

<b>Institution: King's College London</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 29 English Language and Literature</b>
<b>Title of case study: From page to stage: editing two Shakespeare plays for use in the theatre.</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Academics at King's have long been involved in the editing of Shakespeare. Their editions have benefited school students and teachers, general readers, and theatre practitioners. Here we describe the impact which two King's-edited plays have had on theatrical performances and cultural life. Both were published in the Arden Shakespeare series, the general editorship of which has been located at King's for nearly 30 years. <i>Hamlet</i> and <i>King Henry the Eighth</i>, edited by Ann <b>Thompson</b> (co-editor, with Neil Taylor) and Gordon <b>McMullan</b> respectively, were used in major theatrical productions by the RSC in 2009 and Shakespeare's Globe in 2010. Impact is demonstrable in sales figures, directors' statements, viewing figures, and in related media appearances by <b>Thompson</b> and <b>McMullan</b>.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>King's English Department has longstanding strengths in textual editing, especially in the editing of Shakespeare. Ann <b>Thompson</b> (appointed Professor in 1999) is one of the four General Editors of the Arden Shakespeare third series. Gordon <b>McMullan</b> (appointed Lecturer in 1995, Professor in 2007) is one of two General Textual Editors of the forthcoming third edition of the Norton Shakespeare; he is also a General Editor of the Arden Early Modern Drama series. Their aims as editors are twofold: first, to produce widely-useable high-quality texts that will introduce the non-specialist to the latest research findings; and second, to have a direct influence on the way theatre professionals research, rehearse and prepare for performance. An immense amount of research and knowledge goes into the production of these editions. <b>Thompson's</b> scholarship on Shakespeare stretches over four decades and includes two co-edited collections, <i>Reading Shakespeare's Dramatic Language</i> (2001; <b>3.3</b>), and, with <b>McMullan</b>, <i>In Arden: Editing Shakespeare</i> (2003; <b>3.4</b>); and a series of essays and chapters, including, e.g., 'Feminist Theory and the Editing of Shakespeare' (2001; <b>3.5</b>). <b>McMullan</b> is creator and subsequent general editor of Arden Early Modern Drama, and author of a series of essays in collections, e.g. "'Thou hast made me now a man": reforming man(ner)liness in <i>Henry VIII</i>' (1999; <b>3.6</b>).</p> <p>In this case study, we focus on the impact of two editions of Shakespeare plays edited by <b>Thompson</b> and <b>McMullan</b> for the Arden Shakespeare series: <b>Thompson's</b> <i>Hamlet</i> (co-edited with Neil Taylor) (2006; <b>3.2</b>) and <b>McMullan's</b> <i>King Henry the Eighth or All is True</i> (2000; <b>3.1</b>). <b>Thompson's</b> <i>Hamlet</i> was significant because it was the first to present all three early versions of <i>Hamlet</i> including the First Quarto. Although the First Quarto has previously been dismissed as 'bad' (that is, inferior both as a printed text and as a literary entity), it is emerging from the shadow of the vastly better-known Second Quarto and Folio texts: its placing of 'To be or not to be' earlier in the text than in subsequent versions has become increasingly popular with directors, and it is sometimes seen as an independent early version of the play with genuine, off-beat authority. <b>Thompson's</b> decision to present all three of the early authoritative texts of the play draws on the claim that each early version of a Shakespeare play should be treated as independently valid and that the Second Quarto of <i>Hamlet</i> represents the play at a different stage of evolution from that found in both the First Quarto and the First Folio. The Arden edition provides all three texts in fully annotated form, enabling all with a serious interest in <i>Hamlet</i> – directors, students and general readers – to examine the choices made by previous editors and reconsider neglected variants.</p> <p><b>McMullan's</b> edition of <i>King Henry the Eighth</i> was the first to treat as a given the attribution of the play to John Fletcher as well as to Shakespeare. It thus focuses critical and textual attention not solely on the question of authorship but on the play's literary and dramatic qualities and its place in Jacobean culture and in the sectarian politics of its day. It was unusual in choosing to begin with the performance history and then move to critical and textual history, not vice versa, reasserting</p>

## Impact case study (REF3b)

the historical development of Shakespeare's drama out of theatre into print. **McMullan's** editing of the Arden *Henry VIII* led to his role as informal textual advisor to the director of the 1995 RSC production: this occurred while the process of editing was ongoing, tangibly affecting the edition as well as the production, and exemplifying the mutual benefits of knowledge exchange between an academic and theatre practitioners. This made **McMullan** the natural choice as scholarly consultant for the Globe when they mounted a production of the play based on his Arden edition in 2010.

