ROBERT SHAUGHNESSY

Introduction

In recent years, the study of the past and present relationships between Shakespeare and popular culture has been transformed: from an occasional, ephemeral, and anecdotal field of research, which, if it registered at all, was generally considered peripheral to the core concerns of scholarship and pedagogy, to one which is making an increasingly significant contribution to our understanding of how Shakespeare's works came into being, and of how and why they continue to exercise the imaginations of readers, theatergoers, viewers, and scholars worldwide. A range of factors have prompted this shift, among them the increased priority afforded to theatrical performance; the growth of interest in Shakespeare on film and television; the theoretical debates and methodological innovations of the 1980s and 1990s, which have encouraged new kinds of interdisciplinarity in the field of Shakespeare studies, as well as turning attention to the larger forces that have shaped Shakespearean production and reproduction in material culture; the condition of postmodernity itself, in which traditional distinctions between high and low culture have been eroded; and, not least, the changing patterns of educational participation and provision that have characterized the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first. Contemporary research and pedagogy in the field of Shakespeare and popular culture is concerned with the Shakespearean theatre and drama's immersion within the festivities and folk customs, entertainment industries, and traditions of playing of its own time; it is also interested in the reinvention, adaptation, citation, and appropriation of the plays (and, to a lesser extent, the poems), and the myths and histories that circulate around them, across a wide range of media in subsequent periods and cultures. Throughout history, Shakespeare's enduring high-cultural status has coexisted with a multiplicity of other Shakespeares, recycled in stage performance and cinematic adaptation, political discourse, literary and theatrical burlesque, parody, musical quotation, visual iconography, popular romance, tourist itineraries, national myth, and everyday speech. Shakespeare can be quoted in support of an individual declaration of love or an act of war; his

works have acted as sources of inspiration for everything from high opera to the porn movie; his image turns up in the unlikeliest of locations. Versions of, or borrowings from, Shakespeare may be respectful or irreverent, they may be witty, acute, or scurrilous, delinquent, or just plain silly, and whether everything and anything that operates under the banner of Shakespeare can or should be afforded any value or significance, or is of more than passing academic interest, is a matter of debate; as is the desire of generations of educationalists, theatre practitioners, and film-makers for a truly popular "authentic" or mainstream Shakespeare, whether this is to be found in the classroom, on stage, or on the screen. The "popular" is itself hardly a singular or uncontested term or frame of reference: seen from some angles, it denotes community, shared values, democratic participation, accessibility, and fun; from others, the mass-produced commodity, the lowest common denominator, the reductive or the simplified, or the shoddy, the coarse, and the meretricious. When the transmission and appropriation of Shakespeare are at stake, considerations of taste and aesthetic value are also bound up with inevitably vexed questions of cultural ownership, educational attainment and class, and with issues of who the desired and actual consumers of "popular" Shakespeares may be, who these hope to include, and who they don't.

Whereas many recent studies of popular Shakespeare have tended to focus upon its contemporary manifestations, this volume aims at broader historical coverage. It addresses the ways in which Shakespeare has been consumed and reinvented, allowing for interface between cultural, literary, performance, and cinema studies, by means of focused and localized case studies as well as through the mapping of larger cultural logics of Shakespeare-making. In the first chapter ("From popular entertainment to literature"), Diana Henderson traces Shakespeare's journey from the early modern theatrical marketplace to the beginnings of literary lionization, outlining a career as a working dramatist within an emergent entertainment industry which belies his subsequent repositioning as an icon of elite culture. This chapter addresses the relation between the cultures of entertainment and performance (both learned and popular, aristocratic and plebeian) in which the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries originated and the fashioning of Shakespeare's dramaturgy into a literary oeuvre, a process definitively marked by the publication of the First Folio in 1623. Peter Holland ("Shakespeare abbreviated") offers a brief history of Shakespearean theatrical production, cultural dissemination and transmission, in terms of its logics of reduction, selection, and abbreviation; in the popular theatre, Shakespeare seen whole is anomalous and exceptional. Beginning with the shortened and streamlined performance texts of the seventeenth centuries, the chapter considers the durability of the burlesque, skit, spoof, sketch, and parody in the theatre and other media. Holland's

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performance history, which considers the factors which adjust Shakespeare's texts to the material contingencies of theatre-making and popular taste, is followed by Barbara Hodgdon's account ("Shakespearean stars") of the phenomenon of the "star" Shakespearean performer in both the theatre and cinema, from Richard Burbage to Ian McKellen, looking in particular at the ways in which the popular understanding of stardom is differently inflected on stage and screen, and, in relation to this, at the changing levels and types of cultural prestige afforded to the Shakespearean performer before and after the advent of mass media.

