

Institution: University of Warwick
Unit of Assessment: 29 English Language and Literature
Title of case study: Shakespeare in Performance: informing theatrical productions and promoting British cultural engagement
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Performance brings Shakespeare alive and each performance reveals new contexts for, and meanings to his plays. Research on Shakespeare in Performance is a core departmental activity that encompasses complementary themes and leads to impacts across a wide range of strands and fields. Warwick's Shakespeare scholars have explored the relationship between text and performance to bring a new understanding of Shakespeare to professional theatre companies and a renewed enjoyment to public audiences. In particular, their research has impacted on theatre productions, exhibitions, and public understanding through screenings, workshops, talks, young people's theatre and schools.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Warwick's English Department is a leading centre for research into Shakespeare in Performance, exploring the ways in which Shakespeare is adapted and interpreted for the stage and how such representations refract and reflect social and cultural values. The research underpinning the impacts has been conducted by Professor Jonathan Bate (2003-2011), Professor Tony Howard (1973-present), Dr Paul Prescott (2005-present), Dr Stephen Purcell (2011-present), and Professor Carol Chillington Rutter (1989-present). The key themes of this research group are:</p> <p>1. Minorities on stage: exploring the presence of historically under-represented and unacknowledged groups on stage</p> <p>In his monograph <i>Women as Hamlet: Performance as Interpretation in Theatre, Film and Fiction</i> (2007) Howard explores the construction of the female Hamlet in novels, plays and films. He shows how casting a female actress to perform the role (first by Sarah Siddons in 1775) has turned the character into the 'universal human figure', as well as transforming the play into a map of gender by redefining the relationships between the characters. Women have played Hamlet more than 2,000 times, and Howard has observed that their appearances cluster around women's emancipation movements (mid to late nineteenth century, the 1920s, and 1960s) reflecting broader social changes.</p> <p>Rutter's <i>Shakespeare and Child's Play</i> (2007) is an interrogation of the cultural politics in Shakespeare's plays in theatre and on screen. Moving between text and performance, historical analysis and contemporary production, she locates the children who figure in Shakespeare's scripts, examines them in the light of early modern cultural practices that find them constitutive of adult projects (education, apprenticeship, fostering), and observes how contemporary performance on stage and screen re-plays these children to frame current cultural anxieties: loss, child murder, the paradox of 'innocent' evil, and social rehabilitation through the notion of the 'curative' child.</p> <p>Purcell's 2013 article on the World Shakespeare Festival 2012 highlights the ways in which performances of Shakespeare were used to construct cultural identities which could include problematic representations of minorities, such as Native Americans. Purcell argues that many critics missed the fact that many productions actively engaged with the issue of cultural representations, problematizing their own presentations of the cultural 'other'. Many companies had been unable to perform in their own countries, accentuating their outsider status both within the UK and within their home countries. By allowing for the appropriation of Shakespeare performance by non-English-speaking countries, the festival challenged the UK's post-imperial image as an inclusive society in which Shakespeare plays a central role.</p> <p>2. Reviewing Shakespeare: a central cultural activity shaping production and reception</p> <p>Prescott's recent book <i>Reviewing Shakespeare: Journalism and Performance from the Eighteenth Century to the Present</i> (2013) identifies reviewing as a vital cultural activity with economic and cultural ramifications on reputations, box office figures and the circulation of Shakespeare to broader audiences. It tracks the broader historical shifts in the relationship between reviewers and performers over the last three centuries, analysing the conditions – theatrical, journalistic, social and personal – in which Shakespearean reception has taken place.</p> <p>3. Life and Works: how we understand Shakespeare, his world and his writings</p>

In *Soul of the Age* (2009), Bate studies Shakespeare in his cultural context and against the key historical events of the day to explore his development as a writer, reader and thinker (using the framework of the seven ages of man), which he links to comments on his plays and poems. Bate offers fresh interpretations of Shakespeare's Sonnets and some of his central works, such as *The Tempest*. His intimate knowledge of the texts, developed through his editorship of *The RSC Complete Works of Shakespeare*, sets it apart from other biographies. With Eric Rasmussen (University of Nevada), Bate edited the only fully modernized edition of the 1623 Folio to be produced, as well as several works not found in the First Folio. Bate's close reading of often neglected texts has brought to light new clues in some of Shakespeare's most famous works.

