

Institution: St Mary's University College
Unit of Assessment: 29: English Language and Literature
Title of case study: 'Tis a mad world at Hoxton': Leisure, License and Local History in <i>The Tempest</i> .
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>The impact described here concerns the history of Hoxton, London, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, especially in relation to Shakespeare's <i>The Tempest</i> and the anonymous poem <i>Pimlyco, or Run Red Cap – 'Tis a mad world at Hogsdon</i>. As outlined below, the project adds to the cultural capital of this inner-city area of London, and gives one of Shakespeare's most famous plays 'back' to the inhabitants of the city where it originated.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The content of the underpinning research is contained in Peter Howell's essay 'Tis a mad world at Hoxton: Leisure, License and the Exoticism of Suburban Space in Jacobean London' (<i>Literary London</i>, Autumn 2013), and in his scholarly edition of the poem <i>Pimlyco</i> (www.otranto.co.uk/index.php/publication/view/52). As part of a wider project on the history of Shoreditch and its environs, the research was undertaken by Peter Howell, a Lecturer in English, during the period 2010-2012. The essay demonstrates that a significant source for Shakespeare's <i>The Tempest</i> is this long, anonymous poem published in 1609, written in praise of a tavern and its ale, called 'The Pimlyco' or 'Pimlico', in Hoxton, northeast of the City of London. This poem construes this then-suburb as an island, and in so doing borrows a great deal from those stories of the New World written about the Roanoke expeditions in the 1580s, and the Jamestown expeditions of 1607-8. The essay claims that Shakespeare's conception of an enchanted island that has been colonised, and where inhabitants change their personalities temporarily, but that is nonetheless located in the Old World, is in part taken from this poem. There are also a number of textual and extra-textual features that link this poem, and the tavern in Hoxton that it concerns, to Shakespeare's play. These links solve the central problem of postcolonial readings of <i>The Tempest</i>: why is a play about the New World set very specifically in the Old? Shakespeare already had a precedent for this in the Pimlyco poem. The claims of this research also imply that <i>The Tempest</i> has a more local referent than has usually been said; as well as thematisation of the 'big' ideas of colonisation, dispossession, creativity and forgiveness, it also depicts practices of transformational licence to be found in the suburbs of early modern London.</p>
<p>3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>Peter Howell (ed.), <i>Pimlyco; or Run Cap – 'Tis a Mad World at Hogsdon</i> (2013) (http://www.otranto.co.uk/index.php/publication/view/52)</p> <p>Peter Howell, ' " 'Tis a mad world at Hoxton": Leisure, Licence and the Exoticism of Suburban Space in Jacobean London' in <i>The Literary London Journal</i>, 10:2 (Autumn 2013), www.literarylondon.org/london-journal/autumn2013/howell.html</p>

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

The research was disseminated in two main ways, each having its own distinctive but complementary impact:

1. *Shakespeare in Hackney; or, 'Tis a mad world at Hoxton*, by Peter Howell and Matthew Hahn (Drama St Mary's), dir. Matthew Hahn, starring Jack Klaff.

This is a redacted and dramatised version of the poem, produced in collaboration with the Theatre Arts team of St. Mary's University College. It was premiered on 23 May 2013 at Hoxton Hall, a theatre in Hoxton, London, close to the location of the Pimlyco tavern in the early 1600s, and was followed by a lecture by Peter Howell on the poem, the local history of the area and its relevance to *The Tempest*. A recording of the performance is available at www.otranto.co.uk/index.php/pages/index/pimlyco-13. A total of 78 people bought tickets for the performance, and they were asked to fill in a questionnaire concerning attitudes to Hoxton, and attitudes to Shakespeare. 25 completed questionnaires were received (the questionnaire can be found at the end of this section), a summary of which follows:

- 24 of the 25 respondents lived at least three miles from Hoxton; 5 of the respondents came to Hoxton 'between 1 and 5 times per year' or more often, and the rest had 'hardly ever' or 'never' been to Hoxton. As such, there is evidence that the performance drew an audience into an area with which they were not previously familiar.
- Respondents were asked to write up to four words to sum up the *reputation* of Hoxton, and up to four words to sum up their own opinion of it, having seen the show. Many predictable responses came up in both categories – 'grungy', 'edgy', 'up-and-coming', but some transformative effects were evident:

How often in Hoxton	Reputation	Own Opinion
Hardly ever	White poverty enclave	Less isolated than that
Never	Didn't know where it was	Very Londonish
Never	Village atmosphere?	Interesting: more
exploration req.		
Hardly ever	Trendy	Neighbourhood
Hardly ever	0	Interesting
Never	Never heard of it (before)	Now very interesting

There is evidence, then, of an increase in curiosity about Hoxton and in its cultural capital.

