STARS INDEED: THE CELEBRITY CULTURE OF SHAKESPEARE'S LONDON

by

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Abstract

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Despite a recent boom of scholarly interest in the cultural, economic, and affective force of celebrity, critical inquiry remains peculiarly limited to the past century, with only a handful of accounts veering into questions of pre-film era celebrity and almost no discussion of the phenomenon's existence prior to the eighteenth century. *Stars Indeed* expands the putative historical parameters of celebrity to argue that a confluence of theatrical, economic, and social innovations in early modern London gave rise to a nascent celebrity culture that resonated profoundly through performance, print, market exchange, and social relations. As the theater became a stable, public forum for performance and the circulation of current information, the early modern player took on an increasingly visible and important cultural role, embodying and reflecting social innovations and tensions. Facilitated through the reciprocal dynamics between audience and actor in the playhouse, and perpetuated through the player's accessibility and commoditization in performance and print, the emergence of a celebrity culture empowered early modern Londoners with a democratic alternative to traditional discourses and icons of authority circumscribed by birthright. In four chapters, this dissertation explores the collaborative construction of the early modern celebrity in the theater, the circulation and appropriation of celebrity name and image in print media, the tensions between traditional modes of fame enjoyed through birthright and the emergent celebrity of popular performers, and finally, how Shakespeare's enduring and ever-evolving celebrity has colored popular and critical reception

throughout the centuries. As celebrity remains a particularly immediate and ephemeral kind of fame, this dissertation illuminates the celebrity presence of notable players, including Tarlton, Alleyn, and Kempe, through careful analyses of these stars' appearances in contemporary ballads, commendatory verse, prose accounts, and staged performances, while also exploring the ways Shakespeare, Jonson, Marston, and other playwrights interrogated the mechanisms, implications, and impact of this developing theatrical phenomenon.

Acknowledgments

As I have stressed throughout this project, celebrity is a collaborative creation, and as I have found throughout my work here, dissertations, too, are collaborative endeavors. This project would not exist without the support and encouragement of mentors, teachers, colleagues, friends, and family.

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Introduction:
A Poetics of Celebrity

In Philip Massinger's *The Roman Actor*, first performed in 1626, a young mistress of Caesar Domitian becomes so smitten with the popular tragedian Paris that she claims an out-of-body experience while watching her beloved perform. "What I saw presented,/ Carried me beyond myself," she says in attempt to explain her unrestrained behavior during his performance. "Upon the sudden,/ I feel myself much indisposed" (3.2., Sig. G2). Enraptured by both his shape and thespian skill, she obsessively dotes upon her Roman actor, inserting herself into his troupe's rehearsals and sending him love letters until she finally seduces him to an illicit kiss, which, of course, leads to his own tragic finale.

Though exalted to the extremes of tragedy, Massinger's metatheatric exploration of the dynamic between player and spectator may have found some precedence in the playgoing culture of early modern London, in which he lived and worked. Accounts by both spectators and playwrights certainly seem to suggest a similarly impassioned audience response, as playgoers are reported to have regularly shouted, hissed, and applauded throughout performances, while some, as noted by a spectator to a 1610 production of *Othello*, even wept: "not only by their speech but also by their deeds they drew tears. But indeed Desdemona . . . in her death moved us still more greatly" (qtd. in Gurr, *Shakespearean* 226). Evidence also suggests that, like Massinger's lovestruck mistress, audience members' fervent reaction to captivating performance sometimes extended beyond the walls of the theater. "The eyes of all men are upon him," John Earle observes of the player in his 1628 *Microcosmographie or, A Peece of the World Discovered*. "The waiting-women spectators are over-eares in love with him, and Ladies send for him to act in their Chambers" (Sigs. E3, E5).

The kind of infatuation described by both Massinger and Earle is easily recognizable today as an integral component of the phenomenon of celebrity, with fans clamoring for increasingly intimate access to the popular targets of their desire. A recent boom of interest in celebrity's affective, economic, and social force has done much to unravel the cultural pull celebrities wield over their audiences. Although a growing trend within early modern studies has sought to place more direct focus on actors as what Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean call "responsible agents" in the flowering of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century theater (xii),[1] such critical accounts have yet to make use of the extensive insights offered by recent celebrity studies to explore the celebrity of early modern actors.[2] This dissertation aims to contribute both to the emerging field of celebrity studies and recent critical explorations of the early modern actor's cultural role by applying the insights of celebrity theorists to texts, such as Massinger's and Earle's, that interrogate the bonds between actor and audience in ways suggestive of an early modern celebrity culture.

In the past decade, the scholarly study of celebrity has proliferated, complicating and theorizing our understanding of the kind of dynamics Massinger and Earle disclose, examining the cultural role of the celebrity and addressing a number of key, compelling questions: What defines the celebrity, and how does this particular mode of fame differ from other forms? What compels the public to invest such a significant portion of its time, resources, and emotions into the celebrity? What kind of cultural work, if any, does the celebrity perform? As celebrity

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[1] In addition to McMillin and MacLean's *The Queen's Men and their Plays*, see also Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearian Playing Companies* and *Shakespeare's Opposites*, and the volume *Locating the Queen's Men, 1583-1603*, eds. Helen Ostovich et al.

[2] Alexandra Halasz and S.P. Cerasano, both scholars of early modern drama, have published articles exploring sixteenth-century celebrity as pertaining to the clown Richard Tarlton and tragedian Edward Alleyn, respectively, and both yield noteworthy insight into the theater's role in the evolution and business of fame, as I will further discuss in Chapter One. Such work, however, remains absent in lengthier treatises on celebrity's cultural force.

theorists hail from such diverse backgrounds as film, media, and literary studies as well as the social sciences, the vast array of approaches ensures an equally diverse body of theory. In an early attempt to theorize the celebrity, social theorist and cultural historian Daniel Boorstin in 1961 famously defined the celebrity as "a person known for his well-knownness" (57), citing circulation in the public sphere as the celebrity's sole defining characteristic. Boorstin's seemingly circular, and undeniably derisive, definition actually echoes the term's etymological origins: *celebrity*, which entered the English lexicon in 1849 to denote public persons, traces its origin to the Latin *celebrem*, meaning both "famous" and "thronged" (*OED s.v.* celebrity, n.3). Unlike other icons of fame such as the hero or the legend, which originally signified either superhuman strength or saintly piety respectively, the term *celebrity* speaks only to the mechanisms of fame, indifferent to causation. Therefore, the etymological origins of celebrity likewise place primary focus on the role of the public, the throngs through which the celebrity's fame circulates. If *fame*, derived from the Roman goddess *Fama,* who spread rumor of personal accomplishment and scandal, points to individual achievement, purposefully publicized, the concept of celebrity remains indifferent to accomplishment; its impetus lies in publicity itself.

It is, perhaps, the term's relative ambiguity that has opened up such ample space for disparate approaches and often competing treatments of the subject. The earliest whispers of celebrity theory emerged, unsurprisingly, within the early days of the film industry, when social theorist Leo Lowenthal in 1943 noted with concern a troubling "increase of entertainers" occupying space in the print market (127). The "mass idol," as he would deem this new entity, existed as "a caricature of a socially productive agent" (130), embodying leisure while proclaiming his or her seriousness. Sociologist Francesco Alberoni would later label these emerging stars the "powerless elite" (108): prominent individuals who, despite their high

visibility, held no actual institutional power (109). To Alberoni, the emergence of the celebrity signified "a rigorous separation of roles," by which "politically irresponsible stars" emerged alongside a political class of elites (122), offering a new form of eminence unanchored to office. Boorstin, whose circular definition forms part of one of the lengthiest early works of celebrity theory in his book *The Image*, derided celebrities as "human pseudo-events": manipulative media fabrications bestowing honors upon those who least deserve them. Like Lowenthal and Alberoni, Boorstin defines the celebrity through a sense of lack—a lack of gravitas, power, and purpose masked behind a glamorous façade—and fixes the celebrity as the antithesis to the socially productive. For Boorstin, the easy counter-example to the celebrity takes the form of the hero: a person of accomplishment deserving of fame. "The hero," he argues, "was distinguished by his achievement; the celebrity by his image or trademark. The hero created himself; the celebrity is created by the media. The hero was a big man; the celebrity is a big name" (61).

Other early voices in the discussion of celebrity held less polemical views, focusing more on the mechanisms that propel celebrity and aligning the celebrity with particular media. Russian film director and theorist Sergei Eisenstein offers an early meditation on the phenomenon in his 1949 collection, *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, when he notes the sometimes troubling dichotomy of "the *I* of the actor and the *he* of the image" (136). Eisenstein eschewed casting stars, asserting that their larger-than-life personalities, or "the *he* of the image," better became the grand theatrics of the stage than the potential realism achievable in film, but he remains relatively alone in this formulation, and proportionately little work has to date been performed in the arena of theatrical celebrity. In 1957, Edgar Morin, who effusively deemed celebrities modern-day gods and goddesses, went so far as to declare, "A stage actor has never become a star . . . never been able to play so important a role within and beyond the spectacle" (4), and

film theorists frequently cite what Richard Schickel calls the "incalculable importance" of the film close-up as the impetus behind audience identification with its stars (47). According to Joseph Roach, celebrity hinges on a phenomenon he oxymoronically terms "public intimacy": "they must seem at once touchable and transcendent . . . the very tension between their widespread visibility and their actual remoteness creates an unfulfilled need in the hearts of the public" (16).[3] Schickel maintains that the film close-up is the vessel most likely to deliver such illusions of intimacy, thereby arousing the sometimes frenzied desire fans express for their stars: "We do not see our closest friends so intimately," Schickel argues, "or the people who share our homes, or our lives" (47). One has only to turn to Roland Barthes' now frequently anthologized "The Face of Garbo" as testament to the enhanced intimacy offered in the film close-up; in it, the critic lingers over the curve of the star's nostrils, the arch of her brows, and the "snowy thickness" of her make-up as he explains how Greta Garbo's face on screen "plunged audiences into the deepest ecstasy" (628).

Recent work by Christine Gledhill, Mary Luckhurst, and Jane Moody has expanded discussions of celebrity into the arena of theater, though only from the eighteenth century on, directing attention to the manner by which live performance offers similar illusions of intimacy, if achieved through somewhat different dynamics. "Live performers are seen and experienced by audiences without the forms of mediation characteristic of film," write Luckhurst and Moody. "Put simply, the celebrity of performers is about the experience of seeing an actor in the flesh" (3). Though celebrity studies continue to focus predominantly on the film star, notable contributions have also recently explored celebrity's increasingly pervasive influence in other

[3] Morin also comments on this dialectic, noting that the celebrity must remain always "*almost* at the disposition of her adorers" (25). Rojek adds that "celebrities seem, simultaneously, both larger than life and intimate confrères" (16-17).

sectors of the public sphere, including John Street's discussion of political celebrity or Jeffrey J. Williams' assignation of "Academostars." Such accounts explore the means by which intimacy, identification, and projection are achieved through various media, including print and new media.

Though scholars remain split as to the arenas from which celebrities emerge, the few points of consensus within celebrity studies do illuminate why no extensive study into the celebrity culture of early modern London yet exists. Most discussions of celebrity agree that celebrity is a particularly immediate form, unlike, as Leo Braudy has observed, the legendary figures hailed from antiquity through the middle ages that spread through the public consciousness quite gradually, "when the means of communication were slow and the methods primitive" (15).[4] As the celebrity sign remains ever tethered to a live body, it requires a rather extensive and rapid means of dissemination. Nearly all critical accounts hold an organized mass-media a fundamental requisite of a celebrity culture, as celebrity hinges upon an immediate and repetitious relevance substantial enough to reach ubiquity, thereby precluding early modern London from consideration. Fred Inglis' *A Short History of Celebrity*, for example, lists the circulation of newspapers as one of the necessary conditions for celebrity to emerge; Boorstin deems celebrity the byproduct of the "Graphic Revolution"; and sociologist Chris Rojek holds "mass-media representation [as] the key principle in the formation of celebrity" (13). Perhaps cultural and film historian Neal Gabler sums up these arguments most succinctly: "No media, no celebrity" ("The Greatest Show on Earth").

To what, then, do we attribute reports like Earle's? How do we account for the fame of early stage actor Richard Tarlton, the clowning favorite of both the queen and the playgoing

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[4] Boorstin likewise notes of the fame enjoyed by past heroes: "his gestation required at least a generation" (62).

public at large, whose name flooded the early modern print market, and whose image tavern-keepers appropriated for their signs? What do we make of Shakespeare's lament in his Sonnet 111, in which he bemoans the public's confiscation and unauthorized circulation of his famous name? In this dissertation, I apply the substantial, if often varied, theoretical models offered in contemporary celebrity studies to address these and other questions, as I historicize the emergence of the early modern theatrical celebrity and probe what I argue constitutes a nascent but thriving celebrity culture that resonated profoundly through performance, print, market relations, and social exchange. Despite celebrity studies' strict insistence on mass-media as a requisite to the formation of celebrity, I believe that contemporary celebrity scholarship, focused as it is on the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, offers much to our understanding of early modern culture; most importantly, the work of contemporary celebrity theorists helps to unravel the highly significant, though as of yet unexplored, way in which the early modern theater's influence extended throughout the city of London: namely, by providing the public a democratic means of shaping its sphere by the elevation of its own cultural stars.

In applying celebrity theories to the early modern theater culture, I have also fundamentally shifted the base upon which much of the theory rests, dismissing the putative parameters that circumscribe celebrity within the advent of mass-media. Most celebrity scholarship concerns itself only with contemporaneity, generally veering back only so far as the early days of the film industry, which many posit gave birth to the phenomenon as a whole. A small but growing body of inquiry into pre-twentieth-century celebrity has recently emerged, including Inglis' aforementioned *A Short History of Celebrity*, Ghislaine McDayter's *Byromania and the Birth of Celebrity Culture*, and Luckhurst and Moody's volume, *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain, 1660-2000*. Yet each of these explorations subscribes to the "no media, no celebrity"

paradigm espoused by Gabler, extending ideas about mass-media and celebrity culture backward in order to demonstrate that the putative requisites existed earlier than previously considered. Inglis deems celebrity a "no more than 250-year-old phenomenon" (8). Luckhurst and Moody likewise target the eighteenth century "as the historical moment when fame takes [the] recognizably modern form" of celebrity (3), and for McDayter, the frenzy Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* stirred in the early nineteenth century "marks the emergence of celebrity as a cultural industry" (8). In exploring early modern celebrity, I diverge from contemporary historical inquiries into celebrity in that I do not attempt to extend the principles of mass-media to the late sixteenth century; despite a growing market for current news as evidenced by the emergence of corantos and ballads, the mechanisms of mass-media simply did not exist. What did exist, however, was a central and potent site of news dissemination and publicity considered so efficacious that it prompted increasingly severe scrutiny and regulation in attempt to control the messages it dispersed: the early modern theater.

The development of standing theaters not only provided an avenue for repetitious familiarity with its actors but, given the theaters' capacity to seat approximately 2,500 spectators, provided Londoners a mass forum. As Andrew Gurr reports, "There was on average over that seventy years or so of London commercial theater as many as a million visits to the playhouse a year" with between 15,000 and 25,000 people taking in plays a week (*Shakespearean* 212-213). Considering that the entire population of London in 1600 was 200,000 (Merritt 1),[5] those figures likely encompass a substantial swath of all Londoners, meaning that any actor's fame could easily reach ubiquitous proportions throughout the city. Unsurprisingly, considering the number of people that regularly congregated there, the theater became a locus of communal activity, a

[5] Merritt bases this figure on Stowe's *Survey of London*, first published in 1598.

site for the sharing of news and gossip, and the plays performed there banked on the presumption of audience familiarity with current events. In *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama*, Jeremy Lopez argues that a large share of the pleasure experienced by early modern playgoers derived from being treated as an in-the-know collective (44). For example, plays like *Arden of Faversham* and *The Witch of Edmonton*, part of the popular trend in domestic tragedies, dramatized recent, sensational events. Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girl* fictionalized the exploits of well known London virago Mary Frith. Such adaptations of contemporary individuals and events gesture toward audience familiarity and an appropriate means of dissemination. The number of plays with passing references to concurrent goings-on likewise presumes a collective understanding of the day's news. Consider, for example, the porter scene in *Macbeth* in which multiple references to an "equivocator" most likely allude to the recent trial of Gunpowder Plot conspirator Henry Garner, author of *A Treatise for Equivocation*. The comical allusion counts on the public's recognition of Garner and his book in order for the joke to work. But while the Gunpowder Plot was undoubtedly major news, innocuous allusions to recent happenings decorate plays as well, such as in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* when the clueless wooer Slender brags, "I have seen Sackerson loose twenty times, and have taken him by the chain" (1.1.247-248). The offhand comment rhetorically rests upon an audience familiar with Sackerson, the famous bear of the Paris Garden bear-baitings, and treats the spectators as a collective savvy to current events and popular culture.

Jeffrey Knapp's recent work on the early modern theater as a form of mass entertainment in *Shakespeare Only* and Ian Munro's exploration of the "disseminating power" of the theater inform my work here (107), but I do not wish to invoke the theater solely as a precursor to modern ideas about mass-media. Rather, I wish to assert a fundamentally different way of

looking at celebrity—not as a media production, but rather, a theatrical one, constructed through the reciprocal exchanges between live bodies during the fleeting, but highly charged theatrical event. Though the theater, as a centralized forum for the sharing of news and information, provided an effective means of publicity for its stars, it also provided celebrity's launching ground, a space wherein player and playgoer participated in a complex dialogic exchange that spurred audience identification and elevated stage actors into cultural symbols. Chapter One takes this argument as its central focus, exploring through the lens of performance theory the ways in which the momentary spectacle of live performance produces a tension-laden environment that gives rise to heightened affectivity, simulating the bonds of intimacy and facilitating the audience's desires for and identification with on-stage players. This argument not only challenges current studies' steadfast insistence on the necessity of mass-media to circulate celebrity, but also resists another key implication of much celebrity scholarship that positions the public as passive consumers-only of celebrity, rather than as participants in an active exchange.

A number of the foundational texts in celebrity studies rest upon the public's passive consumption of image, perhaps due, in part, to the earliest treatises' Marxist origins within Frankfurt School perspectives of mass culture, such as Walter Benjamin's take on the celebrity as soulless commodity offered up to public consumption: "The cult of the movie star, fostered by the money of the film industry, preserves not the unique aura of the person but the 'spell of the personality,' the phony spell of commodity" (673). Benjamin's theories of the celebrity-commodity have echoed throughout the decades and across disciplines and, indeed, resonate through much of my own work as I, likewise, explore the commoditization of the celebrity; however, I diverge from Benjamin, along with his fellows of the Frankfurt School Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Leo Lowenthal, in their positioning of celebrities as products

of a calculating "culture industry" and audiences as the passive victims of "mass deception" (Horkheimer and Adorno 94). Their Marxist formulations certainly continue to inform recent inquiry into the subject; in 1997, P. David Marshall deemed the celebrity "pure exchange value cleaved from use value" that "articulates the individual as commodity" (*Celebrity and Power* xi). However, as much as the celebrity reifies the concept of the commoditization of individuals in a highly visible way, it does so in a way that invites the public, through its active trade in and consumption of celebrity, to participate in the economic exchanges that assign personal value. Celebrity, I argue, offers a forum for the negotiation of the economic principles that govern everyday life, enfranchising publics to make investments in their stars and deliberate their market values, thus repositioning the celebrity's audience from passive consumer to active trader.

Though lacking the political, and polemical, aims of these Marxist critics, a substantial body of psychoanalytically informed film criticism, most notably in Christian Metz's *The Imaginary Signifier*, likewise focuses on the passive engagement of audiences with their celebrities. As Metz argues, audience members, lulled to a near dream-like state in the darkened auditorium of the cinema, pleasurably misrecognize the movie star as a more complete version of the self. Celebrity is therefore generated through a kind of Lacanian mimetic desire, spurred by the passive, empathic engagement fostered by the cinema. Metz's argument, like many early treatises on celebrity, denies celebrity status to any live performer, as live performance always carries with it the capacity to break the fourth wall, and as Metz theorizes, such "reciprocal identifications," or "the conscious acceptance of the to-and-fro movement between *I* and *you*" (94), prevents passive identification. Though emerging from strikingly different schools of inquiry, Metz's hypothesis, like those of the Frankfurt School, similarly positions the celebrity audience as, here, quite literally unthinking, motivated by the precognizant directives of the

unconscious. In the theater, especially in its pre-Restoration structure before the advent of the dividing proscenium arch, audiences remain aware of their own complicity in the spectacle. They, too, are on display and, therefore, can never drift off to the dream-like state that engenders psychic transfer. In this dissertation, I maintain that it is precisely this active and aware experience, the dialogic exchange between player and playgoer, that facilitated the early modern culture of celebrity.

Central to my argument is a fundamental insistence on the collaborative construction of the celebrity, an assertion that celebrity remains, and always has been, a democratically exercised form of narrative-building. What we call celebrity, I argue, is a sign, a recombinant amalgam of an individual's enacted roles (broadly defined) and publicized personal life conflated with cultural fixation, all projected onto the bodies of living individuals. These human narratives both emerge from and circulate through the public sphere, forming an integral part of the way that cultures both negotiate and craft their environments. In this emphasis, I am indebted both to the politically informed work of Marshall, who asserts that "the celebrity embodies the empowerment of the people to shape its sphere symbolically" (*Celebrity and Power* 7), and to the post-Marxist work of Allison Hearn, Rosemary Coombe, and Lawrence Grossberg, who position the public as both producer and consumer of celebrity image. As Lawrence Grossberg explains,

> Audiences are constantly making their own cultural environment from the cultural resources that are available to them. Thus, audiences are not made up of cultural dupes; people are often quite aware of their own implication in structures of power and domination, and of the ways in which cultural messages (can) manipulate them. (583)

Like Grossberg, I maintain that the public has a far more active role in the generation of celebrity than it is often credited to have in that celebrity empowers the public to craft its own cultural narrative, whether in support of or as a subversive alternative to authoritative discourse. As the public culls and synthesizes its various resources—theatrical performance, rumor, desire, fantasy—into the conflated celebrity sign, it asserts its own cultural message. The celebrity then functions as the passive imprint of an active public imagination, a site of variant popular projections, a narrative of popular power.

It is no wonder that today celebrity thrives most robustly in the untamed wilds of the Internet. Celebrity, I argue, has always functioned in the communal spirit of public ownership, and it has always toyed with the structures of authority, emerging, in fact, as an alternative to sanctioned authority: a cultural symbol authored through popular acclaim. That celebrity worship has always been tinged with an air of irreverence signals the public's recognition of its complicit ownership in the celebrity sign, its authorship of celebrity narrative, and its continuous agency in the elevation or devaluation of celebrity presence. As a democratized form of symbolic storytelling, the mere presence of celebrity proclaims a populace's prerogative to assert its own narrative and cultural figures. As Rojek argues,

> As modern society developed, celebrities have filled the absence created by the decay in the popular belief in the divine right of kings, and the death of God. The American Revolution sought to overthrow not merely the institutions of colonialism but the idea of monarchical power too. It replaced them with an

> alternative ideology, in some ways no less flawed and fantastic: the ideology of the common man. (13)[6]

As I argue in this project, celebrity involves the public generation of what I call the second self of celebrity: a multifariously authored collection of narratives projected onto the live bodies of the famous. This second, socially constructed celebrity body stands, particularly within the context of early modern England, as an egalitarian counterpoint to the dual bodies of the monarch, offering in resistance to the divinely appointed second body of the royal *We,* a communally crafted second self of celebrity.[7]

As my central focus is an exploration of celebrity's narrative power, I focus less on the celebrities themselves than on the public dynamics that generate and perpetuate the celebrity sign. Early modern celebrities do occupy important space in this project as well; indeed, throughout the following chapters, I have combed through and pieced together the often scant documentary evidence available in attempt to reimagine, and then read, the narratives embodied in theatrical stars like Richard Tarlton, Edward Alleyn, Will Kempe, and, of course, William Shakespeare. However, my aim is to uncover the processes by which celebrity emerged as a system of signification and storytelling, the means through which the public crafted and circulated its celebrities, and the cultural ramifications of this emerging development. Therefore, the focus of this project centers, as does the phenomenon of celebrity as a whole, on the public,

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[6] For more on the democratic principles of celebrity, see Marshall, pp. 5-9, and Boorstin, pp. 49-54. For an alternate point of view, see Marjorie Garber, who argues that celebrities reflect a collective nostalgia for hierarchy (*Symptoms of Culture* 18).

[7] See also Roach, who argues, "Celebrities, like kings, have two bodies . . . As their sacred images circulate in the demotic swirl of the profane imagination, celebrities foreground a peculiar combination of strength and vulnerability, expressed through outward signs of the union of their imperishable and mortal bodies" (24).

the variant sites of celebrity authorship, including the theater, the market, the print-stalls, and the patronage system.

In this investigation of celebrity's narrative, economic, and cultural force, I take as my subject the city of London, from approximately the time of the first standing theater, James Burbage's Shoreditch Theater, built in 1576, to the closing of the theaters in 1642, paying particular attention to the decades Shakespeare lived and worked there. As I argue, a confluence of theatrical, economic, and social innovations in early modern London gave rise to a nascent celebrity culture that resonated profoundly through performance, print, market exchange, and social relations. As the theater became a stable, public forum for performance and the circulation of current information, the early modern player took on an increasingly visible and important cultural role, embodying and reflecting social innovations and tensions. Facilitated through the reciprocal dynamics between audience and actor in the playhouse, and perpetuated through the player's accessibility and commoditization in performance and print, the emergence of a celebrity culture empowered early modern Londoners with a democratic alternative to traditional discourses and icons of authority circumscribed by birthright.

Chapter One theorizes and historicizes the collaborative construction of the early modern theatrical celebrity, paying special attention to the paradoxical dynamics of intimacy and estrangement facilitated through advances in "personated" acting styles, while also exploring the ways celebrities provided early modern Londoners a vital and democratic means of valorizing the cultural present and establishing a coalescent sense of a public sphere. Through a close examination of selected dramatic scenes, commendatory verse, and other theatrically inspired print, this chapter further unravels the celebrity of two of the English stage's earliest stars: Tarlton and Alleyn. Both actors, I argue, became powerful symbols of the innovations of their

present age, narrative vehicles through which the public could negotiate changing social dynamics and the increasingly prevalent role of theatricality in everyday social relations.

Shifting attention offstage, Chapter Two delves into the commoditization, circulation, and appropriation of celebrity name, image, and narrative in early modern print, ultimately revealing the gradual distanciation between person and "the second self of celebrity": a multifariously authored, ethereal double consumed and produced outside the famous individual's control. Grounded in post-Marxist theories of "the social factory," this chapter further explores the ways the celebrity-commodity provided a public forum for the demystification and negotiation of early modern social and economic developments, including commodities exchange and the credit culture. Shakespeare, I argue, interrogates the tensions of celebrity, commodity, and credit in the highly theatrical market environment of *The Comedy of Errors*.

Chapter Three argues that early modern celebrities offered a competing narrative of popular power as an alternative to traditional discourses of authority sanctioned through birthright, and the Earl of Essex's audacious theatricality provides a potent example of the impact of an emergent celebrity culture on traditional modes of fame and authority. Juxtaposing the emergent print condemnations of the "popular" with the increasing theatricality of noble and monarchical display, this chapter explores the tensions between these competing paradigms—tensions that Shakespeare likewise explores in *1 Henry IV, Henry VIII*, and *Richard III* as he reinvigorates Britain's legendary rulers within his contemporary culture of celebrity, as kings must engage in public performance and court popular favor.

Finally, as it is a commonplace today, as it seems to have been in the years immediately following his death, to discuss Shakespeare's genius, this dissertation's concluding chapter examines *genius* from another angle borrowed from the classical tradition: *genius* as the divine,

attendant spirit attached to mortal individuals, a kind of ethereal double. As a metaphor for the second, intangible body of celebrity, how are our notions of Shakespeare's genius rooted in the recombinant amalgam of his *genius*? This chapter, through a lens of celebrity theory, contributes to an abiding cultural discussion of Shakespeare's longevity: To what do we attribute every age's appropriation of Shakespeare as contemporary? Though this chapter does not claim to provide a definitive answer to this enduring question, it does attempt to offer a fresh perspective, examining the various narratives collectively understood as "Shakespeare" and the means by which, throughout the centuries, other notable celebrities' narratives have intertwined with his own, including David Garrick, Edmund Kean, and Laurence Olivier. The celebrity sign we currently call Shakespeare, I argue, has evolved into a chimerical body encompassing centuries' worth of celebrity narratives.

This final chapter concludes with a brief exploration that I hope may initiate a larger conversation, as I probe the evolution of Shakespeare's *genius* through the arenas of what I label here Transmedial Shakespeare, or Shakespeare 2.0. The subject, though as of yet almost entirely untapped by scholars, promises a fruitful site of inquiry; over the past decade, an entire market of transmedial Shakespeare, extending beyond film and theater and into the media of graphic novels, video games, apps, and user-generated online content, has emerged, and often with strikingly similar discursive aims—that is, to displace Shakespeare's authority in favor of public authorship. This examination of Shakespeare 2.0 provides a fitting cap to the discussions of early modern celebrity initiated here, as contemporary trends in transmedial Shakespeare render particularly explicit the multifarious authorship and collaborative construction of celebrity discussed throughout this dissertation.

To conclude with a note about my methods, as the study of celebrity belongs to no particular discipline and, as a field of inquiry, is a composite of sociological, psychological, and historical work performed in the arenas of theater, film, media, and cultural studies, my methodological and theoretical framework is, by necessity, diverse. My own theorizations of celebrity are indebted to work performed in each of these fields, but the primary lenses of my investigation lie in performance and cultural studies, variously centered, at times, on issues of economics, class, and the social circulation of multiple forms of media. I likewise employ a historicist methodology to my readings of the plays and poems discussed within these pages, examining these print-texts within the context of an early celebrity culture, and attempting to gain a greater understanding of early modern cultural history through the various interrogations such texts undertake. The central aims of this project are twofold: both to expand the parameters of current celebrity studies and to provide new insights into discourses of early modern public life. Perhaps most importantly, I aim to open up an important mode of early modern symbolic storytelling to critical consideration and, as such, I consider the discussions initiated in these chapters, taken together, as a study in what I'd like to call cultural narratology—that is, a study of the way publics appropriate and structure their cultural resources in the collaborative crafting of narrative. This dissertation investigates a series of overlapping narratives: the stories embodied by early modern theatrical celebrities, the stories through which Shakespeare and his contemporaries interrogated the rise of celebrity as a cultural force, and the over-arching story of celebrity itself as mode of narrative enfranchisement for the culturally dispossessed.

Chapter One:
Stars in Deed

Amid the sumptuous display and elaborate pageantry of Anne Boleyn's coronation procession in Act 4 of *Henry VIII (All Is True)*, a group of onlookers gathers to marvel at the illustrious individuals parading before them:

> SECOND GENTLEMAN. A royal train, believe me. These I know.
> Who's that that bears the sceptre?
> FIRST GENTLEMAN. Marquis Dorset.
> And that, the Earl of Surrey with the rod.
> SECOND GENTLEMAN. A bold brave gentleman. That should be
> The Duke of Suffolk?
> FIRST GENTLEMAN. 'Tis the same: High Steward.
> SECOND GENTLEMAN. And that, my lord of Norfolk?
> FIRST GENTLEMAN. Yes. (4.1.37-42)

When the Second Gentleman finally spies Anne, he cries out, "Heaven bless thee!/ Thou hast the sweetest face I ever looked on" (4.1.42-43), before inquiring about the duchess, barons, and countesses fortunate enough to travel alongside her. "These are stars indeed," the Second Gentleman assesses (55). "And sometimes falling ones," his cohort responds (56).

