



# **The Shakespeare Trade: Performances and Appropriations (New Cultural Studies)**

*Barbara Hodgdon*

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In 1623 Ben Jonson touted Shakespeare as the soul of his age; three centuries later, a newspaper advertisement used Shakespeare's reputation to market Budweiser, "The King of All Bottled Beers." Spanning the past hundred years, *The Shakespeare Trade* looks at how present-day representations of Shakespeare borrow from and negotiate with his cultural authority to shore up particular obsessions, preoccupations, and myths while making and remaking Anglo-American images of gender and subjectivity.

In these provocative case studies, Barbara Hodgdon examines not only how Shakespeare's plays are staged and restaged by readers and critics as well as by performers and directors but also how the Elizabethan age itself is recirculated and marketed.

Hodgdon's look at "The Taming of the Shrew" scans from silent films to the Shrew episode of the eighties television show *Moonlighting*, to the most recent Royal Shakespeare Company productions. Moving beyond Shakespeare's plays themselves, she considers how film and television have marketed Queen Elizabeth I's popular cultural memory and how Stratford's various museum spaces celebrate and exhibit an "authentic" Shakespeare side by side with the "Shakespeare kitsch": T-shirts, ties, thimbles, savings banks, and other mass market souvenirs. Styled as a "collector's history," *The Shakespeare Trade* offers an absorbing and timely account of the means through which Shakespeare's plays, the figure of Shakespeare, and Elizabethan England function in twentieth-century British and American cultures.

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