

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: University of Oxford		
Unit of Assessment: 27 English Language and Literature		
Title of case study: 01 Enhancing cultural engagement with Shakespeare's legacy and enabling new theatrical productions		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 1 July 2004-31 March 2017		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Prof Emma Smith	Professor of Shakespeare Studies (Hertford College)	1 October 1998 to present
Prof Simon Palfrey	Professor of English Literature (Brasenose College)	1 October 2005 to present
Prof Tiffany Stern	Professor of Shakespeare and Early Modern Drama (University College)	1 October 2005 to 31 August 2016
Prof Laurie Maguire	Professor of English Literature (Magdalen College)	1 October 1999 to present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 1 January 2014 - 31 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>Shakespeare specialists enhanced cultural engagement with his legacy and informed new adaptations. Content developed for a quatercentenary Shakespeare Festival and exhibition demonstrated his power of animating death; artistic collaborations drew in audiences unfamiliar with the plays, benefitting Oxfordshire public libraries and Flintlock Theatre. Authentication of the Bute First Folio and advisory work raised the profile of a historic collection, boosting tourism and enriching primary and secondary education in Scotland. Collaborations with Hidden Room theatre, Texas inspired award-winning productions seen by thousands across the US and UK. Advisory work for Shakespeare's Globe theatre enlarged the repertoire and assisted actors' physical interpretation.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>i) <i>Shakespeare in Parts</i> (2007), co-written by Stern and Palfrey, was the first detailed exploration of the form in which Shakespeare's dramas originally circulated: not full play-texts but the actor's individual part(s). With group rehearsals rare or non-existent, the cued part had to furnish the actor's character. He knew what he was going to say, but not necessarily when, why, to whom. The book pursued the implications of the young Shakespeare learning his trade by this route. An exemplary case is the cuing of Desdemona's death explored in <i>Shakespeare's Dead</i>—with conceptual underpinning from Palfrey's chapter on the 'scandal' of Desdemona's death, and the life 'after death' conjured by her bed-curtain (<i>Shakespeare's Possible Worlds</i> [2014]).</p> <p>ii) A deep dive into character and meaning in <i>King Lear's</i> Edgar, Palfrey's <i>Poor Tom</i> (2014) makes a case for Edgar as Shakespeare's most radical exploration of human character and theatrical possibility. Experimental in form, <i>Poor Tom's</i> interlocking of 'scenes' and critical 'interludes' offer a critical-creative response to Edgar's uncanny facility of re-animating outworn, apparently defunct disguises—showing how he embodies questions of living and dying.</p>		

iii and iv): Two books by Smith, *The Making of Shakespeare's First Folio* (2015) and *Shakespeare's First Folio* (2016), reflect intensive examination of all surviving copies (whole and partial) of the first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays—underpinning authentication of the Bute First Folio. *The Making* charts the numerous agents, technical requirements and historical contingencies through which this key text in literary history came into being. *Shakespeare's First Folio* tells the story of how it accrued meaning, reputation and value from the actions of those who bought and used it. Drawing on evidence from bindings, marginalia, general condition, sales history and location, Smith establishes the reception history—detecting recurrent preoccupations of ownership, reading, decoding, performing.

v) Stern's 'If I could see the Puppets Dallying' (2013) suggests that a German version of *Hamlet*, *Der Bestrafte Brudermord* [Fratricide Punished], performed in the early 17th century, may have been put on by puppets. The article establishes a probable origin for the play in the repertory of touring English acting companies performing abroad from the 1590s, integrating puppetry with human performances to circumvent language barriers and economic constraints on touring-company numbers. The essay works closely with the two surviving descriptions of the text to establish dramatic features specific to puppetry, including pacing, gesture and exaggerated action.

vi) Maguire's expertise in Medical Humanities has been developed across several collaborative publications. One example, 'Cognition, Endorphins and the Literary Response to Tragedy' (co-written with Oxford colleagues in English, Classics, Psychology and Anthropology 2017), reports the results of experiments conducted on audiences, measuring individuals' endorphin levels when watching a film tragedy and a control genre (documentary) and shedding new medical light on the problem of tragic 'pleasure'. The experiments supported dissociation of endorphin-related pleasures from reported enjoyment. Increased tolerance of pain and enhanced group experience from raised endorphin levels suggest reasons why experiences of tragedy in the theatre or cinema are valued, even when causing distress.