This exchange offers a productive point of entry into the discussion of early modern celebrity, most notably in the Second Gentleman's choice of the word *stars* to describe the noble entourage. Though the *OED* does not recognize *star* in our contemporary understanding of "a person of brilliant reputation" or "exceptional celebrity" until 1779, the term has long functioned as a signifier of personal exceptionality, tracing its roots to the classical notion that the gods could transform certain exalted mortals' souls, after death, into new stars (*s.v.* star, n. 5a, 1c). In

Book 15 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, for example, Jupiter commands Venus to fetch the soul "from Caesar's murdered corpse" in order to "make it a bright star,/ So that great Julius, a god divine,/ From his high throne in heaven may ever shine" (838-841). Shakespeare directly invokes this classical tradition in *1 Henry VI* when Bedford, mourning the death of King Henry V, declares, "A far more glorious star thy soul will make/ Than Julius Caesar" (1.1.55-56), and again in *Pericles* when the titular character proclaims on word of King Simonides' death, "Heav'n make a star of him!" (22.102). Centuries earlier, Chaucer evoked a similar sentiment when, in *The House of Fame,* the narrator ponders the fate of his own soul, only to be assured that he is not a likely candidate for eternal placement in the heavens: "For Joves is nat theraboute--," the eagle informs the narrator. "I dar well putte thee out of doute/ To make of thee as yet a sterre" (597-599).

In the early English tradition, as in Ovid, the label *star* is a posthumous honor, and for Shakespeare's audience, many of the individuals enacted in the royal procession could indeed be considered stars in the classical sense: their lives extinguished, their names and exploits continued to decorate the annals of English history as they had achieved a kind of earthly immortality. The "bold brave" Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, for example, was remembered as a mighty soldier, a noted sonneteer, a Knight of the Garter and, occasionally, a drunken and imprisoned rioter. Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, one-time brother-in-law to Henry VIII and certainly one of the king's favorites, was a two-time commander of the English army and, according to the seventeenth-century antiquarian William Dugdale, "a person comely of stature and high of courage" (qtd. in Burke 71). Of course, Anne remains the procession's most notable star, as evidenced by the gentlemen's hearty reaction to her emergence, and though charges of

adultery continued to haunt her reputation in the seventeenth century, she was also hailed as the mother of one of England's most beloved monarchs.[8]

But the gentlemen quite deliberately delineate their mode of reception, as an internal audience to the pageantry, from the response of the external audience. To the playgoers, the parading nobles were the stars of their national history, England's great and honored dead. However, the gentlemen, as the staged, contemporaneous onlookers, call special attention to their unique perspective when the Second Gentleman declares, "These are stars indeed"; that is, these are stars *in deed*, or "in action" (*OED s.v.* deed, n.5b, c), distinguishing the stars of the procession from their classical counterparts by assigning the descriptor a vitality absent in its traditional sense. The carefully chosen modifier *indeed* does not reaffirm the descriptor, but rather, subverts it, and thus, "stars indeed," much like our contemporary "living legend," becomes an oxymoron. The posthumous honor, here, is yet active, still in deed, and the Second Gentleman enthusiastically exclaims in self-conscious contradiction what no existent word can aptly denote: a living star. The First Gentleman, playfully dampening his cohort's exuberance, slyly adds his own assessment that these stars are "sometimes falling ones," which the Second Gentleman quickly dismisses with a brusque "No more of that" (57). Yet the disparaging addendum affirms the Second Gentleman's initial assessment and likewise assigns the stars a dynamic presence: these individuals' renown, unlike a fixed, luminous spot in the heavens, is

[8] Another procession, the 1559 pre-coronation procession of Elizabeth I, demonstrates Anne's mixed legacy, as a pageant entitled "The uniting of the two Howses of Lancastre and York" staged the former queen alongside Henry VIII, Henry VII, and his wife Elizabeth to demonstrate Elizabeth I's legitimate claim to the throne. As Tim Leahy explains in "'You cannot show me': Two Tudor Coronation Processions, Shakespeare's King Henry VIII and the Staging of Anne Boleyn," while Anne was featured as part of that legitimate lineage, she was the only staged character absent in the pageant's accompanying verse that was read aloud. Her simultaneous visual staging and verbal omission speak to the complexities of her enduring fame, which I will further discuss in a lengthier analysis of *Henry VIII* in Chapter Three. For more on the 1559 procession, see Leahy, pp. 135-139, and Susan Frye, p. 33.

subject to decline; their legacies are still forming and, as he notes, potentially in jeopardy. The stars of *Henry VIII*, then, occupy a space at the intersection of classical and current meanings of the word *star*, with Shakespeare's audience observing stars in the classical sense, while the internal audience of gentlemen admires their living, famous contemporaries, or stars indeed.

It is no coincidence that the proclamation of living stars should occur within such a display of high theatricality. Anne's coronation procession functions as a kind of play-within-a-play. The highly detailed stage directions indicate a resplendent feast of sight and sound, including hautboys and trumpets, with participants arrayed in gold and pearls, equipped with crowns, scepters, canopies, and flowers. Furthermore, the processing nobles each play a scripted part, as the internal audience of gentlemen discovers in a printed program, such as the Duke of Suffolk's role as High Steward or the Duke of Norfolk's role as Earl Marshall. Situated amidst such a theatrical spectacle, the Second Gentleman's declaration takes on metatheatric significance, highlighting the mechanisms of public display, role-playing, and audience interaction that facilitate the presence of living stars, while casting a light upon the external audience's reactions to the famous actors it beholds upon the stage. Stars, here, are the process and property of the theater, whose decidedly earthly luster resides in richly ornamented public staging. Moreover, the internal audience, and not the gods, elevates these stars to their positions of brilliance, as the lowliest-born characters on the stage, the gentlemen, fashion the processors into stars through their declarations and are thereby endowed with the capacity to negotiate the renown of their higher-born contemporaries, signaling the extent to which the popular audience similarly wields the fame of its stage stars.

In their metatheatric capacity, the stars of *Henry VIII* hold a mirror to the changing social dynamics of fame in the early seventeenth century, theorizing a larger cultural juncture in which

the living famous, facilitated through theatrical enterprise, could grow to iconic heights previously reserved for the legendary dead; the carefully crafted phrase, "stars indeed," responds to this nascent phenomenon by appropriating a classical signifier of enduring fame and modifying it to reflect contemporary trends. Celebrity, as this chapter explores, is in itself a kind of theater, formulated through the complex, dialectical relations between the live bodies of public performers and live, respondent audiences. As I will argue, the immediate and repetitious interface offered between player and playgoer in the early modern theater produced a new kind of fame and a new kind of star: one that was living, mutable, and, perhaps most significantly, elevated not through divine intervention, but popular acclaim.

Amongst the growing body of historical inquiries into the emergence of celebrity, the dominant trend has been to extend the commonly accepted parameters of celebrity, first established by twentieth-century sociologists and film theorists, backward in order to demonstrate that the phenomenon's putative requisites can be found earlier than previously imagined.[9] The earliest forays into the origins of stars isolated the phenomenon within the development of the film industry; subsequent accounts argued that similar conditions of mass dissemination emerged with the development of widely circulating newspapers and books, thus repositioning the origins of celebrity in the eighteenth century, all the while affirming the foundational theories' principles that a celebrity culture hinges on an organized form of mass-media. As Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody argue in their historical exploration of theatrical celebrity, "celebrity is above all a media production: only in the eighteenth century does an extensive apparatus for disseminating fame emerge" (3). In this chapter, and indeed, in this project, I propose an interrogation of celebrity that plots an inverse trajectory from the dominant

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[9] See Ghislaine McDayter, *Byromania and the Culture of Celebrity*; Fred Inglis, *A Short History of Celebrity*; or Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody, *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain, 1660-2000*.

narrative; celebrity, I argue, is not a media production, but rather, a theatrical one that emerged through the reciprocal exchanges between staged performers and live audiences. Rather than attempt to demonstrate that the fundamental principles of mass-media extend back to the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, I propose instead a forward-looking approach, arguing that as the concept of publics has grown to encompass larger segments of a global population, that celebrity-oriented mass-media arose in attempt to recreate the intimate dynamics of the theater, offering periodically, in the absence of live bodies and immediate exchange, the images and narratives the stage provides.

Of Heroes and Celebrities

As scholarly consensus almost unanimously deems the celebrity a modern phenomenon, it has become commonplace amongst celebrity theorists to pinpoint the precise tangent in fame's evolution when the earlier cults of hero- or legend-worship gave way to a celebrity culture, and to theorize why this shift occurred, and what it signifies about the publics that exalt such figures. Hero, like star, was traditionally bestowed as a posthumous honor, and the dominant strain in theoretical distinctions between the hero and the celebrity has figured the two as mutually exclusive categories, with the former grounded in commendable achievement and the latter a vacuous signifier of undeserved fame. Heroes, as Leo Lowenthal argued in one of the earliest treatises on celebrity in 1943, are "idols of production": they provide goods and deeds that feed the cultural sphere; celebrities, on the other hand, are "idols of consumption" who produce nothing, and only stimulate the public appetite (130). Cultural historian Daniel Boorstin elucidated this distinction in his landmark 1961 polemic, *The Image*:

> Our age has produced a new kind of eminence. This is as characteristic of our culture and our century as was the divinity of the Greek gods in the sixth century B.C. or the chivalry of knights and courtly lovers in the middle ages. It has not yet driven heroism, sainthood, or martyrdom completely out of our consciousness. But with every decade it overshadows them more. All older forms of greatness now survive only in the shadow of this new form. This new kind of eminence is "celebrity." (57)

Boorstin's distinctions have echoed through the decades and across disciplines. In 1978, film theorist James Monaco argued,

> Before we had celebrities we had heroes . . . Now, what these hero-types all share, of course, are admirable qualities—qualities that somehow set them apart from the rest of us. They have done things, acted in the world: written, thought, understood, led. Celebrities, on the other hand, needn't have done—needn't do—anything special. Their function isn't to act—just to be. (6)

Each of these theorists, and their subsequent adherents, has framed the divergence between hero and celebrity by measures of achievement, and this argument has resonated through much critical inquiry into the subject.[10] As recently as 2008, this delineation surfaced in one of the most talked about moments of the presidential campaign: the McCain "Celebrity" ad, in which images of Barack Obama were juxtaposed against footage of chanting crowds, Paris

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[10] Part of the presumed distinctions between hero and celebrity may boil down to simple etymology. *Hero*, a term that originally denoted men of superhuman strength favored by the gods, if not the demigods, signifies extraordinary courage and valor (*OED s.v.* hero, n.1); *celebrity*, meaning both celebrated and thronged, points instead to the mechanisms of fame, indifferent to causation (*OED s.v.* celebrity). One term rests on notable virtue; the other is only concerned with the quality of being well known. Such definitions, however, need not paint the two as mutually exclusive.

Hilton, and Britney Spears. “He’s the biggest celebrity in the world,” the voiceover narration announces before the ad fades to black and then asks, “But is he ready to lead?”. The ad quite clearly frames the choice between the two candidates as one between a celebrity and a hero, between baseless, fleeting popularity and a verifiable history of accomplishment, testifying to the ubiquity and enduring potency of the theorized hero-celebrity divide. Such distinctions also similarly delineate the publics that celebrate either figure, as the ad implicitly demonstrates with footage of the Berlin throngs rhythmically chanting Obama’s name; the crowds speak with one choreographed voice, seduced by glamour, no longer capable of individual thought. McCain, in contrast, is portrayed alone, a maverick staring up and to the right, presumably to a better future. The ad not only contrasts the celebrity and the hero, but asks its audience who it would rather be: a mindless follower of a celebrity, or the partner to a singular visionary.

Of course, such easy taxonomy is complicated by a glaring omission: many celebrities rise to fame precisely because of their exceptional achievements, or, to borrow Monaco’s phraseology, because they have done things. As Chris Rojek explains, one type of celebrity—the kind he labels “the achieved”—emerges to prominence because he/she is thought “to possess rare talents or skills” (18), and Rojek includes noted actors, musicians, and athletes in this category, while admitting that another type, “the attributed,” seem to come by their fame solely from mass-media sensationalism (18). It is this second type that garners such derision, but even Rojek’s compartmentalization demands reexamination, as notions of the “achieved” and “attributed” likewise insist that some celebrities deserve recognition while others are little more than flimsy public shams. Celebrity, however, is neither authentic nor imagined, but an exchange between person and public, through which fame is always at least somewhat achieved, originating in a person’s actions, as well as attributed through audience recognition and

projection. All celebrities "do things," whether they act, sing, or have eight babies; what Rojek describes as attributed is really a question of the value he attributes those particular endeavors.

A 2005 study in the *British Journal of Psychology* offers interesting insight into attitudes toward celebrities and heroes and the distinctions frequently attributed to them. In a survey of 299 Britons, psychologists asked participants to name their favorite celebrity and favorite hero. Their question delineated the two categories by specifying that the hero's "achievement persists through time," while the celebrity is "a famous person whose achievements are well known nationally or internationally, but who does not create any objects or ideas of permanence or lasting importance" (42). These guidelines, while similarly demarcating the two categories by means of achievement, also incorporate issues of temporality, isolating the defining distinction in the achievement's enduring impact, which, for the celebrity, referred to here in the present tense, is not yet calculable.[11] Thus, the distinctions listed here lay not so much in the measure of accomplishment as its sustainable presence in the cultural sphere—a presence only assessable in hindsight.

In fact, by Boorstin's own admission, the term *hero* has long been tinged with an air of nostalgia, as if the era of heroes is always already a distant past. "Each successive age," he writes, "has believed that heroes—great men—dwelt mostly before its time" (46). As Leo Braudy observes in *The Frenzy of Renown*, "heroism is ever receding," adding that even *The Iliad*, from which much of our Western conception of heroes derives, is "in great part a lament for a lost civilization of great men and women" (30). Thomas Carlyle, in his 1840 lecture series *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*, refers to heroes almost exclusively in the

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[11] Four of the respondents' top five heroes were deceased: Winston Churchill, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Jr., Princess Diana, and Jesus. The top five celebrities, on the other hand, were all, at the time of the survey, alive: David Beckham, Billy Connolly, Michael Jackson, Sean Connery, and Robbie Williams.

past tense, noting they "were the leaders of men, these great ones" (1), before labeling Napoleon, who died two decades earlier, "our last Great Man" (280). What Boorstin, Monaco, and others call heroes, then, are cultural memories, not because they no longer exist, but because their assignation as such is predicated on the passage of time. *Hero*, if not an altogether posthumous honor, is generally considered one that requires substantial time to properly distill.[12] Likewise, until relatively recently, the term *legend* remained a posthumous attribution, as it originally referred only to the life stories of saints, who are always beatified after death; the concept of the living legend did not emerge until the twentieth century (*OED s.v.* legend, n.1, c.2),[13] nor did what Roger R. Rollin terms the "Hero-for-a-Day" phenomenon (21), in which local do-gooders can receive instant, though generally short-lived, national or international publicity for valorous deeds. If, as Boorstin and others argue, the public no longer celebrates the heroes in its midst, it is likely the public rarely ever did so; heroes are memories, characters in popular histories. The modified descriptors *living legends, heroes-for-a-day*, and *stars indeed* all apply a contemporaneous twist to signifiers of iconic status, resituating a primarily backward-looking phenomenon in the temporality of the present.

Celebrities, on the other hand, are invariably contemporary and are, in fact, an integral part of the way the public constructs its present. If heroes and legends are part of the way a culture constructs its histories, celebrities are part of the way a culture valorizes its present, and while hero narratives build upon decades or centuries of layered storytelling, unanchored to a

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[12] Shakespeare does use the term to refer to contemporaries in *All's Well That Ends Well* when Paroles proclaims, "Noble heroes, my sword and yours are kin" (2.1.39); however, given Paroles' loose tongue and tendency to hyperbolize, his use of *heroes* here most likely is intended to flatter and aggrandize his company and mission.

[13] Consider, for example, William Faulkner's 1940 novel *The Hamlet*, in which the narrator notes of a particular character, "He was a legend, even though still alive" (31), demonstrating the implication that *legend* was generally a posthumous honor.

live body and always distorted through the lenses of nostalgia, celebrity narratives emerge through reciprocal exchange with a living contemporary. Reframing the hero-celebrity divide through a lens of temporality, rather than through a measure of achievement, likewise reframes discussions of celebrity culture. For Boorstin and his adherents, celebrity culture echoes a Frankfurt School perspective of mass culture, famously touted by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer,[14] that positions consumers of celebrity image as unthinking cultural dupes unable to differentiate bona fide heroes from mass-media fabrications. In this light, mass publics passively and unknowingly ingest "an up-dated form of the opium of the people" (Hall 512), as they celebrate and aspire to a quotidian ordinariness that they have been fooled into perceiving as exemplary. On the contrary, when celebrity is understood as a mode of contemporaneous narrative-building, the celebrity's audience becomes more in line with post-Marxist views of popular culture centered on an active public that crafts its cultural sphere from its available commodities and resources. Through such a view, an empowered public exalts individuals selected from its own contemporaneous body of peers as representative of its values; the public does not merely claim affinity with the embodied virtues of time-tested heroes, but actively shapes the concurrent renown of those yet untested by the trials of time.

The emergence of celebrity culture is no less remarkable when framed within temporal concerns, even if, at times, this cultural shift has been somewhat overstated. There is no reason to suppose that the celebrity has supplanted the hero in the halls of fame. The celebrity is less a cultural replacement for the hero than a companion, as our national narratives have proven amply capable of accommodating both our honored dead and living contemporaries. In fact, in a 2008 survey reported in *Smithsonian* magazine, two-thousand teenagers and two-thousand adults were

[14] See, especially, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," pp. 94-136.

asked to name the most famous Americans, excluding U.S. presidents and their wives ("Goodbye, Columbus"). The results between both polling samples were strikingly similar, and only one of the top ten responses, Oprah Winfrey, could be considered a celebrity. The most famous American, according to respondents, is Martin Luther King, Jr. He is joined in the top ten by fellow heroes of American history like Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Edison, and Albert Einstein. Rather than displace, the celebrity has emerged alongside the hero in the popular imagination, which is not to diminish the significance of celebrity's emergence as a co-existent system of iconography. Rather, the rise of celebrity marks a striking distinction from earlier cults of fame in the active, collaborative construction of embodied narrative. The key difference lies in what Monaco labels the "immediate presence" of the celebrity (6), whose verifiable, corporeal presence allows for a dialectical exchange unavailable between the public and its mythologized heroes, and provides a measure of resistance against caricature.

The emergence of this unique system of fame, in which the public crafts its cultural sphere symbolically through narratives projected upon and embodied in living persons, both signifies and is predicated upon a host of social and technological innovations. First and foremost, the presence of celebrity is predicated upon the idea of a collective public—an idea that is as much a conceptual development as it is dependent upon the requisite spaces and technologies that facilitate communal information-sharing. The celebrity's emergence likewise hinges on a valorization of the present, again signaling both an ideological development in conjunction with the available mechanisms of more immediate dissemination. These twin factors remain intimately intertwined, and both the abstract and material conditions that foster a sense of the public and the present meaningfully intersected in an institution that was, in itself, both a material space and a conceptual development: the early modern theater.

Public Theaters and Present Concerns

As Jeffrey Doty notes in his 2010 essay, "Shakespeare's *Richard II*, 'Popularity,' and the Early Modern Public Sphere," the idea of the public sphere now features regularly in early modern scholarship, modifying and historically resituating Jürgen Habermas' foundational model, in which private persons, through their active consumption and evaluation of political discourse, congregate into a more powerful public body capable of effecting political change (Habermas 30). However, as Doty notes, treatments of the early modern public sphere tend to focus either on the publicity of royal affairs within court, or a print culture he characterizes by its "irregular source of news, hostility toward public debate, and intermittent (though often severe) censorship" (187), thereby complicating the possibilities of an early modern public. Doty turns, instead, to the theater "as an emergent space of political uptake and public deliberation" (192), exploring how the dynamics of popularity presented in *Richard II,* especially as staged on the eve of the Essex rebellion, disseminated sensitive political information to the audience, urging the playgoing body to view "themselves as a public and their own thoughts as political" (205).

Though I certainly agree with Doty's assessment of playgoers as constitutive of a public sphere, his strict adherence to Habermasian principles, insisting that private people coalesce into publics only when capable of affecting matters of state, severely limits the theater's potential to operate as a public space. As Habermas' critics, most notably Nancy Fraser, have argued, the insistence that publics are formed through their evaluation of political matters problematically limits the issues around which a public may congregate, as it elevates issues of state and governance to public concern while relegating other issues—primarily those of marginalized people—to the realm of the private. But, as Fraser points out, discussion in the public sphere is

precisely what lifts private issues from obscurity (58-67). Gerard Hauser, following a post-Habermasian model, argues instead for the existence of multiple public spheres centered around a diverse array of issues, while still maintaining the public's active participation and ability to effect change in the issues they discuss. The public sphere then becomes "a discursive space in which strangers discuss issues they perceive to be of consequence for them and their group. Its rhetorical exchanges are the bases for shared awareness of common issues, shared interests . . . and self-constitution as a public whose opinions bear on the organization of society" (64).

It is this latter model that offers the most insight into the early modern theater's role as a public space, and a great deal of scholarship has demonstrated the means by which the theatrical event drew a disparate group of playgoers, through a variety of shared interests, into a participatory collective. The primary shared interest amongst the theatrical public was, of course, attending plays, but as Jeremy Lopez argues, the playgoing publics also shared an interest in the unique kind of social interaction available in the theater, the ability "to see and be seen by others, to loiter about, to meet members of the opposite sex, to show off new clothes" (44). Lopez further argues that a large share of the pleasure experienced by early modern playgoers derived from being treated as an actively collaborating collective: "They enjoyed thinking of themselves and being thought of as a collective entity, whose collective response quite powerfully determined the value of a play" (44). He cites as example the presence of in-jokes, making much of Polonius' interruption of the Players in *Hamlet*, in which the humor remains contingent upon a collective understanding of theatrical practice and appropriate response (25). Furthermore, as S.P. Cerasano observes, given the relative stability of the theater by the 1590s, audience members could, for the first time, repetitiously interact with each other and the repertory actors

as well ("Model Actor" 47), adding a sense of continuity between performances and establishing a familiar ethos of public participation.

As Ian Munro argues, the theater's capacity to forge public spheres extended well beyond the theater walls, which is precisely what prompted such resistance from antitheatricalists:

> The theater audience demarcates the space of drama, but it also disperses it, circulating its images throughout the urban body. This disseminating power was coded by civic elements hostile to the theater as an appropriation of urban space, an illicit infiltration of London that corrupts and pollutes the symbolic landscape of the city with an illegitimate theatrical significance. (*Figure of the Crowd* 107)

The antitheatricalist fear, then, was not just, as Stephen Gosson lamented, that "an assemblie of Tailers, Tinkers, Cordwayners, Saylers, olde Men, yong men, women, Boyes, Girles" would coalesce in the theater into the "judges of faultes" (qtd. in Doty 192; *School of Abuse* Sig. D1), but that this same public would extend its discerning prerogative beyond the theater, that the contained public sphere of playgoers might infect other public spheres, thereby extending the theatrical public's reach.

The idea of a public sphere capable of effecting change depends upon its coalescence around present, mutable matters, and as Lopez notes, the humorous exchanges in *Hamlet* rest not only upon the public's recognition of accepted theatrical practice, but also public familiarity with current theatrical news, particularly in this case, the war of the theaters (25), likely referenced by Rosencrantz's assertion: "Faith, there has been much to-do on both sides; and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them to controversy: there was, for a while, no money bid for argument unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question" (2.2.337-340). In this passage, Rosencrantz ties notions of the public, here labeled "the nation," to the present, as the public, acting as a

collective and exercising its ability to affect performance, goads the rival theater companies to extended conflict; through their collective voice, they are able to shape matters of concurrent interest. “It is hard to say,” J. Paul Hunter writes in *Before Novels*, “when the present time became such an urgent issue in the English cultural consciousness” (169); however, he argues, the seventeenth century, as evidenced in the proliferation of corantos, ballads, and newsbooks, seemed to have given rise to “a developing concern for contemporaneity” and an “urgent sense of now” (168). Of course, the print sources he cites also signify a growing sense of the public, in that, through print, a larger segment of society could collectively understand and engage in present affairs. Hunter does not include the theater in his exploration of the early modern fixation with the present, as his account overlooks the early theater’s position as a center of news, or as Munro puts it, “a place of dissemination” (*Figure of the Crowd* 107), and the manner by which the paradigms of the present and the public intersect there.

In 1599, the Swiss physician Thomas Platter visited London, recording his experiences—including his attendance of an early production of *Julius Caesar* at the Globe—in his diary. Of Londoners, he mused how “the English pass their time, learning at the play what is happening abroad; indeed men and womenfolk visit such places without scruple, since the English for the most part do not travel much, but prefer to learn foreign matters and take their pleasures at home” (qtd. in Mullaney 75). As Andrew Gurr observes, Platter was simply “identifying the first great market for daily journalism” (*Playgoing* 170), as, beginning in the 1590s, the theater became a locus for communal news and current affairs. On stage, plays enacted recent or concurrent goings-on of national importance, like Middleton’s satirical take on the proposed marriage of Prince Charles to the Spanish Infanta in *A Game at Chess*; or regional sensationalism, as in Middleton, Dekker, and Rowley’s dramatization of the execution of

purported witch Elizabeth Sawyer in *The Witch of Edmonton*. The theater also became the subject of news, with the nine-day run of *A Game at Chess*, according to Paul Yachnin, becoming the "most newsworthy event in the history of the early modern English theatre" (187). "All the nues I have hearde since my coming to toune," Yachnin quotes from a 1624 letter, "is of a nue Play . . . called a game at Chess" (186-187).

And though the dramas enacted on stage could both present the news and become news stories in themselves, the greatest source of news at the playhouse may have resided within the stories traded amongst audience members. The centralized forum of the early modern theater facilitated the circulation of information both within and outside its walls. Yachnin adds that the theater provided a space for the circulation of news to those excluded from reports exchanged at court (183), and that playgoers not only dispersed news, but attended performances to become, like courtiers, part of the news. The playhouse, especially its more visible stage seating, provided an avenue of what he calls "self-publication" (184). The theater, then, functioned as a site where news was relayed, made, and traded, where the collective body of the playgoing public consumed and constructed its sphere.

It is, perhaps, fitting that the early modern playhouse would maintain such a complex and enmeshed association with the news, establishing itself as a public center of present concerns, considering that the theatrical event, in and of itself, is so collaborative and immediate. As Richard Schechner notes in his pioneering *Performance Theory*, all live performance is what he calls "a process art," as opposed to the "product arts" of sculpture or poetry (230). He distinguishes the process arts by the active, collaborative creation of the performance by both performer and spectator; "only during live performances," Schechner argues, "do artists and audiences co-create together in the same time/space" (230). He offers as an example the

"selective inattention" of spectators, whose eyes may, when less engaged, wander away from the principal spectacle; performers, through their "unconscious scanning" of the audience, may, in turn, readjust their performance in response (229). He likens these "unpredictable interactions with spectators" to "accidental genetic variations" in the evolution of a performance (230). Theater, therefore, is always grounded in the temporality of the present moment, always a spontaneous production facilitated through both stage performance and public participation. Even when confined to the dialogue and direction of a play-script, live theater is continuously subject to interruption and alteration, and thus, each performance, even of an older play, is a new(s) event.

Early modern drama frequently and self-reflexively celebrates its own innovation and immediacy, for example, in re-inventing historical accounts in the present moment, in the bodies of live, contemporary actors wearing contemporary clothing speaking contemporary English. In this way, staged histories continually displace the past with the present, through each new appropriation and, indeed, through each performance. As Brian Walsh observes in his study of the presentist practices in Elizabethan staged histories, the "plays from this time reverberate with the sense that they are emerging from an innovative technology for depicting and in some sense creating the past" (EPUB Int.). The presence of staged anachronism in such productions—like Brutus' clock, the Douglas' pistol, or Cleopatra at billiards—further grounds the action in what Phyllis Rackin calls "the eternal present of the dramatic performance" (94), illuminating and elevating the contemporaneity of the modes of production, just as actors frequently delivered lines that self-reflexively celebrated their own revisions of theatrical practice. When Hamlet, for example, expresses his disdain for bombastic acting that "out-Herods Herod" (3.2.13), he acknowledges the outmoded style of the medieval mystery plays, implicitly commending modern

technique over antiquated traditions. Similar sentiments surface in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the rude mechanicals' outdated dumb-show presentation of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, during which the players' general inanity, along with the internal audience's playful mockery, commend by comparison the presumably more fashionable production style of the larger play. Ben Jonson offers a more direct critique of theatrical history in his induction to *Bartholomew Fair*, in which he derides for "staid ignorance" those audience members whose tastes reside "five and twenty or thirty years" behind in that they "will swear that Jeronimo or Andronicus are the best plays" (131-136). In an induction that figures the presentation of a new play as an unspoken collaboration between poet and playgoer, Jonson promises a merry time so long as his audience remains, like the production, present-minded, and not fixated on the theatrical past.

The theater's contemporaneity likewise reverberates in the non-dramatic literature it inspired. As Cerasano has observed of sixteenth-century English praise poems, "few *living* individuals of any sort were memorialized in praise poetry before 1590" ("Model Actor" 53), yet a remarkable shift occurs during the century's final decade in which contemporaries of all sorts—including aristocrats, poets, and actors—emerge as subjects of commendatory verse. As the seventeenth century wore on, actors became increasingly memorialized in such poems, and Edward Alleyn became one of the form's more frequent subjects, with John Weever, William Alexander, and Thomas Campion all penning poems in praise of Alleyn's acting ability,[15] years before Jonson's famous 1616 "To Edward Allen." Alleyn's contemporaries, like Robert Armin, likewise became the subjects of praise poetry during their lifetimes. In 1611, John Davies wrote, "Armine, what shall I say of thee, but this,/ Thou art a foole and a knave? Both? fie, I misse" (1-2). John Day commended Lord Admiral's man Thomas Downton in his "Acrostic Verses upon

[15] See Weever, "In Ed Allen"; Alexander, "To his deservedly honored friend, Mr. Edward Allane"; and Campion, "In Ligonem"; all cited in Nungezer, pp. 9-10.

the name of his worthie friende, Maister Thomas Dowton," and King's man William Ostler is commended in the 1611 *The Scourge of Folly* as "the Roscius of these times" (Epig. 205).

