

PART XVIII

SHAKESPEARE AND POPULAR CULTURE

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There is nothing intrinsically high-cultural or popular about Shakespeare. His relationship to a society's particular mode of cultural stratification is determined by its principles of categorization, its social needs, and its cultural history. Shakespeare's changing status is often linked to the history of media. Particularly crucial to Shakespeare's cultural fortunes has been the status of the theater, though recent developments in popular culture suggest that the bond between Shakespeare and the stage has been loosened, if not broken, in the public's imagination. In the twentieth century, Shakespeare became one of popular culture's favorite symbols of canonization.

At the same time, however, modern popular culture has also exhibited nostalgia for a popular Shakespeare, the sense that so valuable a cultural resource should not be the exclusive property of the elite. Accordingly, recent popular appropriations have sought to assimilate Shakespeare into modern pop's genres and ideological protocols. A characteristic tension in modern popular appropriation has appeared between Shakespeare's status as high culture and his once and future popularity. Recent trends in adapting Shakespeare to popular cultures worldwide suggest that the globalization of "Shakespop" may be opening a new chapter in the evolution of Shakespeare's cultural authority.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Different senses of "culture"
- Adaptation, appropriation, spin-off, derivative, mash-up
- History
- After the First Folio
- Bifurcation in the eighteenth century – print and stage
- Shakespeare becomes international
- Nineteenth-century contradiction – iconic and popular
- Twentieth-century changes
- Paradoxes in popular culture versus Shakespeare
- Meaning and cultural politics
- Fidelity versus iconoclasm
- Bakhtin, carnivalization, and Shakespeare
- Philosophers' perspectives on elite and popular culture
- Pierre Bourdieu
- "Middlebrow" culture
- Cultural studies criticism of pop culture
- Cultural studies and identity politics
- Shakespeare's pop globalization
- Critical study of popular culture

170. PARODY, BURLESQUE, SATIRE

Lynne Bradley, independent scholar, Canada

By *alluding to* Shakespeare but not *being* Shakespeare, parodies are able to reinforce commonly held cultural beliefs about Shakespeare and keep certain aspects of his work in constant cultural circulation without the risk of compromising the integrity of his original texts. At the same time, by reviving those beliefs in new contexts, parodies open the door to new meanings, extending the value of Shakespeare's work and broadening its interpretive potential. While parodies add value to Shakespeare, they ask us to reassess the value of contemporary culture. Situated uniquely between the Globe and YouTube, and mediating the interaction of our cultural past and future, parodies play an important role in the construction of value in our culture, and in the ongoing debate around Shakespeare's meaning and significance.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Characteristics of parody
- Early history of Shakespearean parodies
- Nineteenth-century burlesque
- Twentieth-century parody

171. SHAKESPEARE SPIN-OFFS

Amy Scott-Douglass, Marymount University, United States

Throughout the centuries, there have been thousands of Shakespeare “spin-offs” – as scholars tend to call any adaptation that alters Shakespeare to the extent that it results in a second, distinguishable text. This chapter traces the history of Shakespeare spin-offs from the seventeenth century, a period during which playwrights such as William Davenant and Nahum Tate staged their liberal adaptations; to the eighteenth century, when a newly developing reverence for Shakespeare resulted in theater actor-managers such as Garrick attempting to tame early spin-offs and bring them more in line with Shakespeare’s original plays; to the nineteenth century, when burlesques and travesties poked fun at Shakespeare and high-brow Shakespearean audiences; and to the twentieth century, when politically and culturally motivated Shakespeare spin-offs became even more prevalent.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Seventeenth-century spin-offs
- Nahum Tate’s *Lear*
- Politics by other means
- Changing attitudes toward spin-offs in the eighteenth century
- Four versions of *Shrew*
- Burlesquing the Bard
- The serious side of burlesque
- Topicality in twentieth-century spin-offs

172. QUOTING AND MISQUOTING SHAKESPEARE

Kate Rumbold, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom

Both quotation and misquotation can be highly creative: a source of new meanings and values for Shakespeare. The “original” context of the plays is not the only context at work in the act of quotation, nor is it the only source of meaning. Far from being merely derivative, popular culture generates new meanings out of the signification of “Shakespeare” and the associations that these phrases have accrued over time, as well as out of the words themselves. Modern attitudes toward quotation obscure how much the creative, fragmentary play of modern popular culture has in common with the quotation practices of early modern culture.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- The history of quotation and misquotation
- An early modern culture of creative misquotation
- Shakespeare’s proverbial language
- Phrase-snatching Shakespeare
- Changing values of quotation and misquotation
- A fashion for quoting Shakespeare
- Creative misquotation in early modern popular culture
- Deliberate quotation
- Unknowing quotation
- Habitual misquotation
- Creative misquotation
- Shakespearean snowclones