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

- i. [Authored Book, available on request] Simon Palfrey and Tiffany Stern. *Shakespeare in Parts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. ISBN: 9780199272051
- ii. [Authored Book, listed in REF2] Simon Palfrey, *Poor Tom: Living "King Lear"*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014. ISBN: 9780226150642
- iii. [Authored Book, available on request] Emma Smith, *The Making of Shakespeare's First Folio*. Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2015. ISBN: 978185124442
- iv. [Authored Book, listed in REF2] Emma Smith, *Shakespeare's First Folio: Four Centuries of an Iconic Book*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. ISBN: 9780198754367
An Alice Griffin Fellowship (value approximately GBP12,000, Auckland, New Zealand) supported Smith's work on a First Folio in Auckland City Library, March-April 2014; a Folger Fellowship (USD3,000) assisted work on 'A New History of the First Folio', June 2014.
- v. [Journal Article] Tiffany Stern, "If I could see the Puppets Dallying": *Der Bestrafte Brudermord* and Hamlet's Encounters with the Puppets', *Shakespeare Bulletin* 31/3 (2013), 337-52. DOI: [10.1353/shb.2013.0051](https://doi.org/10.1353/shb.2013.0051)
- vi. [Journal Article] Laurie Maguire, with Felix Budelmann, Robin Dunbar, Sophie Duncan, Evert van Emde Boas, Ben Teasdale, Jacqueline Thompson, 'Cognition, Endorphins and the Literary Response to Tragedy', *The Cambridge Quarterly* 46/3 (2017), 229-50. DOI: [10.1093/camqtly/bfx016](https://doi.org/10.1093/camqtly/bfx016)

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

Combined Faculty expertise enabled an **Oxford Shakespeare Festival** which **enhanced cultural engagement with Shakespeare's legacy** during the quatercentenary year, 2016. **Arts Council** funding (**GBP62,000**) (bid-writing assisted by Smith) supported 'Shakespeare Wanted:

Dead or Alive'—a partnership between the Bodleian and Oxfordshire County Library Service. **59 educational participatory sessions enriched local library users' appreciation of Shakespeare's life and cultural legacy. 125,275 people engaged in person** (13% 'never' normally attended arts events); **16,598 people visited the website; 73 artists received 16 new commissions (299 days' employment)** (all data in report to Arts Council) [5.1.i]. The Flintlock Theatre, Oxford, **expanded its audiences and diversified its performance-venue portfolio** via 'flash mob' performances at 4 local libraries, bringing Shakespeare to 'non-conventional settings' (Artistic Director email): at Blackbird Leys Library (a deprived area of Oxford) 'the tills stood slap bang in the middle of the space and people checked out library books' mid-performance' [5.2].

The Festival centrepiece was an **exhibition**, co-curated by Smith and Palfrey, at the Bodleian Weston Library, 22 April - 18 September 2016. 'Shakespeare's Dead' **shed light on the playwright's power of dramatising mortality**. Rare texts, including a First Folio and cue-parts for Desdemona's death scene, drew on *Shakespeare in Parts* to show how stage death differs from reality. **Actors animated textual exhibits, overriding library/theatre distinctions**; painter Tom de Freston **gave visual form to Palfrey's *Poor Tom*** with a triptych interpreting 'Places of Death'. [5.1.ii] 13 public lectures by Smith, Stern *et al.* (**980 attendees in total**) [5.1.iii] explored Shakespeare's interest in dying, as did two linked Oxford University Press engagement videos by Maguire (**2,781 and 3,254 views**, OUP and Youtube figures) [5.1.iv] **98,130 gallery visitors were a Bodleian record**, only 9% identifying as regulars. [5.1.iii] Visitor book entries shared, 'Creepy presentation, nice facts'; 'We contemplate our own end through Shakespeare's words'; 'performances b[r]ought it to life'. [5.1.v] A Twitter tour achieved a Bodleian record **174,600 impressions, 1,345 engagements**. **Global educational impact** resulted from partnering with HarvardX who filmed 'Shakespeare's Dead' for a free MOOC on *Hamlet*: **5,500 outreach students from over 130 countries viewed the exhibition**, discovering (e.g.) why Hamlet distrusted the ghost. [5.1.iii] An exhibition book, co-written by Smith and Palfrey [5.3] **sold 562 copies on site**; a range of 55 souvenir objects at the Bodleian (including triptych postcards) brought in GBP340,000 income (calculated from 'spend per head', profit undisclosed) [5.1.iii]