A number of early modern poems and prose works praising actors self-consciously acknowledge their own temporality, such as the *The Scourge of Folly*'s assertion that Ostler is the Roscius "of these times." In his 1612 prose commentary *Apology for Actors*, Thomas Heywood calls attention not only to Alleyn's talent, but to the author's contemporaneous memorialization of that talent, writing, "Among so many dead, let me not forget one yet alive, in his time most worthy, famous Maister Edward Allen" (Sig. E2). Heywood's insistence that Alleyn is worthy "in his time" offers a subtle counterpoint to the kind words he reserves for the deceased Tarlton, "in his time, gratious with the queene, his soveraigne, and in the people's general applause" (Sig. E2), as he circumscribes each actor by generational limitations. Jonson, like Heywood, singles out Alleyn as representative of the present:

If *Rome* so great, and in her wisest age,
Fear'd not to boast the glories of her stage,
As skilful ROSCIUS, and grave ÆSOPE, men,
Yet crown'd with honors, as with riches, then;
Who had no lesse a trumpet of their name,
Than Cicero, whose every breath was fame:
How can so great example dye in me,
That ALLEN, I should pause to publish thee?
Who both their graces in thy selfe hast more
Out-stript, than they did all that went before:
And present worth in all dost so contract,

> As others speak, but only thou dost act.
>
> Weare this renowne. 'Tis just, that who did give
>
> So many *Poets* life, by one should live.

Here, Jonson taxes himself with the responsibility to recognize and record what is extraordinary in his own day, lest it "dye in mee." Though invoking Roscius was a common rhetorical move in praise poetry for actors, Jonson adds a subtle twist by highlighting the extent to which the historical Roscius, on trial for his life, depended upon the testimony of a rhetorician for acquittal. If Alleyn is a Roscius for the current age, then Jonson fashions himself the day's Cicero, who must save the life of an actor bound for oblivion, signaling his own role in the immediate, collaborative construction of Alleyn's fame. It is a remarkably present-minded tribute, focused on Alleyn's ephemeral presence in the early modern public sphere, or his "present worth"—a notable departure from the kind of posthumous accolades Jonson would bestow on Shakespeare in 1623, whom he deemed "not of an age, but for all time!" (43). Alleyn is not an eternal figure, but a symbol for the triumphs of the theatrical present; as the only player that "dost act," Alleyn is not merely the new Roscius, but superior in talent to the tragedian Roscius and the classical comedian Aesope combined. His enduring legacy is hinted at in the final line, in that, through this poem, he "should live," but his perpetuity remains as of yet untested.

The flourishing of theatrically inspired print not only testifies to the disseminating reach of the theatrical public, but also demonstrates the means by which the public coalesced in celebration of the figures inhabiting the early modern stage and the ways in which living actors functioned as markers of present innovation. As seventeenth-century praise pieces increasingly commemorated living actors, such commendations were frequently achieved through the kind of displacement Jonson employs, in which the contemporary is lauded in light of theatrical history,

sometimes the very recent theatrical past. Heywood, for example, noted how Kempe succeeded Tarlton "in the favour of her majesty, as in the opinion and good thoughts of the generall audience" (43). In 1672, Richard Flecknoe closes his poem "The Praises of Richard Burbage," by singling out a noted Restoration actor: "Such even the nicest critics must allow/ Burbage was once; and such Charles Hart is now" (19-20). The consistent displacement of yesterday's actors for today's exalts the present, celebrating and claiming the value of the immediate moment through the names of famous actors. It is unsurprising that as seventeenth-century poets increasingly looked to their living contemporaries for their subjects that they would turn so often to the theater. Commendatory verse generally focuses on ephemeral qualities, including youth, beauty, and human mortality, and part of the genre's mission, as made abundantly apparent in countless examples, is to bestow upon its subject a kind of earthly immortality. "So long as men can breathe or eyes can see," Shakespeare writes of the fair youth in Sonnet 18, "So long lives this, and this gives life to thee" (13-14).[16] Embedded within this mission is the assumption that poems outlast their subjects; theater, on the other hand, is not only perpetually present, but by extension, strikingly ephemeral as well.[17] As Macbeth said of the player, he "struts and frets his hour upon the stage/ And then is heard no more" (5.5.24-25), and a great deal of praise poetry for actors seems fixed on rescuing the players from the ephemerality of the stage. Jonson closes his epigram to Alleyn by figuring his verse the just recompense for the actor's gifts: Alleyn, he says, brought his words to life on the stage, so the poet will, in turn, endow the actor with a quality the

[16] In his "The Portrait of Mr. W.H.," Oscar Wilde popularized the notion that Shakespeare's fair youth was actually an actor—a theory first proposed by the eighteenth-century scholar Thomas Tyrwhitt.

[17] See also David Scott Kastan's theories of the theater's "radical temporality" in *Shakespeare and the Shapes of Time* (3).

stage cannot provide: enduring life. Of recently deceased actors, Heywood considers it “a kinde of sinne to . . . not commit their (almost forgotten) names to eternity” (43).

Live theater, unlike a poem, is a fluid, mutable event, each performance grounded in its present moment and, therefore, unrecoverable upon its close. As theater critic Aleksandra Wolska riffed on Heraclitus, “One cannot step into the same show twice” (84), and a number of early modern dramas self-consciously recognize the spontaneity and ephemerality of production. In a passage frequently interpreted as meta-commentary for theatrical production, *The Tempest*’s Prospero, upon the completion of the lovers’ wedding pageant, tells Ferdinand,

> Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
> As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
> Are melted into air, into thin air;
> And like the baseless fabric of this vision,
> The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yeah, all which it inherit, shall dissolve;
> And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep. (4.1.148-158)

Prospero’s remarks echo a fairly consistent Shakespearean trope in which the momentary spectacles of the stage are compared to the ephemeral nature of human existence.[18] The fluidity of theatrical production is further called into play in Prospero’s insistence that the production is

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[18] Consider, for example, Jaques’ “All the world’s a stage” monologue in *As You Like It*, in which the phases of human life are compared to the acts of a player’s script.

"baseless" and "insubstantial": theatrical properties here are ethereal, unfixed, unanchored to the world of material endurance. Of course, the twin paradigms of ephemerality found in both theatricality and human existence meet in the figure of the actor; he is both mortal and trades only in the insubstantial stuff of the stage, the principle facilitator of an illusion that, no matter how remarkable, remains only fleeting and "shall dissolve." As Herbert Blau argues, "the body of the actor . . . is, of course, a transient architecture with a breathing skin, subject at any time to the corrosion of time" (50), with Walsh adding that, "in the simplest biological sense, real time is passing, and therefore the actor is actually dying before us" (EPUB Ch.1). The actor's doubly temporal existence, as both mortal and a momentary spectacle, is perhaps what attracted so many poets to take actors as their subjects, in an attempt to hold onto a man and a moment so self-consciously ephemeral. This same dynamic may help explain why audiences so often gauge actors by measures of presence: a term that implies that the bonds between an actor and his public are rooted in the temporality of the immediate moment.

Celebrity Presence

In 2007, Joseph Roach published *It*, an attempt to theorize that indefinable, magnetic quality that lies at the heart of celebrity allure, which he traces back to the English Restoration theater, while admitting that It has existed under numerous aliases throughout history—from Quintilian's *ethos* to Castiglione's *sprezzatura* to Max Weber's charisma. In defining It, Roach offers a series of paradoxes:

> It is the power of apparently effortless embodiment of contradictory qualities simultaneously: strength *and* vulnerability, innocence *and* experience, and singularity *and* typicality among them. The possessor of It keeps a precarious

> balance between such mutually exclusive alternatives, suspended at the tipping point like a tightrope dancer on one foot; and the empathic tension of waiting for the apparently inevitable fall makes for breathless spectatorship. (8)

For Roach, the "It-effect" is a kind of "secular magic" (3), but there is little secularity in the alpha-and-omega capacity he ascribes to celebrities to be all things at once. Of all of It's predecessors, Roach's treatment is perhaps most reminiscent of Weber's charisma, figured as "a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person" (328). Both transcend the commonly accepted bounds of human achievement to become, for Roach, magical, or for Weber, supernatural.

Roach and Weber are hardly alone in their quasi-divine formulations of celebrity power. Edgar Morin, in *The Stars*, deems celebrities modern-day gods and goddesses and refers to fans as "worshippers." In *Fame: The Psychology of Stardom*, Andrew Evans and Glenn D. Wilson situate the celebrity's appeal in the inherently human fear of death, with stars, like gods, transcending both mortality and mortal qualities to project the "illusion of permanence" (4-6). But such ascriptions seem more apt characterizations of the mythologized, superhuman hero than the celebrity, whose live body and, therefore, mortal limitation, is always on display, thereby enticing audiences, and poets, to seek out some means to extend the actor beyond his ephemeral qualities. Quintilian and Castiglione, on the other hand, define their respective characteristics in decidedly human terms. For Quintilian, *ethos* was the ability of the superior orator to embody his own virtue, a sincere projection of authentic inner qualities that could not be faked. Castiglione did not place as much emphasis on the authenticity of the nonchalant charm he prescribed, so

long as such nonchalance appeared unrehearsed. Both figure that special, elusive allure as a human projection, whether innate or studied, without the preternatural implications of Weber or Roach.

Virtue and nonchalance, however, fall short of capturing the enigmatic essence of star power, which is why I return to an admittedly more generalized term to label this phenomenon: presence. As Schechner has argued, presence operates in two distinct ways: The first is the kind in which an office or institution becomes embodied, for example, in the idea of royal presence, in which the office of the monarchy, and all the power contained therein, is rendered visible in a single human agent. The other occurs when "some hard-to-define-but-visible quality in a person vibrates through the public" (232). I would like to suggest, however, that what we refer to as celebrity presence is actually a modified combination of both ideas, in that the "hard-to-define-but-visible" resonator *is* the celebrity's embodiment of abstraction; more precisely, celebrities function as material embodiments of the cultural present, but, as I aim to demonstrate, presence is less a personal attribute that one projects than the product of a complex set of interactions facilitated through theatrical performance.

At its root, *presence* signifies present-ness, thereby rendering Monaco's assertion that celebrities must maintain "immediate presence" somewhat redundant, as to be present is to exist in the here and now, to share a moment in the fleeting, immediate space/time with an observer. As I have argued, theatrical productions and the actors who populate them always operate in the present moment and progress through the continuously collaborative construction between public and performer, and as the spontaneous theatrical event is ever fluid and shifting, the exchange is thereby fraught with tension, subject to unforeseeable disruption and alteration in every fleeting moment. As Lopez observes, in the immediacy of the theatrical event, "audiences are wary of

missing opportunities" (25), and thus, playgoer participation demands heightened attention, for, as the First Gentleman in *The Winter's Tale* explains of a witnessed spectacle, "Every wink of an eye, some new grace will be born" (5.2.99). As philosopher Gary Backhaus explains, this kind of tension experienced in the unpredictable arena of the theater is a form of hyper-awareness, during which the usual suspension of doubt that enables relaxed participation in the world dissolves, and the environment becomes filled with uncertain potentialities, both delightful and frightening (26-27). Hyper-awareness opens up a number of possibilities, magnifying the present moment and enhancing the capacity to become affected and, he argues, enchanted by aesthetic experience.[19] It is important to note, however, that for Backhaus, enchantment has no association with conjuration or fantasy, but rather denotes a transcendent experience in which the hyper-aware ascribe greater significance to the otherwise mundane, including the exchanges between actor and audience. An actor may then assume a kind of hyper-presence in the eyes of his audience, especially considering that the actor's presence, situated as the focal point of a thousand witnesses, becomes amplified by both the tensions inherent in theatrical production and the multiplicity of his beholders.

An actor's presence is further enhanced by the persistently present dynamics of the theater. As Ned Lukacher has argued, the ancient Athenians recognized the theater's capacity to function as what he calls a "time-fetish," that is, a concept, word, or image "used to indicate the persistent aporia of time and/or to conceal, evade, or simply ignore it" (4-5). For Plotinus and Plato, Lukacher argues, the theater operates in a persistent state of "becoming": during performance, characters, stages, and plots are always coming into being from an invisible realm

[19] See also Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, "Aesthetic Enchantment," pp. 3-22.

outside of time.[20] Therefore, the theater's perpetual coming-into-being resonates as a stand-in, or fetish, for the unknowable properties of time and, especially, the eternal recurrence of the present moment.[21] Plotinus, in *The Enneads*, for example, invokes the chorus' capacity to bear witness to present on-stage actions and simultaneously relay the passage of time in his treatise on the One's "ever-being," allowing staged figures to stand in for a complex matrix of questions about the unknowable elements of time (Lukacher 23).

Backhaus' and Lukacher's work on aesthetic enchantment and the theatrical time-fetish offers a valuable contribution to understandings of the likewise enigmatic nature of celebrity presence—namely in that the theater's perpetual state of becoming facilitates the fetishization of theatrical person and property as material embodiments of that recurrent presence. Thus, the hyper-aware audience, with its propensity to ascribe greater, even transcendent significance to its tension-laden environment, may recognize the actor as the living embodiment of the present: a site upon which human mortality, the ephemerality of theatrical entertainment, and the inherent tensions of the present state of always-becoming are negotiated, rendered apparent, yet, as Lukacher notes of the fetish, also concealed in the signifying body. It is, perhaps, this complex matrix of presence that led Ralph Waldo Emerson, in his counter-argument to Carlyle's theories of the hero, to label extraordinary, famous individuals "representative men," in that these persons seem to re-present some portion of the cultural moment, that they are endowed with the capacity to project contemporary values and conflicts, unlike the "great men" Carlyle touts as embodiments of universal values.

[20] See "The Anachrony of the Time-Fetish" 3-33.
[21] Walsh likewise discusses "performance as a phenomenon of perpetual 'becoming'" (EPUB Int.), particularly in Shakespeare's *Richard III* and *Henry V*.

As celebrity presence is co-created in the immediate moment, the celebrity, in its broadest sense, becomes a projected embodiment of that present, functioning as a narrative of some part of the cultural here-and-now. If heroes resonate eternally as manifestations of near-universal virtues of strength, courage, or generosity, the celebrity embodies, instead, a particular strand of the current cultural milieu, which helps to explain what Rojek calls "the peculiar fragility of celebrity presence" (16), as that presence is always, like theater, collaboratively constructed within a specific place and time, and celebrities, as embodiments of present tensions, can easily slip into irrelevance or obsolescence. Consider, for example, Richard Dyer's assessment of the celebrity of Marilyn Monroe:

> Her image has to be situated in the flux of ideas about morality and sexuality that characterized the 50s in America and can here be indicated by such instances as the spread of Freudian ideas in post-war America, the Kinsey report, Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, rebel stars such as Marlon Brando, James Dean and Elvis Presley, the relaxation of cinema censorship in the face of competition from television, etc. . . Monroe's combination of sexuality and innocence is part of that flux, but one can also see her "charisma" as being the apparent condensation of all that within her. Thus she seemed to "be" the very tensions that ran through the ideological life of 50s America. (31)

Though celebrity presence is sometimes measured by a performer's ability to transcend and shine beyond a role,[22] it is difficult to conceive of Monroe as the embodiment of 1950s sexual tensions without The Girl's ruffling white dress over the subway grate in *The Seven Year Itch* or Lorelei Lee's song-and-dance in a pink gown surrounded by gentlemen admirers in *Gentlemen*

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[22] See Schechner, pp. 232-233, and Morin, pp. 27-55.

Prefer Blondes. Rather, those roles are part of what facilitated her unique presence, along with her strikingly sexualized physique, kittenish voice, and ever-shifting public persona that toggled, throughout her career, between sultry provocateur, devoted wife of two different American icons, and damaged victim of her own fame. As Marvin Carlson has convincingly argued in *The Haunted Stage*, it is impossible to completely sever any actor-as-character from his/her previous roles or publicly understood persona; thus, actors are always "haunted" by audience memories and the expectations those memories produce. The actor's presence is thereby mitigated by a host of factors as audiences simultaneously recognize and respond to present character, past characters, and off-stage persona, all conflated in the fetishized, present body of the actor. Monroe's image became a signifier through which her body, her publicized personal life, and her various roles conflated into a singular celebrity sign; that sign, then, stood in for a matrix of competing, contemporary sexual tensions.

It seems fitting, then, as noted by Gurr, that the stage's first stars were "the clowns of extempore," particularly Tarlton, who like Monroe in her time, seemed to embody the tensions of his own. As Gurr reports, Tarlton "became famous in the 1570s, a byword in the 1580s, and a popular legend for a century after his death for his extemporized jests" (*Shakespearean* 86). Tarlton and his successor Will Kempe were celebrated for their decidedly present-centered abilities, their innovative capacities to spout witticisms and break into spontaneous jigs. Improvisation, perhaps more than other types of performance, requires a sustained state of alertness to audience response and, arguably, a more perceptible dialogic exchange with playgoers. Favor later fell to the tragedians, but it is unsurprising that the first stars to emerge from the new venue of the standing theater embodied the innovative spirit of new venture, the

theater's position as the *au courant* center of contemporary news and information, and the hyper-present dynamics of the theater.

The 1615 edition of Stowe's *Annales*, printed twenty-seven years after Tarlton's death, firmly positions the actor as "the wonder of his time":

> Comedians and stage-players of former time were very poore and ignorant in respect of these of this time, but being now grown very skilfull and exquisite actors for all matters, they were entertained into the service of great lords, out of which companies were xii of the best chosen and at the request of Sir Francis Walsingham, they were sworne the Queenes servants, and were allowed wages and liveries as groomes of the chamber: and until this year the Queene hadde no players. Amongst these xii players . . . Richard Tarlton for a wondrous plentifull pleasant extemporall wit . . . was the wonder of his time. (697)

As Alexandra Halasz has pointed out, the difficulty in discussing Tarlton's presence lies in the scant documentary evidence recorded during his lifetime. Posthumously, Tarlton spawned an entire industry of jest books, mass-produced images, pamphlets, and plays that commemorated his quick wit and skill in jigging, but little written by or about him during his lifetime exists, including the now lost, but hugely popular play he authored in 1585, *The Seven Deadly Sins*. Much material attributed to Tarlton was likely otherwise authored, but invoked his name in an attempt to cash in on his fame. What we do know is that Tarlton emerged from humble origins—though from where remains unknown—and that he was a member of the Queen's Men from 1583, the year of its founding, until his death in 1588. In 1587, he became a Master of Fence, a highly regarded title (Nungezer 351).

The first print reference to Tarlton is found in the 1570 ballad, *A very lamentable and Wofull Discours of the fierce fluds whiche lately flowed in Bedfordshire*, which is entirely attributed to the actor with the concluding "Qd. Richard Tarlton." He is likewise cited as the author of *A true report of this earthquake in London* in 1580.[23] The first extant reference to Tarlton as an actor occurs in a 1579 letter written by Gabriel Harvey, in which the university-educated writer laments that his extemporal speaking will be likened to the unlearned extempore of Tarlton or Robert Wilson: "Howe peremptorily ye have preiudishd my good name for ever in thrustinge me thus on the stage to make tryall of my extemporall faculty, and to play Wylsons or Tarleton's part" (67). As Halasz observes, Harvey "simultaneously recognizes the wit and attempts to mark it in class-inflected ways. Unlike Harvey's own, Tarlton's wit is popular; that is, it is widely known and appreciated . . . and nonexclusive—it does not depend on privilege or access to the kind of cultural authority a university man like Harvey possessed" (22). Harvey's apparent contempt for the actor is mitigated in his *Four Letters*, published in 1592, in which he boasts of having been "verie gently invited" to a performance of *The Seven Deadly Sins* "by Tarleton himselfe" (24), as he defends the late actor when he accuses Thomas Nashe of plagiarizing Tarlton's work, which Nashe responded to in *Strange Newes*: "Have I imitated Tarltons play of the seaven deadly sinnes in my plot of Pierce Penilesse?" (qtd. in Nungezer 350).

Several other pamphlets were attributed to Tarlton in his lifetime, including *Tarlton's Toyes*, *Tarlton's Tragical Treatises*, and *Tarlton's Devise upon this unlooked for greate snow* (Nungezer 349). Sometime in the 1580s, the now iconic image of Tarlton arrayed with a purse

[23] Tarlton's pamphlet was jointly printed in a single volume with, and under the title of, Thomas Churchyard's *A warning for the wise*. Tarlton's portion begins sig. C, and his name does not appear on the title page.

and in the rustic apparel of a clown, armed with tabor and pipe, began to circulate. Versions of that image would later grace the frontispiece of *Tarlton's Jests*, first published in 1611, and other publications invoking his name, and would eventually come to be used, as the marginalia of Stowe's 1615 *Annales* notes, on tavern signs (Halasz 19). In discussing Tarlton's presence, however, I confine myself to the limited extant resources produced before his death, despite the abundance of material produced afterward, insomuch as presence is a product of a present exchange between public and performer, and the posthumously produced accounts are filtered through the lenses of nostalgia, absence, and the tensions of a later day. Furthermore, Halasz has aptly demonstrated Tarlton's enduring legacy in her discussion of the ways in which the actor's name and image were appropriated in the seventeenth-century print market, but I am less interested in how subsequent generations used Tarlton's fame than how Tarlton's celebrity emerged amongst his contemporaries.

In many ways, Tarlton could be seen as an embodiment of the theater itself, a fetishized signifier of the complex dynamics of temporality, performance, entertainment, and interaction that characterize the theatrical event. As a Master of Fence, musician, dancer, actor, and extemporizer, he possessed the paradoxical dynamics of being both studied and spontaneous, both a participant in a rehearsed production and an off-the-cuff ad-libber known to single out audience members with pointed witticisms. He could demonstrate the acquired skill and studied craft of the theatrical performer along with the quick wit for which he would primarily be remembered. Through his various performances, he could embody, through his unpredictability, the very tensions that sustain audience hyper-awareness as he oscillated between scripted performance and extemporal antics. His propensity to turn his attention to specific playgoers highlighted the audience's complicity in the production, the present exchange that co-creates

every theatrical moment, rendering each performance a unique process of the here-and-now, unrecoverable after its completion.

Outside of the theater, his name in print surfaces at least three times as a reporter of the news—of floods, snow, and an earthquake, respectively. According to Alan Nelson, Tarlton's account of the earthquake that rocked playgoers at the Theatre and the Curtain appeared within days of the April temblor (242). "The very waters and diches shooke and frothed wonderfully," Tarlton reports. "There were divers Chimneies in many places about the Citie the upper part throwen down. The Beasts in the feelde rorde mercelously. In Christs Church with a stone that fel, there was one kild, and many hurt" (Sig. C5). The account further positions Tarlton as a center of present tensions, with his seemingly first-hand reports disseminating highly descriptive and current news of the earthquake's immediate effects, before he extracts in verse a lesson to be learned from the ordeal:

> Our health of soules must hang in great suspence
>
> When earth and Sea do quake for our offence.
>
> But now you Stewards which are put in trust
>
> Prepare against your Captain call account:
>
> See that your bookes, and reconings fall out just
>
> I feare your paiment wil your welth surmount. (Sig. D2)

As a reporter, Tarlton bears witness to and relays the moment, and as moralist, attempts to unravel its significance to the present audience of frightened readers. The quake, he assesses, was but a token of God's power aimed at demonstrating the frailty of human existence and reminding all to prepare for divine judgment, and Tarlton momentarily casts aside his clowning persona to underscore the gravity of the situation and make sense of current chaos. His report not

only aligns him further with present tensions, but also further reifies the theater's position as a center of news, with a theatrical agent stepping forward to relay and assess current events.[24]

But, perhaps most importantly, Tarlton served as a corporeal manifestation of the changing social relations in his contemporary London and the enhanced social mobility afforded theatrical agents. As an anonymous pamphleteer lamented in 1605, some players "by…long practise of playing, are growne so wealthy that they have expected to be knighted" (qtd. in Gurr, *Shakespearean* 80), and Tarlton, like the famous actors that would succeed him,[25] may have provided an inspirational exemplar of upward advancement. Though the precise conditions of his birth are not known, consensus maintains that Tarlton was lowly born, but died, as a Queen's Man, a member of the royal household and one of Elizabeth's favorites. Upon his death, he had achieved the clout to enlist the aid of royal advisor Sir Francis Walsingham to care for his six-year-old son (Gurr, *Playgoing* 153). His social ascension, due to his quick wit and performative acumen, resonates with the motto another actor, Shakespeare, famously coined for his purchased coat of arms: *Non sans droict*, or "not without merit." The merit, here, points to theatrical accomplishment as a legitimate means of acquiring heightened social status, and Tarlton appears to have been one of the earliest examples of such meritorious rises.

It is important to recognize that the iconic image of Tarlton that would feature so prominently for a century after his death depicts the actor in the country homespun of a clown.

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[24] As Nelson observes, the correlation between the theater and the earthquake did not go unnoticed by the antitheatricals. Philip Stubbes's 1583 *The Anatomie of Abuses* argues, "The like Judgment (almost) did the Lord shew unto them a litle before, being assembled at their Theaters, to see their bawdy enterluds, and other trumperies practised: For, he caused the earth mightely to shak and quaver, as though all would have fallen down" (qtd. in Nelson 242).

[25] Alleyn, Shakespeare, and Burbage subsequently found financial success in the theater business. Alleyn was perhaps the wealthiest and most landed, as he purchased the manor of Dulwich for 10,000 pounds and founded a school and hospital there (Gurr, *Shakespearean* 91). In 1623, he had achieved the clout to marry the daughter of John Donne, Dean of St. Paul's.

His clothing, perhaps, signifies more than a character's apparel, but perpetually fixes Tarlton as the juxtaposition between his status by birthright and, as evidenced by the purse at his hip and by sheer virtue of his iconography, the enhanced position he achieved through the tools he carries. But Tarlton's role as theatrical clown remains an integral component of his capacity to serve as an icon of social mobility. "To be witty," Adam Zucker argues in *The Places of Wit in Early Modern English Comedy*, "is not simply to speak or act well but to exist in a privileged relation to the spaces and materials of a given environment" (3). Feste, Lear's fool, and *Hamlet*'s Gravedigger all operate from a perspective of privileged understanding, which they only relay through a kind of "linguistic acrobatics" (Zucker 7), that renders them the performers within the performance, spectacles that relegate central, often royal, characters to the status of befuddled onlookers. Their quick turns of phrase allow them to demonstrate their superior wit while they simultaneously humble, humiliate, and enlighten their higher-born counterparts.[26] The clown role, like the actor who plays him, demonstrates the meritorious rise of the theatrical performer, while the actor's live body becomes the site upon which such present values and tensions are negotiated.

Intimate Strangers

Tarlton's Jests reports that Tarlton was known to participate in a practice Gurr calls "backchat," in which he appeared to step out of character, extending the clown's privileged position as the superior wit beyond the script, in order to taunt or retort to audience members generally seated in the galleries. As Gurr explains,

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[26] See also David Scott Kastan, *Shakespeare After Theory*, pp. 99-101.

> Playgoers could engage in this kind of comedy, with its extradramatic tactics of direct address to the audience with the clown speaking out of character or . . . claiming not to be a clown. It depends largely on the audience knowing Tarlton as himself, and his special act after the play when he versified extempore on subjects given him by the audience. This familiar practice of backchat might easily spill into the play itself, [and] . . . give some sense of the intimate kinship which existed between players and audience . . . (*Playgoing* 155)

The intimacy Gurr ascribes to the player-audience relationship is, as he notes, dependent upon the playgoers knowing Tarlton *as himself*, which seems here to denote a divide between the player-as-character and the person, Richard Tarlton, who plays. Of course, this formulation begs the question: To what extent can an audience know an actor as himself, considering that even the intimate interaction of backchat, as Gurr admits, shares a blurry boundary with the scripted performance? And to what extent can intimacy, generally considered a private function, occur in the public sphere?

Intimacy is a term frequently invoked in discussions of theater, from the description of smaller venues as intimate spaces, to the concept of the intimate performance, a generally quieter affair stripped down to its barest elements, indicating that theatrical intimacy is often conceived as a relationship freer of interrupting obstacles, including other people. Intimacy is, likewise, nearly universally addressed in discussions of celebrity and, indeed, is considered a fundamental component of the phenomenon. Roach maintains that the core of the relationship between the public and its celebrities is what he oxymoronically terms "public intimacy," in which the tension between a star's magnified visibility and actual remoteness produces an unfulfilled desire ("Public Intimacy" 16). Two decades earlier, film critic Richard Schickel published the

monograph *Intimate Strangers* to account for the same phenomenon, arguing that the means by which celebrities enter our environments through media representation, combined with film's capacity to enhance the subtle details of an actor's appearance and performance, project an illusion of intimate contact. Though Schickel isolates this phenomenon squarely within the technologies of mass media, I invoke his phrase here to embrace his assessment of this kind of intimacy as illusory, as the intimate exchanges initiated in the theater are always mitigated by the inverse interaction of estrangement; that is, the relationship between playgoer and player involves a paradoxical dialectic of distance and accessibility, a ceaseless pushing and pulling by which the rituals of intimate contact are subverted by overt acts of concealment. Audiences and actors, therefore, simultaneously forge intimate connections while making each other strange, as these antipodal tensions spur mutual desire and sustain the dynamic relations between public and celebrity performer.

As psychologist Joel B. Bennett explains, intimacy is generally "equated with some reciprocal exchange of self-disclosure, vulnerability, or sexuality" (xiv), and this reciprocity grounds intimacy, like theater in general, in a present moment. Julia Kristeva, who has theorized and re-theorized intimacy throughout her career, deems temporality a key component of intimacy, which she defines as an event that refuses to culminate, a ceaseless present, or "jammed repetition" (246). Intimate contact, for Kristeva, echoes the Proustian notion of "felt" or "sensible time" (qtd. in Keltner 93), in that moments of intimacy allow the present to resonate more profoundly than other moments—similar to Backhaus' ideas about enchantment and the enhanced ontology of immediate time and space during performance. The theatrical event, then, is perhaps especially suited to foster intimate interaction, given the intense present-ness of production and the mutually vulnerable positions of both actor and audience. As Walsh argues,

"It is this forced intimacy with the body of the performer in real time . . . that distinguishes theatrical performance" (EPUB Ch. 1), for, unlike the cinema, in the theater, the actor's live body is exposed, positioned on stage before the critical gazes of multiple spectators, unmediated by prescriptive camera angles and editing. His body, like costumes and props, becomes part of the spectacle and invites audience response. Henry Peacham, for example, reports that Tarlton's appearance, rumored to include a squint eye, flat nose, and curly hair, often provoked audience laughter before the actor even stepped foot on stage:

> Tarlton when his head was onely seene,
>
> The Tire-house dore and Tapistrie betweene,
>
> Set all the multitude in such a laughter,
>
> They could not hold for scarse an houre after. (qtd. in Nungezer 362-363)

Nashe reports a similar audience reaction to Tarlton in *Pierce Penilesse*: "the people began exceedingly to laugh, when Tarlton first peept out his head" (36). That a Justice reportedly beat the laughing audience members with a staff for "presum[ing] to laugh at the Queenes men" indicates that such spontaneous eruptions at the sight of Tarlton were not solicited through performance (36); they appear to have been laughing upon the mere glimpse of his face, which may explain why, for Peacham, Tarlton became a symbol of exposure and vulnerability. In his epistle to his 1608 collection of epigrams, Peacham anticipates his readers' response, lamenting that, "like Tarleton, I see once again I must thrust my head out of doores to be laughed at, and venture a hissing amongst you" (qtd. in Nungezer 363).

Impressive stature, likewise, became part of the theatrical display on the early modern stage. Scholars have supposed Alleyn to have been anywhere from 5'10" to 6'7" in height, based upon both the full-length portrait of the actor that survives in the Dulwich Picture Gallery and an

analysis of a ring he once owned. Regardless of his actual height, it is a fairly safe assumption that Alleyn was considered a large man, and he was frequently cited by his contemporaries for his deeply resonant voice and stalking gait.[27] As Cerasano observes of his portrait's immense size and stark focus on his large hands and face, "it could only have been painted to suggest Alleyn's unusual height" ("Ring" 176). One of Alleyn's signature roles, that of Marlowe's Tamburlaine, seems to point directly to the actor's size when Menaphon declares him,

> Of stature tall, and straightly fashioned,
> Like his desire, lift upwards and divine,
> So large of limbs, his joints so strongly knit,
> Such breadth of shoulders as might mainly bear
> Old Atlas' burden. (2.1.7-11)

Of course, it is impossible to know how accurately such verses describe the actor's physicality, but lines such as these certainly direct the audience to assess Alleyn's body for parallels, rendering his presumably tall, broad body part of the staged spectacle.

