SHAKESPEARE'S

CULTURAL CAPITAL

HIS

ECONOMIC IMPACT

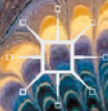
FROM THE

SIXTEENTH

TO THE

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

EDITED BY DOMINIC SHELLARD
& SIOBHAN KEENAN



‘Over the course of the 2016 anniversary celebrations, much will be said about Shakespeare’s value. And yet, his very real cash value will remain for the most part the elephant in the room. Here at last is a book which owns up to it, and it’s wide-ranging and insightful. Properly and refreshingly serious about Shakespeare’s harder contributions to the cultural economy. And because of this honest worldliness, sometimes also funny.’

—Professor Ewan Fernie,
University of Birmingham, UK

‘This wide-ranging and diverse set of essays demonstrate that, where Shakespeare is concerned, money matters. From the financial constraints and opportunities that shaped Shakespeare’s own writing, to the ongoing exploitation of the Shakespeare brand to sell books, beers, dead kings and living actors, this book argues that Shakespeare’s currency is inextricable from the worlds of big business, cultural imperialism, international diplomacy and corporate art. On the 400th anniversary of his death, *Shakespeare’s Cultural Capital* makes a timely and important case for the ongoing value of Shakespeare’s stock.’

—Dr Peter Kirwan,
University of Nottingham, UK

‘A fascinating historical and thematic variety of Shakespeare branding, from his place in early modern commercial theatre and publishing, to his power to sell beer, and his importance in the current GREAT Britain government campaign to attract international investment in the UK. Its contributors raise awareness of our own responsibility as consumers of Shakespeare, as scholars, playgoers and members of the public.’

—Professor Alison Findlay,
Lancaster University, UK

Shakespeare's Cultural Capital

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Foreword

Culture and the market are often seen to be fundamental enemies. It has often been argued that culture can only flourish outside the market, and that works produced within the market necessarily are of low quality, or even that the outcome cannot be counted as art. This book therefore deals with a most relevant and topical issue. It is important to demonstrate that culture and the market can go well together, and in many cases reinforce each other. This does not mean that all cultural activities should be subjected to the market. Indeed, economic analysis has identified under which conditions the market fails with respect to culture, and when it works well.

Shakespeare's Cultural Capital makes interesting reading for everyone who is interested in knowing how the economic and cultural marketplace has worked and is working in the case of the greatest English author. It is fascinating to read how Shakespeare used the market to promote his texts and plays, and the extent to which he was influenced by the market in his writings and presentations of his plays. How Shakespeare is exploited today to promote tourism to Leicester due to the body of Richard III, or in connection to the London Olympics, is also noteworthy. Finally, many readers will be interested to see that Shakespeare has been used for national political purposes, in particular with regard to the quest for a GREAT Britain.

When reading the text I was struck that the relationship of great artists to the market is of considerable interest in many different countries. This is, for instance, true in the case of Germany, a country in which Goethe and Schiller have always played a huge role. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was indeed quite aware of the conflicting relationship between culture and the market. In the 'Prelude on Stage' of his masterpiece *Faust Part I*, he sets a director of a theatre against a dramatist. As can be perceived from the following excerpts the two have quite opposing views of how to deal with customers:

Director: Say what success our undertaking
Will meet with, then, in Germany?
I'd rather like the crowd to enjoy it
…
I'd love to see a joyful crowd, that's certain,

When the waves drive them to our place
…

Dramatist: O, don't speak to me of that varied crew,
The sight of whom makes inspiration fade.
Veil, from me, the surging multitude,
Whose whirling will drives us everyway.
No, some heavenly silence lead me to,
Where for the poet alone pure joy's at play:
Where Love and Friendship too grace our hearts
…
What dazzles is a Momentary act:
What's true is left for posterity, intact.
…

Director: Make sure, above all, plenty's happening there!
They come to look, and then they want to stare
….
Each one, himself, will choose the bit he needs:
Who brings a lot, brings something that will pass:
And everyone goes home contentedly.
You'll give a piece, why then give it them in pieces!
With such a stew you're destined for success.
…

Dramatist: You don't see how badly such work will do!
How little it suits the genuine creator![1]

The text reveals how Goethe saw the tension between the goals of theatre directors who are acutely aware that they must attract a sufficient number of customers in order to survive in their business, and the artists who fear to have to produce for the masses, losing their originality.