Public interest in Shakespeare First Folios was stimulated by Smith's authentication of a copy at Mount Stuart House, Isle of Bute, April 2016. Her identification of 18th century editor Isaac Reed's copy **corrected a mistaken provenance**, attracting worldwide press coverage [5.4]. Verification had **implications for valuation** (recent comparable sale GBP2,800,000). The current Head of Collections confirms that it 'has become a defining asset for us ... incredibly effective PR' [5.5]. The Mount Stuart Library was **encouraged to curate its collection more actively**. Smith assisted a First Folio display, writing descriptive panels. Under her direction 18 graduate summer interns, 2015-17, **completed a major phase of library and archive cataloguing and created displays and information sheets**. **Visitor numbers rose by 80% in 2016** [5.6] with journalists rating the First Folio high among the estate's 'jaw-dropping' cultural riches [5.4]. **Local education services benefitted** from activities led by the Mount Stuart Education Officer, supplementing curricula in English and History. All three local primary schools visited the Library, learning about the Folio. 150 Rothesay Primary children heard a dedicated assembly, with free follow-up visit. Another day-event brought in 99 secondary students from mainland academy and comprehensive schools. Just over **a third had never studied Shakespeare**. **Assumptions were overturned**: 'I expected [the Folio] to be a scroll'; 'I thought it would look like handwriting printed onto paper, ... it was a lot more sophisticated'. [5.7.i]

The Hidden Room Theatre, Austin, Texas **devised new repertoires** based on Stern's puppet research. Collaboration was initiated by Hidden Room's Director after hearing Stern speak about 'the puppet *Hamlet*' at a conference in Staunton, Virginia, 2013. Choosing *Brudermord* as its next production, the company worked with Stern over two years to 'recreate what a puppet show ... might have looked like' in 1710 (a year when *Brudermord* is known to have been in production). 'Entirely inspired, guided, and shaped by Stern's scholarship', Hidden Room developed the production via workshops and WhatsApp consultations, **creatively emulating historic playing practices to recapture a lost way of mediating *Hamlet* to non-English-**

speaking audiences [5.8]. Playing initially to approximately 1,000 people in Austin, January-February 2014 ('a rare gem of an experience' [*Austin Chronicle*]), the production then toured the UK (May-June 2015), seen by approximately 800, returning to the States for remounting in Austin and US tours (2015-18) with total audience approximately 2,500 (Director's estimate). The production **increased critical recognition of the company**, 'now considered cutting edge ... though we are steeped in early modern scholarship' (Director), **bringing visible measures of esteem** including the Austin Critic's Table award for Best Production of a Comedy (2013-14) and B. Iden Payne Awards for Best Production of a Comedy, Best Director, and Outstanding Ensemble. Entertaining a wide range of publics, including children (post-show photographs capture 'kids chatting with the puppet king'). [5.8] **Brudermord recreated the pleasure of early puppet Shakespeare**: '*Brudermord* as a straight play is pretty terrible. As a puppet show? Delightful'. [5.8] A video performance featuring in the British Library's 'Shakespeare in Ten Acts' exhibition, 2016, was seen by 10,000 people, **enabling the Library to showcase Germanic Early Modern collections** [5.9]. Online video is archived on the company website (180 views). *Brudermord's* success prompted further collaborations, including a 2016 production of Nahum Tate's *The History of King Lear*, undertaken at Stern's suggestion. Supported by competitively awarded Knowledge Exchange funding from Oxford, she guided the actors on Restoration theatrical gesture, **completely changing our interpretation of the text, and again produc[ing] a multi-award winning touring show**' (Hidden Room director). The production **made sense of a historically remote text**, sometimes 'ridiculous' in production but here 'light and lovely ... "a perfect little music box"' (director, quoting audience feedback.). [5.8]