"Theater, unlike other art forms, uses living bodies as its media," argues Celia R. Daileader in *Eroticism on the Renaissance Stage*. "Theater literally takes warm flesh as its 'material' . . . Theater is an essentially fleshly, even a fleshy medium: it fills space and it engages the senses; it arouses. And this fleshiness can be rendered visually, as well as rhetorically" (64). A number of plays, like *Tamburlaine*, render flesh simultaneously through visual and rhetorical means, rhetorically directing audiences to gaze upon actors' bodies—sometimes to physical features easily assumed through strategic costuming, from hair color and beards to Falstaff's corpulence or Richard of Gloucester's crooked back, but also to those characteristics less easily

[27] See Cerasano, "Tamburlaine and Edward Alleyn's Ring," p. 176.

faked and more likely the physical characteristics of actors, like Helena's height or Hermia's diminutive stature. In fact, the pointed barbs traded in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which Hermia deems her friend "a painted maypole" (3.2.297), before Lysander commands her, "Get you gone, you dwarf,/ You *minimus* of hind'ring knot-grass made,/ You bead, you acorn" (3.2.329-331), rhetorically rest upon the actors' physiques providing the appropriate visual confirmation of the slander. The humor, here, is contingent upon a corresponding tableau of live bodies and works only so far as the audience responds by assessing and laughing at those bodies, rendering the physical bodies of actors exposed and vulnerable to critique and derision.

As intimacy hinges on reciprocal vulnerability, in the theater, the bodies of playgoers, too, are exposed and vulnerable, subject to the return gaze of performers, their responses not only discernible but frequently and publicly criticized. Like actors, early modern spectators' behavior was partially prescribed, by convention rather than script, and audiences regularly shouted, clapped, stood, and hissed throughout performances. Early modern audiences are also reported to have experienced quite visceral reactions to the plays they attended. In *The Shakespearean Stage*, Gurr cites a 1610 account of a performance of *Othello* in which, "not only by their speech but also by their deeds they drew tears. –But indeed Desdemona, killed by her husband, although she always acted the matter well, in her death moved us still more greatly; when lying in bed she implored the pity of those watching with her countenance alone" (226). According to Matthew Steggle in *Laughing and Weeping in Early Modern Theatres*, tears—both happy and sad—were regular fixtures in early modern playhouses, as recorded and reported in numerous anecdotal accounts, anti- and pro-theatrical tracts, and dramatic inductions. The Prologue in Thomas Dekker's *If It Be Not Good, the Devil Is in It*, for example, praises the playwright who "Commands the Hearers, sometimes drawing out Tears,/ Then smiles, and fills them both with

Hope and Feares" (qtd. in Steggle 86). Nashe wonders in *Pierce Penilesse* how "brave Talbot" would react, were he to know that "hee should triumph againe on the Stage, and have his bones newe embalmed with the teares of ten thousand spectators at least" (qtd. in Steggle 86). As Steggle argues, Nashe's account renders the audience a collective, and "weeping is thus a communal act of remembrance linking the spectators . . . to the actor" (86), while also signaling the audience's vulnerable emotional state in the theater.

But audiences were frequently held in contempt for their behavior, and Gurr counts at least thirty-four complaints by dramatists regarding playgoer response (*Shakespearean* 227). The most notable of those complaints is likely Dekker's *The Gull's Hornbook*, in which the playwright satirically instructs playgoers in obnoxious behavior, lampooning audiences for the various ways they make spectacles of themselves and interrupt productions. Francis Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, which metatheatrically enacts, through its staged playgoers steering the performance, many of the offenses Dekker levels, proved a notorious flop, perhaps signaling the audience's reluctance to watch their own infractions staged, or to confront criticism of their participation in the theatrical event. Such condemnations cast a scathing return gaze upon the audience, demonstrating the extent to which they, too, are being watched, rendering the audience vulnerable to the same assessment actors face.

Entwined in the mutual vulnerability of external assessment and evaluation, the intimacy between audience and actor is further enhanced by the intensely personal nature of their mutual disclosures. Audiences, as noted, responded to performance through affective displays of joy and sadness; such responses, of course, are indicative of the decidedly intimate nature of experience and affect depicted on stage. On stage, the early modern player enacted moments of betrayal, lust, heartbreak, anxiety, reconciliation, mourning, love, and, according to Kristeva, the most

intimate of all experiences, death. Knowledge of the ability to suffer and inflict death, for Kristeva, "constitutes our most concealed intimacy" (229), and human mortality, as discussed earlier, is always on display in the live body of the actor, further enhanced by the ephemeral nature of his performance. On stage, human life, like the theatrical event itself, proves fleeting. "Life's but a walking shadow," Macbeth muses (5.5.23), and early modern audiences witnessed hundreds of theatrical deaths—sometimes, perhaps, as "A Funerall Elegye on ye Death of the famous Actor Richard Burbadg" suggests, rather convincingly represented:

> Oft have I seene him, leap into the Grave
> Suiting the person, which he seem'd to have
> Of a sadd lover, with soe true an Eye
> That theer I would have sworne, he meant to dye,
> Oft have I seene him, play this part in jeast,
> Soe truly, that Spectators, and the rest
> Of his sad Crew, whilst he but seem'd to bleed,
> Amazed, thought even then he dyed in deed. (17-24)[28]

Though the poet may be hyperbolizing Burbage's effective enactments of death in posthumous tribute, he is not alone in singling out Burbage's stagecraft as believable. Thomas Overbury's "An Excellent Actor," which is likely modeled on Burbage given the references to both acting and painting, notes, "what we see him personate, we think truly done before us" (210). As any audience's capacity to respond empathetically rests, at least in part, on the actors' convincing representation of human conflict and emotion, the credibility Overbury assigns Burbage's performance certainly aids in facilitating the intimate exchanges of the theater; however, those

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[28] Cited in Nungezer, p. 74.

same dynamics are precisely what simultaneously facilitate the inverse theatrical interaction of estrangement.

Gurr makes much of the term Overbury chooses to distinguish successful playing: “what the players were presenting on stage by the beginning of the [seventeenth] century was distinctive enough to require a whole new term to describe it. This term, the noun ‘personation,’ suggests that a relatively new art of individual characterization had developed, an art distinct from the orator’s display of passions” (*Shakespearean* 99). According to the *OED*, the verb *to personate* first appeared in print in 1591 (*s.v.* personate, v.1), and for the next several decades, the term grew to prominence, sometimes displacing traditional words like *played* and *acted* on title pages, such as in the 1608 publication of Jonson’s *Masque of Blackness*, “personated by the most magnificent of queenes Anne . . . With her honorable Ladyes” (Sig. A1). The term frequently appears in association with successful or credible performance, such as when Heywood notes that the good actor can “qualifie everything according to the nature of the person personated” (Sig. C5). In the Induction to John Marston’s *Antonio and Mellida*, the boy actors, who appear on stage to question the performance they undertake, distinguish personation from the ability merely to recite a script:

> PIER. Faith, we can say our parts: but wee are ignorant in what mould we must cast our Actors.
>
> ALBERT. Whome doe you personate?
>
> PIER. Duke of Venice.
>
> ALBERT. O, ho: then thus frame your exterior shape,
>
> To hautie forme of elate maiesty;
>
> As if you held the palsey shaking head

Of reeling chaunce, under your fortune's belt

In strictest vasselage: grow big in thought,

As swollen with glory of successfull armes. (lines 4-13, Sig. A3)

Albert's instructions reveal a complex and sophisticated ethos of performance: to properly personate a duke, he advises, one must not only speak and stand like a duke, but think like a Duke, his stately carriage emanating from his privileged perspective and history of battlefield triumphs. Personation, here, requires attention to speech, gesture, and thought.

In concurrence with Gurr, Peter Thomson argues, "'Personation,' which proposes that one whole human being (Hamlet, say) can be represented by another whole human being (Burbage), was an Elizabethan development" (329), as he contrasts a turn-of-the-century acting style, which he calls "representational," with its predecessors found in Tudor interludes and medieval morality plays, which he deems "presentational." Thomson likens earlier presentational style more closely to that of the rhetorician, in that his performance rested more squarely in his oratory, which Meg Twycross confirms in her analysis of fifteenth-century acting styles.[29] Casting calls for guild plays, she reports, sought players "in Connyng voice" who were "well arrayed & openly spekyng" (43); the mark of a fine actor, Twycross maintains, resided in his ability to be seen and heard above the outdoor crowds (43). The turn, then, toward more embodied, illusionistic performance, Thomson argues, more profoundly obscured the boundaries between character and actor (333), in that, with actors thinking, speaking, dressing, and moving

[29] Jean-Christophe Agnew likewise argues, "Medieval actors . . . had identified with their parts in an emblematic rather than an existential sense. Theirs was not a theater of illusion . . . but instead a ritual or quasi-ritual enactment in which no clear line divided performers from spectators" (105).

as dramatic characters, it became increasingly difficult to distinguish one from the other; the two became irretrievably intertwined in one being.[30]

The enmeshed relationship between actor and character in personated performance may allow for a more deeply resonant audience experience, in that playgoers may more readily recognize the conflicts on stage as congruous to their own, and thus, empathetically connect to the persons involved. But the blurry line between character and actor likewise distances playgoer from player, perpetually concealing the distinction between the actor, to use Gurr's phrase, *as himself*, and the character he assumes. Thomson would argue that the famous clowns did not personate, but rather always remained themselves on stage and were, in fact, "loved for it" (334), but certainly, even in his extemporal capacities, the jigging, rhyming Tarlton appeared in the prescribed habit of the stage clown, engaging the audience with a mix of quick wit and studied performance. In 1590, Roger Williams observed that, "Our pleasant Tarleton would counterfeite many artes, but he was no bodie out of his mirths" (qtd. in Nungezer 356); his use of the word "counterfeite" suggests that he recognized Tarlton's stage appearances as theatrical performances, as he further indicates that the actor's offstage presence may have been somewhat less dazzling than his onstage persona, to which the sober tone Tarlton adopted to report the earthquake of 1580 may attest.

Furthermore, Thomson's argument neglects to consider the scripted characters enacted by stage clowns, which, though perhaps resonant of the improvised jesting clowns were famous for, could hardly be construed as the actors themselves. Consider, for example, Tarlton's putative

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[30] As Twycross reports, actor and character remained much more distinctly separate in medieval drama. Multiple actors assumed the same part throughout the course of a day, and actors wore masks or, when playing God, gilded their faces, obscuring the presence of the live actor to place focus on character, carefully eschewing "the danger of identifying the role with any one star actor" (42).

portrayal of Dericke in the anonymously penned *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth;*[31] the witty carrier, who beats whores and looted the French during the battle of Agincourt, was certainly not Tarlton as himself, but rather, a caricature of human incivility, a playful perversion of propriety that probably inspired the similarly deficient Falstaff in Shakespeare's reworking of the play. A number of Dericke's scenes seem to call direct attention to the often hazy line between performer and part and the means by which actor and character morph into one indecipherable body. For example, in scene five, Dericke lures the cobbler John into an impromptu dramatic recreation of an altercation the pair had previously witnessed between Prince Harry and the Chief Justice. When Dericke slips and calls his co-star "John," rather than "Justice," John pauses the performance:

> J. COBLER. But I pray you, who am I?
>
> DERICKE. Who art thou, Sownds, doost not know thy self?
>
> J. COBLER. No.
>
> DERICKE. Now away simple fellow,
>
> Why man, thou art *John* the Cobler.

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[31] The play, likely a source for Shakespeare's *Henry V*, was entered in the Stationer's Register in 1594 and published in 1598, though it is unclear when it was first performed, as the title page indicates, by the Queen's Men. The evidence for Tarlton's role as Dericke stems from an entry in *Tarlton's Jests* that recounts a performance in which Tarlton had to play double roles:

> At the Bull in Bishopsgate was a play of Henry the fift, wherein the judge was to take a box on the eare; and because he was absent that should take the blow, Tarlton himselfe, ever forward to please, tooke upon him to play the same judge, besides his own part of the clowne: and Knel then playing Henry the fift, hit Tarlton a sounde boxe indeed, which made the people laugh the more because it was he, but anon the judge goes in, and Tarlton in his clownes cloathes comes out, and askes, the actors what newes: O saith one hadst thou been here, thou shouldst have seen Prince Henry hit the judge a terrible box on the eare: What man, said Tarlton, strike a judge? It is true yfaith said the other. No other like, said Tarlton, and it could not be but terrible to the judge, when the report so terrifies me, that methinks the blow remains still on my cheeke that it burnes againe. (Sig. C3)

J. COBLER. No I am my Lord chiefe Justice of England.

DERICKE. Oh John, Masse you saist true, thou art indeed. (Sig. C1)

Dericke's out-of-character slip, followed by the cobbler's question, and the subsequent answers he and Dericke provide, demonstrate the unrecoverable conflation of person and part in dramatic performance: Dericke asserts John's "off-stage" identity, or John *as himself*; John clings to his character identity, and in the end, as Dericke pronounces, both are right.

Though personation is a concept generally reserved for tragedians, the clown's subtle embodiment of persona may have provided the blurriest of all distinctions between actor and role, rendering his performance so convincingly authentic that he seemed not to act at all, but rather, to appear *as himself*. But the clowns were not the only performers who seemed to appear *in propria persona* on stage. Marston's induction to *Antonio and Mellida*, for example, features boy players presented as themselves, but clearly exchanging scripted dialogue. In *The Malcontent*, Marston exercises and expands upon a similar technique when, likewise in the Induction, a minor actor, Will Sly, seats himself on the stage and wonders hopefully if the Tire-Man "took'st me for one of the players" (4-5). Of course, Sly is one of the players, and the humor here metatheatrically points to the perceived intimacy between player and playgoer, as the joke requires an audience familiar enough with Sly to recognize him by sight and by name. When the Tire-Man informs Sly that he suffered no such misrecognition, Sly demands to see "Harry Condell, Dick Burbage, and Will Sly" (11-12), the humor once again resonating through audience familiarity with Sly, the actor who has just demanded to see himself and who has also just aggrandized his status by inserting his name alongside two much more widely celebrated actors. In demanding to see "Will Sly," Sly has also cast light upon the blurry distinctions between character and actor; as a character named Sly who claims not to be an actor, he

dissociatively demands to see the actor named Will Sly, suggesting they are separate entities, though they remain irretrievably and indecipherably intertwined in the same body. The play continues to explore such conflation, while banking upon audience recognition of its star actors, when Dick Burbage, Henry Condell, and John Lowin emerge on stage to discuss matters of theatrical business. As their names are indicated in stage directions but never spoken, the Induction assumes the audience will recognize them by sight alone, while presenting the enticing appearance of the actors as themselves. As the trio of actors discusses issues of stagecraft and commercial concerns, the scene also seems to offer a peek behind the scenes and into the private conversations traded between theatrical professionals. The actors, working from a script, are taxed with the distinctive burden of personating themselves, as they occupy a space between character and actor, once again demonstrating the indecipherable distinctions between the actor-as-character and the actor-as-himself.

The Malcontent offers a more audacious employment of a fairly consistent early modern theatrical trope that situated actors and characters in the liminal spaces between scripted drama and its mechanisms of production. A number of epilogues feature characters who emerge at plays' closings to solicit applause, such as when Puck concludes *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by asking the audience to "Give me your hands" (15). Such scenes similarly obscure the distinction between character and actor, as Puck, here, straddles the boundary between the dramatic diegesis and the dynamics of theatrical production. Likewise, Prospero simultaneously extends and dissolves the drama of *The Tempest* into the Epilogue as he proclaims,

> I must here be confined by you
>
> Or sent to Naples. Let me not,
>
> Since I have my dukedom got,

> And pardoned the deceiver, dwell
>
> In this bare island by your spell;
>
> But release me from my bands
>
> With the help of your good hands. (4-10)

Like Puck, Prospero emerges as both scripted character and an actor familiar with the conventions of audience response. His oratory remains rooted in the preceding drama while also standing outside of it and asking for external evaluation. Prospero, especially, signals the drama's perpetual continuation through the collaboration he seeks from the audience; he reveals his vulnerability, his reliance upon public recognition and response, while masking his intimate revelations behind his sustained dramatic role. Both Prospero and Puck, like the actors depicted in *The Malcontent*, seem to simultaneously stage the actor-as-himself who seeks applause for his performance, and the actor-as-character, twin entities conflated in the celebrity body through the act of personation.

The word *personation*, though frequently invoked to denote the credibility of performance, circulated just as frequently as a marker of fraudulence or counterfeiting; to personate was to simultaneously make credible and to conceal, invoking the dynamics of intimacy and estrangement at the root of celebrity. The stagecraft that permits mutual vulnerability and the audience's empathetic response also prevents the actor's reciprocal self-disclosure as, onstage, he is neither entirely himself nor entirely a dramatic fabrication, but rather, an unrecoverable amalgam of each, and a number of accounts indicate that the indistinguishable boundaries of personation extended outside the theater as well. As John Earle observes of the player in his 1628 *Microcosmographie*:

> He is like our painting Gentle-women, seldome in his owne face, seldomer in his cloathes . . . Hee do's not only personate on the Stage, but sometime in the Street, for hee is mask'd still in the habite of a Gentleman--His parts find him oaths and good words, which he keepes for his use and discourse, and makes shew with them of a fashionable Companion. (Sigs. E3r-E4)

Law student John Cocke similarly remarked that the player "hath beene familiar so long with the out-sides, that he professes himselfe, (being unknowne) to be an apparent Gentleman" (qtd. in Gurr, *Shakespearean* 82). In both accounts, the fuzzy line between player and part is further obscured in its placelessness; personation, including costume and scripted oratory, is not relegated to the stage, but a fluid performance that permeates even material boundaries. Cocke's assertion that the player, despite his high visibility, remains "unknowne," further testifies to the antipodal dynamics of intimate estrangement; he is, at once, recognizable from his appearances on the stage, visually identifiable as a gentleman, yet a stranger, as he sustains in unscripted performance the contradictory exchanges that propel his relations with the public.

Contemporary celebrity culture achieves a similar dialectic through the staged moments of behind-the-scenes access as presented in popular print, Internet, and televised media, on red carpets and through interviews that portend to deliver celebrities as themselves, unencumbered by character. Today, it is generally considered a given that stars continue to perform in such appearances, personating the figures their names have come to signify, much as Will Sly and his colleagues did on the early modern stage. Though celebrity theory almost unanimously maintains the celebrity the product of mass-media dissemination, the immediacy of exchange between performer and public, magnified presence, and projections of intimate contact mitigated by mystery all find their roots in theatrical dynamics, in the reciprocal exchanges between the live

bodies of audiences and actors, particularly in the early modern theater. As a fixed and stable venue of performance capable of accommodating a large swath of all Londoners,[32] the early modern theater facilitated a complex set of exchanges between performer and playgoer previously unavailable, fostering, through collaborative participation, a sense of a public sphere with a proven reach of dissemination into other segments of the general population. The theatrical public, in turn, coalesced around and celebrated its staged, public figures—"representative men" ascribed with the capacity to embody present cultural fixations—with whom audiences could claim both intimate and estranged understanding, facilitated through the repetitious familiarity offered by the repertory system and the contradictory dynamics of audience-actor relations. The early modern theater offered, through its trade in personation, improvisation, and self-conscious metatheatricality, the presentation of both actor-as-himself and actor-as-character, both the celebrated performance and the appearance of intimate access.

Returning to the play that launched this chapter, *Henry VIII*, the Second Gentleman's declaration of "stars indeed" proves particularly resonant as, of the group of three gentlemen, he most clearly demonstrates the exchanges between public and performer, holding a mirror to the dynamics that facilitate theatrical celebrity. As the scene opens, the Second Gentleman reveals his heightened attention, informing his companion to "Stand close" (4.1.36), as this pageant and the new queen on display signify the dawn of a new era that will culminate, at the play's close, with the birth of Elizabeth. The First Gentleman announces that he possesses a program detailing which nobles will play which parts in the coronation procession, before offering the document to his cohort. "I thank you, sir," the Second Gentleman tells him. "Had I not known those customs,/ I would have been beholden to your paper" (20-21). But the Second Gentleman quickly

[32] See Introduction, p. 18.

demonstrates that he does not understand the customs of coronation, nor does he recognize any of the participants, even while claiming otherwise. “These I know,” he exclaims, before revealing his ignorance: “Who’s that that bears the sceptre?” (36-37). As his contradictory declarations reveal his simultaneous feelings of familiarity and estrangement with the performers of a highly theatrical spectacle, the First Gentleman takes it upon himself to point out both the individuals and their roles to him; the Second Gentleman continues to assess and evaluate all he sees, including the “bold, brave” Early of Surrey, whom he admits, through his questions, he does not recognize.

Once Anne passes over the stage, the Second Gentleman, clearly enchanted by her presence, declares her “an angel” with “the sweetest face I ever looked on” (44, 43), before proceeding to claim a highly intimate understanding of Anne’s relationship with the king: “Our King has all the Indies in his arms/ And more, and richer, when he strains that lady./ I cannot blame his conscience” (45-47). Of course, the basis of his intimate evaluation arises only from his scant, though highly charged, interactions with the publicly staged figures and, therefore, remains completely illusory. These illustrious figures, though displayed in public pageantry with clearly assigned roles, remain, in the words of Cocke, unknown to him, as the Second Gentleman offers a reflective lens through which the audience can negotiate its own exchanges with the stars of the stage.

Chapter Two:
A Commodity of Good Names

In Robert Wilson's morality play, *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*, first published in 1590 and staged by the Queen's Men, the ballad-selling clown Simplicity displays his wares before three young pages. "This is Tarltons picture" (266), Simplicity informs the illiterate Will and, by extension, the larger theatrical audience. "Didst thou never know Tarlton?" When Will responds that he never knew the recently deceased stage clown, Simplicity explains, "O, it was a fine fellow, as ere was borne:/ There will never come his like while the earth can corne/ O, passing fine Tarlton! I would thou hadst lived yet" (267).

The staging of "Tarltons picture" has generated a number of critical speculations, both in terms of the image's materiality and its symbolic capacity. Richard Levin has noted that neither the dialogue nor the stage directions ("*Shew Tarltons picture*") ever explicitly identify whether the picture is a ballad, a small woodcut taken from a book's title page, or a folio-length picture more easily seen by audience members (436); however, John Astington argues that, in line with Simplicity's profession, the picture is most likely a ballad that was "probably for sale outside the playhouse after the performance" or, more simply, "the real thing" (163), meaning, a stage property not created for the performance but one available for sale in some capacity outside the theater walls. Embracing Astington's reasoning, Ian Munro then observes that "such a mass-market image of Tarlton provides an especially legible illustration of the commercial matrix that stands behind the prop" ("Page Wit" 118-119).

As Jonathan Gil Harris has argued, stage properties have "social lives that extend beyond the stage" through which "audiences . . . recognize that the product has a life prior to the drama (i.e. that it exists in the real world, as does its corporate supplier), and . . . fantasize about the extension of that life after the show is over (i.e. about their purchase or consumption of the

product, if not of the actual prop itself)" (36). In Harris' model, then, all props are "the real thing,"[33] and the staging of Tarlton's picture works as a kind of corporate product placement, enticing audiences to purchase a similar picture upon the play's close, much as Simplicity attempts to sell his picture to the young pages before one of the lords eventually buys it for a groat. But this particular prop enjoys a rather complex social life, as the picture Simplicity aims to sell on stage points not only to a vendible good, but a marketable name, already, as discussed in Chapter One, attached to and fueling the sale of a number of other goods, including jest books, plays, and news pamphlets. In contrast to the more utilitarian or artisanal wares that Harris takes as his focus, Tarlton's picture points less to the skilled work of craftsmen than to the intangible force of a famous name and the complex matrix of memory, affect, and desire that such a name signifies or arouses.[34] Simplicity's sales pitch notably offers nothing of the good's artisanal value, in terms of the quality of the likeness, but rather, focuses solely on the skill of the man represented—a skill he pointedly remarks was "passing fine," meaning both exceptional and ephemeral, as he reminds his potential customers that though the man is dead, his name and image are still for sale. What Simplicity offers, then, is the tantalizing opportunity to hold on to a beloved, though departed, celebrity of the London stage, to own his name, to transform him, by means of a stage property, into personal property.

As Linda Charnes argues in *Notorious Identity: Materializing the Subject in Shakespeare*, "names become the objects of . . . desire—the property of a cultural marketplace in which they serve as commodities" (4), and the staging of Tarlton's picture reveals the means by which "the real thing" for sale is less the material picture than the immaterial force of Tarlton's name—a

[33] Andrew Sofer similarly argues in *The Stage Life of Props* that "objects accrue intertextual resonance as they absorb and embody the theatrical past" (2).
[34] In fact, as another page, Wealth, tells Simplicity, "There is no such finenes in the picture, that I see" (266), implying that the picture's value lies in Tarlton's name and image only.

point further affirmed when the same image resurfaced on the London stage again in 1600 in Robert Armin's *Quips Upon Questions*.[35] In a seemingly scripted adaptation of extemporal practices, in which the audience shouts questions toward the stage for improvisational response, the question, "Wher's Tarlton" (Sig. E3), is answered with the story of a simple collier who, stunned and incredulous at the news of Tarlton's death, seeks the deceased stage clown at the theater, whereupon he encounters Tarlton's image upon the stage:

> Within the Play past, was his picture usd,
>
> Which when the fellow saw, he laught aloud:
>
> A ha, quoth he, I knew we were abusde,
>
> That he was kept away from all this croude.
>
> The simple man was quiet, and departed,
>
> And hauing seene his Picture, was glad harted. (Sig. E4)

In an almost certain reference to Wilson's *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*,[36] the collier takes the image on stage for "the real thing"—not a vendible good, but the man himself—leaving the playhouse contented to discover Tarlton yet living and that news of Tarlton's death "was but rumour'd prate" (Sig. E4). Levin argues that "Armin's point is that the collier was right after all because, even though Tarlton is dead, his fame lives on" (435), but the collier's figurative resurrection of Tarlton reveals a subtler and more complex dynamic between public desire and star player, signifying the reflexive capacity of celebrity name and image. The collier does not merely encounter a signifier of Tarlton's enduring fame on the playhouse stage, but actively constructs the deceased clown anew, projecting his own stubborn desires, despite others'

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[35] This play is often erroneously attributed to John Singer (Levin 436).

[36] Levin was the first to make the connection between the Tarlton scenes in *Quips Upon Questions* and *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London* (435-436), which Munro later reaffirmed in his discussion of the two plays.

insistence that "he is dead" (Sig. E4), onto the image he sees on the stage; what he sees, then, more accurately reflects his own desire that the actor "yet . . . liues" (Sig. E4). The collier, determined from the onset to discover Tarlton alive as "he sayd that he would see him" (Sig. E4), sees in the picture exactly what he wants to see, and thus, the reanimate Tarlton that the collier proclaims is a fantasy, a projection of desire facilitated through the availability, and salability, of Tarlton's name and image.

Taken together, the staging of and reference to Tarlton's picture in both Wilson's and Armin's plays offer a fascinating, albeit limited, glimpse into the commercial circulation and affective purchase of early modern celebrity media. Commenting on the original staging of the image, Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean figure the image as the ballad-seller's counterpart to the lords' shields; once the lords have cluttered the path to Simplicity's stall with their heraldic shields, "Simplicity enters with *his* impresa, which is a picture of Tarlton, and begins to move the lords' shields" (125). Munro somewhat disagrees with this notion, claiming that "Tarlton is less Simplicity's escutcheon than his commercial ware" (118), but the picture's significance is perhaps best appreciated at the confluence of both interpretations. As a saleable good, the picture highlights the commercial circulation of Tarlton's commoditized name and image, and as impresa, reveals, as in *Quips Upon Questions*, the reflexive value ascribed it, in that Simplicity allows the picture to stand in, not just for the deceased stage clown, but, as with any heraldic device, for himself as well. Like the collier, for whom the image of Tarlton becomes a site of his own projected desires, Simplicity bears the player's image as a beacon of his own projected values—perhaps invoking, as discussed in the previous chapter, Tarlton's success at transcending his status by birthright to become a wealthy, powerfully connected member of the royal household. That this particular shield can be purchased by anyone for a groat signals its

decidedly democratic and capitalist divergence from heraldic imagery: celebrity name and image become an accessible means by which the public may herald its own values—"a commodity of good names," as Falstaff would say, through which individuals may, as P. David Marshall asserts, "shape the public sphere symbolically" (*Celebrity and Power* 7).

It is not only the picture, but Tarlton, who enjoys a vital social life through these plays, as, despite his corporeal absence, the public continues to participate in a pattern of complex social and commercial interactions with him, or more precisely, with his celebrity as generated through the circulation of his name and image. As I will explore in this chapter, stage celebrities, like stage properties, similarly reveal their existence beyond the confined and momentary spectacle of the theater, pointing to their availability in the form of saleable products and performances and their names' more abstract circulation in the marketplace of popular imagination. While Chapter One focuses on the collaborative construction of celebrity presence in the early modern theater, I shift attention here off stage, to the means by which celebrity thrives in circulating name, image, and narrative, and to the epistemological divide between the material body of the famous actor and his fame, between person and popularly traded name, or what I term here the second self of celebrity. Finally, I end this chapter with a discussion of how the circulation, appropriation, and commoditization of celebrity players offered early modern Londoners an accessible forum through which to negotiate emerging social and economic relations, concluding with a sustained analysis of the ways in which Shakespeare interrogates these emergent dynamics in *The Comedy of Errors*. As the collier and the ballad-seller demonstrate, celebrity presence may originate on the stage, but thrives and perpetuates in the market, continuously informed and constructed by market values, personal fantasies, and popular projections.

The Social Lives of Players

"A commodity," writes Arjun Appadurai in *The Social Lives of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, "is a thoroughly socialized thing" (6). In this collection of essays, from which Harris and Natasha Korda draw heavily in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, Appadurai argues that a commodity's value arises from a complex system of social interactions, embedding objects with "cultural biographies" (34), in that through exchange, commodities travel time and space, trade hands, and accrue social histories that convey significance and impart value. Though Appadurai confines his discussion to things, as do Harris and Korda in their appropriation of his theories, Appadurai's fluid interpretation of the commodity offers broader application. Beginning with Marx's broad assertion in *Capital* that "A commodity is, in the first place, an object outside us that by its properties satisfies human wants" (qtd. in Appadurai 7), Appadurai rejects stringent models that require that commodities are necessarily produced for the sole purpose of exchange, instead arguing that commodities emerge within social contexts and may move in and out of the commodity state (16), their values arising, fluctuating, or disappearing entirely due to their "ability to resist our desire to possess them" (3).[37] Therefore, the commodity's value is negotiated at the intersection of competing dynamics in both its potential to satiate desire and its resistance to acquisition, and this model of commodity seems especially pertinent to the celebrity, whose appeal and value reside in a similar convergence of accessibility and distance, intimacy and estrangement.