From Henry Peachum's extempore illustration of a sixteenth-century text of *Titus Andronicus* onwards, Shakespeare's works have provided ample material for artists of every description, serving as source material and inspiration for portraiture, genre painting, representations of scenes and characters, cartoons, caricatures, and prints. Tracing the ways in which Shakespearean visual iconographies both shape expectations of reading and performance and assume a life of their own, Stephen Orgel's chapter, "Shakespeare illustrated," examines how the changing relationship between the arts of performance and of illustration disseminates images of the drama beyond the limits of both page and stage. There are, as Orgel points out, only a handful of pictorial representations contemporary to Shakespeare which allude to performance; much more generally associated with the likeness of Shakespeare in popular consciousness is the portrait of the author, attributed to Martin Droeshout, that acts as the frontispiece for the 1623 Folio. This iconic, much-reproduced image is the point of departure for Douglas Lanier's essay, "Shakespeare™," which moves from a consideration of its status as a universally recognized trademark to an examination of Shakespeare's personal appearances, in various guises, in popular fiction. Addressing a range of media and cultural formats (theatre, film, the novel, comic books), this chapter investigates how biographical fictions trade with and transform the popular mythologies that circulate around the writer and the work. Like Shakespeare himself, Shakespeare's plays and characters have also provided material for narrative adaptation from an early stage, and in the following chapter, Laurie Osborne focuses upon recent novelistic appropriations of *Hamlet* to explore the ways in which popular fiction reworks dramaturgy as narration. Questions of genre, and of the effects of adjusting Shakespeare's works to a medium for which they were not conceived (in this case, television), are also the concern of Emma Smith's chapter, "Shakespeare Serialized." Looking at a pioneering instance of Shakespearean transposition to the broadcast medium, the BBC's serial adaptation of the First and Second History play cycles, *An Age of Kings* (1960), Smith identifies its generic affinities with the soap opera and historical epic, as well as comparing the forms and conventions of modern serialization with the

original circumstances of composition and theatrical production of the multi-part play.

As Stephen Buhler observes in his survey of "Musical Shakespeares," the story of Shakespeare in music begins with the presence of music in Shakespeare; since then, across a range of musical genres, the language, narratives, dramatis personae, and mythology of Shakespeare's works have served as resources of musical inspiration, citation, allusion, and recycling, frequently in ways which blur the divisions between the serious and the popular, highbrow and lowbrow, minority and mass culture. Acknowledging the vast terrain of musical appropriations of Shakespeare, this chapter examines modern popular musical culture's enduring capacity to borrow or steal Shakespearean archetypes as a means of engaging concerns of race, generational conflict, and sexuality. Shakespeare's auditory presence is also the concern of "Shakespeare Overheard," in which Susanne Greenhalgh surveys Shakespeare's fortunes within one mass entertainment medium in which he has seemed remarkably at home: radio. Greenhalgh details a history of productions of the works, and their associated authorial fictions, that has remained largely invisible to performance critics. Following an itinerary which runs from Shakespeare's Stratford to "Juliet's balcony" in Verona, Nicola Watson's chapter, "Shakespeare on the tourist trail," examines the dissemination of Shakespearean mythologies and cultural memories across a range of key tourist sites, assessing both the official narratives that are available to the Shakespearean tourist, and the variety of ways in which these can be negotiated by the serious, agnostic, or casual visitor. If the tourist sites associated with Shakespeare can be regarded as specific, highly charged geographical locations in which popular myths and alternative narratives around Shakespeare flourish independent of scholarly concerns, the placeless, global space of the world wide web is another arena in which information – and misinformation – about Shakespeare can circulate regardless of academic boundaries and regulations. A number of recent accounts of Shakespeare on the internet have begun to focus upon the pedagogic and scholarly possibilities and responsibilities of the digital media with regard to the dissemination of archival, teaching, and research materials, to the exchange of information and to the management of critical debate. Once academic discourse is placed in the wider context of internet culture, however, it finds itself situated within a medium which does not necessarily differentiate between the responsible and the irresponsible use and circulation of information, between high and low cultures, and between what can be verified and what can be fabricated. Shakespeare on the internet is as much the provenance of the cultist, the crank, the conspiracy theorist, the parodist, and the pornographer as it is the domain of the professional researcher and pedagogue, in that it allows, even encourages, the proliferation of resources and viewpoints once confined to