- The respondents were quite knowledgeable about Shakespeare, with all but two having either read or seen at least '11-20' plays in the past ten years. 16 had studied his work at university level, with all the rest having studied it either to GCSE or A-Level (or equivalents).
- There were not many answers to question 13 (the 'open' question), possibly because the optional nature of it was emphasised in order not to lead respondents too much, but below are some of the responses received, indicating that the performance encouraged the audience to re-evaluate perceptions of Shakespeare and his work:
 - 'An excellent exposition of the context of Shakespeare's writings'
 - 'It brought home for me the creative atmosphere Shakespeare was working in – I didn't really know anything about his influences and other contemporary writers'
 - 'It has enlivened again my interest in Shakespeare'
 - 'Interesting to hear possibilities of where Shakespeare drew his ideas from and also the

idea of an island as a space inland!
'Emphasised how his work is rooted in London/English society'

Questionnaire on Tonight's Performance

We'd be delighted if you could answer these questions at the end of the evening, and leave this slip in the box by the door on your way out. Thank you.

Section One: You

1. Your age..... 2. Your gender

3. Your occupation

4. Where do you live?

(Please state the first part of your postcode; e.g., if your postcode is E2 0DL, write 'E2'. If you don't live in this country, please state where you're usually resident).

Section Two: Hogsdon and You

4. On average, how often do you come to the Hoxton area? (Please tick one)

- Almost every day (inc. if you live/work here) []
- About once a week []
- About once a month []
- Between one and five times a year []
- Hardly ever []
- I've never been to Hoxton before tonight []

5. Why do you come to Hoxton? (Please tick all the appropriate answers, and skip this question if this is

your first time in Hoxton)

- I live here [] I work/study here []
- To see friends [] For pubs []
- For the nightlife [] To shop []
- For 'cultural' events, e.g., theatre, cinema etc. []
- Other (please specify)

6. Thinking about what is said by friends, colleagues and in the media, please write up to four words to sum up the reputation of Hoxton.

7. Please write up to four words to sum up how you think about Hoxton.

Section 3: Mr. W^m Shakspeare and You

8. Please estimate how many of Shakespeare's plays you have seen on stage or film in the past ten years. (If you have seen the same play more than once, just count it as one.)

- None [] 1-5 [] 6-10 []
- 11-20 [] 21-30 [] 30+ []

9. Please estimate how many of Shakespeare's plays and poems you have read in your life.

- None [] 1-5 [] 6-10 []
- 11-20 [] 21-30 [] 30+ []

10. Please indicate at what level you have studied Shakespeare.

- Never [] Up to O-level/GCSE []
- Up to A-level/Bac. [] University []
- Academic or professional research []

11. Thinking about what is said by your friends, colleagues and the media about Shakespeare and his works, please rate the following descriptions from 0 to 5, where 0 is never said, and 5 is very often said.

- A poet for our times 0 1 2 3 4 5
- A Londoner 0 1 2 3 4 5
- Stuff I was forced to do at school 0 1 2 3 4 5
- Relevant to my community 0 1 2 3 4 5
- An Englishman 0 1 2 3 4 5
- Difficult 0 1 2 3 4 5
- Elite or élitist 0 1 2 3 4 5
- Expresses universal experiences 0 1 2 3 4 5

12. Thinking about your own experience of Shakespeare and his works, please rate the following descriptions from 0 to 5, where 0 is completely inaccurate and 5 is very accurate.

- A poet for our times 0 1 2 3 4 5
- A Londoner 0 1 2 3 4 5
- Stuff I was forced to do at school 0 1 2 3 4 5
- Relevant to my community 0 1 2 3 4 5
- An Englishman 0 1 2 3 4 5
- Difficult 0 1 2 3 4 5
- Elite or élitist 0 1 2 3 4 5
- Expresses universal experiences 0 1 2 3 4 5

13. Please use this space – if you wish! – to note down any thoughts you have on how tonight's performance has changed your perception of Shakespeare and his work.

Finally, we'd be really pleased if you could write you email address here - we won't give it to anyone else, but we may email you a couple of times with news of local events.

2. Text of *Pimlyco; or Run Red Cap* – 'Tis a mad world at Hogsdon and related discussions on www.otranto.co.uk

Following the performance of the poem, the text of the original pamphlet, together with recordings of the performance and an academic paper on the poem, were made available online in an innovative new format for the interactive publication of academic texts created by St Mary's scholars: www.otranto.co.uk. After the paper was published by the journal *Literary London*, it was taken down from the otranto site, but for the three months it was on there (June-August 2013) it attracted a high standard of discussion, particularly on the nature of the poem's relationship to *The Tempest*. Discussion of the text of *Pimlyco* itself can be viewed at <http://www.otranto.co.uk/index.php/publication/view/52>. At the time of writing this site is still an on-going project, but it raises the possibility of increased interaction with community and non-specialist readers interested in the local history of east London, and in Shakespeare.

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

Creative Co-ordinator at Hoxton Hall, Hoxton St., London N1

Questionnaire responses held by Peter Howell (available on request)

<http://guildhe.ac.uk/archive/crest/en/news/index.cfm/east-london-source-for-shakespeares-tempest.html>