Goethe and Schiller, among many other German artists, were heavily engaged in the economic, political and cultural marketplace. Especially in the Romantic period they were used as symbols of German thinking and culture, and to promote unification. But it comes immediately to mind that the same has occurred for artists in other countries: Tolstoy in Russia, Molière in France or Cervantes in Spain would be comparable. The tension between culture and the marketplace is not restricted to writers but also applies to composers such as Sibelius in Finland, Grieg in Norway or Smetana in the Czech Republic.

Once a sufficient number of studies corresponding to Shakespeare and the market have been undertaken, it is possible to compare the fate of different artists and to gain insights into the exact conditions

under which there is indeed a conflict between culture and the market, as Goethe suggests in the 'Prelude' to *Faust* and in which they go well together, perhaps even reinforcing each other.

Shakespeare's Cultural Capital opens a welcome new area of research in cultural economics. It is to be hoped that similar works are written for artists in various cultural fields and in various countries. This would greatly enhance our knowledge about how artists feel about, and cope with, the market, and how the market copes with culture.

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Note

1. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (2003) 'Prelude on Stage', *Faust Part I* in *Faust Parts I & II*, translated by A. S. Kline, www.http://www.poetryintranslation.com, date accessed 27 October 2015, lines 35–7, 49–50, 59–65, 73–4, 89–90, 96–100, 104–5.

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1
Introduction

Siobhan Keenan and Dominic Shellard

> 'We were just in a financial position to afford Shakespeare when he presented himself!'[1]

Subsequent research into the economic difficulties experienced by late sixteenth-century England might have encouraged scholars such as Melissa Aaron to reconsider John Maynard Keynes' famous remark and to observe that 'England produced Shakespeare when she could least afford him', but Keynes' comment usefully highlights the fact that Shakespeare's work was financed and made possible by money and the emergence of a professionalised theatrical market in late sixteenth-century London.[2] It also reminds us that Shakespeare's 'value' and impact in the UK and beyond has been economic as well as cultural. Early twentieth-century scholars were quick to celebrate the cultural importance of Shakespeare, but the world of Shakespeare studies has been slower to acknowledge the economic importance of Shakespeare's works and name, despite the fact that the scholarly Shakespeare industry has itself been partly based on the ongoing marketability of England's most famous playwright and his art.

Recent years have seen concerted efforts to address this apparent 'blind spot' in Shakespeare studies. Thus, there has been important work on Shakespeare in relation to the theatre industry and economy of his time by scholars such as Douglas Bruster and S. P. Cerasano.[3] Much closer attention has been paid, likewise, to the business of playwriting and the commercial practices of early modern playwrights and acting companies, including Shakespeare's main acting company, the Lord Chamberlain's (later the King's) Men.[4] There have been a number of studies which explore the use and appropriation of Shakespeare's name and works, too, especially in modern culture, in spheres such as

the theatre, advertising and education.[5] Such studies have often been indebted to, and informed by, the research of contemporary cultural theorists, with Pierre Bourdieu's concept of 'cultural capital' proving especially important. Bourdieu used his famous phrase to describe the social status and esteem accrued by those members of society who possess 'the cultural competence' to interpret and understand works of art, such as literature.[6] It is a concept which this volume shall be returning to in a variety of ways, as our contributors contemplate the values associated with using and understanding Shakespeare.