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marginal groups of self-styled sectarians, heretics, and dissidents. In the penultimate chapter, "Performing Shakespeare in digital culture," W. B. Worthen takes up the challenge of Shakespeare in the newest media, suggesting that the extent of the impact of digitalization, the DVD, and the potential for interconnectivity, upon our understanding of how performance works, and what it is, has only begun to be realized. Finally, in "Shakespeare's popular face," Carol Chillington Rutter reflects upon both the beginnings and endings of performance by turning to an aspect of Shakespeare's visual presence within the cultural environment that has been strangely neglected as a source of evidence of how the theatre engages its audiences: the playbill and the theatre poster.

This *Companion* invites the reader to consider the singular case of Shakespeare in order to address wide-ranging questions of cultural transmission, appropriation, authority, and pleasure. It asks what happens when Shakespeare is popularized, and when the popular is Shakespeareanized; it queries the factors that determine the definitions of and boundaries between the legitimate and illegitimate, the canonical and the authorized, and the subversive, the oppositional, the scandalous, and the inane; it investigates the consequences of what happens when cultural practices and vocabularies located within one zone migrate to another, as when popular performance becomes legitimized, or when aspects of elite or minority culture are rendered mainstream. Acknowledging the immense diversity of forms and activities adopted by, on behalf of, or under the name of, Shakespeare, it hopes to extend and enrich our continuing conversations with the works, and with the cultural legacies they have sustained and generated.

Quotations from Shakespeare are from the Oxford *Complete Works* (1988), edited by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor.

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DIANA E. HENDERSON

From popular entertainment to literature

Shakespeare's transformation from popular entertainer to literary lion was a complex, fascinating process, but it is only one of several plots in the drama of his ever-widening success and influence. Although it is undeniable that Shakespeare has become the Bard of high culture, he has never been exclusively or stably held aloft. Indeed, his story convincingly demonstrates the instability of the line dividing high and low, elite and popular, revealing the multiple (and sometimes colliding) meanings of those terms. Certainly never "unpopular," Shakespeare worked in a theatre that was attended by a broad cross-section of the London populace and drew on a range of ritual and folk elements; at the same time, his theatre belonged to an emergent proto-modern economy that arguably displaced oral and amateur traditions. Through greater attention to marketplace and medial transformations as well as distinct variations among non-elite groups, the last forty years of research have shown the inadequacy of simple, singular definitions of "the Elizabethan stage," "popular culture" – and even "Shakespeare." Thus, rather than engage in the potentially "futile endeavor" to "isolate what was purely popular" in the early modern period,[1] this chapter works outward from narrow signifiers to broader contexts, dancing through the evidentiary thickets. It thereby reveals both the importance and rich multiplicity of relationships between Shakespeare and popular culture.

The man and his theatre

To begin with the man William Shakespeare is already to signal his distance from traditional conceptions of popular culture: namely, those derived from folk practices that were immediate, oral, visual, and gestural, in which no individual or writer took precedence over the communal experience and the division between performers and audience was virtually non-existent. Naming Shakespeare serves as a useful reminder of our modern distance not only from those ritual practices but also from their traces in Shakespeare's

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theatre. Its popular inheritance included non-scripted performances (by clowns and dancers, as well as the gestural and rhetorical improvisations of other actors), collaborative scripting that made plays by "patchwork," lively interaction between actors and audiences, and the subordinated importance of the playwright.[2] But to get back there from here, let us start from modern assumptions, with the man.

If forced to place young William Shakespeare in one cultural location, it would not be among the elite. He was born neither noble nor "gentle," did not attend university, worked as an actor and provider of scripts for a professional theatre of such dubious status that it was not allowed to perform within London's city limits, and wrote in a vernacular with little enough belabored classicism to remain generally comprehensible to most English speakers centuries later. The earliest documentary reference to his presence in London makes clear that even within theatrical circles, he was perceived as an "upstart"; in lines attributed by Henry Chettle to Robert Greene, this "Shake-scene" threatens to undo the aspirations of those university-educated playwrights who strove to attain a higher status than the actors. He did so precisely by being a "Johannes factotum" who performed both roles.