3. References to the research

The researchers have authored, edited, translated and adapted numerous world class and award-winning plays, adaptations, monographs, journal articles, and editions related to Shakespeare and performance for nearly 30 years. Relevant publications include:

Bate, *Soul of the Age: The Life, Mind and World of William Shakespeare* (London: Penguin; New York: Random House, 2009).

Bate, (Gen. Ed.) *The RSC Shakespeare: Complete Works* (London: Macmillan UK; New York: Random House Modern Library USA, 2007-2011).

Howard, *Women as Hamlet: Performance and Interpretation in Theatre, Film and Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

Prescott, *Reviewing Shakespeare: Journalism and Performance from the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

Purcell, "What country, friends, is this?" Cultural Identity and the World Shakespeare Festival', *Shakespeare Survey* 66 (2013): 155-65.

Rutter, *Shakespeare and Child's Play* (London: Routledge, 2007).

Rutter, 'Unpinning Desdemona (Again)', *Shakespeare Bulletin* 28.1 (2010):111-32.

Evidence of Research Quality:

Soul of the Age was shortlisted for the PEN/Jacqueline Bograd Award for best biography (2009). Worldwide sales: 14,945; Nielsen Bookscan.

The RSC Shakespeare: Complete Works, winner of Falstaff Award for Best Shakespeare Book and a British Book Design Award (both 2007). Worldwide sales: 44,600; Nielsen Bookscan.

Women as Hamlet, winner of Shakespeare's Globe Book of the Season Award (2007).

Research Grants:

Bate, Leverhulme Personal Research Professorship, £100k and £6k extension (2003-04); RSC Research Fellow, £70k (2004-05); BA Small Grant, £7.5k for 'The First Folio' (2005-06); AHRC, £33k for 'RSC Shakespeare: the director's cut' (2007); AHRC, £281k for 'Collaborative Plays by Shakespeare and Others' (2008-11).

Prescott, AHRC, £4k for 'Shakespeare's Global Communities: a research review of the 2012 World Shakespeare Festival (2012).

Rutter, AHRC, £13k for 'Shakespeare and Child's Play' (2004).

Reviews: *Shakespeare and Child's Play*, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 60:1 (Spring 2009): 89-94 and *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 27:2 (Summer 2009): 355-8. *Women as Hamlet* was referred to as 'extraordinary', *Journal of British Studies*, 47:2 (Apr 2008): 182-3 and as a 'supremely successful achievement', *Review of English Studies*, N.S., 59:238 (Feb 2008): 150-2. *Soul of the Age*, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 60:4 (Winter, 2009): 487-93.

4. Details of the impact

1. Public Understanding and Engagement

As a result of his biographical research on Shakespeare, Bate co-curated (with Dora Thornton and Becky Allen) the critically-acclaimed British Museum exhibition *Shakespeare: Staging the World*, 19 July – 25 November 2012, part of the Cultural Olympiad (5 stars, *Telegraph*; 4 stars, *Guardian*). With Thornton and Allen, he co-wrote the accompanying publication, *Shakespeare's Theatre of the World*, described by the *Telegraph* (16.07.2012) as an 'impressive work of scholarship in itself' (Worldwide sales: 8,012). According to Thornton, 'It was Jonathan's brilliant idea to structure the book and the exhibition around Shakespeare's imagined places as an inherently theatrical concept which also takes us neatly through the known chronology of Shakespeare's plays' (*Telegraph*, 20.07.2012) underlining Bate's centrality to the exhibition and an aspect which was identified in the exhibition evaluation as a 'stand out feature'. It attracted over 100,000 visitors, with a total visitor

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spend estimated at £2.75 million (£1.2 million from overseas). The exhibition evaluation found that 95% of visitors liked the themes, storyline and narrative of the exhibition (70% giving the highest rating), while 96% were satisfied with the intellectual level of the content. 75% of visitors said that they gained deeper insight into Shakespeare's plays and 82% said that the exhibition improved their knowledge and understanding. The underpinning research and much of the preparations were undertaken while Bate was at Warwick (until 2011). **(see Source 1)**