The last thirty years have also witnessed fresh interest in Shakespeare's use of economic language, with a series of studies which document or explore his plays and poetry in relation to economic theories and/or their original economic context, borrowing since the 1990s from a new wave of literary criticism christened 'New Economic Criticism'. As two of its pioneers, Martha Woodmansee and Mark Osteen, explain, this can include investigating the 'social, cultural and economic contexts in which individual or related works have been produced', 'understanding texts as systems of exchange' and 'studying exchanges between characters and economic tropes in language', with a focus on 'issues such as the market forces at work in canonization' and the 'selling or publicising of art or literature'.[7] As this overview suggests, New Economic Criticism varies in its approaches to texts, although it is typically 'rooted in semiotic and historicist practices' and 'often employs formalist methods to discuss the interplay between literature and the economic'. The impact of this critical movement on Shakespeare studies was surveyed by Peter Grav in an important article published in the journal *Shakespeare* in 2012.[8] As Grav demonstrates, New Economic analyses of Shakespeare's plays and poetry have been very varied and have led to some fascinating new insights not only into Shakespeare's own overt concern with economic issues (such as usury) and forms of social exchange in plays such as *The Merchant of Venice* and the *Sonnets*, but have thrown fresh light on aspects of the economic context in which he and his peers lived and worked. This has included a growing awareness of the extent to which Shakespeare was an 'active participant in the construction of an economic world of theatre'.[9] There is, however, no existing study specifically focused on the marketing and economic (as well as cultural) impact of Shakespeare. In the year in which we mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death – an anniversary that will see a host of celebrations, publications and Shakespeare-related commerce – it is fitting that we now reflect more fully on Shakespeare's role in the economic as well as the artistic marketplace. It is with this

aim that we invited the contributors to this volume to reflect on the 'cultural capital' and the direct and indirect economic impact associated with Shakespeare and his work since the early modern era. As an area that remains under-researched, we hope that the following essays will offer a timely and distinctive contribution to our understanding of Shakespeare and the Shakespeare industry, as well as a spur to further research in this important field.

The emergence of Shakespeare as cultural icon and brand

Today Shakespeare is a well-recognised cultural icon whose name, image and works circulate widely across the globe. As the world's most famous and arguably most esteemed playwright, Shakespeare has come to be associated internationally with 'high' culture, and yet his fame is not confined to the world of high art. As scholars such as Douglas Lanier have demonstrated, Shakespeare also features widely in modern popular culture: 'Movies, television, radio, pulp fiction, musicals, pop music, children's books, advertisements, comic books, toys, computer games, pornography: nearly every imaginable category of contemporary pop culture features examples of Shakespearian allusion or adaptation'.[10] Shakespeare's ongoing cultural importance would seem to confirm Ben Jonson's famous assertion that Shakespeare and his work were destined to be 'not of an age, but for all time'.[11] But Shakespeare's modern iconic status was neither inevitable nor immediately established.

Shakespeare did come to be recognised as the leading playwright of his day in his own lifetime (as will be discussed in Chapter 2), but drama itself was not held in high cultural esteem by many of his contemporaries. On the contrary, it was traditionally associated with popular culture. Shakespeare's success and the success of the professional stage more generally were to raise the profile and cultural position of drama, but only slowly. That the status of drama remained ambiguous is confirmed, indirectly, by responses to Ben Jonson's publication of a folio edition of his *Workes* in 1616, which included plays that he had written for the public playhouses, alongside his poems for elite patrons and his court masques. The edition faced considerable criticism. While some contemporaries mocked Jonson for his arrogance in publishing an edition of his works, others objected to the format Jonson had used. Folio editions were large and expensive and were traditionally associated with learned works, not plays. The Jonson *Workes* (which also celebrates its 400th anniversary in 2016) set an important precedent in treating plays with this seriousness, and its example was to inspire

the posthumous publication of the First Folio edition of Shakespeare's plays in 1623. Indeed, in many respects it was the latter publication that marked the beginnings of Shakespeare's transformation from the most successful writer of his day into long-term cultural icon. As well as preserving approved copies of 36 of his plays, many of which had never been published before, the First Folio confirmed Shakespeare's growing literary reputation, and his importance as a writer to be read as well as performed. Over subsequent centuries, the popularity of Shakespeare's plays on stage was to wax and wane, as his plays were adapted and staged in accordance with changing theatrical practices and fashions, but his life in print was firmly established.