Will had a way of blurring boundaries. His first and only definitively "authorized" publications were narrative poems on classical themes, dedicated to an earl; he circulated sonnets in a manuscript form associated with elite and would-be courtiers. Like the uneducated rustic (called, conventionally, a "clown") in *The Winter's Tale*, the adult Shakespeare became a "gentleman born" as an adult, when he acquired a coat-of-arms for his father. He used his earnings as a theatrical professional to buy the biggest house, New Place, in his hometown of Stratford-upon-Avon. His plays would be performed not only in Southwark alongside whorehouses and animal-baiting arenas but also before queens and kings at court, and would be published posthumously in an almost unprecedented, expensive format. In short, Shakespeare was exceptional and exceptionally hard to pin down, in the process forcing his audiences likewise to reconsider inherited ideas of hierarchy, propriety, and value. "Art thou base, common, and popular?" (*Henry V*); "Wherefore base?" (*King Lear*); "What is honor?" (*Henry IV*, *I*); "What's aught but as 'tis valued?" (*Troilus and Cressida*). His art still prompts scrutiny of the meanings in, around, and behind those words.

To the extent that Shakespeare can be regarded as representative, it is in his socioeconomic background from a family of the "middling sort," the growing class of merchants, yeomen, and artisans from whence (*pace* Chettle and Greene) most theatrical professionals came. He and his cohort challenged a two-tier vision of high and low, and could on occasion move in either direction. As actors, moreover, their very appearance defied sumptuary

(dress) codes designed to maintain old hierarchies: wearing robes donated by aristocrats as well as their own or cheaper garb, they played roles ranging from aristocrats and royalty down to beggars and country "clowns." The language Shakespeare would provide for them likewise ranged from rhyme to prose, from elegant textbook rhetoric to scurrilous jokes and insults. This mobility of perspective clearly contributed to the dynamic energy of their storytelling, and the potentially subversive popularity of their performances. They had to hope that King Lear was right when he said: "Robes and furred gowns hide all . . . None does offend" (4.5.161–64). Their box office success, in turn, became Shakespeare's route to financial security and more elevated, if not elite, social status.

The acting companies that were the fundamental organizations of London theatre likewise challenged easy categorization as popular or elite. Officially they were liveried servants under aristocratic or royal patronage, and thus distinguished from the increasing number of socially disruptive "vagabonds" wandering across the English landscape in an era of land enclosures, staggering inflation, unpensioned armies, and expanding markets. From the courtly perspective, their performances in public amphitheatres in the "Liberties" outside London – free from the City Fathers' control, although not from supervision and censorship by the court-appointed Master of the Revels – were warm-ups, encouraging the development of skilled groups of professionals and an extensive repertory, the most successful of which would then be produced at court. Whereas many writers worked as freelancers for various acting companies, Shakespeare was from 1594 both a performing member of the Lord Chamberlain's Men and wrote exclusively for them; in 1599 with the construction of the Globe Theatre he also became a "sharer" or shareholder in that theatre and in their indoor one at Blackfriars, meaning that he was one of a limited number of actors sharing the risks – and profits – from performances in those spaces. He remained a "company man" when, with the ascension of James I, the Chamberlain's Men were renamed the King's Men.[3] Thus, while the company's daily lives and economic fortunes were reliant upon their popular success with those paying as little as one pence (more for a bench seat) to watch their shows in "lowlife" districts, the King's Men were court-affiliated and in Shakespeare's last years performed as well at the more expensively priced Blackfriars (minimum entrance 3–6 pence), for those who could afford it. Although aldermen and Puritan preachers regarded the theatre industry as distracting, disorderly, and even devilish, Shakespeare's career within it reveals the analogy between its incipiently bourgeois aspirations and the business models of its London critics. Whether we follow Paul Yachnin in emphasizing the "popu-luxe" character of this theatre's entertainment, or attend to its submerged

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expressions of the "popular voice," as does Annabel Patterson, the mobility of the middling sort and the middle term contributed – and continues to contribute – to Shakespeare's multifaceted appeal.[4]