The British Museum hosted a *Shakespeare on Film* season to accompany the exhibition, curated by Howard and underpinned by his research into Shakespeare on film. The four film screenings sold out to audiences of 140 (560 total) and the study day attracted another 68 attendees. Howard's expertise in Shakespeare on Film has also underpinned another 29 public events involving more than 1,400 people since 2008. He has been invited to curate Shakespearean film seasons for the *Goethe Institut*, London (2010-11) and the first Harlem Shakespeare Film Festival, New York (2013), and to deliver a lecture series at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, London (May-August 2013), entitled *Howard on Shakespeare: Stage and Screen*. **(Sources 2, 3)**

Purcell is a founding member and Artistic Director of the Arts Council-funded and critically acclaimed theatre company, *The Pantaloons* (since 2004), through which he brought Shakespeare to non-traditional or marginalised audiences, an interest he pursues in his research. Since his appointment to Warwick in 2011, Purcell has led workshops and given public talks about Shakespeare at the World Shakespeare Festival Winter School (01.2013), a Globe Education Study Day (03.2013), practical workshops with community theatre groups in Tunbridge Wells (2012) and Rushlake Green (2013); a public workshop on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (04.2013, London; 32 attendees; ticketed) and on Elizabethan comedy (London, 01.2013, 30 attendees, ticketed). He has also delivered a workshop for service users and workers of the Westminster Mind mental health charity (London, 15 attendees, 05.2013) on 'Hamlet and Self-expression'. **(Source 2)**

Prescott's scholarly interest in Shakespeare reviewing has led to engagements with professional theatre practitioners, critics and the public. A conference in September 2009 brought together leading theatre critics in Britain (*The Guardian*, *Whatsonstage.com*), with actors, directors, academics and the public (total audience 140; free attendance to local schools) and explored the way theatre reviewing is changing in response to developments in theatre practice. More recently, Prescott has taken his work on Shakespeare reviewing into the digital realm. Prescott developed the website www.yearofshakespeare.com, an interactive online archive for the World Shakespeare Festival (2012), featuring reviews, blogs, podcasts, audience feedback and public discussion about performances (with the University of Birmingham, the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and Misfits Inc.). The website has had 40,000 page views from 100 countries. **(Sources 2, 4)**

2. Performance and Professional Practice

Influence on professional performance and practice has been exercised through a formal knowledge exchange partnership, and via consultancies between individual academics and theatre companies. The CAPITAL Centre (funded by HEFCE, 2005-10) was the focal point for a knowledge exchange partnership between Warwick and the Royal Shakespeare Company directed by Rutter (2005-6, 2007-2010). Initiatives included the Warwick/RSC Fellowships in Creativity and Performance (17 Fellowships in total) in which academics and theatre practitioners worked on collaborative projects. The Centre hosted the Warwick/RSC playwright in residence, a part-time Artist in Residence drawn from the RSC's Assistant Directors, and a residential theatre company, thereby offering direct access for up and coming artists to world-class research and expertise, and providing a space for creativity to develop. **(Source 5)** Rutter's leadership of CAPITAL was underpinned by her work as a consultant for a number of productions by national and regional UK theatre companies, and whose input impacted directly on the final production. She was embedded in the Propeller theatre residency at the University of Michigan (2010) which involved public lectures and workshops to over 700 participants. She has been the academic consultant for the RSC (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*: 54 performances, 32 actors, 59,400 tickets, 14,800 programmes) and Theatr Clwyd Cymru (*Measure for Measure*: 27 performances, 16 actors, 6,480 tickets, 1,500 programmes; *The Taming of the Shrew*: 30 performances, 16 actors, 6,436 tickets, 1,718 programmes; *As You Like It*: 32 performances, 7,147 tickets, 1,795 programmes; and 5 other productions). The Director and Chief Executive of Theatr Clwyd Cymru has said that Rutter is 'our leading page to stage practitioner working today; her advice has guided all my Shakespeare

