

Institution: University of Winchester		
Unit of Assessment: D33 Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies		
Title of case study: Fallout: Portraits of Nuclear Children		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: January 2005 - December 2019		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Gordon Murray	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Senior Lecturer in Drama	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 2000-present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: Jan 2013- July 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Gordon Murray's work on the theatricalisation of testimony has impacted on three institutions representing those affected by exposure to nuclear bomb blasts between 1952 and 1958. In doing so it has aided the formation of a wider 'nuclear community'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The British Nuclear Test Veterans Association (BNTVA), that had lost all claims for compensation and recognition from the Ministry of Defence (MOD), altered their campaign strategy by using testimony as artistic practice and achieved significant funding. • The Nuclear Community Charity Fund (NCCF) rearranged their project portfolio in response to Murray's research into theatricalisation and digitisation of testimony, as well as expanding its community reach. • The <i>Fallout</i> community of nuclear children (descendants) has become established, catalysed by Murray's work from 2015. 		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Personal testimony is a useful tool for campaigning organisations, but the benefits are limited. This case study describes a research project that utilises theatre techniques with a campaigning charity, and then evolves these techniques to increase audience/community reach and engagement.</p> <p>Between 1952-1958, the British Government tested nuclear bombs at various locations. Conscripted personnel worked at the sites and witnessed the bomb blasts. Men flew through the mushroom clouds after detonation or swam unprotected into the sea fishing out radioactive materials and handing them to scientists who were wearing lead-protected aprons. The chilling intergenerational legacy of these events is a narrative of terrifying apocalyptic traumas, sudden deaths, slow pedestrian declines, cancers, skeleto-muscular disintegration, dreadful birth defects, paranoia, conspiracy theories, and chronic pain, all undercut with a strange intangible relationship with change that may or may not be taking place in the body at chromosomal level.</p> <p>BNTVA struggled for many years for recognition and compensation from the MOD, losing their final appeal in 2012. They lobbied government and tried to persuade journalists to listen, but there were several difficulties: most veterans had signed the Official Secrets Act; the MOD refused to accept any causal link between the veterans' radiation exposure and their subsequent ill health; the medical profession was largely ignorant of the tests and their legacy of physical and emotional disease; there was no register of sufferers among the descendants of the veterans.</p> <p>Community theatre practices often include personal stories that can be performed live to an audience. An extension of this practice is verbatim theatre in which testimony is performed by actors. Murray worked with the BNTVA in 2005 to look at ways in which verbatim theatre could</p>		

overcome the limitations of their campaign methods. He discovered that speaking to actors rather than journalists alleviated worries around contravening the Official Secrets Act, and that maintaining the power and authenticity of the original testimony whilst widening audience reach and journalistic interest was of paramount importance. Murray introduced a methodology in which actors interviewed veterans, allowing intricate details to be related in confidence, passionately and emotionally. The testimonies were performed back to veteran communities, allowing further stories to emerge and leading to nuanced representations of the veterans' experiences. The play *Half a Life*, presented at Leeds Festival for Peace in 2006, was created using this methodology.

The research demonstrated that the live event was valuable for presenting testimony in an authentic and powerful way and could pique journalist interest, but it also illustrated the limited reach of live events for a campaigning organisation. The next iteration of the research (2016-2019) sought methods that transformed theatricalised testimony into digital form. A truly new form emerged utilising theatre, documentary, musical composition, aurality and polyphonic discourse. Murray's continuing research into new artistic forms which maintain the authenticity of the original voice but can be disseminated beyond the live performance event resulted in *Fallout: Portraits of Nuclear Children*.

This new artistic documentary form influenced the structure and outreach methods of NCCF. It also uncovered and articulated a previously hidden sense of unease felt by many in this community, particularly the descendants of nuclear veterans. This unease comes from the knowledge that unverifiable changes and mutations may be taking place at chromosomal level in the body.

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

- 3.1** Murray, G. (2018) *Fallout: Portraits of Nuclear Children* [CD] Available at British Nuclear Community Audio Library <https://nucleartest.online/audio-galleries/> (CD versions can be supplied on request).
- 3.2** Murray, G. (2020) 'After the Fallout' *Archive on 4*. BBC Radio 4: 14 March 2020. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000gdtx>
- 3.3** Murray, G. (2018) Where do you put the bomb? *Unlikely Journal of Creative Arts* 5. <http://unlikely.net.au/issue-05/where-do-you-put-the-bomb>
- 3.4.** Murray, G. (2018) 'Nuclear': Creative Arts Exposing Humanitarian Impacts of the Atomic Bomb. Powerhouse-Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. *Society for Social Studies of Science Conference* Sydney International Convention Centre, Australia. 29 August 2018. (contributor to exhibition and joint winner of the Making and Doing award). https://stsinfrastructures.org/sites/default/files/artifacts/media/pdf/4s18_print_program_180812.pdf
- 3.5** Murray, G. (2018) 'Fallout'. Conference Presentation. *Society for Social Studies of Science Conference*. Sydney International Convention Centre. 29 August – 1 September 2018.
- 3.6** Murray, G (2019) 'Speak with a listening voice'. *Listening Across: TAPRA Sound, Voice, Music Working Group*. Exeter University, September 2019.