In his contribution to Appadurai's volume, Igor Kopytoff argues, "the conceptual polarity of individualized persons and commoditized things is recent and, culturally speaking,

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[37] In Appadurai's model, it is the space "between pure desire and immediate enjoyment" that establishes a commodity's value (3). Chapter Three further discusses this concept, including the means by which Shakespeare's Henry IV adopts this model to enhance his own value in the public sphere.

exceptional" (64), and celebrity actors, as objects of desire that exist just beyond reach of possession, become, as Michael Bristol observes in *Big-Time Shakespeare*, "living commodities" (28): persons who, as in Appadurai's model, move in and out of the commodity state depending on their ability to maintain a position at the intersection of desirability and resistance. As Marshall explains in *Celebrity and Power*, "the celebrity sign is pure exchange value cleaved from use value. It articulates the individual as commodity" (xi),[38] and as commodity, the early modern celebrity participated in a complex social life, his commercial appeal informed by a cultural biography that included his past performances, offstage social interactions, and appearances in other media. According to Harris, "certain props disrupt the fields of representation in which they appear by disclosing larger social lives that extend beyond the stage" (36); the celebrity player, likewise, through a number of metatheatric devices, reveals his own existence beyond the momentary spectacle, encouraging the audience to view him not only as an actor embodying a character, but as an actor who plays a number of roles in various arenas, thus enhancing his own commercial value by publicizing his cultural biography while fueling the sales for other performances and, perhaps, other forms of celebrity-oriented media as well.

Early modern English drama is remarkably metatheatrical, with countless episodes of performance, disguise, and reflexive puns disrupting the suspension of disbelief to illuminate, as Jenn Stephenson has argued, that "the perceptual gap between the fictional and the actual is wide and inescapable" (136). However, Andrew Gurr observes in *Shakespeare's Opposites* that such "metatheatric trickery" (2), as he puts it, may have originated less as a philosophical reflection on the form and function of the theater than as a commercial strategy. Gurr further hypothesizes that given the demand for daily plays and the limited number of actors to fill roles, the Admiral's

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[38] For the history of celebrity commodification, see Kembrew McLeod, "The Private Ownership of People."

Men sought to stave off audience familiarity and, hence, boredom, with its famous faces, and thus, staged plays that allowed its lead actors to perform in multiple roles in various disguises. He cites specifically George Chapman's *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria*, in which Edward Alleyn "took four parts, three of them in disguise parodying his more famous roles in other plays, notably Tamburlaine and Barrabas" (2). Indeed, audiences undoubtedly noted the influence of Barrabas in Chapman's usurer, Leon, or Tamburlaine in Cleanthes, the shepherd who ultimately ascends the Egyptian throne, with these similarities rendered all the more visible through the body of Alleyn, who enacted not only these parodies but the roles they reference. But while I certainly agree with Gurr's assessment of the metatheatric capacity of disguise roles, I would not, as he does, lump together the parodic interplay of *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria* with the general practice of staging characters in disguise, as parody offered not only a means of staging Alleyn in fresh guises for audience consumption, but also allowed Alleyn to highlight and comment upon his own body of work. Thus, by once again donning the "bottle-nose" of Barrabas in the part of Leon (7.84), Alleyn called direct attention to his existence in other roles on the Rose stage, and to borrow from Linda Hutcheon's postmodernist model of parody, he could then both playfully subvert his former roles while legitimizing them as cultural points of reference (97).[39] Parody, here, provides a commercial strategy unexamined by Gurr, in that such intertextual and intertheatrical roles may perform an advertorial function, raising the visibility of other performances and enticing audiences to seek out the characterizations referenced, to be in on the in-joke, while also increasing Alleyn's value as commodity by revealing his cultural biography as a leading man in a number of popular shows.

[39] In Hutcheon's model, parody is defined by "its inscribing as well as undermining of that which it parodies" (101), providing a mode for art to engage its history (96). For more, see *The Politics of Postmodernism*, especially Chapter 4, "The Politics of Parody."

Parody provides an apt form for such metatheatric commentary since, by definition, its humor necessitates a referent, and because of parody's self-conscious, referential kind of comedy, it likewise provides an effective means of publicity, disrupting the dramatic diegesis to alert consumers to the broader social lives of players, to their availability and salability beyond the theatrical event. *The Second Part of the Return from Parnasus* offers a similar kind of intertheatrical and intertextual parody of players and their parts when Richard Burbage and Will Kempe appear *in propria persona* to coach two Cambridge students in the art of playing. Of course, any time a player personates himself, he immediately signals his own existence beyond the spectacle, calling attention to the actor behind the role and his ability to assume other roles, and in so doing, ascribes himself with a prop-like function, signaling his movability between spaces and stages and directing attention to a body that operates through various names and guises. But as one of the acting neophytes, Studioso, salutes the professional players by calling attention to Kempe's offstage public appearances, exclaiming, "Welcome Master Kempe from dancing the morrice over the Alpes" (4.3.35-36), he further demonstrates the actor's movability between various arenas, as Kempe's Morris-dancing performances circulated primarily through ballad accounts, including Kempe's own *Nine daies wonder*. Kempe replies in proclamation of the famous duo's cultural value, "he is not counted a Gentleman, that knows not Dick Burbage and Wil Kemp" (4.3.45-46), and his playful braggadocio allows him to extol his and Burbage's cultural value, gently singling out those in the know from those not. As Philomusus concurs, he provides an analysis of Kempe's apparently robust social life outside the theater, connecting him to the print market and alerting the audience to his availability at the booksellers' stalls: "Indeed, Master Kemp, you are very famous; but that is as well from works in print as your part in cue" (4.3.50-52).

Burbage, in contrast, reveals his value through less overt means, referencing his theatrical history as the young players solicit advice from their more accomplished counterparts:

> BURBAGE. Master Studioso, I pray you take part in this booke and act it, that I may see what will fit you best, I thinke your voice will serve for Hieronimo, observe how I act it and then Imitate mee.
>
> STUDIOSO. Who calls Hieronimo from his naked bed?
>
> . . .
>
> BURBAGE. I like your face, and the proportion of your body for Richard 3. I pray Master Philomusus, Let me see you act a little of it.
>
> PHILOMUSUS. Now is the winter of our discontent,
>
> Made glorious summer by the sonne of Yorke.
>
> BURBAGE. Very well I assure you. (4.3.57-61, 93-99)

Like *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria*, this anonymously penned conclusion to the Parnassus trilogy employs metatheatric devices chiefly to direct focus to the player's history, which may, intentionally or not, serve commercial ends. The scene provides a remarkably audacious moment of both intertextuality and metatheatricality, offering in quotation lines from both *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Richard III*, while drawing specific attention not only to Burbage's body of work, but to his corporeal body as well. As Burbage draws attention to his history of leading roles, he demonstrates a cutting wit by informing young Philomusus that he has a suitable body to portray the withered, hunchbacked Duke of Gloucester; such a dig then encourages the audience to remember Burbage's own body in that role, to compare the body currently on stage to the one presumably aided by prosthesis, thereby directing focus onto the actor's materiality, his capacity, like a prop, as a moveable object on the stage that has appeared

on other stages as well. And as Philomusus recites lines once uttered on stage by Burbage, he further demonstrates that movability, as roles prove interchangeable and multiple actors may slide in and out of their parts, even as, in a somewhat surreal turn, Burbage watches another perform one of his signature roles. But one may reasonably speculate that a portion of the humor here arises from Philomusus' presumably less commanding performance of Richard, which parodically both subverts the referent by means of poor performance while legitimizing Burbage's theatrical history, commending his enactment of the role in comparison.

A moment of metatheatric parody in Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* calls further attention to the objectified and movable body of the performer on the early modern stage, and the means by which his body may signify its own social life. As the "hobby-horse seller" Leatherhead prepares to perform his puppet-show adaptation of *Hero and Leander*, young Cokes approaches him and inquires of his basket of puppets:

> COKES. Do you call these players? (5.3.87-88)
>
> LEATHERHEAD. They are actors sir, and as good as any, none dispraised, for dumb shows. Indeed, I am the mouth of 'em all!
>
> . . .
>
> COKES. Which is your Burbage now?
>
> LEATHERHEAD. What mean you by that, sir?
>
> COKES. Your best actor. Your Field?
>
> LITTLEWIT. Good, I'faith! You are even with me, sir. (5.3.87-91, 98-101)

Reminiscent of Robert Greene's charge in his *Groatsworth of Wit* that actors are "beautified by [poets'] feathers" (Sig. C4), here, Jonson levels a metatheatric swipe at players, likening them to inanimate, wooden conduits for the voice of the dramatist, whose words provide "the mouth of

'em all." The metatheatric punchline then takes a turn for the absurd when Cokes demands which of the puppets is the most skilled, especially considering that Nathan Field—one of the two players Cokes counts as the best—was a leading player of Lady Elizabeth's Men in 1614 when the play was performed and was, therefore, almost certainly part of the cast, perhaps as Littlewit.[40] As with all parody, the exchange both subverts and legitimizes its referent—here, Field—as the dialogue elevates the actor's fame and commercial value by pointing to his history of positively received performances, while simultaneously suggesting that a wooden doll could do his job. But the playful ribbing is underscored by a somewhat darker comedic undertone: as the puppet show functions as a play-within-a-play, the puppets then occupy a unique position as performers, props, and Leatherhead's vendible wares, blurring the distinction between human subject and commercial object, and the exchange simultaneously anthropomorphizes the puppet while reducing the actor, confronted by his puppet doppelganger, to a commoditized good—a point reaffirmed when, after a brief sales pitch, Cokes proclaims, "I am in love with the actors already, and I'll be allied to them presently" (5.4.151-152). The puppet is, quite literally, a commoditized player, a purchasable performer. When Leatherhead displays his "best actor" as the puppet in the part of Leander, he collapses the distinction between person and prop; standing before the actor Nathan Field, he produces his "Field": a saleable product, a stage property that Cokes intends to take home as personal property.

As a comedic subgenre, parody offers unique opportunities for intertextuality and metatheatricality, but it also makes special demands of its audience, chiefly by requiring an in-

[40] Though numerous accounts assume Field in the part of Littlewit, Nora Johnson argues that Field more likely played Cokes; thus, Littlewit's response that "You are even with me, sir" becomes, in Johnson's interpretation, "You, Nathan Field, are standing right in front of me" (62). Keith Sturgess likewise supports this interpretation, noting, "the jokes here work better" with Field as Cokes (177).

the-know playgoing public able to catch even subtle references, lest the humor fall flat. Early modern drama is filled with punchy one-liners presumably aimed at theatrical professionals. For example, Hamlet's instruction to the players that "those who play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them" (3.2.31-32), is frequently taken as a pointed criticism of Will Kempe, who left the Lord Chamberlain's Men in 1599, and whose propensity to adlib may have provoked his company's ire. Pistol's bombastic rhetoric in *2 Henry IV* is often deemed a critique of Marlowe or, as Peter Hyland opines, Alleyn (8), and Jonson is thought to have ridiculed Shakespeare in *Every Man Out of His Humour* through the country bumpkin character of Sogliardo, whose recently acquired coat of arms bears the banner, "Not Without Mustard," reminiscent of Shakespeare's motto, *Non Sans Droict*, or "not without merit."[41] If critical speculation is correct, each of these jokes banks upon audience familiarity not only with actors in other roles, but with the offstage lives of actors as well, suggesting the existence of external referents, beyond the stage, that circulated the names and exploits of celebrity players.

Text in the City

Given early seventeenth-century London's population of approximately 200,000, professional players accounted for only a tiny fraction of the city's inhabitants. The major adult playing companies, as revealed in royal patent licenses, generally consisted of five to ten primary actors. The first such patent, granted to the Earl of Leicester in 1574, included five actors. The 1594 royal patent for the Lord Chamberlain's Men, of which Shakespeare was a sharer, listed

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[41] The phrase "not without mustard" appeared first in 1592 in Thomas Nashe's *Pierce Pennilesse*, before Shakespeare acquired his coat of arms in 1596. In Nashe's prose work, a shipwrecked man vows, "*Not without mustard, good Lord, not without mustard*, as though it had been the greatest torment in the world to have eaten haberdine without mustard" (19). Though Sogliardo is frequently taken as a caricature of Shakespeare, Jonson may have been referencing Nashe's prodigal sailor instead.

eight actors, and nine by the time the troupe was later patronized by James I as the King's Men. In addition to the principal sharers, companies likely included another handful of hired men to fill minor roles as well as several apprentice boy actors (*Shakespearean* 71). Yet this otherwise obscure group of players achieved remarkable visibility in a bustling, populous urban center, becoming, as Gurr notes, cultural bywords (*Shakespearean* 86), and the ready referents of parody on the early modern stage.

Players' striking prominence emerged, of course, on the city's stages, through their regular availability as the aural and focal center in the standing theater; as Sir Thomas Overbury wrote of the actor, "Sit in a full theatre and you will think you see so many lines drawn from the circumference of so many ears, while the actor is the center" (210). As Gurr notes in *The Shakespearean Stage*, all actors likely performed in every play of a company's repertory (104), every day, allowing audiences to repetitiously engage with the company's actors to the point of both familiarity and emotional attachment, and as Bristol argues, the prominent early modern players then became "extremely valuable commercial properties" (28), rendering the theater "a specialized market environment for these living commodities" (28). S.P. Cerasano goes so far as to speculate that certain actors, beginning with Alleyn, became such valuable commodities that these early celebrities determined the courses of their playing companies and playhouses; audiences, she argues, demanded particular actors in the particular types of roles for which they were known, and playhouses, eager to capitalize on consumer demand, selected plays to market their star attractions ("Model Actor" 50-52).[42] In a provocative twist on conventional wisdom, Cerasano muses that, perhaps, Alleyn did not grow to fame through the popularity of Marlowe's

[42] Richard Baker seems to support Cerasano's ideas about audience demand for star actors in his 1662 *Theatrum Redivivum* when he notes, "And what scurrility was ever heard to come from the best *Actours* of our Time, *Allen*, and *Bourbidge*? Yet, what Plays were ever so pleasing, as where their Parts had the greatest part?" (34).

plays so much as Marlowe's plays gained a following as a vehicle to deliver the much-sought-after Alleyn ("Model Actor" 52). Though this kind of chicken-and-egg speculation remains unknowable, it does touch upon the highly probable function of actors as what Bristol terms "purveyors of cultural products" (28), in that their position as the targets and solicitors of audience desire, coupled with their regular accessibility on the stage, was undoubtedly exploited for marketing purposes, not only on the stage, but off as well, and not only for theatrical performance, but for a whole host of theatrically inspired print.

Playhouses frequently capitalized on actors' popular appeal and, by extension, advertorial potential, by parading their players through London streets on performance dates to "cry the play," or announce the plays being performed that afternoon (Stern 36). But the names of acting companies and their individual actors likely circulated to greater penetration in printed texts, as they increasingly occupied a more prominent space in the city's burgeoning print market. As Tiffany Stern argues in *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England*, "the city was textual, not in a historical sense so much as in a literal one: it was covered in texts" (62), and as she demonstrates, a substantial portion of those texts consisted of theatrical material, from playbills to play-texts and advertorial title pages, plastering the city with the names of acting companies and their players, amplifying the presence of a remote group of professional actors to citywide prominence.

As the market for printed plays expanded over the final decades of the sixteenth century and the early decades of the seventeenth century, so, too, swelled the visibility of actors and companies on and in those texts, as the marketers of print increasingly aligned their printed play-texts with the performers who enacted them. Since their inception, printed plays have contained information relating to their staging, but, as Gabriel Egan observes, the orientation of that

information shifted in the late sixteenth century from instructional to advertorial. Between one-quarter to one-half of all extant plays printed between 1520 and 1570 contain references, on title pages, to theatrical production, frequently to "potential future performance in the form of a list of parts or a statement of how easily a given number of actors may play it or a statement about the appropriate occasion for a performance" ("As It Was"). Egan surmises that such instruction implies that these earliest plays in print were intended for use by acting troupes; however, in the 1580s, a noticeable shift occurs in both the volume of plays printed and in the content of title pages: according to Egan, while fifteen plays were printed in the 1580s, 124 plays were released in print in the first decade of the seventeenth century, indicating a much larger market for printed play-texts, and as the printing of plays rapidly increased, instruction for performance all but disappeared, with references to production almost unanimously looking backward rather than forward, with some variation of the ubiquitous "as it hath been played" ("As It Was"). Instead of offering staging instruction, the nearly universal title-page blurb referenced production seemingly as a marketing device, assigning value to the play-text by virtue of its past life as performance. As a prefatory epistle to Shakespeare's First Folio explains, "these Playes have had their triall alreadie, and stood out all Appeales; and do now come forth quitted rather by a Decree of Court, then any purchas'd Letters of commendation" (Sig. A3); similarly, the declaration that a play has been "sundry" or "divers" times acted indicates its validity and worth, having withstood its "triall" by performance to proceed to print.

In announcing their relationship to the performance event, printed play-texts likewise take on a kind of souvenir function, not unlike contemporary publishing practices in which novels, once adapted to films, are retronymed according to the movie's title and rebranded to

include images of the film's stars.[43] Such cross-promotional practices offer some portion of the event in the form of material artifact, a means by which the public may extend, own, and hold onto an otherwise ephemeral experience. As Bristol writes, "The early printed editions suggest how the appeal of texts is referred back to and thus depends on the spectacles of which they are not so much a literary source as a mechanically reproduced record. The early editions offer intended purchasers repeated access to a dramatic spectacle" (38). For the past several decades, scholars have debated the nature of the relationship between playwrights, theatrical companies, and printers: Gurr, for example, argues that "the companies that bought these plays were actively hostile to the idea of printing them" (*Shakespearean* 6), while Stern and Douglas A. Brooks cite a much more collaborative environment between printer and playhouse.[44] Whether plays were printed in antagonism or cooperation with playing companies, one potential point of friction remains clear: printers operated under no legal obligations to credit, cite, or compensate the writers, producers, or performers of plays (Bristol 38). Therefore, any indication of authorship or past performance accompanying the play-text occurred only at the discretion of the printer, who, most likely, included such information only when considered useful for marketing purposes. "The name of an unknown author, might, after all, do a play no good service," Stern writes. "If an author's name will sell a book, it starts to feature: Shakespeare, not named on any title page before 1598, is, by 1605, featuring even on plays he had not written" (59).

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[43] This contemporary practice has deep roots, tracing back to the earliest days of the film industry; Margaret Mitchell's Pulitzer-winning *Gone with the Wind* was rebranded with a dust jacket featuring the likenesses of Clark Gable and Vivien Leigh.

[44]See Douglas A. Brooks' *From the Playhouse to the Printing House*, which argues that printed play-texts were produced in a highly collaborative environment. Likewise, Stern speculates that, "the playwright might have collaborated with a printer as much as, and perhaps more than, with actors" (78).

What does feature almost universally on plays' title pages is the playing company that performed the drama, and considering the title page's function as a marketing tool, this regular fixture suggests that acting companies, even off stage, held market clout. Early modern English title pages, aside from signaling the contents of books, were also printed separately for advertising purposes and posted throughout London, sometimes to the dismay of the authors of printed texts. "Thou that mak'st gain thy end, and wisely well,/ Call'st a book good, or bad, as it doth sell," Jonson instructs "the Bookseller" in a prefatory note to his *Epigrams*, adding:

> Use mine so too ; I give thee leave : but crave,
>
> For the luck's sake, it thus much favor have,
>
> To lie upon thy stall, till it be sought ;
>
> Not offer'd, as it made suit to be bought ;
>
> Nor have my title-leaf on posts or walls,
>
> If, without these vile arts, it will not sell,
>
> Send it to Buckler's-bury, there 'twill dwell. (154)

Jonson's opposition to the "vile arts" of advertising remains in line with his frequent and overt condemnations of any perceived acts of pandering to popular tastes.[45] Advertising, perhaps, offers the most direct kind of writing for the common palette that Jonson so often derided, in that its overt aims are to provide the public exactly what it wants, and the near uniformity of play-text title pages offers some suggestion as to what potential buyers wanted. Playwrights' names appear sporadically, as do references to what can be assumed to be crowd-pleasing scenes and characters, such as are included in the title page to the 1598 quarto edition of *1 Henry IV*: "With the battell at Shrewsburie, betweene the King and Lord Henry Percy surnamed Henrie Hotspur

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[45] See Chapter Three for a more detailed examination of Jonson's disdain for the popular.

of the North, With the humorous conceits of Sir John Falstalffe." Most all plays, however, feature the companies that performed the play, and some, like the 1594 title page of *A Knack to Know a Knave,* referenced not only the company that performed the drama, but its specific actors as well: "newlie set foorth, as it hath sundrie tymes bene played by Ed. Allen and his companie, With Kemps applauded merrimentes." If such advertisements cater to the "vile" tastes, then it seems that the names of acting companies and actors were deemed an effective means of whetting the popular appetite.

As the printing of plays expanded and accelerated in the first decades of the seventeenth century, the actors who performed in those plays became even more visible in the increasing practice of including cast lists with the play-texts. Few printed plays contain such lists prior to 1600, but the trend gained in popularity, becoming a fairly regular feature by the time the First Folio included the list of actors who had performed in Shakespeare's plays. Some, like the 1605 quarto edition of Jonson's *Sejanus*, include which parts the actors played, though most do not offer such information. Like plot previews in the form of "arguments" or testaments to the playwright's skill, cast lists, generally located in the paratextual space between dedicatory epistles and the play-text, seem to fulfill a similar kind of marketing function. If, as Bristol has argued, printed plays were marketed as a means for consumers to extend the dramatic spectacle, then it seems that the increasing visibility of actors in such texts, from title-page references to companies to lists of specific actors involved in performance, was progressively deemed a more significant, and marketable, portion of that spectacle. In a less common employment of paratextual space, John Webster not only includes a cast list, but praises his actors' skill in performing the play, especially Worcester's man Richard Perkins, in a note appended to his *White Devil*:

> For the action of the play, twas generally well, and I dare affirme, with the joint testimony of some of their owne quality, for the true imitation of life, without striving to make nature a monster, the best that ever became them. Whereof as I make a generall acknowledgment, so in particular I must remember the well approved industry of my friend Maister Perkins, and confesse the worth of his action did crowne both the beginning and end. (Sig. M3)

Webster's adulatory addendum links his printed play to its successful "triall" in performance and, more specifically, to the actors that performed in it, and in a less direct manner, cast lists offer a means of aligning the subsequent script with the stars of the stage.

The highly visible names of actors and companies certainly fulfilled a cross-promotional function as well, drawing enhanced consumer attention to the actors themselves, magnifying their visibility, and redirecting attention to the players' corporeal availability on the stage, especially in the case of playbills which, like title-pages, were posted prominently throughout the city. Though no playbill dating from before 1687 has survived, Stern hypothesizes, based on anecdotal evidence and the smattering of other forms of extant advertising bills, that playbills and title pages included quite similar information, including the venue and acting company (37). In an anecdote published in his *Wit and Mirth*, the Thames ferryman and poet John Taylor suggests that playbills were rather conspicuous features in the city:

> Master Field the Player riding up Fleetstreet a great pace, a Gentleman called him, and asked him what Play was played that day. Hee (being angry to be stayd upon so frivolous a demand) answered, that he might see what Play was to be playd upon every Poste. I cry you mercy (said the Gentleman) I tooke you for a Poste, you road so fast. (Sig. B7)

Thus, with playbills and title-pages "upon every Poste," the names of playhouses and acting companies enjoyed substantial representation throughout London, potentially facilitating citywide familiarity and, as Stern argues, providing "a major way in which the playhouse intruded into the city" (62). As Taylor's account demonstrates, printed plays and advertising materials account for only a portion of the texts that circulated the names of famous players throughout London, and this brief story, while establishing Field as a recognizable celebrity who is interrupted and irritated by the demands of his public, is, interestingly, one of only five of *Wit and Mirth*'s one hundred anecdotes to label its subject by name.[46] Two of the others, Tarlton and Lady Elizabeth's man William Barkstead, are also players, suggesting that Taylor not only banked upon readers' familiarity with their names, but deemed all three to be subjects of public interest. But printed anecdotal accounts such as Taylor's offer a glimpse not only into the circulation, but the appropriation, of celebrity names in the print market, as players regularly feature simultaneously as both recognizable cultural points of reference and the butt of public jokes; consider, for example, the following story involving Barkstead:

> *Will Backstead* the Plaier cast his Chamber-lye out of his window in the night, which chanced to light upoon the heads of the watch passing by, who angrily said, Who is it that offers us this abuse? Why, quoth *Will*, who is there? Who is here, said one of the pickled watchmen, we are the Watch. The Watch, quoth *William*, why my friends, you know, *Harme watch, harme catch*. (Sigs. A8r-B1)

Both anecdotes similarly elevate, then ridicule, their subjects, singling each man out for his recognized fame and even physically elevating him—Field upon horse, Barkstead up in his

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[46] With nearly every story beginning with such anonymous openers as "A nobleman of France" (Sig. B8), or "A gallant in his youth" (Sig. A8), only the stories centered around Field, Tarlton, William Barkstead, James I, and a Signeur Valdrino in King Alphonsus' service name their subjects.

window—before gently deflating him, allowing Field's interpellator to get the last word and positioning Barkstead with his chamber pot, exposing his bodily functions. Another account in *Taylor's Feast* involving John Singer, who grew ill upon being served a beverage to which he had a strong aversion (70), likewise playfully humiliates its player-subject, at once singling him out as a famous actor and then ridiculing him as he falls into "a foolish traunce" (70). Each of these anecdotes, along with a handful of stories preserved in the writings of Thomas Nashe, Gabriel Harvey, and Samuel Rowlands,[47] follows a similar narrative pattern, in which theatrical celebrities' names are wielded for their commercial and popular cachet and exploited to comic effect, pointing to the unique kind of fame enjoyed by celebrities, who have achieved, through various avenues of circulation, the prominence to function as cultural references, yet elicit little reverence. Instead, celebrities' appearances in pamphlets consistently reiterate their base humanity, providing a counter-balance to a larger-than-life presence facilitated through performance and popular media, with pamphlets providing a kind of mass-circulation forum for gossip that only hints at the circulation such names undoubtedly enjoyed in the unrecoverable forum of everyday London gossip.[48]

Of course, as discussed in Chapter One, actors were also held in high regard as the frequent subjects of printed commendatory verses, but the playful derision and mockery of stage-players evident in pamphlets extended to popular ballads as well. Searches in the English Broadside Ballad Archive of the University of California, Santa Barbara reveal a number of

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[47] Nashe's *Pierce Pennilesse* offers a few anecdotal accounts of Tarlton's stage appearances, while mentioning and alternately praising and mocking several other actors' names in passing. Harvey likewise relays his judgment of and speculations about Tarlton in *Pierces Superrogation* and *Four Letters*. Rowlands satirized Thomas Pope's and John Singer's reputations in *The Letting of Humours Blood in the Head-Vaine*.

[48] Chapters Three and Four offer further discussions of the role of gossip in the circulation of celebrity.

ballads featuring the names of actors, including several that reference Tarlton and one "Excellent New Medley" in which "Boyes ring the bels and make good cheere,/ when *Kempe* returnes from *Rome*." A ballad entitled *A Sonnett upon the pitiful burning of the Globe playhowse in London* paints a number of prominent King's Men as bumbling fools in its comical account of the 1613 fire:

> Out runne the knightes, out runne the lordes,
>
> And there was great adoe;
>
> Some lost their hattes and some their swordes;
>
> Then out runne Burbidge too;
>
> The reprobates, though druncke on Munday,
>
> Prayd for the Foole and Henry Condye.
>
> Oh sorrow, &c.
>
> . . .
>
> Then with swolne eyes, like druncken Flemminges,
>
> Distressed stood old stuttering Heminges. (22-28, 33-34)

Just as playwrights held little control over the publication of their plays, actors, too, it seems, possessed little control over the circulation of their name and image in ballad. As *2 Return from Parnassus* suggests, Kempe owed his fame as much to his appearances in print as on the stage, and in *Kemps nine daies wonder*, in which he recounts his famous journey dancing the Morris from London to Norwich, he decries the numerous unauthorized accounts of his stunt currently in print:

> . . . I am forst to desire your protection, else every Ballad-singer will proclaime me bankrupt of honesty, A sort of mad fellows seeing me merrily dispos'd in a

> Morrice, have so bepainted mee in print since my gambols began from London to Norwich, that (having but an ill face before) I shall appeare to the world without a face, if your fayre hand wipe not away their foule colours. One hath written Kemps farewell to the tune of Kery, merym Buffe: another his desperate daungers in his late travaile: the third his entertainement to New-Market; which towne I came never neere by the length of halfe the heath. Some sweare in a Trenchmore I have trode a good way to winne the world: others that guesse righter, affirme, I have without good help daunst myselfe out of the world: many say things that were never thought, But in a word your poor servant offers the truth of his progresse and profit to your honorable view. (Sigs. A3-A4)

Nine daies wonder is apparently Kempe's attempt to correct the erroneous record disseminated in popular ballads with an authoritative account, to reclaim the reins of his popularly circulating name and image from the ballad-sellers attempting to cash in on his fame. These competing ballads no longer exist, as ballads were, in general, an ephemeral form, but Kempe's pleas suggest the existence of a wider print network for the circulation of famous names and the exploits of theatrical celebrities than presently survives. His declaration that some ballad accounts suggest "I have . . . daunst myself out of the world" seems to point to his recent exit from the Lord Chamberlain's Men and, with it, the Globe, and if ballads indeed disseminated such news, they may have provided audiences with the external referents that allow jokes such as Hamlet's supposed jab at Kempe to work.

Such pleas also suggest the tensions the subjects of ballads and other print accounts may have experienced as they lost agency over their names' circulation in the print market. Kempe concludes in an epilogue, "Kemps humble request to the impudent generation of Ballad-makers

and their coherents: That it would please their rascalities to pitty his paines in the great journey he pretends, and not fill the country with lyes of his never done actes, as they did in his late Morrice to Norwiche" (Sig. D3). His struggle exemplifies the sometimes troubling consequence of high visibility—namely, the gradual distancing between name as personal signifier and material person. As Kempe attempts to combat the "lyes" that he maintains have obscured his authentic self with a barrage of "foule colours" circulating through popular ballads that bear his name, he illustrates the often tenuous relationship between name and person for those whose famous names have become commodities to be bought and sold in the open market.

Split/Screen

As Charnes argues, "names—like coins that bear the images of emperors, queens, and presidents—can be deployed in ways and transported to places not under the control of the figures they represent" (4). Printed names become, quite literally, the property of the consumer, and gradually, Charnes argues, the longer a name circulates on the market, the more value it accrues and the more likely it is to be appropriated to diverse commercial or ideological ends (5), rendering the material person the name once represented a "lost signified" (4), and the name a commutable signifier. Thus, the wide circulation of the names of early modern actors in print, while amplifying those actors' visibility and value as both living commodities and purveyors of products, propelled a gradual distancing between the material man and his famous name.