Shakespeare's wider significance as pre-eminent British cultural icon was to emerge more slowly, arguably taking firmest hold from the late eighteenth century in the wake of the Romantics' embracing and mythologising of Shakespeare as an original genius.[12] One sign of the growing importance of Shakespeare as an icon and a 'brand' – separate from his works – is the beginnings of the Shakespeare tourist industry in Stratford-upon-Avon. Often traced to David Garrick's inaugural Stratford Jubilee festival in 1769, the late eighteenth century saw growing numbers of people heading to Stratford-upon-Avon to visit the places where Shakespeare had grown up and the rise of what later scholars have christened 'bardolatry'. As Graham Holderness notes, 'bardolatry as an organised evangelical movement scarcely existed' before the Garrick Jubilee, but it was to thrive thereafter, as did the Stratford tourist industry.[13] Nicola J. Watson reports that visitor numbers steadily rose across the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: 'in 1806, when records began to be kept, there were about 1,000 visitors a year; 2,200 came in 1851, but, after the opening of the railway line from Warwick in 1860, 6,000 came in 1862; in the tercentenary year of 1864 some 2,800 visitors came in the festival fortnight alone' and 'by 1900, there were some 30,000 visitors a year'.[14] As anyone who has visited modern Stratford will know, the local Shakespeare industry has continued to grow with 'well over a million visits … being paid annually' to the five properties owned by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, and many more visitors being drawn to the town in the last fifty years by the opportunity to see Shakespeare's plays performed in his home town by the Royal Shakespeare Company, the dedicated Shakespeare company set up in 1961 by Sir Peter Hall.[15] As the example of the Stratford tourist industry and the creation of the Royal Shakespeare Company indicates, the modern era has seen Shakespeare's increasing importance and deployment not only as a product (on stage and in print), but as a 'brand', with

his name used to sell not just his plays and poetry but other products – some Shakespeare-related (such as Shakespeare memorabilia) and some not, such as beer and Britain (as is explored below in Chapters 6 and 8, respectively).

Recent years have seen some fascinating research on the emergence of Shakespeare as a 'brand' and his use in advertising and marketing. As this work has shown, the ways in which Shakespeare – and Shakespearean allusions and quotations or misquotations – have been used in advertising and other forms of popular culture have varied over time, but often businesses who draw on Shakespeare are relying either on the 'cultural capital' that has come to be associated with Shakespeare (to borrow Bourdieu's phrase) and/or the specific cultural associations that Shakespeare has accrued over time. These include his identification 'with "culture", quality, Britishness, tradition' and 'wisdom'.[16] As Douglas Holt explains, these kinds of symbolic associations are characteristic of cultural icons, such icons conventionally functioning as 'exemplary symbols that people accept as a shorthand to represent important ideas'.[17]

These same cultural associations, and the 'capital' associated with knowledge of Shakespeare, also help to explain how and why Shakespeare has come to occupy a key place in the educational systems of a number of countries in the last hundred years, mostly notably in the UK and North America. Despite a backlash against the study and teaching of canonical literature in schools and universities in the 1970s and 1980s, Shakespeare continues to occupy an important place in the UK education sector. Indeed, his place has become more firmly entrenched in the last 30 years, following the introduction of the National Curriculum. Currently, the study of Shakespeare is compulsory at Key Stages 3 and 4 (i.e. for 11–16-year-olds).[18] The widespread study of Shakespeare in schools in the UK and beyond has also stimulated and supported an expanding industry of Shakespeare textbooks, scholarly studies of his works and student editions of the plays, as well as feeding into theatre programming and outreach work at national and regional theatres. While defenders of the curriculum argue for Shakespeare's value in teaching students about the human condition as well as drama, the compulsory teaching of Shakespeare in schools has had its critics, with some arguing that Shakespeare is used to reinforce conservative views on issues such as class, race and gender.[19] In either case, what is clear from these debates is the perceived impact and continuing cultural significance of Shakespeare and his works. At the same time, the Shakespeare industry that has grown up around Shakespeare's place in the secondary and higher education sectors reminds us of Shakespeare's continuing economic, as well as cultural, impact and value.