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

- 3.1 William Shakespeare and John Fletcher, *Henry VIII (All Is True)*, ed. Gordon **McMullan**, 'The Arden Shakespeare' (London: Thomson Learning, 2000), pp. 506; widely reviewed (e.g. *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in English*: 'The best *Henry VIII* available, the Arden 3 edited by Gordon **McMullan**, is simply formidable, the one thing to own for serious study').
- 3.2 William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. Ann **Thompson** and Neil Taylor, 'The Arden Shakespeare' (London: Thomson Learning, 2006), pp. 613, and *Hamlet: The Texts of 1603 and 1623*, ed. Ann **Thompson** and Neil Taylor, 'The Arden Shakespeare' (London: Thomson Learning, 2006), pp. 368 widely reviewed (e.g. *Shakespeare Survey*: 'An extraordinary achievement and milestone in the recent history of version-based editing').
- 3.3 Ann **Thompson**, Sylvia Adamson, Lynette Hunter, Lynne Magnusson and Katie Wales (eds.), *Reading Shakespeare's Dramatic Language* (London: Arden, 2001).
- 3.4 Ann **Thompson** and Gordon **McMullan** (eds.), *In Arden: Editing Shakespeare. Essays in Honour of Richard Proudfoot* (London: Arden, 2003).
- 3.5 Ann **Thompson**, 'Feminist theory and the editing of Shakespeare', in Kate Chedgzoy (ed.), *Shakespeare, Feminism and Gender* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), pp. 46-69
- 3.6 Gordon **McMullan**, "'Thou hast made me now a man": reforming man(ner)liness in *Henry VIII*,' in Jennifer Richards and James Knowles (eds), *Shakespeare's Late Plays: New Readings* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 40-56.

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

The Arden Shakespeare is probably the most respected edition of Shakespeare's works in the world. Its most popular titles, including **Thompson's** *Hamlet*, sell around 10,000 copies a year (5.3). Importantly, the series also ensures that quality editions of less well-known plays are also available: the annual sales of **McMullan's** *King Henry VIII* are around 300. Arden editions are often used as school texts. According to the Chief Examiner for A-level English Literature, Arden Shakespeare editions are the preferred texts for teaching 6<sup>th</sup> formers: 'I want to see candidates who have developed their own ideas, based on the freedom to explore that a scholarly edition can give them. With the interpretative freedom it offers, plus the contextual insights given in the introduction, the Arden approach has to be the right one' (5.1). Given their role as editors, **Thompson** and **McMullan** regularly lecture to school pupils and teachers on Shakespeare's plays. A good example is a lecture on *Hamlet* given by **Thompson** to an audience of A-level students at an Arden/Edexcel Shakespeare day in 2010.

These high-profile editions help to present and re-interpret Shakespeare's works for wide audiences, including but extending far beyond school class rooms. They thus participate in sustaining an important part of Britain's cultural capital, while also keeping Shakespeare's works alive, as living texts, open to new and sometimes controversial interpretations. Both **Thompson's** and **McMullan's** editions have had an impact on the interpretation of Shakespeare by challenging common assumptions and cultural values surrounding this iconic writer. **Thompson's** *Hamlet* disaggregated the versions of the play, offered a fresh account of its evolution in performance, and encouraged a new freedom in relation to its interpretation. **McMullan's** edition presented

## Impact case study (REF3b)

Shakespeare as a playwright equally at home working collaboratively and as a solitary writer, thus extending the ongoing critique of Romantic distortions of the creation of the Shakespearean text.

**Thompson** and **McMullan**'s editorial work has had particular impact on theatrical productions. Arden texts are frequently used in staging plays. A prominent Shakespearean actor affirms that the edition is valued for 'its balance of opinion, analytical detail and practicality' (5.2). In this current REF period, these editions have been used for high-profile productions and **Thompson** and **McMullan** have testimony from the directors of these productions affirming the influence of their research on the way they understand, rehearse and present Shakespearean texts.

**Thompson**'s *Hamlet* was the main source of textual information for the 2008-09 RSC production starring David Tennant (5.4). The Director drew substantially on **Thompson**'s edition, discussing his new 'conflation' of the play with her, as the key historian of its different versions. The Director has said of this production: 'We had Ann **Thompson** and Neil Taylor's latest Arden edition in rehearsals with us and constantly referred to it to provoke and challenge us: an invaluable resource'. The reach and impact of this production was considerable. The RSC sold 63,000 tickets to this production of *Hamlet* (5.9). It was broadcast 3 times by the BBC (including a much discussed Boxing Day screening) and watched by 1,148,000 viewers (5.8). It was screened by PBS in the US in 2009 and 2010 and was issued on DVD and blue-ray on 3 continents. The RSC reports that, between 2009 and 2010, 50,000 copies were sold worldwide (5.9).