"We live in a culture that fetishizes names," Charnes argues. Her particular interest, however, lies in the special "commutability or appropriability" of a select group of names (5): those well-known names, like Kempe's, that gradually seem to lose meaningful connection to the bodies they once signified, as the public, by popular usage, converts famous names into

"manipulable signs" (5). Thus, like Tarlton's picture, famous names assume a reflexive capacity, signifying the aims of those that employ them, often in indifference to the persons connected to those names. Charnes confines her discussion to the "legendary" figures inhabiting Shakespeare's stage—Richard III, Antony and Cleopatra, Troilus and Cressida—as she explores such names' historiographic functions in fashioning English culture, but her theories on the circulation, commodification, and appropriation of famous names, and those names' tenuous connections to the material persons they signify, could just as easily apply to the contemporaneously famous and, particularly, to the emerging celebrity culture of Shakespeare's London, especially considering the vast commercial networks through which commoditized celebrity names circulated. The key difference between the circulation of legendary and celebrity names, however, lies in the celebrity's contemporaneous and corporeal existence, and his continued attachment to the manipulable signifier being bought, sold, traded, and appropriated while he must continue to operate under a name that has spiraled well beyond his control.

In Sonnet 111, Shakespeare seems to address, and bemoan, the realization of Charnes' central assertion:

> O, for my sake do you with Fortune chide,
>
> The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
>
> That did not better for my life provide
>
> Than public means which public manners breeds.
>
> Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
>
> And almost thence my nature is subdued
>
> To what it works in, like the dyer's hand:
>
> Pity me then and wish I were renew'd;

> Whilst, like a willing patient, I will drink
>
> Potions of eisel 'gainst my strong infection
>
> No bitterness that I will bitter think,
>
> Nor double penance, to correct correction.
>
> Pity me then, dear friend, and I assure ye
>
> Even that your pity is enough to cure me.

Lamenting that his fortune had not bestowed upon him more ample means, the poet here finds himself relegated to public performance—whether by acting or soliciting patronage—to sustain his livelihood, which he believes has, in turn, compromised his integrity as he has conformed to public expectation. Perhaps most distressing to the speaker, though, is that his "name receives a brand," with *brand*, according to the *OED*, signifying both "stigma, a mark of infamy" as well as the seared mark of ownership particularly imprinted onto livestock (*s.v.* brand, n. 4b,d). In both capacities, the poet bewails the loss of his name; it has received, like a coin, a public stamp, ineffaceably marked through public assessment and branded as public property. His authentic "nature" has become subsumed and stained, like Kempe's "foule colours," by his publicly traded name, as the speaker longs for renewal, a return of the depleted self from the colonizing power of the publicly crafted identity projected upon him. But the poet seems to have succumbed to the idea that no act of his own volition—no taking of bitter medicines or performance of penance, however willingly—can restore his identity in a way comparable to the power ascribed to the sentiment of his "dear friend." The greatest measure of agency in the restoration of his identity continues to lie in extrinsic production, as the poet's successful revitalization hinges on his listener's pity and a sympathetic reader's recognition.

Of course, *name*, for the poet, as in much of Shakespeare and other early modern texts, signifies more than mere nomenclature, but functions as a kind of shorthand for the reputation and history of the individual encoded therein. When, for example, in *1 Henry IV*, Falstaff suggests to Hal, “I would to God thou and I knew where a commodity of good names were to be bought” (1.2.72-74), he expresses his desire to bypass the traditional avenues of reputation-building in favor of simply purchasing favorable public esteem. Shakespeare’s lament in Sonnet 111, then, is that his branded name signals a reputation not of the poet’s own making, that he is bound to a name encoded with the passive imprint of public projection. This kind of discord between name and nature, between public perception and private person, according to sociologist Chris Rojek, remains a mere matter of course for celebrities: “celebrity status always implies a split between a private self and a public self” (11). However, Rojek reduces this distinction to a highly problematic dichotomy of public and private that pits an authentic, or what he labels the “veridical,” self against a consciously staged public façade (11), implying that authentic identity is not socially informed, or that a social identity is necessarily a premeditated fabrication. Rojek’s model of celebrity duality, in which “the public presentation of self is always a staged activity” (11), echoes Stephen Greenblatt’s theories of self-fashioning, by which the early modern individual attempted through various mechanisms to construct his social identity and “impose a shape upon oneself” (*Renaissance* 1); however, the struggles disclosed by Kempe and Shakespeare unveil a decidedly external locus of identity production, quite out of individual control, eliciting desperate pleas from both men as they confront their publicly traded identities.

As film theorist James Monaco observes of celebrities, “It’s not what they are . . . but what we think they are that fascinates us” (14), and what we think they are can arrive from any host of real, performed, printed, or otherwise imagined sources; if, to borrow from Monaco once

more, heroes *do things*,[49] then celebrities, I would argue, are more *done unto*, with the public face of celebrity less one individual's carefully crafted, conscious projection than a publicly generated screen. As high public visibility necessitates the dispersal of the modes of identification—names, images, biographies—in order to achieve mass circulation, subjective agency is likewise dispersed; as a living commodity, the celebrity is offered up to public ownership, his subjective agency scattered amongst the commercial networks of producers and consumers that trade his name and image. As Rosemary Coombe argues, "the celebrity is authored in a multiplicity of sites" (722), forming a complex matrix of shared authorial responsibility, as the crafting, revising, and perpetuating of celebrity identity encompasses various arenas in performance, print, gossip, and the market. The shared onus of authority further complicates the commercial pathways through which celebrity is circulated, as the public becomes not only the consumer of celebrity, but, through active consumption and trade, a producer as well, complicit in the process of celebrity construction by means of their often unwitting immaterial labor, defined by Autonomous Marxists[50] as "the labour that produces the informational and cultural concept of the commodity" ("Immaterial Labour"), including "the kinds of activities involved in defining and fixing cultural and artistic standards, fashion, tastes, consumer norms, and . . . public opinion" (Lazzarato 2005). Thus, the circulation of celebrity names, whether by the selling or purchasing of media, or even through the seemingly innocuous avenues of idle chat, becomes an act of labor in the production of celebrity.

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[49] As Chapter One recounts, Monaco distinguishes the hero from the celebrity by noting that heroes have "done things" while the celebrity's function is "just to be" (6). See Chapter One for more on Monaco's distinctions between the hero and the celebrity.

[50] As a leftist branch of post-Marxist thought, Autonomous Marxists, including Antonio Negri and Mario Tronti, stress the ability of the proletariat to force change on capitalist structures through organized activity and resistance. For a foundational text, see Negri, *The Politics of Subversion: A Manifesto of the Twenty-first Century.*

This is not to say, however, that celebrities do not actively contribute to their public personas, but that an individual's attempt to self-fashion accounts for only a portion of the public self of celebrity and is often employed as a compensatory strategy to regain a measure of personal authority in the face of competing narratives. As Rojek argues, celebrity status necessitates the presence of a second self; the celebrity sign is that second self—a recombinant amalgam of various public projections and fixations; individual performances, both of the scripted and unscripted varieties; market values; and circulating names, images, and narratives. But celebrity never quite reaches the level of detachment of what Coombe labels the "floating signifier" of celebrity (722), nor the unanchored sign of Jean Baudrillard's "hyperreal" (6), because the celebrity sign always maintains at least a tenuous connection to a material person, thus resulting in the friction expressed by Kempe and Shakespeare, in which living persons struggle to reconcile themselves to, or emerge beyond, a largely uncontrollable specter of celebrity. Rather than a completely severed signifier, celebrity functions instead as a sort of tenuously attached, ethereal double: a second, popularly traded self of multifarious authorship that may or may not align with an individual's self-assessment or desires. Cary Grant, for example, once remarked in an interview with *Vanity Fair*, "Everyone wants to be Cary Grant—even I want to be Cary Grant" (174), acknowledging, from an external perspective, his popularly traded second self: a dashing, sophisticated, and witty alter-ego fashioned through roles in films such as *The Awful Truth* and *The Philadelphia Story*, reinforced by his weekly appearances in fan magazines and his own public appearances, about which he admitted, "I pretended to be somebody I wanted to be" (qtd. in "Becoming Cary Grant"). Thus, the Cary Grant that Archibald Leach (Grant's birth name) wished he could be was a fiction, but one that he, along with the fans, the fan industry, and the studio system, all contributed to.

The vested interest famous individuals take in the construction of their celebrity is easily appreciable, as are the goals of the marketers of print and theatrical production, but perhaps less transparent is the willing assumption of labor on the part of the public to buttress and perpetuate the celebrity of others. Here, Antonio Negri's post-Marxist theories of social labor offer some insight: as capital becomes a more pervasive influence on social dynamics, information becomes a commodity through which individuals wield and display knowledge as a sign of value; thus, trading information, or communication more generally, becomes the immaterial labor of the "social factory," in which, as Alison Hearn explains, "work is dispersed into all areas of life and the social becomes the site for the creation of new forms of productive activity and their transformation into commodities" (618-619). According to Negri, the social factory produces "a specific social constitution—that of co-operation, or rather, of intellectual co-operation, i.e. communication—a basis without which society is no longer conceivable" (51), and the public's desire "to follow and be kept informed" is both a self-serving means of accruing cultural and capital cachet as well as an exploitable market force (116). To apply this model to the circulation of celebrities, the consumption and display of celebrity name and image, whether through material artifact or intangible information, becomes a vehicle for the proclamation of personal value, a means by which to declare oneself knowledgeable and current, an informed participant in a social or intellectual community. As Kempe says in *2 Return from Parnassus*, "he is not counted a Gentleman, that knows not Dick Burbage and Wil Kemp" (4.3.45-46).[51] Yet these same, self-serving exchanges likewise construct and propel the cultural and commercial values of the celebrities traded.

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[51] Similarly, in *The Three Lords and Ladies of London*, the ballad-seller Simplicity informs his potential customers of Tarlton, "if thou knewest not him, thou knewest no body" (267).

Another portion of the work performed in the perpetuation of celebrity is undertaken with less self-conscious motivation, driven instead by an affective impulse to extend the bonds of intimacy initiated in the theater. Building on Eve Sedgwick's theories of touching and feeling, in which either activity can signify both corporeal entanglement and the intangible realm of emotions, Deborah Thien argues that intimate exchanges may, but need not, occur within geographical proximity, as bodies may "feel" or be "touched" by other bodies through socio-spatial proximity, a social sense of connectedness unrelated to corporeal closeness, across what she terms "intimate distances" (191). She cites, as example, pen-pals who, though they have never met, often claim an intimate kinship via the material artifact of the letter. The authenticity of such intimate exchanges—certainly questionable, given intimacy's putative reliance on reciprocal vulnerability—is of less importance to Thien than the participants' "feeling" of intimacy, in the Sedgwickian sense, even as the letter becomes a stand-in for another and assumes a somewhat reflexive function, given that at least a portion of the intimacy experienced involves the reader's own projections.[52] Thien's ideas about social-spatial intimacy likewise help to unravel the complex affective processes of fans; as Edgar Morin observes in *The Stars*, the fan industry arose in response to audiences who demanded greater access to the film stars with whom they had grown attached in the cinema, to perpetuate their feelings of intimacy through artifacts that bore their favorites' name and likeness, or claimed to offer enhanced off-screen access (27). Following Thien's model, celebrity-inspired media offers a vehicle for the perpetuation of intimate feeling, regardless of the projective quality of that feeling, and it is, perhaps, this same phenomenon that Armin toys with in *Quips Upon Questions*, as the image of

[52] See *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. Sedgwick's theories on "touching feeling," or finding comfort in textured forms, seem particularly pertinent to the feelings consumers of celebrity media may take in the artifact.

Tarlton comes to stand in for the man, Richard Tarlton, allowing one fan to leave the theater convinced he has interacted with a man dead for more than a decade.

The public, therefore, makes both a commercial and an affective investment in its celebrities, and as with any investment, expects returns—whether through the celebrity's potential to designate personal value, satiate a hunger for intimacy, or, as Lawrence Grossberg argues, provide a more stable sense of identity. "The fan authorizes [celebrities] to speak for him or her, not only as a spokesperson but also as surrogate voice," Grossberg writes. "The fan gives authority to that which he or she invests in, letting the object of such investments speak for and as him or herself. Fans let them organize their emotional and narrative lives and identities" (587). Though Grossberg focuses his argument on the dynamics of contemporary fandom, evidence suggests that early modern Londoners exhibited similarly impassioned responses to celebrity players. John Earle, in his *Microcosmographie,* notes of the player that, "The waiting women Spectators are over eares in love with him, and Ladies send for him to act in their Chambers" (Sig. E4), and fans may have likewise participated in the conspicuous consumption of celebrity merchandise that characterizes today's zealous fans. As the marginalia to Stowe's *Annales* of 1615 notes, Tarlton was "so beloved that men used his picture for their signs" (qtd. in Halasz 19). Just as the celebrity's identity is dispersed among its public, in Grossberg's model, fans, too, disperse their identities among their various "sites of investment" (587), including the celebrities in whom they have invested their money, time, and emotions. As the ballad-seller Simplicity displays "Tarltons picture" as a form of impresa, the consumers of celebrity names, images, and narratives likewise endow the media they trade with the reflexive capacity to signal the wielder's identity. And if Simplicity's asking price of a groat, or four pence, provides any kind of reasonable reflection of its value on the London market, then celebrity media remained a highly

accessible investment that promised powerfully charged economic and affective rewards. Therefore, the assumption of labor on the part of the public in the crafting and perpetuating of the celebrity sign is likely never seen as labor at all, but an active and ultimately self-serving investment that likewise enhances the cultural and commodity value of others, and because of these simultaneous and circular dynamics, any elevation of the celebrity's value can be taken as an elevation in the value of those who trade in him.

For early modern Londoners, this complex matrix of celebrity circulation—rooted as it is in both commercial and affective dynamics—may have held special resonance, given the emerging economic and social relations of the proto-capitalist market. The enhanced social mobility of early modern England has been well documented,[53] and Lawrence Stone and others have demonstrated how wealth and material accumulation played an increasingly important role in social status. The earliest theatrical celebrities may have appeared to embody such mobility in their social and economic ascensions and declines, as discussed in particular relating to Tarlton in Chapter One, while likewise providing the public a substantial means of participation in the process; by investing their resources in a highly visible, fluid commodity, the consumer-producers of celebrity could, in very real ways, negotiate and determine the status of public figures, whose rises and falls would then reflect back unto the investors. As co-authors of the celebrity sign, the public became complicit in the allocation of social status, and celebrity may have provided a vehicle for the demystification and negotiation of such social forces.

[53] See Alan Everitt, "Social Mobility in Early Modern England" and Lawrence Stone, "Social Mobility in England, 1500-1700."

Credit, Celebrity, and *The Comedy of Errors*

"The greatness of the celebrity is something that can be shared, celebrated loudly and with a touch of vulgar pride," writes Marshall in *Celebrity and Power*. "It is the ideal representation of the triumph of the masses. Concomitantly, celebrity is the potential of capitalism, a celebration of new kinds of values and orders, a debunking of customary divisions of traditional society" (6). In Marshall's effusive model, the celebrity emerges "from the twinned discourses of modernity: democracy and capitalism" (4), and thus, operates as a "bottom-up" form of power, narrating the cultural landscape through a semiotics of democratically selected, freely traded famous persons. Indeed, a substantial part of the celebrity's appeal, and the zeal with which the public consumes and trades him, lies not in his exceptionality, but, as Taylor's humbling anecdotes demonstrate, his ordinariness, his position as a highly visible figure to emerge from the masses. The celebrity magnifies and reflects the tensions of everyday life—particularly, as a living commodity, the otherwise abstract conditions of quotidian capitalist consumerism. As Rojek argues, "Celebrities humanize the process of commodity consumption" (14), assigning a human face to the ebb and flow of market demand and providing a collective forum for the negotiation of market exchange and its social implications.

The emergent celebrities of early modern London may have provided a particularly potent symbol of the increasingly pervasive credit culture that governed nearly all market exchanges. As in a celebrity culture, the culture of credit likewise commoditized individuals by assigning them both commercial and affective value, and the parallels between credit and celebrity are further apparent in the sometimes tenuous attachment between person and credit; in fact, in many ways, credit, like celebrity, functions as a sort of intangible double—a publicly negotiated and traded name over which an individual wields only partial control. As Craig

Muldrew demonstrates in *The Economy of Obligation*, an increase in commodity exchange in early modern England, coupled with a shortage of currency, created a transaction pattern in which "almost all buying and selling involved credit of one form of another" (95). Though transactions involving credit and debt had existed for at least a thousand years, and were a commonplace of the medieval market, extant bills, bonds, and wills illustrate an overwhelming expansion of the practice in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to the extent that "every household in the country, from those of paupers to the royal household, was to some degree enmeshed with the increasingly complicated webs of credit and obligation with which transactions were communicated" (95). As Muldrew argues, credit then took on a somewhat equalizing function in society because of the universal reliance upon it: the peerage required credit to maintain its markers of status, merchants required it to acquire capital, and wage laborers were often paid in credit. The culture of credit entwined households of unequal status in a collective state of interdependence (124), and with such emphasis placed on credit, the term took on a host of meanings, ranging from trustworthiness, favorable esteem, and honor to "trust or confidence in a buyer's ability and intention to pay at some future time" (*OED s.v.* credit, n. 9a).

Like the second self of celebrity, one's credit signified a conflation of public perceptions and projections, and because of the communal interdependence facilitated by a pervasive system of credit, community members held a vested interest in the credit value of their neighbors, out of both a sense of reliance and competition (Muldrew 125). Publicly expressed opinions could do much to damage or elevate one's neighbors' credit, and as credit rose to the forefront of economic exchange, Muldrew explains in "Credit and the Courts: Debt Litigation in Seventeenth Century Urban Community" that its counterpart, debt litigation, also grew accordingly (23). In

fact, by 1640, debt suits accounted for more than 80 percent of cases in both courts (23). Court entanglement, even without conviction, could destroy a verifiable credit history, and in some cases, negative verdicts could actually transfer one person's credit over to another. Alexandra Shepard relays how "dissolute husbands risked forfeiting their credit to their wives, as in the case of a maltster, Robert Oliver, who was characterized in 1625 as 'a drunkard and a bad husband'. Consequently, as many witnesses reported, the bargaining for barley required for his business was done by his wife" (83-84). Debt litigation provides a dramatic example of the tenuous attachment between person and credit, as mere accusation could undermine a lifetime's history of stable exchange. The case of Oliver the maltster demonstrates that credit need not correlate in any economically meaningful way to the person attached; Oliver was not accused of defaulting on an exchange, and his wife gained credit merely by default. The corresponding explosion in slander litigation in the seventeenth century,[54] as a means to protect and restore one's credit against detractors, is then unsurprising.

Celebrities provided an apt vessel for the negotiation of credit, with their own highly visible reputations and exchange values elevated to public display, hyperbolically mirroring the everyday social and economic realities of the public who consumed and created them. The public's active trade in celebrity media and performance may have provided some sense of restored agency in the market concerns that governed their daily lives. In *Worlds Apart*, Jean-Christophe Agnew explores the early modern theater's crucial role in the negotiation of social relations, positing specifically in Chapter 3 his theory of "Artificial Persons," or the means by which individuals, compelled by the demands of a credit culture, adopted modes of theatricality

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[54] See M. Lindsay Kaplan, *The Culture of Slander in Early Modern England*, and Jennifer Kermode, *Women, Crime and the Courts in Early Modern England*. Kermode estimates that by 1633, 70 percent of court cases involved defamation (26).

to preserve their ability to participate in market affairs; the theater, then, proved both reflective and prescriptive, demonstrating "how precarious social identity was, how vulnerable to unexpected disruptions and disclosure it was, and therefore how deeply theatrical it was. Everyone, dramatists seemed to say, was a player-king embroiled in a ceaseless struggle to preserve his legitimacy" (112). Citing specifically the early modern misidentification play, in which, through the adoption of disguise, "Self [confronts] Rival Self" (113), and the protean capacity of individuals to self-fashion emerges, Agnew argues that the theater provided "a laboratory of and for the new social relations" (xi): a space in which audience and player united in a mutual exploration of social identity.

Agnew's work proves invaluable in the study of early modern celebrity, as it demonstrates the highly enmeshed relationship between the theater and the market—the twin institutions that, as I have argued, facilitated the emergence and perpetuation of celebrity as a cultural form in both the actor's staged performances and the circulation of the second self in commodities exchange. Furthermore, as Agnew argues, the trope of misidentification, as achieved through the employment of doubling, provides a potent site of inquiry into the existence of the second selves of both celebrity and credit, though I diverge from Agnew's model in his steadfast focus on individual performance as the principal means of constructing the "Rival Self," because, as I have argued, self-fashioning accounts for only a portion of the circulating second self. As numerous dramas of misidentification demonstrate, the adoption of alter-ego almost always disintegrates amidst the unforeseen projections of the public with whom it interacts, and certain cases of mistaken identity—specifically those involving twinship—never originate from conscious performance at all, rendering the targets of public misidentification the unwitting victims of misplaced projection. Such is the case in *The Comedy of Errors*, which

perhaps provides Shakespeare's most profound employment of the tropes of doubling and misidentification. As I will argue, in this remarkable, extended episode of misidentification, Shakespeare visits with greater scrutiny the theme touched upon in Sonnet 111, exploring the manner by which the divergence of "nature" and "brand" extends not only to theatrical celebrities like himself, but becomes an endemic condition of everyday market relations, revealing the means by which celebrity dynamics hold a mirror to emergent social and economic relations. As Antipholus of Syracuse absorbs the projections of the Ephesian marketplace's faith in his twin brother, the pair demonstrate the gradual estrangement between person and name in early modern credit and commodities exchange.

In Act 3 of *The Comedy of Errors,* the Ephesian businessman Balthasar offers his associate, Antipholus of Ephesus, a gentle warning that provides a productive lens through which to examine the remarkable employment of doubling and misidentification in the play. As a frustrated Antipholus of Ephesus pounds at his door, demanding to be let in until finally, in an act of desperation, he seeks out a crowbar to force his passage, Balthasar advises,

> Now in the stirring passage of the day
> A vulgar comment will be made of it,
> And that supposed by the common rout
> Against your yet ungallèd estimation,
> That may with foul intrusion enter in
> And dwell upon your grave when you are dead.
> For slander lives upon succession,
> For ever housed where once it gets possession. (3.1.100-107)

Speaking to that most obsessive of early modern fixations, reputation, Balthasar manages to convince Antipholus to "depart in patience" (3.1.95), and conduct their business at an alternate venue. The concern demonstrated by both parties reflects a fairly consistent trope in early modern drama wherein reputation is endowed with such potent force that it is thought to outlast the corporeal self. "Reputation, reputation, reputation—," bewails Michael Cassio in *Othello*, "Oh, I ha' lost my reputation, I ha' lost the immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial!" (2.3.246-248).[55] However, Balthasar's instructions take on added urgency in the distinctly commodities- and exchange-oriented setting of Ephesus, especially for Antipholus, a wealthy merchant whose "yet ungallèd estimation," later identified as his "credit infinite" (5.1.6), facilitates his participation in the market—a point assuredly rendered once Antipholus' long-lost twin arrives and unwittingly disrupts his brother's favorable esteem. Public regard, as Balthasar and Cassio agree, operates, like celebrity, as a kind of second, ethereal body, forever, though perhaps only tenuously linked to its subject.

As Russ McDonald argues, staged twins function as "visual puns," or "an identical outward appearance conceal[ing] two very different persons" (47), and thus, as with linguistic puns, provide humor in the audience's recognition of the dual meanings, or bodies, signified by a single collection of physical features. But as the visual pun of twinship divides one entity into two visually identical, though significantly divergent, forms, the trope offers broader ontological potential beyond humor; staged doppelgangers provide a visible means of dividing a single human agent into duality, assigning material substance to the otherwise abstract expressions of the human condition. Thus, twins, doppelgangers, and alter-egos provide an apt vessel for the

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[55] Consider also *Much Ado About Nothing*, in which a slandered Hero fakes her own death in order to shed her defiled reputation. As her uncle Leonato comments, "She died, my lord, while her slander lived" (5.4.66).

interrogation of both credit and the divided selves of celebrity, demonstrating through a visual pun the existential split between material personhood and the passive imprint of a publicly projected double. Balthasar's warning then helps to frame the terms of the divided Antipholi; public assessment, he advises, survives and perpetuates independent of individual participation, circulating freely in the public sphere, ceaselessly haunting its fleshy analogue. Unbeknownst to Antipholus of Ephesus, his twin, Antipholus of Syracuse, is doing precisely what Balthasar cautions him about, circulating through the Ephesian market, bearing Antipholus of Ephesus' face and name, disrupting the social and commercial relations of the Ephesian twin, who is then forced to bear the brunt of an uncontrollable alternate identity's interactions with the public. Thus, this visual pun divides the wealthy merchant, Antipholus of Ephesus, from his publicly constructed second self, embodied in the figure of Antipholus of Syracuse, who functions, like celebrity, as an amalgam of his twin's social and commercial history and the public's various projections onto and investments in him.

Antipholus of Ephesus begins the play a man of considerable wealth and social standing, as the goldsmith Angelo informs a merchant:

> Of very reverend reputation, sir,
>
> Of credit infinite, highly beloved,
>
> Second to none that lives here in the city.
>
> His word might bear my wealth at any time. (5.1.5-8)

As Angelo extols the name of Antipholus, he demonstrates the public's commercial and affective investments in the Ephesian Antipholus: they revere and love him, which implies a level of intimate feeling, and have extended him endless credit, meaning that the public, like Angelo, places absolute faith in his reputation and his ability to pay for goods and services rendered; he is

considered by all a sound investment that promises rewards. Furthermore, Angelo, in his hearty proclamation of Antipholus' virtue, buttresses Antipholus' value with the immaterial labor of his praise, by which he further circulates his friend's name and positive esteem, enhancing the value of someone in whom he has made investments.

However, after what Emilia labels a "sympathizèd one day's error" (5.1.399), this rich, famous, and beloved Ephesian merchant finds himself bound in a chair, facing exorcism by a quack. This rapid devolution of status is partially unraveled by the sympathy Emilia attributes the day's errors: the misidentification that propels the plot remains one error, shared between two sets of twins, much as the twins function as one being, divided into two bodies. Furthermore, as Kent Cartwright points out, "sympathy," in medieval and early modern England, also denoted a kind of magic, particularly apropos to this drama, through which "effects could be created on a remote being by performing them on another object representative of that being" (332), such as a wax effigy or voodoo doll (333). Thus, the sympathized error is the result of a kind of sympathized magic, by which Antipholus of Ephesus suffers the pangs of the public's disgruntlement with his unwitting twin's activities. The parallels between sympathized magic and the day's sympathized errors are rendered further apparent by Antipholus of Syracuse's description of the Ephesian mart upon arriving there:

> They say this town is full of cozenage,
>
> As nimble jugglers that deceive the eye,
>
> Dark-working sorcerers that change the mind,
>
> Soul-killing witches that deform the body,
>
> Disguisèd cheaters, prating mountebanks,
>
> And many suchlike libertines of sin . . .

> I greatly fear my money is not safe. (1.2.97-102, 105)

Of course, the magic Antipholus of Syracuse fears is revealed, perhaps even more frighteningly, as rooted in the very real-world phenomena of theatricality and market exchange; the true magic here lies in the cunning ability of vendors and performers to part a man from his money, and as Antipholus of Syracuse assigns both commerce and performance to the realm of the magical, he blurs the boundaries between the theater and the market—two arenas that overlap in the bustling port city and which facilitate the construction and circulation of celebrity. His apprehensive description of the Ephesian mart echoes early modern criticisms leveled at both institutions, particularly the "subtle craft" employed by idle persons—including players—in the Vagrancy Act of 1572, and several published accounts of marketplace deception, like Miles Mosse's 1595 warning: "Some, to cover their sinne, and to upholde their credite, have devised faire cloakes to shroude their ragged garments, and have begotten a more cunning and subtile kinde of trafficke" (qtd. in Vitkus 169). However, the rational explanation behind Antipholus of Syracuse's fears does not mean that those fears will go unrealized. Antipholus of Syracuse's appearance on Ephesian shores signals the emergence of his twin's "representative" being in the arena of commodities exchange, a second body that, like a voodoo doll, transfers its interactions with the public onto the body of Antipholus of Ephesus. Indeed, the Syracusian's circulation in the market will, as he feared, deceive eyes, change minds, and de-form bodies—particularly, the eyes of Ephesians who project upon him the credit they have extended to his brother, and the body of Antipholus of Ephesus, severed temporarily into two as he divides from his "very reverend reputation," before he re-forms in the play's concluding union.

As opposed to his accomplished and highly regarded brother, Antipholus of Syracuse emerges in Ephesus as a lost wanderer who admits to feelings of incompleteness: "I to the world

am like a drop of water/ That in the ocean seeks another drop" (1.2.35-36). He notably frames his self-assessment from an external perspective of public projection, defining himself by how "the world" views him, which is, as he notes, only half of a complete whole. The divided nature of the Antipholi is further referenced in Antipholus of Syracuse's place of dwelling in Ephesus: the Centaur, a being that, like the twins, is composed of two distinct halves. Also within this introductory scene, in the space of ten lines, Antipholus of Syracuse repeats his intention to "lose myself" in this foreign mart (1.2.30,40), as he prepares to wander the frightening market that he believes may swallow up his autonomy and his money. As his twin's second self, Antipholus of Syracuse's lost self signifies his gradual detachment from the material Antipholus of Ephesus in the free and open exchange of the market, in which names and images become increasingly severed from the persons they signify through public trade and appropriation. Unsurprisingly, then, the first episode of mistaken identity occurs over an exchange of currency, as the Syracusian demands a bag of gold from the wrong servant, Dromio of Ephesus, then proceeds to beat the hapless servant for withholding his money. Bereft of his gold, Antipholus of Syracuse unknowingly reunites with his proper servant, the likewise estranged twin Dromio of Syracuse, whom he also beats before the two exchange linguistic puns that not only highlight the characters' function as visual puns, but prove prescient as well:

> DROMIO OF SYRACUSE. Marry, sir, for this something that you gave me for nothing.
>
> ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE. I'll make you amends to give you nothing for something. (2.2.50-53)

As Dromio declares his beating undeserved, and Antipholus responds by promising to right the injustice with a future unequal trade, the pair also foreshadow the errors yet to come, as rewards

are bestowed without investment and credit attributed where none was earned, while his Ephesian twin will receive undue punishment for no offence of his own. As the embodiment of his twin's second self, Antipholus of Syracuse, furthermore, is no thing, an abstraction misidentified for some thing.

The errors continue as the Syracusian pair are erroneously wrangled into dinner in Antipholus of Ephesus' home, where his wife Adriana, mistaking Antipholus of Syracuse for her husband, remarks on his changed demeanor:

> O how comes it
> That thou art then estrangèd from thyself?
> Thy 'self' I call it, being strange to me
> That, undividable, incorporate,
> Am better than thy dear self's better part. (2.2.119-123)

Though the undividable self she references here seems, on the one hand, to point to the union of "one flesh" in marriage,[56] she likewise acknowledges that her husband appears to her as an incomplete part of a whole, distanced from her as well as from some portion of himself. She admits that she does not recognize the incomplete man before her, while encouraging him to reunite his two severed selves. But as Antipholus of Syracuse takes heed of Adriana's instructions and attempts union with her sister, Luciana, Dromio of Syracuse's encounter with his so-called better half—that is, his twin's portly wife, Nell—compels the Syracusian pair to flee back into the Ephesian mart.

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[56] Genesis 2:23-24: "And Adam said, 'This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be two in one flesh'."