Structure of the Book

In the following chapters, our contributors explore some of the different ways in which Shakespeare has had direct and indirect economic and cultural impacts, nationally and internationally, from the late sixteenth century to the twenty-first century. In the process they demonstrate how Shakespeare has been a part of economic and cultural markets from the beginning, but they also highlight some of the different ends to which he and his works have been put and alert us to some of the ways in which 'Shakespeare's cultural power has been reconceptualised' and redeployed 'over time'.[20]

In Chapter 2, 'Shakespeare and the Market in his Own Day', Siobhan Keenan looks at some of the earliest evidence of Shakespeare's place in the cultural and economic market, exploring Shakespeare's engagement with the world of commercial theatre in late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century London and the place of his plays and poetry in the burgeoning print marketplace. Keenan makes the case that Shakespeare's sustained commercial and artistic success was all but unique amongst the period's playwrights and was tied to the collective commercial strategy and business practices of Shakespeare and his fellow members of the Lord Chamberlain's Men from 1594 onwards. In her reading of Shakespeare's career, the Warwickshire playwright was exceptional not just in his talent as a writer, but in his ability to read the theatrical market and in his unusual financial position as a playwright, company shareholder and part playhouse owner. Keenan's chapter also makes clear that for Shakespeare and his peers, playwriting and playing were commercial as well as artistic pursuits. Shakespeare appears to have played a less active role in putting his plays into the print market, but the early success of his printed plays affords indirect testimony of his growing literary reputation, just as the increasing use of his name on his publications (and on other printed works that he did not write) affords an early example of the exploitation of the Shakespeare 'brand' to market non-Shakespearean, as well as Shakespearean, products.

In Chapter 3, 'Shakespeare and the Impact of Editing', Gabriel Egan extends this concern with the branding and marketing of Shakespeare's works to the present day, reflecting on the shaping and marketing of Shakespeare's plays and poems in print in recent times. Surveying some of the best-known modern editions of the plays, including the Oxford Shakespeare, the Norton Shakespeare and the Complete Works edition published by the Royal Shakespeare Company in collaboration with Palgrave Macmillan, Egan considers how the different editorial

decisions on which these books are based inform readers' understanding of Shakespeare and ongoing debates about his work. He also makes the case that readers and playgoers are implicitly willing to pay more money for editions and performances informed by the latest scholarly work on Shakespeare, so that what might seem esoteric debates (e.g. about the authorship of Shakespeare's plays) have economic as well as cultural and scholarly significance.

In Chapter 4 Deborah Cartmell extends the discussion of Shakespeare's marketing to the world of cinema, exploring the advertising of Shakespeare on film. Focusing first on the history of Shakespeare on film in the early era of sound movies, Cartmell looks at the box-office failure of movies such as *The Taming of the Shrew* (1929) and *As You Like It* (1937) and the role played in this by ineffective marketing strategies. She contrasts this failure with the highly successful marketing of a number of late twentieth-century Shakespeare films, such as Baz Luhrmann's *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* (1996) and John Madden's *Shakespeare in Love* (1998), and makes the case that film companies and producers implicitly learned from the marketing strategies used earlier in the century. At the same time, Cartmell demonstrates the extent to which the ongoing 'life' of the Shakespeare 'brand' is partly attributable to its openness to commercial reinvention and to the marketability of 'Shakespeare' himself. As Douglas Lanier notes, unlike many corporate 'brands' the 'Shakespeare trademark' is not 'under the control of a single institution or cultural (re)producer. It thus remains ever a contested object of value, a body that, despite Shakespeare's warning about moving his bones, remains always in motion'.[21]

The values associated with Shakespeare and the Shakespeare 'brand' are also key to Anna Blackwell's chapter on 'Shakespearean Actors, Memes, Social Media and the Circulation of Shakespearean "Value"'. Paying particular attention to the careers of actors who have moved between Shakespearean work and more popular cultural forms (such as blockbuster movies), Blackwell considers the impact of contemporary Shakespearean actors on popular conceptions of Shakespeare and his cultural and economic value. As she shows, actors such as Tom Hiddleston and Benedict Cumberbatch potentially inflect contemporary understanding and views of Shakespeare, both through their performance of Shakespearean and popular roles and through their participation in digital cultural phenomenon, such as memes, and their engagement as 'Shakespeareans' with social media platforms such as Twitter.

Graham Holderness and Bryan Loughrey reflect on Shakespeare's place and use in a rather different cultural industry in their chapter