

<b>Institution: Royal Holloway, University of London</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: English</b>
<b>Title of case study: Literature in Public Life: Professor Sir Andrew Motion.</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Professor Sir Andrew Motion works at the heart of the poetry sector in the UK and speaks for it at all levels of public discourse. His research into poetry through criticism and practice, and his tireless public engagement, lead to impacts on a wide range of users in cultural life and education, civil society, public discourses and public services. These are achieved through such positions as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director and Co-Founder of <i>The Poetry Archive</i> (since 2003)</li> <li>• Chair of Arts Council Review Group (2009)</li> <li>• Director of <i>Poetry by Heart</i> (from 2012).</li> </ul> <p>Widespread benefits are felt through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the creation and identification of cultural capital</li> <li>• influence on education and public policy (2008-13).</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Professor Motion was appointed Professor of Creative Writing (0.5 FTE) in the English Department at Royal Holloway in 2003. He was already established in the Laureateship, occupying this high office in public life to serve Queen and Commonwealth, engaged in revitalizing the traditions of the role established by such figures as Wordsworth, Tennyson, Betjeman and Hughes. His writing continued to mark not simply Royal occasions, but also encompassed many commissions from Charities seeking his voice to promote their causes in verse. Beyond his work as poet and novelist, he is an influential biographer, editor, and literary critic, specializing in Romantic, twentieth-century and contemporary literature. These are all areas of activity which he has maintained since his appointment at Royal Holloway and since stepping down as Laureate (2009).</p> <p>Motion's primary research occurs through the composition of lyric poetry, and as an editor and critic. Its key insights concern the nature of lyric poetry, its tradition in English, its preservation, enrichment and renewal. Through the three collections of his own verse published in the period under review, he demonstrates the complexity of the form and its urgent place in our culture. This creative output is supported by four critical editions of poetry and poets' work. Two novels and an autobiography published over the same span, bring, by association, his own poetry, writings, and indeed the larger sphere of English literature into greater public prominence, attesting to the vitality of literary history, heritage and tradition.</p> <p>Poetry, for Motion, provides alternatives to functionalist attitudes: lyric poetry, as Motion understands it (via Keats) 'does not have a design on us'. Its meaning is in its form. The insights of the processes that produce poetry are embodied implicitly in it. While his poetic practice is not carried out with specific social ends, his public role connected with his writing undoubtedly is. And, paradoxically, that practice, while being private, ensures that his public role has an impact; the privacy is, indeed, the necessary condition of the public power. The belief in poetry that fuels his compositional practice is not separable from his public activities.</p> <p>Poetry 'provides us', as he argued in his 2011 Romanes lecture, 'with the paradoxes that we depend on for the realisation and fulfilment of ourselves as human beings. ... They are the means by which we learn to live more deeply as ourselves, but they are also the echo-chambers in which we begin to understand what it means to live in history.' In expressing personal, sometimes painful and intimate memories, poetry is key in providing social groups and individuals with a language of commemoration. While these insights relate to established conceptions of poetry in a Wordsworthian tradition, Motion's creative practice responds to a continuous need to express those conceptions in new forms, revitalising and</p>

re-presenting them. The effects of these insights are aimed at the field of public discourse in general. The poems embody a commitment to poetry, which then issues forth in diverse and powerful public activities.

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

#### Poetry:

Andrew Motion, *The Cinder Path* (Faber and Faber, 2009). Short-listed for the Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry; “beautiful, tender, maternal... He has a gift for allowing conversation to evolve into lyricism without any transitional awkwardness...” Kate Kellaway <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2009/apr/26/andrew-motion-cinder-path>

Andrew Motion, *The Customs House* (Faber and Faber, 2012). “Lucid, brilliant, melancholic poetry collection... *The Customs House* is a strong, searing and sad book... As with the line of English poets – Thomas Hardy, Edward Thomas, Keith Douglas, Philip Larkin – the mature subjectivity of tone is of course a never-to-be-realised happiness, a restlessness of feeling, a scarred understanding that yields fine, heart-rending language and the grace and pressure of precise memory.” David Morley

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2012/dec/14/customs-house-andrew-motion-review>

“We need to renew the language of remembrance. Motion aims to discover how humanely self-conscious language can endure amid the shock and grief in those slaughterhouses.” Boyd Tonkin, *The Independent*.

#### Collections and Criticism:

Andrew Motion (ed.), *First World War Poems* (Faber and Faber, 2003). “Challengingly, Motion includes a sequence of late twentieth-century WW1 poems by Philip Larkin, Ted Hughes, Michael Longley, and others, which shows that the long march of that war’s poetry continues with new poems as well as new anthologies.” Hugh Haughton, ‘Anthologizing War’ in *The Oxford Handbook of British and Irish War Poetry*.

Andrew Motion, *Ways of Life: On Places, Painters and Poets* (Faber and Faber, 2008). “Pastiche has seldom been put to a more serious end... vivid and localized... full of pleasures.” Philip Hensher

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/non-fictionreviews/3560976/Review-Ways-of-Life-by-Andrew-Motion.html>

**Autobiography:** Andrew Motion, *In the Blood* (Faber and Faber, 2006). “The opening chapter is brilliantly written,” Frank Kermode; “vivid and poignant”, John Mullan; “filled with the eloquence of the detail... disturbingly powerful accounts of disaster, grief, denial and realization.” Adam Nicolson.

Andrew Motion was **knighted** for services to poetry in 2009.