173. POPULAR ADAPTATIONS FOR THEATER

Jill Levenson, University of Toronto, Canada

If popular culture is a discursive space where a wide range of views can be entertained, popular adaptations that put Shakespeare's plays in circulation beyond "legitimate" theater began to appear at least as early as the first years of the seventeenth century. Ultimately, they became the foundation of modern drama, plays written between 1850 and the present, starting with those created by important dramatists of the nineteenth century who lived into the twentieth century and extending to highly politicized adaptations of the late twentieth century.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- *Hamlet* and Chekhov's *The Seagull*
- Shaw and Shakespeare
- Popular adaptations of Shakespeare's life for theater
- Clemence Dane's *Will Shakespeare*
- Edward Bond and Shakespeare
- Shakespeare's life in late twentieth-century transformations
- Popular adaptations of Shakespeare's plays for theater
- Comedies
- *The Merchant of Venice* and Jewish history
- Marowitz's *Variations on The Merchant of Venice*
- Wesker's *The Merchant* or *Shylock*
- Histories
- Tragedies
- Modern adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*
- Modern adaptations of *Hamlet*
- Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*
- Stoppard's *Dogg's Hamlet*, Cahoot's *Macbeth* political trends

174. THE COMMODIFIED BARD: SHAKESPEARE, ADVERTISING, AND MARKET CULTURE

Jean I. Marsden, University of Connecticut, United States

Since the eighteenth century, "Shakespeare" has been a brand. It is not Shakespeare who is being sold but rather his power as a merchandising symbol and as a manifestation of how consumers see themselves. Thus, the iconography of the Bard in market culture changes as the tastes of the target audience change. His value in this venue is based not in his actual contribution to culture but in his contribution to commerce, which in turn requires a general perception of his cultural worth. Rather than becoming less relevant as the Elizabethan era grows more distant, the Bard takes on new forms in new markets, demonstrating his efficacy as both a product and a vehicle for the promotion of trade.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Beginnings in the eighteenth century
- Print and image
- Shakespearean products and businesses
- New media
- Global markets

175. SHAKESPEARE AND POPULAR MUSIC

Daniel Fischlin, University of Guelph, Canada

Orsino's opening declamation in *Twelfth Night* – "If music be the food of love, play on" – encourages musical "play" and links that play, by paronomasia, to theatrical play and to erotics, as if to suggest the inextricable links among music, play, and love. Musical and theatrical play are empowered as forms of performance that cannot help but be popular, if not "universal," because they are inextricably linked to erotic play. Shakespeare's roots in Elizabethan popular culture and his skill at making money are not unrelated to the ways in which his work has, from the start, intersected with notions of globalization, cultural

border-crossing, and the confrontation with difference. Shakespeare and popular music coexist today as collided entities mutually generating meaning for each other in the crucible of contemporary popular cultures.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Defining “popular”
- Pop music
- Shakespearean contexts and connections
- The ballad
- Globalizing Shakespeare through popular music
- How Shakespeare and popular music intersect

176. ICONIC CHARACTERS: OVERVIEW

Deanne Williams, York University, Canada

Shakespeare’s iconic characters bridge textual and visual cultures, as well as high and popular cultures. Although they are initially products of a text, visual details such as Ophelia’s flowers or Falstaff’s belly make them instantly recognizable. Created by an author who has himself become, an icon of high literary culture, Shakespeare’s iconic characters extend their influence beyond literature and theater, inspiring visual art, music, and opera. As our increasingly digital culture develops new forms of entertainment and expression, Shakespeare’s iconic characters maintain their grip on the popular imagination and continue to inspire artists in a wide range of visual and textual media – and in cultures across the globe.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- The origin and meaning of the word “icon”
- Character criticism
- Shakespeare’s characters as unique individuals
- The afterlives of Shakespeare’s iconic characters
- Shakespeare’s iconic characters in the present world at large

177. ICONIC CHARACTERS: OPHELIA

Sujata Iyengar, University of Georgia, United States

Ophelia in popular culture responds to particular textual aspects of her character: an emblem of innocent, beautiful, doomed sexuality; a mad woman whose lyric sufferings anticipate nineteenth-century female hysteria; a decorative object, “beautified” by the words of Hamlet in his intercepted letter and of Gertrude in her account of Ophelia’s drowning; and a victim of misused male power. Some popular appropriations fantasize that Ophelia both resists her scripted silencing through suicide and transcends eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and early twentieth-century representations of her as a presexual or childlike character rather than the sexually aware singer of act 4.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Eighteenth-century representations
- Nineteenth-century representations
- Twentieth-century film representations
- Twentieth- and twenty-first-century fiction
- Ophelia in France and Asia
- Ophelia in the twenty-first century