The popular performance tradition

Both as performance scripts and within their dramatic fictions, Shakespeare's plays are infused with signs of popular culture. Perhaps easiest for the modern reader to discern are two character types identified chiefly by functional rather than individuated names: the Fool and the Clown. Peter Thomson rightly details the distinctions among fools, clowns, and knaves (such as Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale*).[5] Nevertheless, they all derive from what Joel Schechter represents as the origins of popular theatre in mime and clowning: "Their art lives in bodies and voices, in their memories and stage acts, and those of people who know them; their repertoire reposes in people."[6] Emphasizing the unruly body and the immediacy of performance, these figures move back and forth between the world of the fictional representation and that of its audience. Some argue that they follow in a secular satirical tradition tracing back to the ancients; certainly they brought to the professional stage the kinds of tricks and attention to the body common amongst medieval *jongleurs* and amateur folk players. Richard Tarlton, who most likely honed his skills at insults and jigging while working as a tavern host, became the biggest star of the Queen's Men in the 1580s playing (satirical) bumpkins such as Simplicity in *The Three Ladies of London* (1584) and Derrick in *The Famous Victories of Henry V* (1587?), plays with which Shakespeare was clearly familiar.[7] Thomson argues that soon after Tarlton's death in 1588 Shakespeare "resurrected him" as the rebellious Jack Cade in *Henry VI Part 2*.

Like his relative the Fool, the rustic Clown could, under guise of boorish incomprehension, make jibes at issues and authorities a "wiser" man would not dare broach. Although not their skill exclusively, Clowns were often associated with jigging and other forms of popular dancing. (After his stint with Shakespeare's company, Will Kemp would make a "Nine-Day's Wonder" out of his stunt of Morris-dancing from London to Norwich.) The jigs that concluded each professional stage performance seem to have involved not only dance steps but satire, libel, or scurrility – which may be another reason why none of them survive. They were thought "dangerous enough for an order for their suppression in all London playhouses to be issued in October 1612 after the 'tumultes and outrages'" they caused at the Fortune Theatre, where they drew "divers cutt-purses and other lewde and ill disposed persons in great multitude."[8] Here, as in so much official and

anti-theatrical writing, unruliness onstage is held responsible for unruliness beyond it, with forms drawing on popular tradition being seen as particularly threatening. Similarly, in 1607, a Somerset Justice of the Peace complained that "shews" involving the folk plays of Robin Hood and St. George, performed in the streets of Wells, were slandering him.[9] Clearly the dukes and kings of Shakespeare's plays were not alone in suffering under the scrutiny of their social "inferiors." Robert Weimann contrasts this "disenchanting" function of clowning with the "enchanting" work of representational fiction-making, noting how it allows a structure of burlesque and parody within or alongside a more "elevated" plotline.[10]

The Fool figure has an especially rich history in this regard, and his multiple connections with both popular and courtly traditions have made him also among the most studied. Enid Welsford has traced the ways in which the "natural fool," whose lack of mental capability was regarded as having bawdy bodily compensations, contrasted with the "artificial fool" or witty court jester, and yet were mingled in the playing tradition. Medieval devils and the Vice figures from earlier popular plays such as *Mankind* (*c.* 1471) and *Cambises* (*c.* 1561) provided another analogue from the religious tradition for the Fool's outrageous behavior and unusually free speech: although within the fiction they would eventually be defeated in the name of morality, along the way they stole the show by running amidst the audience, announcing their pleasure in evil-doing, and otherwise wreaking havoc.[11] Weimann dubs the Fool the "heir of myth and the child of realism," calling attention to the flexible functionality of such topsy-turvy figures in performance.[12] Certainly the Fool's carnivalesque role in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and *King Lear* includes turning the world "upside down" in language and behavior, but even more importantly within the fiction he reveals how much more inverted and "foolish" putatively civilized society can be: one witnesses the transfiguration of a popular performance tradition in the service of an artfully multifunctional dramatic production.

Shakespeare would have encountered actors in the popular Italian tradition as well, the *commedia dell'arte* actors who wore masks, played tricks, and improvised from action-based scenarios called *lazzi*. In *Love's Labour's Lost*, he creates his own versions of the pedant, the wily servant, and the braggart soldier, all popular figures from the *commedia*. The "rude mechanicals" in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* unwittingly combine the group performance antics of a bad *commedia* troupe with the clownish rustics of English tradition. The popularity of traditional types melded with (and was complicated by) the popularity of the particular actors for whom Shakespeare provided scripts. Not only did this mean "less need for any actor to work on issues of characterization" – a useful time-saver for repertory