The fully annotated Arden text has also enabled productions of the 'bad' First Quarto, notably by the Zimbabwean 'Two Gents' company's *Kupenga Kwa Hamlet* which toured to London in 2010 (5.7), and by Shakespeare's Globe Theatre for a touring production in 2011-12. According to the director of the *Kupenga Kwa Hamlet*: 'Ann **Thompson**'s three text edition of *Hamlet* was an invaluable resource for my work on the Q1 text - indeed it was instrumental in giving rise to the idea of us staging *Hamlet* in the first place. I was aware of the Q1 text from my university days but had only read excerpts - when it was pointed out to me (by Sonia Massai in a post-show discussion to our production of *Two Gentlemen of Verona*), however, that some of the strategies my company, Two Gents Productions, employs in performance were comparable to the textual strategies apparent in the Q1 text - my curiosity was piqued. Reading Ann **Thompson**'s introduction to her edition of the Q1 and Folio texts made me appreciate the Q1 text as a legitimate and independent version of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. It made me realise that a production of *Hamlet* based on Q1 would allow a closer, fresher communion with the impulses of those actors that were first to perform *Hamlet* at the time Shakespeare was actually writing it. The achingly brief list of productions based on Q1 also made me realise that perhaps I had stumbled on a gap in the *Hamlet* legacy. Where I had previously been doubtful of approaching this canonical text with my young two-man acting company, the insights, context and commentary provided by Ann **Thompson**'s edition actually reassured me that a professional production based on Q1 would inadvertently be treading new ground, would appeal to audiences over-saturated with Q2 and F readings of *Hamlet* and would tie into the newest trends in *Hamlet* scholarship.'

**McMullan** was advisory scholar for the 2010 Globe production of *Henry VIII*, writing the programme notes, working closely with the director on cutting the text for performance, and discussing the play's meanings and contexts with director and cast. He provided particular insight into how Shakespeare's acting company, the King's Men, might have managed the theatrical performance of 'truth' (a key, if highly ambiguous, concept in the play); Shakespeare's difficult balancing act in representing the process of Reformation; and his practice of collaborative authorship (5.5). According to the Director: 'Working with Gordon **McMullan** on my 2010 production of *Henry VIII* at Shakespeare's Globe was a key collaborative relationship for me. My brief from the Globe was quite specific - to produce the play at the Globe for the first time since its Elizabethan premiere, and in so doing, I was expected to stick with the original (rather than reinvent), respect the text (rather than radically reshape it), present it in Tudor dress (rather than transpose), and use Tudor music (rather than hip hop!). Circumstances meant I also had little time to prepare the text which meant Gordon and his Arden edition were indispensable resources when it came to placing the play within its rich and complex history and its long performance history (especially given his direct experiences with the RSC's production). He alerted me to the play's

## Impact case study (REF3b)

various political agendas and, perhaps most vitally of all, gave me essential dramaturgical support in creating the rehearsal text from his Arden text of the play. He also attended rehearsals and spoke brilliantly to the company about specific areas of research. Gordon's impact on the production was fundamental'. **McMullan** also gave media interviews related to the production; was keynote speaker at a public study day on *Henry VIII* at Globe Education, May 2010; and spoke about the play on 'Front Row', BBC Radio 4, 24 May 2010 (5.6). This in turn led to an interview on BBC1 Television's *The One Show* (average viewership 4.4 million) and to his roles as a judge for the BBC's 'Off by Heart' Schools Shakespeare Competition, (November 2011; 400,000 viewers; 5.8) and as a 'talking head' for the third episode, 'Legacy' (389,000 viewers; 5.8), of *The King and the Playwright: A Jacobean History*, a BBC4 three-part series by James Shapiro, April-May 2012 (5.10).

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

5.1 Statement: Examiner Edexcel and Head of English, Alton Convent School (on impact in education).

5.2 Use in theatre (Simon Russell Beale):

<http://www.exacteditions.com/browse/478/1308/29621/3/11>

5.3 Sales figures for the Arden *Hamlet* stand at around ten thousand copies per year since 2006 (source, Arden/Bloomsbury), the approximate figure for the most canonical texts in the series.

5.4 Statement: Artistic Director, Royal Shakespeare Company on influence of Arden *Hamlet* on the 2009 production.

5.5 Statement: the director of Shakespeare's Globe 2010 production of *Henry VIII* on influence of Arden *Henry VIII*.

5.6 To listen to **McMullan** (cited as 'editor of the Arden edition') talking about *Henry VIII* with the director of the Globe production on BBC Radio 4's 'Front Row' (24 May 2010), go to <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00sfv62>

5.7 Statement from Director of 'Two Gents' company's *Kupenga Kwa Hamlet* on influence of Ann **Thompson**'s text on his production.

5.8 BBC viewing figures were supplied by BARB (Broadcasters Audience Research Board). Boxing Day *Hamlet*. <http://www.theguardian.com/media/2009/dec/29/hamlet-david-tennant-ratings>

5.9 RSC production information was supplied by the RSC.

5.10 'The King and the Playwright', see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00qhsr5>