The Globe Theatre benefitted from Maguire's **advisory work** with its Education Director (over 140,000 engaged per year., on his estimate). She **championed Read not Dead text-in-hand performances 'allow[ing] the public ... to see and hear early-modern plays that are rarely performed'**. 8 plays per year. in the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse attracted audiences of approximately 250 each. [5.10.i] With the Globe HE-lead, Maguire **founded a Forum for Medicine and Theatre in Practice**, leading a symposium on amputation to complement a visceral *Titus Andronicus* at the Globe and commissioning a play on anatomy theatres for a 2015 symposium. **'Actors [...] gain[ed] deeper understanding in stage portrayals of real conditions ... – the sort of insights that last a career'** (Director/actor testimonial). [5.10.iii]

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

1. Shakespeare Festival, 2016 - Combined Reports.
 - i. Bodleian Libraries, A Summary of the 2016 project *Shakespeare Dead or Alive* for report to Arts Council England.
 - ii. Freston triptych reproduced on artist's website and Bodleian/YouTube video of Palfrey and Freston discussing its creation (592 views).
 - iii. Audience data and analysis sections from Bodleian Libraries internal evaluation report on *Shakespeare's Dead*.
 - iv. Maguire OUP engagement videos (viewing data from OUP, 16 April 2020).
 - v. Collated photographs of visitor comments in 'Shax Comments Book' (4 vols). [Full electronic copies available on request.]
2. Email from Artistic Director of Flintlock Theatre, Oxford, 1 April 2020.
3. Exhibition book: Emma Smith and Simon Palfrey, *Shakespeare's Dead: Stages of Death in Shakespeare's Playworlds*. Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2016. ISBN: 9781851242474
4. Selected national and international press coverage of Smith's authentication of the Bute First Folio at Mount Stuart, Isle of Bute
5. Selection of materials from Mount Stuart collections.
 - i. Emails from Collections Director, 27 March 2020 and 15 April 2020 (pdfs exported).
 - ii. Video on dedicated Mount Stuart website: 'Mount Stuart Stories: Shakespeare First Folio', <https://www.mountstuart.com/stories/shakespeare-first-folio> (pdf of main page exported).
6. Argyll and Bute Economic Forum Report (January 2017), p. 3 <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s117553/ARGYLL%20AND%20BUTE%20ECONOMIC%20>

[FORUM%20FOLLOW%20UP%20REPORT January%202017 Final.pdf](#)

7. Selection of evidence related to schools engagement on Isle of Bute.
 - i. Mount Stuart Education Officer's report on 'School Visits—Shakespeare 2016'.
 - ii. Website advertisement: 'Autumn Education Programmes at Mount Stuart, Isle of Bute', 6 September 2016, <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/ab/SAL/?p=21476> (pdf exported).
 - iii. Local newspaper article, 'Bute Pupils Celebrate Shakespeare at Mount Stuart', *The Buteman* 25 April 2016.
 - iv. Sharing Argyll Learning (Argyll and Bute Council webposting) - 'Celebrating Shakespeare at Rothesay Primary', 3 May 2016.
8. Emails from Director of The Hidden Room Theatre, 6 and 7 December 2020.
9. Lead Curator, British Library Germanic Collections, 'From Slapstick to Schlegel: Hamlet goes to Germany', British Library European Studies blog, 21 May 2016:
<https://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/european/2016/05/hamlet-goes-to-germany.html>
10. Evidence from Globe Theatre
 - i. Email from Director of Globe Education, 21 March 2020 (includes audience data).
 - ii. Newspaper article with impact of Globe production discussed, 'Globe production takes out 100 audience members with its gory *Titus Andronicus*', *Independent* 22 July 2014, <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/news/globe-theatre-takes-out-100-audience-members-with-its-gory-titus-andronicus-9621763.html>
 - iii. Email from Globe Theatre actor, 17 April 2020.