funded by Trinity Vision's work with for-profit companies. In the process of making such films, Trinity Vision drew on Roberts' research on theorising and reflecting on practice. This has resulted in a more rigorous and self-reflexive approach to production, production management and relations with external clients. The following examples are organisations that have benefited from this different approach used by Trinity Vision. A substantial project was undertaken with Washburn Heritage Centre, an organisation funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, which seeks to support and preserve the history of the Washburn Valley (North Yorkshire). This project (begun in 2010 and ongoing) recorded oral history from local residents, focusing on agricultural history and World War II. Memories captured on film were used by the heritage centre in subsequent exhibitions and archived for the future. Trinity Vision provided training to residents in handling the camera equipment. The final video was

then edited and produced on a DVD by Trinity Vision.

A further project involved working with the Positive Lifestyle Centre, Bradford, producing two promotional videos for the organisation. The Positive Lifestyle Centre are an educational service that provide personal development sessions for schoolchildren, situated at the Bradford City Football ground. School groups come to visit the ground and then participate in sessions such as self-esteem, drug awareness, and healthy eating. The centre is a charitable organisation that relies on community funding to provide their services. Trinity Vision produced two promotional films for the organisation that were then used to advertise their services and attract funding (April-May 2013).

Trinity Vision have also worked with the Irish Arts Foundation, an organisation based in Leeds that promotes the music and arts of Ireland throughout Britain, providing access and participation in traditional Irish culture. As part of their work, the Irish Arts Foundation held a concert with four of Ireland's top musicians performing. Trinity Vision filmed this concert and interviewed people involved, asking them about their background and the importance of preserving Irish culture (Summer 2011).

Trinity Vision have had a more sustained involvement with the Leeds Fashion Show (a not for profit organisation supporting people to bridge the gap between education and the fashion industry) and the Leeds Chinese Community Association. Trinity Vision have filmed annual events for each organisation, a fashion show and Chinese new year celebrations respectively, since 2010.

In line with the unit's approach to impact during the REF assessment period, Roberts has engaged with particular groups of the public based on his research into production processes and resulting production outputs. He was instrumental in setting up and running a film-making club (October 2011 – July 2012) at Fulneck School, Leeds. This ran parallel to his research at Leeds Trinity in production techniques. Though the number of students involved varied, there were frequently around 30 involved. As a consequence, different groups of students were inspired to shoot their own short videos (including their views of the school, fund raising events and an end of year all-day celebration event) and Sixth formers produced a video about the attractions of post-16 study at the school which was used as a marketing tool at an open evening for prospective students and their parents. Roberts utilized his research via teacher and peer-led discussion to inform and shape the production process and how it can be developed.

Roberts further engaged with the public through his involvement in the University of the Third Age (U3A), where he acted as advisor on the 'A Planet in Crisis' project from January to July 2013. U3A is a registered charity that provides educational, creative and leisure opportunities for people no longer in full-time employment. The organisation is based on reciprocal principles of 'the teachers learn and the learners teach'. It is entirely run by volunteers and so welcomes support and research contributions. The 'A Planet in Crisis' project sought to explore the issue of climate change and opinion formation. As part of the project, 64 members of U3A were surveyed on their attitudes to climate change and perceptions of opinion shaping. A further 20 members were then engaged in one-to-one interviews which explored in more depth how attitudes are formed and influenced. Roberts contributed advice regarding the structure of the project, questionnaire and focus group design. In July 2013, the culmination of Phase 1 of the project (which will continue in 2014) Roberts was invited to provide the keynote speech and was the plenary contributor to a one day seminar on climate change and opinion formation hosted at U3A, Cambridge. Roberts' keynote was based on his research into the use of the mass media to shape public opinion (in this case around the issue of 'climate change', with particular reference to how specific production

practices produce specific production results). It was delivered in an accessible way to an interested but non-specialist audience. The seminar was attended by 45 people (audience numbers were limited by the room capacity, many more members applied to attend). The project co-ordinator has received several positive e-mails and is now planning a follow-up event: 'Influence your family and neighbours to forsake consumption and take on sustainability'. Roberts will be involved as media/production mentor (building on the research findings of outputs 1 and 2 above). In particular Roberts' continuing involvement centres on mentoring the project team and engaging with participants to reflect on how the nature of production shapes the product we consume. In addition (to build on the filming of the workshop/seminar) Roberts continues to engage in strategies to involve previously excluded groups.

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

Kenneth Relf, project manager at Trinity Vision

Brian Wallis, Project Director: Attitudes to Climate Change, University of the Third Age

Adrian Chilvers, Head of History and Politics at Fulneck School

<http://www.washburnvalley.org/index.php?p=videos-and-photos> – film for the Oral History Project with Washburn Valley, produced by Trinity Vision.