

Institution: Anglia Ruskin University
Unit of Assessment: UoA 29 English Language and Literature
Title of case study: Storytelling and adaptation: creativity and performance
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Mick Gowar's critical and creative practice has impact on culture and education within the community. His work has had, and continues to have, a significant impact on children's reading and writing, in particular introducing children to the heritage of British folklore through initiatives such as the World Wide Story Web which both preserves and presents cultural heritage. A key impact of his research is the way it has enabled adults and children, including children with special needs, to express themselves through writing and music making, thus having a positive impact on wellbeing, educational achievement and personal development.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Gowar's research expresses itself both through traditional criticism and scholarship and through creative practice. Since taking up his permanent fractional post at Anglia Ruskin in 2006 as a Senior Lecturer in Contextual Studies based in the Cambridge School of Art the main focus of his critical and creative practice has been in the fields of writing and storytelling for (and by) children.</p> <p>A major focus of Gowar's critical work is poetry for children, in particular the poetry of Ted Hughes. His research into the origins of creative writing as a discipline is evidenced in his essay on Ted Hughes's reflections on creative writing aimed at child readers and writers, <i>Poetry in the Making</i>. Another research interest, and one which is also apparent in his impact activities, is the relationship between poetry and the community. This is the subject of his essay on Richard Berengarten and the Cambridge Poetry Festival (2011).</p> <p>Gowar's work as an adapter has had an impact on his critical practice, and he has published a paper reflecting on his experiences of adapting the folk tale 'Yallery Brown', suggesting ways in which his different versions of the narrative might shed light on why and how stories change over time. This paper was originally presented at a colloquium on Literature and Transhistoricism held at Anglia Ruskin in 2010. This research interest in the adaptation of folk literature led to Gowar making a successful bid to bring Jack Zipes, a leading expert on fairy tales, to Anglia Ruskin as a Visiting Leverhulme Professor (2013).</p> <p>It was his expertise in adaptation, both as a researcher and practitioner, that led him to design and implement the Story Web, an initiative for which he secured a grant of £7,500 from the British Academy in 2010. Its patrons are children's author and poet Kevin Crossley-Holland and Jack Zipes. The project exemplifies his commitment to innovative work on the digitization and dissemination of narratives in new, more interactive formats for a range of audiences. This element of his research is also apparent in his co-editorship of <i>Book 2.0</i>, a refereed journal on the future of the book. The journal showcases cutting edge research, much of which is expressly targeted at publishers and other industry professionals.</p> <p>Since 2006, Gowar has either written or edited more than twenty books for children and young adults, including fiction and non-fiction published by major publishers such as Collins, Evans, Franklin Watts and Oxford University Press. This work can be viewed both as creative practice (as research) and as a vehicle for impact. Particular specialisms are writing for reluctant readers and children with special needs, also re-tellings of traditional stories; these include a prose re-telling of <i>Beowulf</i> for young readers (Oxford University Press) and school editions of Bram Stoker's <i>Dracula</i> and Mary Shelley's <i>Frankenstein</i> for Hachette. He has contributed to the Oxford University Press <i>Treetops</i> and <i>Project X</i> reading schemes which are very widely used in UK schools and other English speaking countries.</p>
3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)
Grants and Awards

Impact case study (REF3b)

In 2010 Gowar was awarded a British Academy Small Grant of £7,500 and a CoDE Honorarium of £3000 (internal funding); in 2012 he was instrumental in securing a Visiting Professorship (£47,000) from the Leverhulme Trust for Jack Zipes (for 2013).

1. 'Richard Berengarten and the Cambridge Poetry Festival: a vision of community' in *The Salt Companion to Richard Berengarten*, ed. Norman Jope, Paul Scott Derrick & Catherine E Byfield, Cambridge: Salt Books, 2011.

Salt is a leading publisher of contemporary poetry, and critical discussions of modern poets. This item is included in REF2.

2. 'Within The Seeing and Hearing of Children: The illustrated children's books of Ted Hughes and Leonard Baskin', (with Peter Cook), Vol 1 No 1 *Journal of The Ted Hughes Society*, 2011.

The *Journal of the Ted Hughes Society* is a well-regarded peer reviewed journal. This item is included in REF2.

3. *Beowulf, Grendel & The Dragon*, Oxford University Press, 2010.

OUP is a leading publisher of both academic and educational books. This item can be supplied by the HEI on request.

4. Book 2.0, Vol 1, no 1, Bristol: Intellect Books, February 2012. ISSN: 20428022

<http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/view-Journal.id=198/>

This is a peer-reviewed journal, co-edited by Mick Gowar, which publishes cutting-edge research on a range of issues relating to research and practice in publishing. Copies can be supplied by the HEI upon request.

5. 'Poetry in The Making: Fifty Years Old', Vol 1 No 2 *Journal of The Ted Hughes Society*, 2011.

This item was published by a well-regarded peer reviewed journal and is included in REF2.

6. 'Thou's let oot thy-sel' fro' unner th' sto'an': the narrative environment of Yallery Brown.

Mick Gowar gave this paper at a conference, Literature and Transhistoricism, held at Anglia Ruskin University in 2010. The item can be supplied by the HEI on request.

