

<p>Institution: Queen’s University Belfast</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 29 - English Language and Literature</p>
<p>Title of case study: Shakespeare through Film: Empowering the ESC</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>This study focuses on research which has been of benefit to the Educational Shakespeare Company (ESC) and to its various users, both local and international. The ESC is a Belfast charity (XR40787) that deploys drama and film in therapeutic applications with socially excluded groups (prisoners, those on probation, the homeless and youth at risk). In 2006, the ESC produced <i>Mickey B</i>, a film adaptation of <i>Macbeth</i> made in Maghaberry, Northern Ireland’s maximum security prison, with a cross-community group of life-prisoners. Research by Burnett and Wray – on <i>Mickey B</i>, the ESC’s work more broadly, and the place of independent local filmmaking inside Shakespearean cinema – has had these impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an increased awareness of the film and the ESC’s work • improved civil society understanding of Northern Ireland’s histories and the current peace process • increase in sales and revenue for the ESC • pedagogical tools and the development of educational practices • the establishment of work-placement opportunities for Queen’s students • the identification of social ideas and cultural values that have positively affected individuals • developed links with global film-makers and Shakespeare organizations
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>2.1 Research on Shakespeare and Irish film. Broad-based research by Burnett and Wray (Professor and Reader at QUB) from 2006 onwards has identified Shakespeare on film as an important vehicle for the transmission of cultural value and the promotion of public dialogue. This research has had a significant reception: Burnett’s <i>Filming Shakespeare in the Global Marketplace</i> (Palgrave, 2007) was reissued in paperback in 2012 and has been widely cited as a salutary discussion of the ways in which local cinema is communicative precisely because of its absorption in historical particularity. Emerging from these initiatives is a concentration on Irish film, in particular, as politically suggestive and cultural distinctive. For example, Wray’s discussion of the ESC – and its film, <i>Mickey B</i> – makes a case for the significance of place and demonstrates how the company’s use of Shakespeare in therapeutic drama and film marks a rejection of the universal values usually associated with ‘prison Shakespeare’. In its mixture of Shakespearean quotation and modern vernacular, <i>Mickey B</i>, Wray demonstrates, mediates local prison histories and points up the difficulties involved in the movement toward political resolution. <i>Macbeth</i>, so translated, is a play that prompts reconsideration of current political sticking-points and brings into circulation questions about guilt and memory that plague the peace process. Crucially, Wray’s work successfully argues that <i>Mickey B</i> invites us to think anew about Shakespeare, his local utility and the reparative cultural work his plays are still enlisted to perform.</p> <p>2.2 Research on international film-making trajectories. More generally, research by Burnett and Wray has suggested that cinema has an important role to play within <i>international</i> understandings of Northern Ireland and the complexities of the current peace process. Burnett is interested in the work of the ESC as part of a global trajectory of independent, but largely ignored, Shakespearean film-making. A series of journal articles, and <i>Shakespeare and World Cinema</i> (CUP, 2013), argue that, rather than attend to the cinema of Kenneth Branagh and his US counterparts, a more profitable and ethically responsible approach is to take note of the plethora of Shakespeare films that lie outside these axes. Shakespeare films have been produced in, among other countries, Brazil, France, Germany, India, Malaysia, Sweden, Tibet and Venezuela. Burnett’s</p>

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research suggests that, in their scope and inventiveness, these works constitute a wealth of filmic adaptations with intrinsic value that raise important questions about current inequities of space and place, issues of cultural translation, notions of the Shakespearean universal and the place of the regional in discussions of filmic practice. *Shakespeare and World Cinema*, in particular, both increases knowledge and offer a new understanding of Shakespeare and his relevance, one which allows for interrogation of the channels through which we have access to production, inscribes a more representative canon and insists upon a re-engagement with plurality. Enfolding a film such as *Mickey B* inside these global paradigms permits a renewed attention to local-global relations and the role and reach of independent cinema production.

2.3 Burnett's *Shakespeare and World Cinema* was selected by the AHRC to feature in its 2011 survey on interactions between arts and humanities academics and broader society. Research for the survey was conducted by the Centre for Business Research, University of Cambridge.

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

3.1

Books:

Burnett, Mark Thornton, *Shakespeare and World Cinema* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). Listed in REF2.

Burnett, Mark Thornton, *Filming Shakespeare in the Global Marketplace* (Basingstoke and London: Palgrave, 2007). Listed in RAE2. Reissued in paperback with a new preface in 2012

Burnett, Mark Thornton, and Ramona Wray, eds, *Screening Shakespeare in the Twenty-First Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006). Listed in RAE2.

3.2

Articles/Chapters:

Burnett, Mark Thornton, 'Screen Shakespeares: Knowledge and Practice', *Critical Quarterly*, 52.4 (2010), pp. 48-62

Wray, Ramona, 'The Morals of *Macbeth* and Peace as Process: Adapting Shakespeare in Northern Ireland's Maximum Security Prison', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 62.3 (2011), pp. 340-363. Listed in REF2

Wray, Ramona, 'Shakespeare on Film, 1990-2010', in Mark Thornton Burnett, Adrian Streete and Ramona Wray, eds, *The Edinburgh Companion to Shakespeare and the Arts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), pp. 502-521.