As Charnes argues, famous names accrue value the longer they circulate in the marketplace, and the Syracusian twin's continued circulation in the market imbues him with increasingly enhanced economic value. He is first greeted by Angelo, who mistakenly provides him with a gold chain commissioned by his brother, demonstrating the tenuous relationship between a person and his credit, as Angelo projects upon the Syracusian twin the faith he has placed in the other. "Master Antipholus" (3.2.163), Angelo greets him. "Ay, that's my name" (3.2.164), Antipholus of Syracuse responds, signaling the extent to which he functions, here, as the name and image of his brother. "I see a man here needs not live by shifts" (3.2.180), he surmises, accepting the chain while acknowledging his baseless claim to it. As he proceeds onward through the mart, he continues to savor the perks of his brother's "credit infinite":

> There's not a man I meet but doth salute me
> As if I were their well-acquainted friend.
> And everyone doth call me by my name.
> Some tender money to me, some invite me,
> Some other give me thanks for kindness.
> Some offer me commodities to buy.
> Even now a tailor called me in his shop,
> And showed me his silks that he had bought for me,
> And therewithal took measure of my body.
> Sure, these are but imaginary wiles
> And Lapland sorcerers inhabit here. (4.3.1-12)

Once again, Antipholus of Syracuse attributes to magic what Shakespeare and his audiences may have recognized as congruous to their quotidian experiences in both the credit culture and the

culture of celebrity—that is, the gradual estrangement between person and name in the realm of commodities exchange. As Antipholus of Syracuse wanders further into the mart, he further transforms into a projective screen of his brother's fame, name, and credit; with no verifiable ties to this community, nor any history of reliable exchange, Antipholus of Syracuse yet functions as a site of both commercial and affective investment, accepting praise, thanks, currency, and goods from a public that has placed its absolute faith in his Ephesian twin and, undoubtedly, expects returns that this twin has no means of producing. Thus, as with the celebrity sign, the Ephesian townsfolk here collaboratively author this second self, assigning him credit and favorable esteem while enriching his status and dressing his body in luxurious fabrics, seemingly responding to a question he had previously asked of Luciana: "Would you create me new?" (3.2.39). The people of the Ephesian mart here collaboratively mold the incomplete, wandering stranger into the embodiment of their perceptions of, and projections onto, their prized Ephesian merchant.

With self severed from second self, Antipholus of Ephesus, then, has found himself, to use Agnew's words, "in a ceaseless struggle to preserve his legitimacy" (112). Denied access to his home, accosted by a vendor, accused by his wife, arrested, and, ultimately, bound in preparation of Doctor Pinch's exorcism, the Ephesian twin, and rightful claimant of the benefits enjoyed by the other Antipholus, demonstrates the kind of friction Shakespeare and Kempe reveal, respectively, in Sonnet 111 and *Nine daies wonder*, as he struggles to emerge beyond the public's perceptions and projections of an uncontrollable alternate self. That he is guilty of none of the charges leveled against him, yet suffers for all of them, speaks to the sliver of attachment he shares with his second self; the misdeeds attributed him exist solely in the arena of public perception, yet as Antipholus of Ephesus continues to share a name and face with the embodiment of such perception, he suffers their consequences as his words and deeds prove

impotent in the face of oscillating public sentiment. Reminiscent of Cassio's desperate wailing in *Othello* that without his reputation, "what remains is bestial," Antipholus of Ephesus finds himself materially intact, though reduced in the eyes of others to a baser form, as his wife questions his sanity, deems him "wretched" (4.4.110), and instructs Pinch to bind him as if he were an unruly animal. If Antipholus of Syracuse functions as the embodiment of the second self, then Antipholus of Ephesus is relegated to the position of personhood only in the strictly material sense.

As the day's sympathized error escalates, both twins are eventually united before the Duke, who marvels, "One of these men is *genius* to the other:/ And so of these, which is the natural man,/ And which the spirit?" (5.1.333-335). Invoking the classical conception of the *genius*, or the divine, attendant spirit attached to the mortal individual, the Duke's assessment proves both astute and layered. As the twins function as two embodied forms signifying "the natural man" and his intangible double, the Duke assigns, as does Balthasar, an immortal quality to the second body substantiated through public perception. But as the *OED* notes, *genius* also denoted "the quasi-mythologic personification of something immaterial (e.g. of a virtue, a custom, an institution) . . . a person or thing fit to be taken as an embodied type of some abstract idea" (n.1e).[57] Thus, the Duke recognizes that one of the twins before him likewise functions as an embodiment of abstraction—specifically, here, the second, collaboratively authored self as emerges in cultures of credit and celebrity. The Duke then follows his initial question with, perhaps, an even more compelling one; after asking which twin is *genius* to the other, he then inquires, "Who deciphers them?" (5.1.335). What he demands is a measure of authenticity, a way to isolate the man from the publicly authored double, while admitting his inability to

[57] Shakespeare invokes this type of genius in *1 Henry IV* when Falstaff labels the thin Justice Shallow "the very genius of famine" (3.2.285).

distinguish the two; both stand before him as real, substantial bodies in whom the public has made real investments and, in the end, the Duke concludes, "I know not which is which" (5.1.365). But as the Dromios, likewise united in the play's conclusion, suggest, neither entity, on his own, is truly discernible from the other. "Methinks you are my glass and not my brother" (5.1.419), Dromio of Ephesus informs his twin, acknowledging the means by which the Dromios, too, operate as two parts of a whole as Dromio of Syracuse serves as an external projection of his brother's face. "I see by you I am a sweet-faced youth" (5.1.419-420), the Ephesian Dromio continues, as only when confronted by his face in the glass does Dromio of Ephesus assess the totality of his being, acknowledging his self as incomplete without its accompanying public face.

All the World's a Stage

The first act of the play, in which a wary Antipholus of Syracuse bemoans the "nimble jugglers" and "disguisèd cheaters" of the Ephesian mart, offers a subtle moment of metatheatricality, as an actor, disguised in his role, parrots a number of the allegations frequently hurled at his trade, and the pointed comparisons he draws between the market and the theater are further reified by his physical location in the mart setting on stage. In this moment, both environments dissolve into an unrecoverable conflation: as an actor, he is both the "prating mountebank" he fears and a vendible commodity of the mart, his stage both a space for performance and a platform to demonstrate saleable wares. Throughout the play, the worlds of performance and commodities exchange are likewise interwoven. The conflated settings point to the market conditions that govern theatrical performance, and the theatrical tropes that inform participation in the market. That the play's central famous figure is a wealthy merchant—

enacted, of course, by a stage-player—further conflates both worlds in the body of the actor, demonstrating the means by which the commoditization and divided selves of theatrical celebrities mirror the everyday world of market exchange. As Balthasar's instructions to Antipholus of Ephesus demonstrate, a successful merchant must also be a proficient actor, aware at all times of his audience and performing to public approval, and as Antipholus of Syracuse metatheatrically suggests in the mart, a successful actor is also a kind of merchant, able to command a price for his own commoditized appearances.

Chapter Three:
Usurped Authority

Long before Robert Devereaux's oft-discussed February 7, 1601 stunt, in which he sponsored a production, presumably of Shakespeare's *Richard II,* at the Globe Theater in a bid to rouse public support on the eve of his planned uprising, the second Earl of Essex demonstrated a keen flair for the theatrical. After the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, for example, Essex orchestrated a grand spectacle for the climax of a week's parades when he arrayed an entourage of more than three hundred horsemen, musketeers, and harquebusiers in the Devereaux colors of white and tangerine, making "great efforts to ensure that his display was larger and more impressive than those which had preceded it" (Hammer 200). The brash and handsome 22-year-old earl, and newly appointed Commander of Cavalry (Wotton 178), then engaged his friend the Earl of Cumberland in a staged battle, continuing to delight the gathered audience even after the queen signaled for cessation and eventually departed (Hammer 200). Despite the queen's dismissal, Sir Henry Wotton reports that she "much graced him openly in view of the Souldiers and people" (179), which he claims in hindsight provided "the very poyson of all that followed" (179), as Essex proved "greedy of honour and hot upon the publick ends" (180).

Though Essex's staging of *Richard II* has garnered a great deal of critical attention,[58] the event marks little more than one final, failed attempt to harness the theater's influence by a man

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[58] Queen Elizabeth's remark to antiquarian William Lambarde in August of that year, "I am Richard II, know ye not that?" has propelled much of this interest (qtd. in Siemon 239). According to James R. Siemon, the monarch's rare and candid acknowledgment of the theater has provided "the documentary lynchpin" in "discussions relating Elizabethan theater and society" (239, 238), especially the theater's potential for political subversion. See, for example, Stephen Orgel's treatment of this "piece of very dangerous civic pageantry" (119) in "The Spectacles of State"; Stephen Greenblatt's observation of how the production has "metastasized" through Elizabeth's observations in *The Power of Forms in the English Renaissance* (3); or Leah S. Marcus' discussion of the performance's value as political propaganda in *Puzzling Shakespeare* (27).

who had already, for well over a decade, successfully employed theatrical strategies to further his remarkable career. Even before his dazzling post-Armada pageantry, Essex had already established himself as a magnificent spectacle in the tiltyards (McCoy 81-82), for which he commissioned elaborate set pieces and scripted performances; he was further known to don costumes to theatrical effect, such as when, in 1590, he upstaged his friend and rival Cumberland's installation as the queen's champion by appearing in mourning attire to broadcast his disappointment (Hammer 202). If not the first, then Essex surely proved one of the earliest and most audacious noble appropriators of emergent theatrical conventions to achieve his star-like rise to prominence, for which he was repaid in kind: playwrights including Shakespeare and Peele, in turn, appropriated Essex's name and exploits on the early modern stage, perhaps most famously in the Chorus to the fifth act of *Henry V*, when the titular hero's return from France is compared to the London arrival of "the General of our gracious Empress/ . . . from Ireland coming" (30-31), as the Chorus notes of Essex's popular following, "How many would the peaceful city quit/ To welcome him!" (33-34).

"Far more so than any of his contemporaries," Paul Hammer writes, "Essex projected a public image of himself which was consciously—and conscientiously—created . . . he sought to present the world with an image of himself as the embodiment of conspicuous virtue" (199). As is well documented, such self-conscious self-fashioning was neither a rarity nor a secret among the early modern nobility, and the proliferation of prescriptive conduct manuals aimed at sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English courtiers not only sanctioned but standardized the cultivation of an agreeable public face. Where Essex diverted from such standard practice, though, lay in his blatant contradiction of prescriptive courtly behavior. Manuals aimed at the aristocracy generally shun ostentatious display and garrulousness, and certainly deride behavior

that appears rehearsed or otherwise self-promoting:[59] Castiglione, for example, advises the courtier to refrain from excess speech and maintain himself "alwayes within his bounds" (189); James Cleland, in his 1609 *The Institution of a Young Nobleman*, likewise encourages restraint and moderation in all affairs, specifically warning the young nobleman not to "maketh himselfe a mocking stocke to the world" through ostentatious display "like a king of a stage plaie" (215). Essex, however, from very early in his career, appears to have dismissed entirely the putative parameters of proprietary behavior in favor of the decidedly self-promoting, theatrical strategies Cleland rails against; he both sought out and exploited avenues of public display and, like the earliest theatrical celebrities contemporaneously rising in fame, dared dabble in the realm of the popular, courting favor equally from both the monarch and her common subjects alike.

Beyond the conventions of performance, what Essex seems to have appropriated most successfully from the theater are the strategies employed in the cultivation of celebrity. He not only staged himself, as Wotton would lament, "to the publique view of so many thousand Citizens which usually flocked to see him" (190), but he also ingratiated himself to the public through conspicuous gestures of good will to those who petitioned him,[60] establishing himself as a privileged benefactor whose heart resided with the common people. "My lord . . . never sent strangers from him discontented," Edward Reynoldes once wrote (qtd. in Hammer 212). To similar ends, Essex became a rather profligate patron of the arts, further demonstrating his aristocratic liberality while simultaneously ensuring his name's wide circulation, as dedicatee, in print. As Alexandra Gajda notes, "Essex was the recipient of more literary dedications than any

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[59] As Frank Whigham argues in *Ambition and Privilege: The Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Literature*, the primary objective of conduct manuals was to weed out pretenders from the true nobility; therefore, obviously prepared behaviors and affectations signaled an individual's illegitimate claim to noble status, as his behaviors should appear innate and effortless (147-150).

[60] See Hammer, particularly Chapter 7, "My Lord of Essex His Men," pp. 269-315.

other figure in the 1590s" (3, n.9), even surpassing Queen Elizabeth, but he also appeared fairly regularly in print he did not commission. He is counted "great England's glory and the World's wide wonder" in Spenser (145-146), and his military exploits were lauded in popular ballads and pamphlets; "there can be no doubt," Hammer argues, "that public interest in Essex—and the possibilities of commercial publishers turning a profit from it—were quite genuine" (214).

Such commercial motivations likely prompted "some foolish idle headed ballad maker" (qtd. in McCoy 96), in 1600, to print and sell an engraving of a heroic Essex on horseback during the earl's house arrest following his insubordination in Ireland. As Richard McCoy recounts, "the Earl disappeared from the public eye, but this engraving kept his heroic martial image in circulation and sustained his popular reputation" (98), but not without provoking the Privy Council's censure. The council acted quickly to stamp out such practices, forbidding the sale of any nobleman's engraving, "Because the custome doth growe common and indeed is not meete such publique setting forth anie pictures but of her most excellent Majesty shall be permyted yf the same be well done" (qtd. in McCoy 98). The council's quick action suggests its recognition of the competing and, perhaps, threatening influence of Essex's popularity. As Francis Bacon wrote in a 1596 letter, Essex was "a man . . . of a popular reputation" (qtd. in McCoy 88), and as Jeffrey Doty has demonstrated, *popularity*, in the 1590s, held complex, intertwined connotations, simultaneously conveying notions of public favor and vulgarity, often accompanied by mischievous or even seditious overtones ("Popularity" 189). The word became increasingly aligned with the earl throughout the final decade of the sixteenth century (Doty, "Popularity" 184), as did the word *public*, as Essex's peers attempted to isolate his particular appeal and influence, which was deemed more troublesome and, as McCoy argues, dangerous, as the decade proceeded, and which showed no signs of slowing despite the earl's confinement and loss of

favor with the queen. Through his numerous public stagings and wide availability in print, Essex had forfeited authorial agency in the circulation of his image to the public who clamored for him and, thus, become a celebrity; his name and image continued to incur favor despite the earl's physical absence from the arenas that made him famous.

Essex occupies a unique position at the intersections of various, competing paradigms—between the privileged and the popular, the worlds of the court and the theater, the aristocrat and the celebrity—and as such, offers a particularly salient example of the pervasive reach of early modern theatrical celebrity, as well as its limitations. The earl's eventual execution as a traitor following his failed attempt to transform popular appeal into rebellious action further testifies to the frictions between these various paradigms, as the earl demonstrated the hazards of straddling two worlds built on inverse notions of power: the sanctioned, top-down authority as bestowed through birthright, and the popular (from the Latin *populāris*, literally, "of the people"), bottom-up influence of celebrity. This chapter explores those same intersections and tensions that Essex embodied in his tumultuous career, first by situating early modern ideas about popularity within larger cultural concerns and exploring the concept's particular associations with the theater and its rising stars. In early modern England, *popularity* stood in for much of what we currently attribute to celebrity, and this chapter directs focus onto the cult of early modern political celebrity, its intersections with theatrical enterprise, and the means by which notions of popular power challenged and complemented modes of power bestowed through birthright. Inversely, this chapter likewise explores how aristocratic conventions, especially patronage, helped to shape the celebrity paradigm, before turning to the ways Shakespeare interrogates the increasingly symbiotic, though tension-laden, relationship between royal and popular authority in his histories, as he reinvigorates Britain's legendary rulers—specifically, here, Richard III,

Henry IV, and Henry VIII—within his own contemporary culture of theatrical celebrity, as monarchs attempt to marshal popular opinion and publics seize agency in the elevation of their sovereigns.

Popularity and the Playhouse

Popularity entered the English lexicon in the fifteenth century to denote commonly accepted beliefs and opinions and, in a now obsolete definition of the term, the spread of disease as well (*OED s.v.* popular, n.1), such as in Montaigne's description of plague as *maladie populaire*, translated to English as "popular sickness." While the term evolved to encompass various aspects of public favor, eventually becoming defined by lexicographer John Wilkins as "beloved by the people" in 1668 (*s.v.* popular, adj.), and grew to wider usage throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, popularity never quite shook its connotative association with infection—both literally, as when William Cornwallis asked, "Who then will spend his time in pursuit of a thing so diseased?" in his 1603 "Of popularitie" (Sig. R8), and in the more figurative sense of social and political infection, such as when Henry Constable warned in 1600 that a potentially seditious pamphlet was "treading the steps of popularitie" (Sig. C3). Like disease, popularity was generally figured as not only a corruptive force particularly aligned with the lower classes, but a fast-spreading contagion as well: "Such a popular pursuit once begun by one, and seconded by another," wrote Wotton, "should quickly kindle a greater party" (552). And as the essayist John Stephens noted, popularity, like the most potent infections, could also prove life-threatening: "it will never be good," he wrote, most likely in reference to Essex, "So long as people doe but conduct their favorites to the Scaffold" (Sig. G5).

Ultimately, the persistent linking of popularity to infection lies in their perceived origins among the lower classes and the uncontrollable, upward trajectory each shares. As William C. Carroll argues, infection was seen as "the inverse energy of power: power operates down the social hierarchy . . . infection operates up the chain, threatening those of 'better disposition'" (128); similarly, Doty observes that "popularity . . . is a world turned upside-down" ("Popular Appetite" 5), in which favor, and hence, favorites, emerge from the ground up, rather than through royal appointment. As such, Cornwallis deemed popularity "an usurped authoritie" (Sig. R3r), by which undeserving men could illegitimately, albeit fleetingly, seize the people's love from its rightful recipient, the sovereign, by performing and pandering to the vulgar masses. Cornwallis's model echoes the proliferation of print condemnations of popularity that emerged throughout the 1590s, signaling a growing perception of popularity's threat to stable social and political order—a threat for which Essex, accused during his trial of "affecting popularitie" (qtd. in Spedding 44), became a potent symbol. As Doty explains, "Because the people were seen as volatile, their collective actions or feelings—from illegitimate worship to their publicly expressed enthusiasm for certain figures—were treated by elites as a threat to the social order, and popularity was something of a 'buggesword'" ("Popular Appetite" 2-3). Popularity, then, provided a dangerous alternative to established modes of power, through which the public could elevate its own cultural symbols in resistance to sanctioned orthodoxy, and as such, the early modern term *popularity*, in its host of meanings, conveyed much of what we currently attribute to celebrity in its democratic emergence, strong affective ties, and palpable public influence.

Not surprisingly, popularity was also strongly associated with the theater, a forum that self-consciously solicits and depends upon the people's explicit, public approval, and which, coincidentally, was also figured as a breeding ground for both literal and figurative infection; in

the 1574 "Act of Common Council for the regulation of all theatrical performances in London," theaters were cited for "the uttering of popular, busy, and seditious matters" (305). As the Puritan antitheatricalist William Prynne wrote, "Of stage-plays, there are two sorts: the one popular, or public, acted by hired and professional stage-players (the plays we have now in hand), and these they all confess to be abominable and unlawful pastimes" (286).

As Prynne points out, the theater operated, in Doty's words, as "a literal domain of popularity" ("Popularity" 191), its plays, playwrights, and players ascending to celebrated prominence on the wings of popular acclaim, and in realization of the polemicists' fears, the theater concomitantly provided the launching ground of the "usurped authoritie" of celebrity actors. Stephen Gosson rightfully wonders of popular players "[if] I made them lords of this misrule" (Sig. C3r), questioning his own complicity in the elevation of illegitimate authorities, the carnivalesque lords of popular affection without whom, he argues, "such multitudes would hardly be drawn in so narrow room" (Sig. C4). John Cocke, in his derisive 1615 sketch, "A Common Player," attempts to delegitimize the player's ill-gotten authority by pointing out the popular nature of his prominence: players, he argues, can only speak when "heartened on by the multitude" (qtd. in Wickham et al 179), lacking any genuine authority and instead functioning as a sort of mouthpiece for popular opinion. In a similarly democratic model, he insists that, despite pretenses that might suggest otherwise, the player remains but "the servant of the people" (qtd. in Wickham et al 179), circularly dependent upon the public that acclaims and reveres him. Unsurprisingly, with popularity so strongly tied to the theater and its players, theatrical conventions were frequently appropriated to theorize popularity as a whole. According to Cornwallis, at its heart, popularity is an "Arte" perpetuated through "much cunning, much danger, much applause" (Sig. R4). His word choices here suggest the inherent theatricality of

popularity, as do many early modern treatises on the topic, and applause, which a number of players would directly solicit in dramatic epilogues, was frequently figured as the vessel through which the contagion of popularity spread; Essex was regularly described not only by the "stage" he occupied but by the applause he elicited,[61] and as Bacon cautioned, "So some fall in love . . . with popular fame and applause, supposing they are things of great purchase, when in many cases they are but matters of envy, peril, and impediment" (282).

Ben Jonson, whose personal aversion to popularity is well documented, actually rebuffs his audience's "popular applause" in the prologue to *Cynthia's Revels* (13), which he likens to "foamy praise, that drops from common jaws" (14). Though early modern drama provides an apt forum for the negotiation of popularity, considering that a play's success depends so strongly upon it, Jonson invokes the term and concept more than any other playwright of the era and proved, not unlike the antitheatricalists, one of popularity's harshest critics. Later in *Cynthia's Revels*, for example, Jonson takes a more sustained jab at popularity when, during a word game in which participants must match random adjectives to a selected noun, a player attempts to pair "popular" with "breeches":

> PHA. Why popular breeches?
>
> PHI. Marry, that is, when they are not content to be generally noted in court, but will press forth on common stages and broker's stalls, to the public view of the world. (4.3.116-120)

Though in his 2011 *Ben Jonson: A Life*, Ian Donaldson muses that Jonson "emerged as Britain's first literary celebrity" (41), it is highly doubtful that Jonson himself would ever have claimed to

[61] For example, Matthew Sutcliffe wrote of Essex, "God hath placed [him] on a high stage . . . never man had greater favour of the beholders, nor was more likely to obtain the singular applause of the people" (Sig. B2r).

be such. As the exchange from *Cynthia's Revels* illustrates, Jonson generally held celebrity, or its linguistic predecessor, popularity, in contempt as a desperate and illegitimate pathway to renown; here, popularity is tied to both the theater and the market, most likely the bookseller's stall—the two avenues by which celebrities achieved magnified visibility, which he paints as "common" forums for wanton acts of pandering, echoing the prologue's assertion that lesser writers "prostitute their virgin-strain,/ To every vulgar and adulterate brain" (7-8). Jonson's career and harsh take-downs of all things popular suggest a man much more invested in the sanctioned, top-down authority of royal or noble appointment than the bottom-up cult of celebrity.

By 1605, Jonson had begun his career as a prominent masque-writer for the most exclusive audiences of the Jacobean court, which, as Donaldson notes, not only proved more lucrative than writing for the theater, but also provided a kind of acclaim unavailable in the playhouse, conferring a degree of legitimate authority and "bringing him to the notice of aristocratic and diplomatic observers" that ultimately led to "a position of social prominence that was unusual, if not unique, for a writer in early modern England" (236). Modeling his career on the classical tradition of poets he so often referenced in his writing, Jonson, who was eventually appointed James' poet laureate, fashioned himself, as Leo Braudy notes, like Virgil or Horace as a kind of "poet-priest" (322), who aimed to serve his monarch through dramatized depictions of virtue, notably, virtuous fame. As Jonson wrote in the preface to his 1609 *The Masque of Queenes, Celebrated from the House of Fame*, "being us'd in these Services to her *Majesties* personal Presentations . . . it was my first and special regard, to see that the nobility of the Invention should be answerable to the dignity of their Persons. For which reason I chose the Argument to be, *A celebration of honourable and true Fame, bred out of Virtue*" (Sig. A5). This

"honourable and true Fame" stands in marked contrast to the popular fame he decries in the dedicatory epistle to *Volpone*:

> As for those that wil (by faults which charity hath rak'd up, or common honesty concealed) make themselves a name with the Multitude, or, to drawe their rude and beastly clappes, care not whose living faces they intrench with their petulant stiles, may they doe it without a rivall, for mee! I chuse rather to live grav'd in obscuritie, then share with them in so preposterous a fame. (Sig. A4-A5)[62]

As Jonson recuses himself from his rivals' pursuit of popular acclaim, he assigns the mass audience to bestiality—a common sentiment generally expressed in the recurrent trope of the "many headed multitude," from which popularity emerges. The Hydra-like image, originated by Plato and adopted as a favorite descriptor by both early modern antitheatricalists and playwrights alike, dissolves the theatrical audience, and the larger city population, into an undifferentiated and monstrous mob, as threatening as it is base and unrefined. As Ian Munro argues in *The Figure of the Crowd in Early Modern London*, to be "many-headed is the same as to be headless" (109), that is, to lack the rule and authority of a singular, sovereign head, as of the body politic, and because "the manyheaded monster was composed of masterless men, those for whom nobody responsible answered" (109), the multitude was situated somewhere outside social and political order. Unorganized and crude, its tastes were deemed uncritical and fickle, its whims volatile and dangerous, and critics like Jonson frequently noted the crowd's propensity to lift the unskilled and undeserving to troubling prominence—a recognition only allayed by the multitude's inconstant loyalty and wavering affections. The popular man, according to

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[62] Jonson did soften his stance somewhat in the Prologue to *Epicoene*, when he mentions those writers who "will taste nothing that is popular" (6), before declaring his intentions are "not to please the cook's tastes but the guests" (9).

Cornwallis, is held "a loft by the pleasure of others . . . his foundation is the many headed multitude, a foundation both in respect to their number and their nature uncertaine, and consequently dangerous, for who knowes not the divers formes of mens imaginations" (Sig. R5).

Of course, such figuration further ties early modern ideas about popularity to our modern concept of celebrity, figuring popularity as multifariously authored in the public sphere, fragile, and subject to the whims of oscillating sentiment, and this kind of fame proved anathematic to the ordered, carefully constructed fame Jonson pursued. Despite his protestations above, Jonson did not live in obscurity, nor do his exploits suggest he would have been content to do so; rather, he took great care in establishing his renown on his own terms, becoming the first playwright to publish his collected works in folio edition in 1616. His *Works*, fronted by an engraving of himself, sober and laureled, opposite a magnificent monument, demonstrate the author's intent to establish his own legacy, to erect the monument that will present him to and preserve him for future generations. The illustration only foreshadows the carefully guided hand-holding Jonson provides his readers throughout the volume, as he offers instructions as to how to read, stage, and appreciate his work.[63] Reportedly, Jonson kept a similarly watchful eye during performances of his plays as well; in *Satiromastix*, Thomas Dekker describes the manner by which Jonson, represented here as Horace, surveyed his players from the galleries, making "vile and bad faces at every line to make men have an eye to you and to make players afraid" (5.2.299-300). Ultimately, such careful control proves incompatible to the circulation of celebrity; as discussed in detail in Chapter Two, celebrity involves an external, largely uncontrollable locus of identity production, through which popular reputations are crafted and perpetuated by the public sphere.

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[63] As a result of Jonson's careful editorial style, Eugene Giddens argues that even today, editors remain "conservative" in their approach to Jonson's texts and have never taken the same license with his work that they have throughout the centuries with the works of Shakespeare (65).

Jonson, on the other hand, held the reins of his renown close, publishing his own plays, even theatrical flops like *Sejanus*, before others could—generally with carefully solicited praise poems appended. Rather than attempt to court public favor, he lashed out at his audiences as ignorant simpletons unable to appreciate his genius, and when, late in his career, his *The New Inn* drew hisses at the Blackfriars and promptly closed, he responded by penning his "Ode (to Himself)," in which he commands himself, "Come leave the loathed stage,/ And the more loathsome age" (1-2), since "'Twere simple fury, still, thy selfe to waste/ On such as have no taste!" (13-14). Unable to satiate the popular appetite, he closes his poem, and, essentially, his long career, by clinging to the avenues of royal patronage that advanced and sustained him from the beginning, noting,

> But when they heare thee sing
>
> The glories of thy *king*,
>
> His zeale to *God*, and his just awe o'er men:
>
> They may, blood-shaken, then,
>
> Feele such a flesh-quake to possesse their powers
>
> As they shall cry, 'Like ours,
>
> In sound of peace or wars,
>
> No Harp e'er hit the stars,
>
> In tuning forth the acts of his sweet raigne:
>
> And raising *Charles* his chariot 'bove his *Waine*.' (51-60)

Scholars frequently position Jonson and Shakespeare at opposite ends of the popularity spectrum,[64] painting Jonson as an elitist adherent to the traditional institutions of royal

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[64] See, for example, Braudy, pp.322-326, and Donaldson, pp.41-51.

preferment, with Shakespeare the emergent poet-actor of the people. Indeed, such polarity offers the much discussed rivalry a seductive narrative,[65] especially as Jonson hints at Shakespeare's popular reputation in his poetic tribute featured in the First Folio:

> To draw no envy, SHAKSPEARE, on thy name,
>
> Am I thus ample to thy book and fame;
>
> While I confess thy writings to be such,
>
> As neither Man nor Muse can praise too much.
>
> 'Tis true, and all men's suffrage. (1-5)

As Jonson aligns the departed poet with popular praise, that is, "all men's suffrage," he is careful at the same time to separate his own thoughtful admiration for Shakespeare's work from the "blind affection" of the uncritical masses (9). He insists, "these ways/ Were not the paths I meant unto thy praise" (5-6). As Jonson deemed himself the undeserving victim of an ignorant audience's jeers, here, he figures Shakespeare as the undeserving recipient of a common popularity, when his talents warranted far nobler admiration. His aim, then, is to refashion a popular renown into an authoritative one bestowed by a royal favorite and poet laureate—one that culminates with the deceased poet's image alongside those of royalty, when the "Sweet Swan of Avon" appears to "make those flights upon the banks of Thames,/ That so did take Eliza, and our James!" (73-74).