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

Gowar's work has made a significant impact on children's early experiences of reading and writing. His work is widely read in primary schools, and his popular retellings of traditional stories have introduced new generations of readers and potential storytellers and writers to the rich heritage of British folk tales. His work has been broadcast on BBC 2 schools television (2012). The Story Web has helped preserve, conserve and present the cultural heritage of communities both inside and outside the UK, including minority communities, thus enhancing understanding of different cultures and traditions. Digital technology offers powerful tools to preserve cultures, languages and dialects which are under threat. It offers new media through which stories can be told and shared. What the Story Web offers to children is a modern, digital analogue to traditional oral storytelling through which young people can not only re-tell and share traditional and contemporary stories but also take ownership of digital technology instead of being merely passive users of pre-packaged content.

Impact case study (REF3b)

As well as preserving heritage the Story Web contributes to innovation through the design of new products, and has informed practice by educational practitioners. The most significant recent development is in adjusting the design of the site and preparing support materials to reach out to children with special needs. A series of digital picture books has been prepared for publication, specifically written and illustrated for older teenagers, and these have been very warmly welcomed in piloting by a group of language and literacy coordinators from Suffolk Special Schools.

The project has also helped generate new ways of thinking that influence creative practice, as well as enhance children's personal development. Dr Gowar has worked with pupils and students with special needs, drawing on his research to design creative workshops to help them express themselves both through writing and music-making. This has also led to part-time and voluntary work with *Squeaky Gate*, a Cambridge-based creative arts charity.

Other storytelling projects linked to the Story Web project since 2008 have had a beneficial impact on a range of stakeholders: children, educationalists, representatives from the heritage industry. These have helped generate new approaches to creative practice, create new forms of artistic, literary and spiritual expression, and give fresh stimulus to the local community, contributing to its profile as a destination for tourists.

2011:

- *Making the past present*, panel discussion on the relevance of world classics, epics and oral traditions to schools, museums and cultural organizations.
- *Keywords for Children's Literature*, talk by Prof. Lissa Paul, Brock University, Toronto, and Prof. Philip Nel, State University of Kansas.
- *Imagining The Past*, Creative workshops for children and adults using items from the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology as starting points for creative writing and illustration, jointly led with Chris Draper, Cambridge School of Art.

2012:

- *Faith, Dreams and Signs*, panel discussion on the connections between dreams and the foundations of religious faith.
- *Dispatches from the Literacy Wars*, panel discussion on past and present methods for teaching reading and writing and for assessing competences in literacy, jointly chaired with Prof. Lissa Paul, Brock University, Toronto.
- *Creating Dreamtimes*, Creative workshops for children and adults using items from the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology as well as the writings of Ted Hughes as starting points for creative writing and illustration.

Gowar has also been very heavily involved in music education, both in creative workshops in schools and as a librettist and lyricist. Since 2008, he has taken part in the following projects:

- (i) Digital film-making project jointly led with stage-designer and mask-maker Gwen Taylor, and cellist Sam Glazer, re-telling the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur (2008-9).
- (ii) Joint leader, with composer Simon Gunton, of a creative project with students from Cambridge School of Art to produce original visual work and musical compositions based on the paintings and songs of Syd Barrett, as part of *The City Wakes*, a ten-day celebration of the life and work of Syd Barrett of Pink Floyd (2008)
- (iii) Storytelling and song and drawing workshops based on an exhibition of Sara Fanelli's illustrations for *Pinocchio* for more than 120 children from twelve Cambridgeshire primary schools (2008).

In 2013 Gowar organised and participated in a series of well attended and received talks and 'in conversation' sessions given by Jack Zipes, Visiting Leverhulme Professor, all of which were open to the general public. Some of these events were heavily oversubscribed requiring a larger auditorium to be booked.

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

Impact case study (REF3b)

1. This link evidences Mick Gowar's extensive contributions to Oxford University Press's Oxford Reading Tree series.

https://global.oup.com/education/searchresults?search_input=gowar®ion=uk

2. This is the link to the World Wide Story Web.

http://www.mickgowarcsa.org.uk/World_Wide_Story_Web/World_Wide_Story_Web.html

3. Details of the Cambridge Festival of Ideas event 'Making the Past Present' can be found on p. 6 of this PDF.

<http://www.cam.ac.uk/sites/www.cam.ac.uk/files/foi2011.pdf>

4. This link is a reference to the Faith, Dreams and Signs event for the Cambridge Festival of Ideas.

<http://www.cambridgeshire.net/event/faith-dreams-and-signs-/80287.aspx>

5. A reference to 'Dispatches from the Literacy Wars'

http://www.wereallneighbours.co.uk/cambridge_events/event.php?id=107260

6. A report on the workshops based on Sara Fanelli's Pinocchio illustrations.

http://www.anglia.ac.uk/ruskin/en/home/faculties/alss/deps/csoa/news/2007-8_news_archive/the_ruskin_gallery.html

7. The poem 'Aquarium' on BBC Learning Zone

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/clips/mick-gowar-aquarium-poem-only/6471.html> and BBC Schools 'English Express' <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p011mvdv>

8. Video of reading of *Yallery Brown* on Youtube

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zb1_K4HJcDQ

9. Statement by former Deputy Head of St Paul's CE Primary School, Cambridge.

10. Statement by former Commissioning Editor at Oxford University Press.