178. ICONIC CHARACTERS: SHYLOCK

Sabine Schülting, Free University, Germany

Since Shakespeare’s time, “Shylock” has not only been added to the English dictionary, signifying a “loan shark,” but has also come to serve as a virulent cultural icon and figure of thought, both representing and challenging the relationships

between Jews and the Christian majority population in Western societies. Over the past four hundred years, the character of Shylock has been realized onstage in distinctive, historically specific, *visual types* of the money-lending Jew. More recent stage productions have either emphasized Shylock's common humanity with the Christian characters or have drawn on earlier burlesque traditions to present Shylock as a product of anti-Semitic fantasy.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Shylock between high and popular culture
- Shylock, the Holocaust, and cultural remembrance
- Addressing the stereotype

179. ICONIC CHARACTERS: ROMEO AND JULIET

Carlos Antônio Leite Brandão, Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil

The iconic figures of Romeo and Juliet lay claim to universality because they invite us to rediscover a love that is free, a way for us to construct our humanity and our fate, in a world that, like Shakespeare's Verona, is dominated by business and by pragmatic, banal, and utilitarian relationships. A production by Brazil's Grupo Galpão mounted in 1992 at Shakespeare's Globe in London drew on cultural traditions specific to Brazil but was designed for a global audience, for a space that was metamorphic, dynamic, and unpredictable.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Shakespeare in a popular universe
- Rewriting Shakespeare rewriting an Italian original
- From the streets of Minas Gerais into the streets of the world

180. ICONIC CHARACTERS: FALSTAFF

Michael Dobson, Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom

An inhabitant of Shakespeare's greatest chronicle plays, his fortunes intimately bound up with those of the historical King Henry V, Falstaff manages nonetheless to escape mere history and mortality altogether. His dramatic life continued during the Interregnum in a comic skit. Later he found himself the subject of several operas, porcelain figurines displayed his belly, and brewers and publicans welcomed him with open arms. Amateur actors still love playing him.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Escapes from the texts
- In the pub
- Among the amateurs

181. ICONIC CHARACTERS: RICHARD III

Laura Silva, theater director, Argentina

Richard's charisma and the ease with which he becomes what Spanish speakers would call the *caudillo* or dictator help explain why many Latin American theater directors have been drawn to staging *Richard III*. These directors have felt a certain empathy between Richard and the situations many Latin American countries have been through, subjugated, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, by military groups that usurped power by means of tactics of extreme cruelty, submerging their people in the deepest national identity crisis.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- The charismatic *caudillo*
- Stagings in Argentina
- Telling atrocities

182. ICONIC CHARACTERS: OTHELLO

Irina Prikhodko, Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia

The iconic status of Othello as a character is registered in the fact that in Russia, after *Hamlet*, *Othello* has always been the most popular among Shakespeare's tragedies. Several translations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (the earliest in 1806) brought the play and the title character to the attention of some of Russia's great creative minds: Pushkin, Lermontov, Stanislavsky, Pasternak. In Soviet times, *Othello* was the most popular of Shakespeare's tragedies because, ironically, it was considered less provocative than the other plays with regard to social and political issues, and was taken to be a domestic tragedy.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Russian writers and Othello
- Postrevolutionary *Othello*
- *Othello* in Soviet Russia

183. ICONIC CHARACTERS: LEAR

Aimara da Cunha Resende, Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil

A prehistoric British king may seem unlikely as the inspirer of a fledgling theatrical troupe in Colombia or as a compass point amid the turbulent politics of the 1960s and 1970s, but Shakespeare's Lear filled both roles. In interviews for this chapter conducted in November 2011 and April 2013, Ricardo Camacho, founder of Teatro Libre de Bogotá and its director ever since, reflected on the company's beginnings and Lear's importance in helping the company get its bearings. The students from the Universidad de los Andes who started the Free Theater of Bogotá in 1973 didn't imagine that five years later they would still be performing Shakespeare's *King Lear* and that the production would change their dramatic and political vision forever.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Lear's rise and fall
- Lear's fall versus Edgar's ascent
- *King Lear*, Teatro Libre, and Colombia's political crisis

184. ICONIC CHARACTERS: HAMLET AS ICONIC IMAGE IN RUSSIAN CULTURE

Nikolai Zakharov, Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia

The history of *Hamlet* in Russia confirms the remarkable flexibility of Shakespeare's iconic images to suit the needs of any epoch. The Russian Romanticists considered Shakespeare their predecessor and took his artistic model for help in framing their own national literature. Later in the nineteenth century, Turgenev identified Hamlet as a "superfluous man" – the progenitor of Dostoevsky's Ivan Karamazov. Hamlet's fortunes in the twentieth century were mixed, the product of conflicting interpretations as well as the examples of many stage productions. In the twenty-first century, Russian literature continues to use Hamlet as an icon in popular culture (commercials, sitcoms, etc.), as the embodiment of a thinker, a nobleman, a lover, a lunatic, and an enigma.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Romantic Hamlet of the nineteenth century
- Hamlet as "superfluous man"
- Hamlet of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries