

Institution: Royal Holloway, University of London
Unit of Assessment: 35A: Music, Dance and Performing Arts (Drama)
Title of case study: Reassessing Terence Rattigan
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Professor Rebellato's research has been a significant factor in the revival of Terence Rattigan's reputation as a serious playwright, impacting on a wave of high-profile productions from 1998-2013. He has impacted on two groups of beneficiaries identified in the Department's Impact Strategy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Professional theatre-makers: His scholarly editions of Rattigan's plays used by actors and directors for performance. He contributed directly to the National Theatre's decision to revive one of Rattigan's least-known plays; 2. Theatre audiences and members of the public: Rebellato's many public talks, programme notes, appearance on broadcast media have helped shift the critical reception of Rattigan's plays.
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Rebellato's research on Terence Rattigan has been carried out from 1994 and throughout the REF period to 2013, while at Royal Holloway. It has consistently revalued the cultural and sexual politics of Rattigan's work and built greater understanding of the complexity of his dramaturgy. It has involved the publication of chapters, articles, a monograph, and new editions of the plays.</p> <p>His work on Rattigan has been a key part of a broader project of re-reading the theatre of the 1940s and 1950s. The monograph <i>1956 and All That</i> (London: Routledge, 1999) offered an historiographical re-reading of the theatre of the 1940s and 1950s, drawing on Foucaultian and 'queer' models to revalue the theatre of the West End as it may have seemed before the critical axis shifted towards Tynan and the Royal Court. This involved re-reading the queer dynamics of the West End, the theatre's relationship to its audience, changing attitudes to theatrical collaboration, attitudes to Europe and Empire, the perception of emotional repression, the cultural dynamics of homosexuality, and the theatre's relation to political context.</p> <p>Rebellato has also edited 12 volumes of Rattigan's plays for Nick Hern Books, each of which comes with an original and substantial (7000–10,000 word) scholarly introduction as well as a general outline of Rattigan's life and work. Several of these plays (<i>First Episode</i>, <i>Less Than Kind</i>, <i>Duologue</i>) have never been published before; others (<i>After the Dance</i>, <i>Who is Sylvia?</i>) have been long out of print. Publishing <i>First Episode</i> involved tracking down the six existing typescripts and establishing a definitive new edition. His edition of <i>Separate Tables</i> was the first to publish Rattigan's own gay variant on the text. Each edition offers critical, against-the-grain readings of the plays, their development and their place in their historical, cultural and theatrical contexts. The editions include hitherto unpublished materials from the archives. In some cases, such as the edition of <i>Who is Sylvia?</i> which publishes extracts from an incomplete first draft thought to have been destroyed, Rebellato traced archive materials that were previously unknown. Together these introductions revalue Rattigan's plays and politics, demonstrating the sophistication of his playwriting.</p> <p>Rebellato has extended the audiences for these ideas through public talks and programme articles accompanying Rattigan productions. They include talks at the National Theatre, Lyric Hammersmith, Chichester Festival Theatre, Theatre Royal, Haymarket, and elsewhere and programme articles for Rattigan productions by the National, Royal Exchange, English Touring Theatre, Royal and Derngate, and the Shaw Festival, Ontario. He was a contributor to a <i>Front Row</i> special on Rattigan in June 2011 on BBC Radio 4 and was consulted for the BBC Four documentary <i>The Rattigan Enigma</i> in the same month. He has written on Rattigan for Nick Hern Books and the <i>Guardian's</i> websites in 2011 and 2010.</p>

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

- *1956 and All That: The Making of Modern British Drama*. London: Routledge, 1999.

The book was discussed and reviewed in broadsheets as well as academic journals and is widely read by theatre makers and academics; it is now a core text on mid-century theatre, frequently cited both in academic books and publications for the general reader as diverse as Michael Billington's *State of the Nation* (2007), John Heilpern's *John Osborne: A Patriot for Us* (2006), and Dominic Sandbrook's *Never Had It So Good* (2006). The book was favourably reviewed in *Contemporary Theatre Review* by Maggie Gale ('eloquent and witty ... insightful'), Stanton Garner in *Theatre Survey* ('impressive and important'), Peter Buse in *Modern Drama* ('Rebellato has comprehensively and brilliantly rethought British drama's putative founding moment'), in *New Theatre Quarterly* by John Deeney ('an important interpretive challenge'), *The Independent* by Aleks Sierz ('a brilliant and provocative re-evaluation') and by Michael Billington in *The Guardian* ('provocative and perverse'). The book was nominated for the Society for Theatre Research's Theatre Book Prize. The arguments in the book are extended, developed and refined in other publications, including:

- 'Look Back at Empire: British Theatre and Imperial Decline.' *British Culture and the End of Empire*. Ed. Ward, Stuart. Studies in Imperialism. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001. 73-90.
- 'Noël Coward's Bad Manners.' *Look Back in Pleasure: Noël Coward Reconsidered*. Eds. Kaplan, Joel and Sheila Stowell. London: Methuen, 2000. 44-61.

Rebellato has edited and introduced 12 editions of Rattigan's plays. Each edition has a general introduction of around fifteen pages, followed by a specific introduction to the play or plays in the volume. These are indicative volumes:

- Rattigan, Terence. *First Episode*. Ed. Dan Rebellato. London: Nick Hern, 2011. [pp. xxii-xliv]
- Rattigan, Terence. *Separate Tables*. Ed. Dan Rebellato. London: Nick Hern, 1999. [pp. xix-xxxviii]
- Rattigan, Terence. *After the Dance*. Ed. Dan Rebellato. London: Nick Hern, 1995 [pp. xix-xxxii] (2nd ed., 2010 [pp. xix-xxxii]).

These editions are widely read and used. Several publications have cited these editions, for example David Pattie, *Modern British Playwriting: The 1950s*, London: Methuen Drama, 2012, Susan Mandala, *Twentieth-Century Drama Dialogue as Ordinary Talk: Speaking Between the Lines*, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007, Sean O'Connor, *Straight Acting: Popular Gay Drama from Wilde to Rattigan*, London: Cassell, 1998. Productions of *Man and Boy* (Duchess Theatre, 2005), *Separate Tables* (Royal Exchange, 2006) and a platform at the National on *The Deep Blue Sea* (2000) reprinted parts of these introductions in their programmes. Rattigan's principal biographer described the introduction of *After the Dance* as 'brilliant' (Michael Darlow, *Terence Rattigan: The Man and His Work*, London: Quartet, 2000, p. 480).

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

The impact of Rebellato's research is evident in the **significant contemporary interest in Rattigan**, in the professional theatre, in film and in the wider public; he has contributed in various ways, directly and indirectly, to this interest and to shaping Rattigan's revived reputation. This is not, of course, to claim that Rebellato has single-handedly revived Rattigan's reputation. It is that his research has contributed to the general reassessment through (a) the significance of the ideas themselves, (b) the influence he has therefore

been able to have on revivals of the work, and (c) the interpretive activity around these revivals that he has been asked to take on.

The impact of his research has been evident in some of the **revivals of Rattigan's plays** in major theatres. The director of *After the Dance* at the National Theatre explained in a public interview at the National Theatre on 17 June 2010 that she read the play in the Nick Hern Books [NHB] edition, with Rebellato's introduction, and it was this that persuaded her to direct a revival. Rebellato was asked to chair the platform in the Lyttelton Theatre and write an article in the programme. The director's faith in the play, partly deriving from Rebellato's edition, was born out by 97% houses, and four Olivier awards in 2011, including best revival, and Best Director in the Critics Circle awards. This in turn encouraged the director to revive Rattigan's *Cause Célèbre* at the Old Vic the following year.

Several theatres marked Rattigan's centenary in 2011 with productions, including *Flare Path* at the Haymarket, *The Deep Blue Sea* and *The Browning Version* at Chichester, and *In Praise of Love* at the Royal and Derngate. In each case, Rebellato provided programme notes or pre-show talks to place these plays in context. In the case of *In Praise of Love*, Rebellato was consulted early by the director who had read his edition. When a new film of *The Deep Blue Sea* was released in 2011, the tie-in edition published Rebellato's introduction to the play alongside a piece by the film's producer who, in the 1990s, had written a book on gay playwrights like Rattigan which made extensive use of the NHB Rattigan editions. When English Touring Theatre revived *French Without Tears* in 2007, **the director drew directly on Rebellato's introduction** to the NHB edition in shaping his production. Every major revival of *Separate Tables* since 1999 has used the 'gay variant' first published in Rebellato's edition, including Philip Frank's acclaimed Chichester production (2009). Frank later drew on Rebellato's work in 2011, when, at the same theatre, he directed a reading of *First Episode* using the pre-publication copy of the definitive text that Rebellato had newly established.

The range of activity demonstrates Rebellato's impact in this area; he is the principal academic commentator on Rattigan's work with an **established ability to talk to a wider audience**. In this REF period he has appeared on platforms at the National on Rattigan and *After the Dance* (both 2010), given three talks at the Chichester Festival Theatre in 2010 and 2011, and one each at Birkbeck College London, Theatre Royal, Haymarket, the English-Speaking Union, and Harrow School all in 2011. Recent programme articles include *After the Dance* (National Theatre, 2010), *In Praise of Love* (Royal and Derngate, 2011), and *French Without Tears* (Shaw Festival, Ontario, 2012). These might be understood as interpretation activities (to use the term from the visual arts) in which the insights given by the scholarly and critical work is presented for a wider audience, offering a gateway through which the academic work can have an impact on a wider non-academic public.

Audiences for the various publications and talks range in scale from approximately **three million listeners** who heard the BBC Radio 4 Front Row special to the 150-strong audience for the talks at the Chichester Festival Theatre. The NHB editions have sold strongly, many selling in the thousands and they have established themselves as the definitive editions of the plays. Rebellato's significance as a commentator on Rattigan led to him being invited as a guest of honour at the inaugural meeting of the Terence Rattigan Society in 2011. In the words of Rattigan's literary executor '**There is no doubt in my mind that [Rebellato has] contributed to the rise (re-birth?) of Rattigan in the past years**'.

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

Director of *French Without Tears* (English Touring Theatre, 2007) This source will corroborate the impact Professor Rebellato research on their production.

Director of *After the Dance* (National Theatre, 2010), to corroborate the impact of Rebellato's research on reviving this play.

Platform, Lyttelton, 17 June 2010 was recorded and is available to listen to in the NT Archive. Evidence of how the insights given by the scholarly and critical work is presented for a wider audience.

Director of *In Praise of Love* (Royal and Derngate, Northampton, 2011), Evidence of how the insights given by the scholarly and critical work is presented for a wider audience.

Literary Agent for the Rattigan Estate, to corroborate on the wider impact of Rebellato's research on the Rattigan Estate and public interest in the playwright.

Publisher of Rebellato's editions of Rattigan's plays, to corroborate the revival of interest in Rattigan's plays following publication.