*The Poetry Archive* has received grants and benefactions from dozens of sources including The Gulbenkian Foundation, Nesta, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Department of Culture, Media and Sport, Department of Education. A full list can be seen here:

<http://www.poetryarchive.org/poetryarchive/benefactors.do>

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

Those who feel the impact of Motion’s research include the audiences, supporters and funders of contemporary poetry; writers themselves, policy makers, educationalists, teachers at all levels, and, above all, school children and young people. This range reflects his multiple and varied activities, in particular the co-foundation and Directorship of [The Poetry](#)

[Archive](#), an ever-expanding web resource of recorded poetry launched in 2003. His ongoing guiding work for the Archive springs from his creative investigations into both the sounds of poetry and its life-enhancing roles in public discourse. His concern with the renewal of the tradition of English lyric poetry is reflected here in the generation of a living tradition of spoken poetry. As Chair of its selection committee, Motion has gathered recordings of over 250 British poets reading their work. Under his direction, the project has become international, now working with the Poetry Foundation of America, the Commonwealth Foundation and other partners. It now includes some 150 poets from the USA, and 25 poets each from Australia and New Zealand. Motion has established other partnerships overseas to include recordings by poets from Canada, India, South Africa and the Caribbean.

Usage of this vital resource is enormous, international and increasing: for the year ending 31 March 2013, there were 2,206,404 unique visitors (an increase of 13% on the previous year) who made 9,386,255 page views. There is a rich range of testimony from assorted users of its impacts: it is 'a treasure trove' (*The Guardian*); 'an extraordinary achievement, based on a remarkable and generous vision. I am utterly bowled over' (George Szirtes, poet); 'an oasis at the end of the day', 'fantastic – it's education, entertainment, joy, support, discovery, challenge and comfort all at once' (public users). Transformational for the poetry sector in general, hailed as 'a monumental achievement' by Stephen Page, CEO of Faber, it 'broadens spectacularly the access people have [and] could change the ways in which [poetry] is taught, learned and loved' (editorial, *PN Review*).

*The Poetry Archive* developed from Motion's long-standing programme of taking his work into schools. In so doing, he developed insights into school-childrens' relations to poetry, and into the training of teachers. The Arts Council, recognizing this, commissioned Motion for a report. The result was '*The Motion Report: [Young People and Poetry](#)*' (2010). Containing several recommendations about teaching poetry, this led to a major investment in 2012 (£500,000) from the Department of Education to develop poetry provision for young people within and outside school. At its heart was the initiative, also directed by Motion: '[Poetry by Heart](#)'. This annual national competition for the recitation of poetry, launched in December 2012, aims to inspire the teaching of poetry in schools and motivate pupils and teachers to explore the rich heritage of English poetry. 768 schools registered for the scheme in its first year; regional competitions took place in over 50 cities and towns across England, and the final championship took place in the National Portrait Gallery in April 2013 at which forty-one finalists were accompanied by their teachers. It has received national media coverage. One programme of Poetry Please on BBC Radio 4 comprised entirely of recordings made at the finals. In its first full year the impacts of this project are still emerging and will be ongoing. The reach across the country is already extensive. The DfE tender has been extended for the next two years, meaning that its profound significance will be long-lasting and sustainable.

Motion's high cultural status assists the effectiveness and the impacts of his work while his advocacy for poetry contributes intellectually and economically to the buoyancy of the poetry sector. His appearances to promote poetry at festivals and related events number an average of two engagements per week throughout each year under review. Publishers benefit financially from the high sales, relative to the field of contemporary poetry, of his books. Responses in reviews or comment pages to his books and, increasingly, to his public pronouncements (about the Booker Prize, for example, or culture more generally as he addressed it in his Romanes lecture, or about English Heritage), are widespread.

Recent examples of positions of responsibility include: Chair of the T. S. Eliot Prize

(2009); Chair of the Man Booker Prize (2010) and, since 2011, Trustee of the Man Booker Foundation; Chair for the Forward Poetry Prize (2011) and the Montreal Poetry Prize (2011); Chair of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (since 2008); member of the Council of the Advertising Standards Authority (since 2008); President, Campaign to Protect Rural England (since 2012). He is also a committee member of UK Literary Heritage, which he established in order to address the retention of contemporary literary manuscripts in the UK. Overseeing two large conferences at the British Library - 'Manuscripts Matter' (2009) and 'Manuscripts Still Matter' (2012) – Motion contributed to its goals.

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

**For general corroboration of Motion's impact on Cultural Policy**

1. Former Secretary of State for Culture, and Chair of the London Cultural Consortium

**For corroboration of the impact of 'The Motion Report' commissioned by the Arts Council:**

2. Literature Director, Arts Council for England

**For corroboration of the impact (usage statistics, press response) of *The Poetry Archive*:**

3. Joint Founder/Director of *The Poetry Archive*

**For corroboration of the impact (usage statistics, press response) of *Poetry by Heart*:**

4. Education Director, *Poetry by Heart*

**For corroboration of sales figures detailed in section 4:**

5. Andrew Motion's agent.

**For illustration of impact on cultural public funding choices:**

6. Government's announcement about Poetry by Heart,  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pioneering-national-poetry-competition-to-inspire-teens>.

**Press responses to 'Bonfire of the Humanities' lecture:**

8 and 9.

June 2011. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/andrew-motion-delivers-fiery-bonfire-of-the-humanities-lecture-2292289.html>

and

<http://www.theguardian.com/culture/culture-cuts-blog/2011/jun/03/arts-funding-andrewmotion>