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productions in Wales and America.' A freelance director who has worked with Rutter at Theatr Clwyd and the RSC has said that 'Rutter was my academic consultant on two productions, *Measure for Measure* (Theatr Clwyd) and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (RSC). Her input, advising on text and performance, impacted directly on what I directed, what my actors performed, what audiences saw on stage, and what they read in their programmes.' **(Source 6)** She was a consultant for the Northern Broadsides production of *Othello* in 2008/09, for which she organised workshops and actor tutorials that fed directly into the company's touring production (Feb-May 2009) and its West End run (Sep-Dec 2009). As the result of a day workshop with Rutter, Lenny Henry decided to take the lead role. The production was recorded for BBC Radio 4 Saturday Drama and broadcast twice (2010, 2012; approx. avg. audiences 485,000; RAJAR figures); a CD of the production is available via the BBC shop. **(Source 7)** In 2010, Howard ran preparatory workshops for the Young Vic director Ian Rickson, based on his *Hamlet* research. He became a consultant for Rickson's production of the play (starring Michael Sheen), which was chosen as the London production of the year by the *New York Times* (27.12.2011). The director commented: 'Lots of what came out of that dynamic week went directly into the production. The bridge between professional theatre and academic practice can be of such mutual value. I would do this again at the drop of a hat.' **(Sources 8, 9)**

3. Impact on schools and young people's theatre

Rutter's research on children in Shakespearean theatre led to the establishment of a children's theatre company. Her research into early modern cross-gendered theatre with the King Edward's School for Boys, Stratford, resulted in the setting up of a boys company, Edward's Boys, in 2006. Since 2008, the company has made 10 productions playing in Stratford, Warwick, Oxford and the Globe Theatre. Roughly 150 performers (11 to 19 years old) have played to audiences totalling more than 6,000. Highly regarded by students, parents and teachers, the company director has claimed that 'it is fair to say that the work has had a profound influence in terms of moderating adolescent boys' views of drama, gender roles and sexuality'. The company was also featured on BBC Radio 4 *Who was Rosalind?* (18.02.2013, 10 million listeners, BBC figures; chosen as *Pick of the Week*, 24.02.2013, 12 million listeners, BBC figures) and on BBC Midlands *Today* (3.3.2013). In addition, following Rutter's 'Unpinning Desdemona' project on the relation between performance and text in collaboration with the Globe Theatre (2010-11), and her Globe Fellowship during Globe Education's 'Youth and Shakespeare' season (2010), the Globe set up a children's company which will commence playing in Spring 2014. **(Source 10)**

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. "*Thereby hangs a tale: exploring visitor responses to Shakespeare: Staging the World* at the British Museum. Exhibition report, Morris Hargreaves McIntyre, 2013 [PDF available]
2. Public engagement events audience numbers and feedback
3. Statement from the Director, Globe Education
4. Reviewing Shakespeare: *The Guardian* 1.9.2009; Whatsonstage.com blog 7.9.2009 and www.yearofshakespeare.com Google Analytics report [PDF available]
5. CAPITAL HEFCE final evaluation report, 2010 [Word document available]
6. Director and Chief Executive, Theatr Clwyd Cymru, and independent Director [and audience figures]
7. Influence of Rutter on Lenny Henry playing role of Othello, *The Independent* (8.9.2009); *Guardian* (27.1.2009); *The Times* (14.2.2009). *Lenny Henry Plays Othello*, BBC Radio 4 (20.2.09; repeated 21.2.10) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00qynvv>. The BBC CD was released 03.2010.
8. *Hamlet, Young Vic*: Attendance figures 36,831 [Young Vic box office email]; 'One of the most successful productions the Young Vic has had at the box office with all 84 performances selling out.' (Society of London Theatres) http://www.solt.co.uk/downloads/pdfs/pressroom/london_theatre_highlights_2011.pdf
9. Director, *Hamlet*, Young Vic Theatre
10. Edward's Boys: recorded feedback from Director; BBC Radio 4, *Who was Rosalind?* <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01qlhjt>; *Pick of the Week*, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01qss95>. Listening figures from the BBC.