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

1. On the British Nuclear Test Veterans Association (BNTVA). From August 2013

Having previously failed to persuade the MOD to recognise the case for compensation, the BNTVA changed its campaigning strategy as a direct result of this extended research project.

The interest and publicity that resulted from the research outcomes gave rise to an understanding that the 'deep' gathering and theatrical mediation of testimony could be central to the BNTVA's campaign moving forward. They began to widen their campaigning methods to include art and film as well as theatre. A senior representative of BNTVA commented that Murray's research 'gave us access to a context and an interest outside our usual sphere. The depth and emotion transmitted through the theatrical form drew in audiences and journalists who engaged and empathized far greater than any had done to the traditional dry soundbite so easily lost in a daily news report'

(5.1). They added that there is a clear line between Murray's research practice and the subsequent campaign successes: *'The success of these new modes of using personal testimony of nuclear veterans as part of our campaign delivery was clearly proven when in November 2014 Prime Minister, David Cameron, gave official recognition to the service of our British Nuclear Test Veterans. Following from this the Chancellor, George Osborne, announced the provision of an initial £25 million to create the 'Aged Veterans Fund' (5.1).* Osborne mentioned the Nuclear Veterans and the campaign of the BNTVA in his 2015 budget speech (5.2).

The money enabled the establishment of the NCCF.

2. On the Nuclear Communities Charity Fund (NCCF). From March 2016

The NCCF was set up to allocate a portion of the £25 million 'Aged Veterans Fund'. Murray's collection, curation, and theatricalisation of testimony expanded to include voices of the families and descendants of veterans. As a direct result, the NCCF reaches and engages the nuclear community including and beyond the BNTVA. Murray's later work on digitalised theatricalisation of testimony helped achieve this. A senior representative of the NCCF states that *'This work and its development into digital and audio use and its expansion into the experiences of the descendants of nuclear veterans had a significant impact on the way that the NCCF strategised its portfolio' (5.3).*

The NCCF funded eight projects, four of which utilise Murray's research outputs: (i) The virtual museum is an online resource being developed to allow access to recorded testimonies, the first addition being *The Gordon Murray Collection*. (ii) The Remembrance Project funds the upkeep of memorials and military arboretums where QR codes will allow access to the Virtual Museum. Researchers on (iii) The Nuclear Family Project benefitted from access to the numerous transcribed interviews that various iterations of the research had yielded over time. The NCCF also set up (iv) the Centre for Health Effects of Radiological and Chemical Agents. The NCCF senior representative states that *'The most recent iteration of Gordon's research has managed to make apparent a level of anxiety felt by the descendants which hitherto they were unable to express or articulate. This has proved incredibly beneficial by allowing the researchers an introduction into the feelings and the concerns of those who have this condition. This has been particularly pertinent to researchers who are involved in the 'Living with Worry' research project' (5.3).*

3. On the Nuclear Descendants. From August 2015

The descendants of nuclear veterans felt themselves to be effaced as part of the 'nuclear story.' During the years that Murray has been working with this community, membership of the group has increased from 20 to over 800. Murray's work was a catalyst to the creating, enlarging, developing and strengthening of this community. The interviews ran parallel with the development (through a closed Facebook group) of a community made up of descendants. As the finished pieces emerged between 2016 and 2019, they were keenly anticipated, shared and discussed. A senior representative of the group has stated that *'it soon became evident that he was beginning to articulate a feeling that all of the Fallout members had but were unable to express. I really believe that his emerging work was a significant influence on the growth of our online community' (5.4).* The audio documentary poems fitted perfectly with this newly forming (virtual) community's method of communicating, attracting members who had not previously considered themselves to be 'nuclear children'. They articulated, gave credence to and validated feelings and experiences which hitherto had been side-lined and yet were evidently shared amongst these individuals. Comments from members of the Fallout Community include: *'What an amazing piece, literally had me in tears last night. The style of these works is so dystopian that they resonate to that metallic tang that is so often unwritten in our nuclear community'; 'the piece was brilliant, I listened to it 4 times'; 'it was very touching the way you dealt with it. I'm glad you got to do these audio records of us G, You're a man of integrity and that is a rare thing these days'; 'absolutely amazing, very dramatic and brought a smile to my face and a tear in my eye; [it] made me wish I could get back on the stage but unfortunately even though surgery went well I don't think I will ever be able to dance again'; 'Absolutely blown away (forgive the pun); It's a very surreal feeling to hear stuff that has never had an outlet for the last fifty or so years, mine and my dad's story rolling around in my head all those years, very powerful juju. Thank you' (5.5).*

Murray's work enabled the recognition that descendants are a part of the nuclear community. As a result, they were given access to the funding from the Aged Veteran Fund (delivered through the NCCF) to assist with health and wellbeing.

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

5.1 Senior representative of BNTVA. Letter of endorsement for ICS.

5.2 HC Deb (2015) Budget Speech. Available at <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2015-03-18/debates/1503184000001/FinancialStatement?highlight=budget#contribution-15031840000171>

5.3 Senior representative of NCCF. Letter of endorsement for ICS.

5.4 Senior representative of Fallout Descendants Group. Letter of endorsement for ICS.

5.5 Comments by nuclear community members collated from Social Media and private correspondence.