3.3

Research Grants:

- (1): Mark Thornton Burnett, 'Filming Shakespeare in the Global Marketplace', Arts and Humanities Research Council, Award Holder, AHRB Research Leave Scheme, 2005-06 (£14,013)
- (2): Mark Thornton Burnett, 'Transnational Shakespeare on Film', Arts and Humanities Research Leave Scheme, 2009-2010 (£30,850)
- (3): Mark Thornton Burnett, 'Shakespeare and World Cinema', Short-Term Fellowship, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC, 2010-2011 (\$2,500)
- (4): Mark Thornton Burnett, NEH Institute on 'From the Globe to the Global: Shakespearean Relocations', National Endowment for the Humanities, Folger Institute Centre for Shakespeare Studies, 11-15 July 2011 (\$750)

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

4.1 Inside Northern Ireland

Inside Northern Ireland, Burnett (first as Board Member of the ESC and then as Friend) and Wray have been active in exciting local discussion of the issues raised by *Mickey B* through their research and contributions to showings of the film at HMP Maghaberry (2007), festival venues (2010) and community events (2012). Some of these showings were attended by prisoners and

their families, and all of them included discussion about memory, reconciliation and the prison system itself. Feedback on these activities – ‘the showing made me think about prisoners and the issues around rehabilitation more positively’ wrote one attendee – shows that screenings have been opportunities for self-reflection.

4.2 There have been economic benefits accruing from the popularization of the film and the company. An increase in sales of the DVD means that income is ploughed back into the company, into charitable work and into continuing Shakespearean projects with individual and communal benefit. Useful here have been Burnett’s links with filmmakers interviewed for the *Shakespeare and World Cinema* book. For example, using his research as a vehicle for collaborative understanding, Burnett arranged for Mark Tan, the Malaysian filmmaker, and Andibachtiar Yusuf, the Indonesian filmmaker, to visit Belfast in 2010 and 2012 for showings of their film adaptations of *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet* (*Jarum Halus* and *Romeo Juliet*) and to forge contacts with local filmmakers, including those at the ESC. Such international connections have helped secure funding for the ESC’s new film project, *Prospero’s Prison*, an adaptation of *The Tempest*. Showcasing a cross-community cast, the film prioritizes the social and political value of reinterpreting Shakespeare, stressing, as it does, a local drama of forgiveness. Funding thus far includes the Probation Board of NI (2010-11, £10,000), the Seedbed Foundation (2010, £5000), Gems / Kestrel (2010, £6900) and Newtownabbey Borough Council (2011, £1800).

4.3 International:

The research conducted has ensured that *Mickey B* (which did not have an official distributor) has come to the attention of international Shakespeare conferences and, subsequently, enjoyed an international circulation. Actively using the conclusions of his and Wray’s research, Burnett collaborated on successful applications to show the film at multiple venues including the Shakespeare Association of America meeting (Chicago, 2010) and the British Shakespeare Association meeting (Lancaster, 2012). Each showing featured a workshop chaired by Burnett/Wray and involved an audience of between 100 and 150 students, teachers, academics and creative practitioners. The international impact of these conference screenings has been considerable and has meant that *Mickey B* has had a subsequent audience beyond the merely academic. For example, in the wake of the 2010 Chicago event, funding was secured for showings of the film at a range of institutional, festival and community settings, including Michigan State University (2010), Jerusalem (2010), Seoul (2010), Guelph (2011), Florida (2011), Notre Dame (2103) and several British universities (2011). Conference showings, that is, proved a stimulus to the film’s reception in wider, non-academic sectors.

4.4 Following on from these screenings, *Mickey B* was released in 2012 in a DVD package, which is sold internationally, with French, German and Portuguese subtitles. A concomitant development has seen the film placed on courses at the universities of Exeter, London and Marymount, allowing for fresh reflection on questions related to Shakespearean representation and Northern Ireland. The visibility of the film has been enhanced by its being featured in the online *Forum* of the journal, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, to which academics and creative practitioners, including the film’s director, have contributed, thereby reinforcing its significance in generating public discussion. A research engagement with the ESC, then, is enabling the film to flourish and Northern Ireland’s most disadvantaged constituency to be better understood in the international discourses of civil society.

4.5 Pedagogy: local and international

A product of the research impact is the establishment of a permanent internship opportunity for a QUB MA student to work with the ESC. The first internship, which has been awarded to AHRC-funded MA student, Romano Mullin, commenced in January 2013.

4.6 Pedagogical engagements with school children have been facilitated via an education pack centred on *Mickey B* produced by the ESC in collaboration with Burnett in 2011: repackaging his research, and funded via the Arts Council, this accessible output is designed to engage young people in creative learning through the contemporary context of prison culture. Burnett appears in

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interview in the package, was involved in writing and devised marketing strategies. Educational materials include a script, storylines and sessions detailing practice-based workshops, and encourage students to design their own versions of Shakespeare's classic story. The package meets the requirements of a number of curricula, including drama, English and media studies, and the feedback that the ESC has received from users is highly positive.

4.7 The need to develop alternative pedagogies around less familiar Shakespeare films was recognized in the in the US when Burnett was invited to teach on the National Endowment for the Humanities funded 2011 summer institute for college and university teachers at the Folger Institute, 'From the Globe to the Global: Shakespearean Dislocations', which formed part of an annual US educational and outreach programme. The programme has a public platform (part of the Institute's 'Primary Sourcebooks for the College Classroom') in the form of a website with accompanying video commentaries. Programmes such as the Folger summer institute are indicators of impact in that they combine research-led teaching with a significant knowledge transfer imperative. This competitive initiative attracted twenty college teachers of English who pursued a variety of approaches to the topic over a six-week period.

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

1. 'Shakespeare: From the Globe to the Global': http://www.folger.edu/folger_institute/globe/
2. Interview with *Mickey B* Director: <http://titania.folger.edu/blogs/sq/forum/?p=399#comment-70>
3. Arts and Humanities Research Council website: <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk>
4. Educational Shakespeare Company website: <http://www.esc-film.com>
5. Shakespeare Association of America website: <http://www.shakespeareassociation.org>

Individuals:

6. Director of the Educational Shakespeare Company: ESC NI.
7. Senior Promo Artist, Rocksteady Studios:
8. Independent Film Director and Producer