Even if Shakespeare, as Jonson suggests here, was the more popular poet, that does not mean that Shakespeare necessarily relished the position. In his Sonnet 111, as discussed in Chapter Two, Shakespeare expresses disdain for the public's appropriation of his name,

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[65] See James Shapiro, *Rival Playwrights: Marlowe, Jonson, Shakespeare*, especially Chapter 4, "Jonson and Shakespeare." Shapiro likewise deems Jonson "obsessed with rendering how he should be remembered" (133), while portraying Shakespeare as generally less concerned with such matters.

lamenting that his humble means had compelled him into a life of public performance. He may have also, like Jonson, questioned the public's powers of discernment; in *Hamlet*, for example, Claudius muses of his nephew, "He's lov'd of the distracted multitude,/ Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes" (4.3.4-5), which only echoes Hamlet's more pointed barbs at popular audiences, or "the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise" (3.2.9-11). Furthermore, as Jeffrey Knapp argues,

> If Shakespeare's popularity thus distinguished him from Jonson, it did not necessarily prevent him from sharing Jonson's elitism. In . . *Venus and Adonis* . . . Shakespeare, too, seems to prefer the one reader to the many, assuring the Earl of Southhampton that 'only if your Honor seem but pleased' will Shakespeare 'account' himself 'highly praised' for his poetry. (41-42)

Clearly, both men valued their aristocratic patrons, but whether Shakespeare's supplication to the Earl of Southhampton originated from a sense of propriety, ambition, personal affection, or financial necessity is debatable. What is clear, though, is that from 1594 on, unlike many of his freelancing peers, Shakespeare wrote exclusively for, and presumably arrayed himself in livery of, the Lord Chamberlain's, later the King's Men, in whose service he would stage performances for the royal court. Taking a holistic look at Shakespeare's dramatic oeuvre, Diana E. Henderson posits that "Shakespeare's plays are infused with signs of popular culture" ("Popular Entertainment" 9); from his frequent incorporation of songs and folk tropes to his endearing fools and shifting genres that correspond, she argues, to popular taste, Shakespeare's drama embodied much of what was popular. Such characterizations of content, however, have been met with justifiable critical scrutiny, especially as pertains to the distinctions between popular and

elite culture; as Tim Harris argues, such delineation “distracts us from considering the degree of interaction between the cultural world of the educated and the humbler ranks of society” (5).[66]

If Shakespeare did share some of Jonson’s distaste for popularity, he never proved nearly as ardent a critic. His most sustained meditation on the subject, *Coriolanus*, which mentions the word *popular* more than any other of his texts and accounts for four of his eight total uses of the word, offers a mixed bag of sentiments. Annabel Patterson has argued that in *Coriolonaus*, Shakespeare’s exploration of popularity, set against the fitting background of Republican Rome, revisits the role of the masses that he wrote off as foolish and violent in *Julius Caesar*, to “thematiz[e] the popular and its role in earlier historical events (both Roman and English) in order to bring attention to the ‘popular voice’” (85). Patterson’s overt aims are to situate Shakespeare as a populist son of a glover sympathetic to the values and struggles of commoners—a group, she argues, to which Shakespeare assigned himself. She thereby rejects the notion that Hamlet’s criticism of the multitude reflects Shakespeare’s own opinion, arguing, “it seems folly to assume that his plays, by assuming an elitist social perspective, knowingly insulted a large proportion of their audience” (3). Instead, she explores the various means by which Shakespeare provides a platform for the *vox populi*, which, in *Coriolanus*, often takes center stage in the form of a number of vocal citizens bestowed the power of arbitration in Coriolanus’ ascent to consul. Certainly, the plebeians are granted an important measure of agency in this play; as the Third Citizen notes, “every one of us has a single honour in giving him our own voices with our own tongues” (2.3.39-40). Patterson’s argument, however, is quickly complicated by Shakespeare’s rendering of the popular voice as fickle, easily swayed, and given to mob mentality—a pronouncedly less severe mob mentality than the one that slayed

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[66] See also *Shakespeare and Elizabethan Popular Culture*; Alex Davis’ chapter, “Shakespeare and the Clowns,” takes up Harris’ debate (67-91).

Cinna the hapless poet merely because he shared the name of Cinna the conspirator—but a kind of collective mentality by which individual plebeians hesitate to stray from the perceived opinions of their peers, made all the more visible by the numerous lines of dialogue attributed to "All the Citizens." As the play opens, the citizens outspokenly revile Coriolanus as "the chief enemy to the people" (1.1.5-6), to which the crowd responds in a unified voice, "We know't, we know't" (6), and the returning war hero's vehement disdain for the commons only further piques their aversion. However, once Coriolanus, in need of the people's consent to serve as consul, "counterfeit[s] the bewitchment of some popular man, and give[s] it bountiful to the desirers" (2.3.92-93), the citizens offer their support, only to quickly recant once whispers of dissent, and Brutus' persuasive speech, sway the crowd's collective mind. When Sicinius asks, "What is the city but the people?" (3.1.199), the question posed is both ennobling and troubling, elevating the importance of popular opinion, while reckoning with its problematic propensity to bend toward the loudest, not necessarily the worthiest, voices.

If Shakespeare holds the popular voice to scrutiny, he holds his eponymous hero's failure to consider the plebeians' opinions up to contempt and ridicule. Coriolanus believes that authority is derived from martial prowess and views the people as "fragments" (1.1.212), or scraps of uneaten food—part of a larger gastronomic metaphor that features throughout the play in which the starving people, denied the corn rotting away in storehouses, are figured as consumable goods for those in power.[67] "If the wars eat us not up, they will" (1.1.75), the First Citizen warns of the state. The inversion comes, however, when Coriolanus' close ally Menenius predicts that the "hungry plebeians" aim to "devour" Coriolanus (2.1.8); that is, by humbling and

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[67] In "Idols of the Marketplace: Rethinking the Economic Determination of Renaissance Drama," Scott Cutler Shershow extends this gastronomic metaphor to consider the ways in which the plebeians function more generally as consumable commodities for the Roman bourgeois.

staging Coriolanus for public consent, Menenius fears an inversion of the traditional structures of authority by which Coriolanus will offer himself up to be consumed by "the many-headed multitude" (2.3.15), echoing the fears of "usurped authoritie" common in early modern treatises on popularity. Coriolanus, whose overt contempt for the people is depicted as both intractable and petulant, echoes his ally's fears of usurped authority:

> Behold, these are the tribunes of the people,
> The tongues o' th' common mouth. I do despise them,
> For they do prank them in authority
> Against all noble sufferance. (3.1.22-25)

Echoing Cornwallis, Coriolanus delegitimizes popular authority; the tribunes, representative of the people, do but "prank," or shroud themselves, with the popular power of the people's tongues. As he continues, he focuses on the plebeians' capacity to feed, referring to them as a "herd" and asking the tribunes, "why rule you not their teeth?" (3.1.15, 18), before surmising that the citizens aim to "curb the will of the nobility" (3.1.41). His hostility toward the Roman citizens, then, seems rooted in his fear of becoming consumed by them, of inverting the traditional structures that maintain his nobility and safely position him as consumer. Of course, his failure to reconcile himself to the public will is precisely what leads him to his proposed act of treasonous revenge, and to his eventual downfall. Popularity, in *Coriolanus*, proves both powerful and highly unstable, a potent force circulated amongst the well-intentioned but undiscerning, and simultaneously, a political necessity and source of official anxiety, dooming those who choose to deny its puissance.

Patrons and Patricians

While Jonson (and perhaps to a lesser extent, Shakespeare) rebuffed popular acclaim in favor of aristocratic preferment, inversely, the early modern nobility, and even royalty, increasingly appropriated the conventions of theatrical celebrity to sustain its power, signaling a growing recognition that popularity could be marshaled for social and political clout. In a letter to the Earl of Essex, Bacon carefully delineates the potential value of popularity per se from the danger and vulgarity tied to the label of popularity:

> . . . a popular reputation, which because it is a thing good in itself, being obtained as your Lordship obtaineth it, that is *bonis artibus* [by good art]; and besides, well governed, is one of the best flowers of your greatness both present and to come; it would be handled tenderly. The only way is to quench it *verbis* [in word] and not *rebus* [in matter]. And therefore, to take all occasions to the Queen, to speak against popularity and popular courses vehemently; and to tax it in all others but nevertheless to go on in your honourable commonwealth courses as you do. (qtd. in Spedding 44)[68]

As Bacon advises, popularity, in and of itself, is a positive attribute, even an admirable one likely to assist Essex in his political aims, but one that must be gently wielded to avoid the assignation as popular (Doty, "Popularity" 190); therefore, the earl must publicly denounce the concept, while continuing to pursue his "commonwealth courses"—with *commonwealth* serving as an early modern near-synonym for *popular*—which Bacon deems, here, "honourable." Further, his letter implicitly commends Essex's various strategies to curry popular favor, including his

[68] See also Doty, who observes that, "Unfortunately, for Essex, he did the opposite, maintaining a reputation for popularity while losing actual popular support" (190). James Shapiro likewise references this letter in *A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare: 1599*, noting that Bacon, here, urges Essex to "banish popularity from his thoughts" (128).

patronages, public performances, and publications, as *bonis artibus*, and Bacon was hardly alone in his recognition of the value and potential gains associated with such popular pursuits. In fact, the harsh condemnation popularity elicited from elites signals the perceived potency of its power, and charges against Essex's cultivation of popular favor ironically provided a model other nobles could follow so long as such pursuits were somewhat less audaciously undertaken—more *rebus* and less *verbis*.

The sponsorship of a playing company provided an efficacious means of popularity in matter, without the troublesome implications of popularity in word, demonstrating an important, symbiotic relationship between actors and aristocrats, imparting popular appeal to patrons while lending a measure of legitimacy to the usurped authorities of popular celebrity. Theatrical patronage effectively circulated the names and liveries of aristocratic sponsors, aligning their historic names to those of the theater's emerging stars, ingratiating them to the public, and encouraging popular support, while resisting charges of popularity. Instead, theatrical patronage fell under the jurisdiction of the closely related, though highly regarded institution of *magnificence*.

Magnificence, as an aristocratic value, traces its roots to Plato, but is perhaps more clearly defined, in its early modern English appropriation, in Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* as when "those who are wellborn, of good repute, and all such things" spend their money lavishly "not on [themselves] but on the common affairs" (4.2.1122a, 1123a), providing a specialized forum for virtuous, conspicuous consumption aimed at supporting public needs. Such expenditures, according to Aristotle, must "involv[e] largeness of scale" (1122a)—smaller

expenditures he cites instead as liberality[69]—and also must reflect the purchaser's aesthetic good taste. Magnificence rose to the forefront of courtly virtues in the Italian Renaissance, becoming strongly aligned with the Medici (Howard 326),[70] and Hoby's translation of Castiglione counts magnificence as one of the chief attributes, along with gentleness, wisdom, and temperance, that lead men to glory so that they become "very dear to men and God" (262). Spenser, likewise, salutes magnificence in *The Faerie Queene* as a noble virtue, writing in his letter to Raleigh, "So in the person of Prince Arthure I sette forth magnificence in particular, which vertue . . . is the perfection of all the rest" (qtd. in Hamilton 181).

Increasingly in sixteenth-century England, argues Kevin Sharpe, "status and authority depended on degrees of magnificence and display," and "the Tudor monarchs showed the most sophisticated appreciation of the need for the royal household and court to outshine any rival in abundance, conspicuous consumption and magnificence" (204).[71] Likewise, Gordon Kipling argues that the zealous Tudor cultivation of magnificence began in the court of Henry VII, who carefully orchestrated and publicized his patronage of drama, poetry, and painting (119). Of course, nobles followed such royal precedent, but with the Vagrancy Act of 1572, a unique opportunity for the display of magnificence emerged when "All and everye persone and persones beynge whole and mightye in Body and able to labour, having not Land or Maister," especially including "all Fencers Bearewardes Common Players in Enterludes & Minstrels, not belonging

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[69] Wotton also distinguishes the two concepts in his comparison of the Earl of Essex and the Duke of Buckingham, noting, "The Earl I account for liberal, and the Duke the more magnificent; for I do not remember that my lord Essex did build or adorn any house, the Queen perchance spending his time, and himself his means" (174).
[70] In fact, Catherine de' Medici, queen consort to France's Henry II, became famous for her elaborate court masques, called "magnificences."
[71] See also Linda Levy Peck's *Consuming Splendor: Society and Culture in Seventeenth-Century England*, which explores various forms of patronage, the emerging trade in luxury goods, and the role of conspicuous consumption in aristocratic displays of magnificence.

to any Baron of this Realme or towards any other honorable Personage of greater Degree" would be "deemed Roges Vacaboundes and Sturdy Beggars"(qtd. in Gurr, *Shakespearean* 27). The statute effectively reserved the right of theatrical patronage for the nobility,[72] forcing players to become part of a noble household and wear their patron's livery to escape prosecution for beggary. As such, sponsorship of playing companies became a more elite form of patronage, circumscribed not only by means but by birth, even as it proved one of the least expensive. Nobles were under no obligation to pay their companies, except for specific, solicited performances, and as Kathleen E. McLuskie and Felicity Dunsworth argue, patrons provided more for their companies in terms of influence rather than financial reward (428). This benefit, according to G.K. Hunter, was mutual, as the players, in turn, conferred status upon their patron:

> The Elizabethan players were saved from [vagrant] status only by the largely fictional argument that they were servants to a noble lord, a fiction that suited both parties, for it not only allowed the players to impose themselves on reluctant licensing authorities but also gave the lord a free retinue and an opportunity to outshine his peers in cultural display and courtly status. (12)

Elizabeth, for her part, seized upon the opportunity to display her magnificence through a company of players when, in 1583, she assembled the Queen's Men by recruiting the most celebrated players from each of the existing troupes, including Richard Tarlton, Robert Wilson, and John Singer, and thus, according to Gurr, "checked the rivalry of the great nobles" (*Shakespearean* 28).

Leeds Barroll has recently taken issue with the notion that theatrical patronage was tied to the cultivation of aristocratic magnificence. In "Shakespeare, Noble Patrons, and the Pleasures of

[72] This statute was followed by another, stricter one in 1598, "leaving only great nobles with the authority to lend their names to players" (Gurr, *Shakespearean* 27).

'Common Playing'," Barroll observes that such patronage practices began well before, as he says, "the advent of Marlowe, Shakespeare, or Ben Jonson and other of their eloquent fellows began to impart some luster to playing and playhouses" (100), and therefore asks, "what, before the 1580s, was to be gained by an aristocrat when some group, garnished with his high noble name and livery, was enacting plays of the quality of *Cambises*?" (100). But Barroll's question presumes that the theater rose to prominence only through the quality of plays (a value that, in itself, is difficult to gauge from its contemporary standards) and the renown of playwrights—the majority of whom were not even considered enough of a selling point to appear on printed plays' title-pages until after 1600—and that a company's capacity to impart magnificence was thereby linked to its dramas and dramatists; however, as much evidence to the contrary suggests, it was the players who first ascended to prominence and thereby conferred status upon their patrons. Stowe's *Annales*, for example, cites the actor's skill as the basis of royal patronage:

> Comedians and stage-players of former times were very poor and ignorant . . . but being now grown very skillful and exquisite actors for all matters, they were entertained into the service of diverse great lords: out of which there were twelve of the best chosen, and . . . were sworn the Queen's servants and were allowed wages and liveries as Grooms of the Chamber. (qtd. in Wickham et al 208)

Tarlton, probably one of Sussex's Men before 1583, was not only the most famous and celebrated theatrical entity of this early era, already appearing in print, as Chapter One discusses, by 1570,[73] but also one the queen's favorites, as reported by Thomas Heywood, Thomas Nashe, and others. As such, a number of the plays commissioned by the Queen's Men centered on

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[73] Gurr likewise argues that Tarlton "became famous in the 1570s" (*Shakespearean* 86).

clowning,[74] likely for the explicit purpose of showcasing the company's star player—a practice bemoaned by Marlowe, whose prologue to *Tamburlaine* scoffs at "the jigging veins of rhyming mother wits/ And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay" (1-2). Therefore, players likely brought "luster" to the theater well before Marlowe's or Shakespeare's lines became part of its celebrated features, so the noble payoff resided more squarely with the acclaim of the company's actors than the plays commissioned to showcase them.

Barroll cites aesthetic taste, rather than a desire to broadcast magnificence, as the impetus behind theatrical patronage, arguing that "nobles functioned as patrons for common players, companies, and playwrights, in much the same way and for the same reasons usually attributed to nobles who patronized other kinds of artists . . . that is, an interest in the genre per se" (101). But certainly, patronage of the visual arts could be rooted in political or social motivations as well; as William Cecil, Second Earl of Exeter and patron of Italian artists, advised his peer the Earl of Shrewsbury, commissioned paintings "increase your magnificence" (qtd. in James 182). All forms of artistic patronage, including Henry VII's patronage of glass workers, likely stemmed from a combination of aesthetic delight and a bid for enhanced social status, but the sponsorship of playing companies occupied a unique position as the most public, and popular, form of early modern patronage. Commissioned paintings, for example, were displayed, as Exeter advised Shrewsbury, "in a Great Chamber" (qtd. in James 182), for the enjoyment and appreciation of select guests, and as Linda Levy Peck argues, artistic patronage was generally considered a "private, dependent, deferential alliance" (3), by which a patron could control or

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[74] Some of the Queen's Men's plays include *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, in which Tarlton enacted the part of Derricke (see Chapter One for more on this performance), and Robert Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, featuring the Latin-bastardizing clown Miles. For more, see Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth Maclean's *The Queen's Men and their Plays*, which, in Chapter 6, likewise observes that "clowning is at the centre of the dramaturgy" of the company (122).

limit access to a desirable resource (48), thus furthering the patron's exclusivity and reinforcing his or her prestige. Playing troupes, however, in addition to their performances in court and in noblemen's homes, played regularly in public amphitheaters and halls, and thus, anyone with a penny could similarly "patronize" the players and savor the aesthetic delights favored by royal and noble sponsors. The Earl of Leicester's 1574 patent—the first issued after the Act of 1572—gave its actors free reign to perform anywhere, provided their plays received the Master of Revels' approval (Chambers 88-89). This patent provided the model for those that followed, freeing patronized players to perform in commercial arenas, which, as McLuskie and Dunsworth note, proved a financial necessity. "Having a patron was never a guarantee of financial success" (428), they write, and commercial playing, even if it proved, like patronage, only an irregular source of income, provided a sorely needed economic supplement.

What patronage may have lacked in financial reward, it made up for in "the extended network of social relations" it provided (McLuskie and Dunsworth 428), offering a measure of protection against civic authorities and, as Richard Dutton claims, "an important adjunct to commercial viability" (227). Commercial playing likewise extended the reach of royal or noble magnificence, demonstrating the sponsoring aristocrat's generosity, grandiosity, and good taste not only to his or her peers, but to the entire city as well. Theatrical patronage provided a public platform for the promulgation of the patron's virtue, not unlike the effusive praise lavished upon poetic patrons, but here extended to illiterate audiences unable to afford costlier print entertainment, and the player became a promising site of investment that conferred, much like the patron, influential social rewards. That the playing companies, and their audiences, were composed of commoners could actually enhance the magnificence of the benefactor; Barroll argues that out of a spirit of magnificence, elites frequently included the poor in stately

spectacles, including Queen Elizabeth's funeral procession (96). The similar enfranchisement of the common player, for the delight and amusement of a common audience unable to experience such spectacles at court, might similarly signal, in a very public forum, the munificent virtue of the patron.

Of course, such displays of magnificence before the multitude share a blurry boundary with the decidedly undesirable status of the popularity that plagued Essex's reputation, much of which was achieved through his profligate patronage. But Elizabeth's and, later, James' participation in the practice, especially since he organized playing companies for his queen and the prince as well, firmly and authoritatively sanctioned the process, allowing patrons to achieve a level of popularity *rebus*, without the troubling accompaniment of popularity *verbis*. Beyond the stage, theatrical patrons' names circulated widely through print, appearing on the covers of nearly every printed play-text, and were likely plastered across posts throughout the city on playbills, while the popular celebrities of the theater sported their liveries, all of which reinforced patrons' virtues and further aligned them with the celebrated actors of the stage, amounting to a popularity in deed if not in name. As Doty explains, such carefully modulated popularity may have been increasingly deemed an advantageous social and political position in the highly factional court of the 1590s, especially as the specter of uncertain succession loomed over all matters of state ("Popularity" 191). The decade proved, he argues, "a political culture in transition" (191), with the people's love increasingly considered a strategic political force, as was modeled by Essex—first to great effect, before carried to tragic excess.

Theatrical patronage productively and substantially demonstrates an important intersection between the aristocracy and the celebrity, and the theater continued to provide a forum for aristocratic display by means of play attendance, where nobles occupied the pricey and

exclusive lords' rooms above the stage, becoming, like players, an integral part of the theatrical spectacle. Gurr counts that, of the 250 persons known by name to have attended public performances between 1567 and 1642 in both amphitheaters and halls, nineteen were nobles, including some of the patrons themselves (*Playgoing* 69). Both queens Henrietta Maria and Anne attended performances at the Blackfriars, and in a well documented moment of noble attendance, the Duke of Buckingham commissioned and attended, with an entourage including an earl and a foreign ambassador, a performance of *Henry VIII* at the Globe in 1628, before abruptly leaving during the second act. As Thomas Cogswell and Peter Lake argue, "This incident illuminates both the emergent style of public politics in which even grandees like Buckingham were forced to operate and the role of the public theater" (255). In their article, Cogswell and Lake describe Buckingham's attendance as a carefully orchestrated exercise in political propaganda, in which the Duke harnessed the power of the theater, including the gossip and newsletters his appearance was likely to fuel, to transmit messages about himself to counter his increasingly negative public image as a corrupt favorite. Such messages were intended, according to Cogswell and Lake, not only for Buckingham's court detractors, but for the theatrical audience and the nation as a whole, as Buckingham sought to strategically wield popular favor to his political advantage, deeming the public amphitheater the ideal platform for his petition.

Further, as Braudy argues, by the early seventeenth century, "the increasing importance of the actor as a public figure" exerted a powerful influence on aristocratic displays of authority (331), at once establishing a model of performance that elites could follow to maintain the public's attention while simultaneously becoming their stiffest competition for the people's affection; thus, in a circular twist, the celebrities that nobles had helped lift, though their

patronage, to positions of prominence, and who had in turn imparted enhanced social status upon their sponsors, had emerged as rivals for the people's love. In his discussion of Edward Alleyn's role as Genius of the City in the coronation procession of James I, Braudy indulges in some unanswerable, yet intriguing speculation about such rivalry (331-332): Whom might the crowds have been more excited to see? Which man—the king himself or the tall, commanding actor who played Tamburlaine—portrayed the greater and more convincing image of authority? Of course, we cannot begin to answer such questions, but James' procession, including Alleyn's appearance, signifies an important intersection of royalty and theatrical popularity. Though elaborate pageantry had already, by the fifteenth century, become a fixture of coronation celebrations, James' procession, the first since the establishment of London's commercial theater industry and, hence, the first to incorporate theatrical professionals, marked, according to William Leahy, the culmination of a two-hundred-year evolution toward increasingly grandiose and theatrical processions (53). As James proceeded through seven triumphal arches through the city, pageants composed by Jonson and Dekker were performed at each,[75] the first of which featured Alleyn's welcome. Alleyn was undoubtedly selected not only for his gifted oratory—in *The Magnificent Entertainment*, Dekker reports that his speech "was delivered with excellent Action, and a well tun'd audible voice" (280)—but also for his celebrity. As Genius of the City, Alleyn stood as the embodiment of all its people, a celebrated performer that had swelled to eminence through both noble patronage and popular acclaim, and the staged encounter between the new king and a champion of the people's love powerfully demonstrates the increasing symbiosis of their respective paradigms. James' entrance to the city, ushered in by the most

[75] Each playwright subsequently published his own account of the festivities, highlighting his own contributions to the event: Dekker's *The Magnificent Entertainment* and Jonson's *The Coronation Triumph*.

celebrated stage actor of the day, not only conferred clout upon the king, but also provided him a popular welcome bestowed by a highly distinguished representative of the people; Alleyn's speech, reports Dekker, specifically offered its "heartiest Welcome" on behalf of "the Lord Maior and Aldermen, the Councell, Commoners and Multitude" (280). The meeting likewise casts a spotlight on Alleyn himself, a common son of a London innkeeper made ceremonious ambassador of the people's good will to their king, privileged with the authority to welcome royalty to his city.

For the remainder of this chapter, I would like to explore how Shakespeare stages similar interactions between monarchs and their publics, probing the tensions and reconciliation of various discourses of authority in his histories, specifically in *Richard III*, *1 Henry IV*, and *Henry VIII (All Is True)*. As previously discussed, popularity, for Shakespeare, proved a precarious phenomenon that was at once potent and unstable, requiring careful management but, ultimately, capable of altering the course of nations. It is my argument that as Shakespeare breathes new life into the legendary kings of English history, he does so amidst his own contemporary theatrical culture, in which monarchs appropriate the conventions of celebrity as an alternate pathway to authority—one that originates not through birthright or conquest, but in the people's love. Therefore, Shakespeare's monarchs participate in various strategies of performance and calculated publicity in order to marshal and maintain popular support as an adjunct to the sanctioned authority of royal lineage.

Richard III and the "thousand several tongues"

In Richard Loncraine's 1995 film adaptation of *Richard III*, Sir Ian McKellen's Richard, in his bid to secure the crown, hurries to his flower-filled dressing room before a carefully

planned public appearance (act three, scene seven in the play). As Richard seats himself before a large, brightly lit dressing room mirror, his attendants place a drape over his shoulders before two young female make-up artists arrive to carefully inspect and prepare the face he will soon present to his public. When Richard finally emerges from the dressing room door, he is transformed into the image of avuncular benevolence, his face softened and bespectacled, his arm clutching a prayer book, but the film audience, unlike the audience Richard emerges to meet, has been invited behind the scenes to witness his transformation. In a subtle and clever moment of metafilm, the dressing room scene invokes an iconic image of the Hollywood star, attended upon and framed in the white glow of the mirror's globe lights, surrounded by vases of flowers left by admirers and hangers-on. This peek behind the scenes exposes the collaborative construction of a star, the conscious preparation in the staging of the public face, establishing Richard not only as a contender for the crown but an actor as well. Set in an alternate version of the English 1930s, the scene likewise points back to the early days of the film industry and the expanding role it came to play in the political sphere, to a time when another disabled head of state, Franklin Roosevelt, adeptly wielded the power of film to promote a strong and assured public image by appearing in newsreels, always strategically situated behind desks or podiums. But Richard's performance here proves only a mild dress rehearsal compared to the following scene, in which he accepts the crown and the cheers of a massive audience while poised behind the media's microphones and staged before a strikingly Nazi-esque banner of red, white, and black. As Richard smiles, waves, and winks to his retainers, the film quite overtly directs attention to the troubling intersection of media, popularity, and politics, the manner by which the

public, seduced by the glow of political celebrity, elevates the charismatic but undeserving to power.[76]

Such scenes provide a fitting modernization of Shakespeare's play as the film and media savvy of Loncraine's Richard aptly corresponds to the theatrical acumen of Shakespeare's character, just as Loncraine's backdrop of an emerging film industry echoes Shakespeare's own revivification of Richard within the early modern theater culture. Both play and film reflect meaningfully upon their respective genres, on the industries they participate in, and the place of those industries in the political sphere. From the first moments of the play, Richard identifies himself as a self-conscious character of an unfolding drama[77]: "therefore since I cannot prove a lover/ To entertain these fair well-spoken days," he announces to the theatrical audience, "I am determinèd to prove a villain" (1.1.28-30). He likewise acknowledges the theatricality of the present era—"these fair well-spoken days"—in which an attractive façade and slick oratory have proven requisites to popular, particularly, in this case, women's favor. In his pronouncement of intent, he invites his audience, as does Loncraine's Richard, behind the scenes to witness the crafting of a character that emerges only a few lines later when Richard quiets his candid confession to enact the role of kindly brother: "Dive, thoughts, down to my soul: here Clarence comes./ Brother, good day" (1.1.41-42). Again, the audience is treated to a moment of behind-the-scenes access as Richard shifts into character—a moment and technique that Richard will continue to share with the theatrical audience throughout the play as he reflects, in moments alone, upon the success of his performances, perhaps most famously after he woos Anne in act

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[76] Jared Scott Johnson likewise notes, "McKellen's film cultivates a climate of self-reflexive ambiguity, both criticizing politicized forms of mass media while fully exploiting its own sub-genre of mass media: film" (45).
[77] In a somewhat similar vein, Linda Charnes argues that Richard self-consciously comes to terms with "his prior textual existence" (30)—that is, his existence as a notorious character in English historiography.

one, scene two, and abruptly shifts in tone to self-congratulate, "Was ever woman in this humour wooed?/ Was ever woman in this humour won?" (215-216).

Many of Shakespeare's monarchs are endowed with similarly theatrical propensities, though perhaps not carried out to such self-conscious revelry, and the performative aspects of kingship in Shakespeare have been well documented,[78] but Richard, along with Henry IV, stand out as the most attuned to the particular desires and motivations of their audiences, most likely out of sheer necessity: each suffers the anxiety of a shaky claim of succession, and therefore, each seeks out avenues of popular support to buttress his legitimacy. As Doty argues, questions regarding uncertain succession in the 1590s may have propelled the aristocratic pursuit of popularity for political advantage, and both of these monarchs heed the lessons of the theater in their pursuit of popular favor—not, as is often discussed, by learning to play the part of king, which, arguably, Richard never actually learns to do, but, following the celebrity paradigm, in their attempt to disperse authorial agency amongst the public, to achieve and maintain authority by popular consent. Richard, for his part, understands authority as conferred both by hierarchical structures of patrilineal descent, and thus, murders every legitimate claimant to the throne above him, but also through the ground-up support of the people's love, and therefore stages elaborate campaigns to court the populace. His first attempt to do so involves the spreading of rumors among the citizens of his nephews' illegitimacy, commanding Buckingham, "There, at your meetest vantage of the time,/ Infer the bastardy of Edward's children" (3.5.72-73). In appropriately theatrical fashion, Buckingham responds, "Doubt not, my lord, I'll play the orator"

[78] See, for example, Jean Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England*, particularly Chapter 6: "Kings and Pretenders: Monarchical Theatricality in the Shakespearean History Play," and David Scott Kastan, *Shakespeare After Theory*.

(3.5.93).[79] As Buckingham later recounts, he performed his role with gusto, attempting to persuade his audience not only of the princes' bastardy but reminding them of Richard's lineage, noble character, and military prowess, rousingly concluding by bidding his supporters, "Cry 'God save Richard, England's royal king!'" (3.7.22).

"And did they so?" Richard asks (23).

"No, so God help me," Buckingham replies. "They spake not a word" (24), demonstrating to abruptly comic effect the extent to which the pair have underestimated the English public's powers of discernment.

In the Induction to *2 Henry IV*, Shakespeare offers a brief meditation on the power of rumors when the personified figure, Rumour, takes the stage and asks, "Open your ears, for which of you will stop/ The vent of hearing when loud Rumour speaks?" (1-2), implying that few can resist the seductive pull of "false reports" (8). As the Induction explains,

> Rumour is a pipe
> Blown by surmises, Jealousy's conjectures,
> And of so easy and so plain a stop
> That the blunt monster with uncounted heads,
> The still discordant wav'ring multitude
> Can play upon it. (15-20)

Invoking the image of the many-headed multitude, Shakespeare figures gossip and rumors as conduits of false information perpetuated by the base motivations of the public sphere, and Richard counts on such motivations to pave his pathway to the throne. That rumor proves "so

[79] Buckingham had already commended his own acting abilities in act three, scene five, when he informed Richard, "Tut, I can counterfeit the deep tragedian,/ Tremble and start at wagging of a straw" (5-6).

easy" to play suggests its general efficacy, that it circulates freely among its intended audience to deliver its misleading "surmises" and "conjectures." The citizens of Richard's England, however, remain, in Richard's words, "tongueless blocks" (3.7.42), who refuse to confirm and repeat the rumor even after the Mayor attempts to regain the citizens' attention and lend Buckingham further credence. Their reluctance suggests a higher level of public discernment than Shakespeare discusses in Rumour's Induction, but is less surprising in light of the citizens' political discussions in act two, scene three. In this scene, Shakespeare directs focus upon the conversations of nameless citizens, much as he does in *Coriolanus*, similarly spotlighting the popular voice and allowing them to contemplate and evaluate matters of state; they confirm news of Edward's death, express concern at the prospect of being ruled by a child king, and issue a dire warning about Richard's role as advisor to the prince: "O full of danger is the Duke of Gloucester" (2.3.27). In *Richard III*, the citizens are less a "blunt monster" and more a discerning and deliberating public, but perhaps part of their reluctance also stems from the particular type of rumor that Richard and Buckingham attempt to circulate, which deals in questions of birthright—a type of authority from which the citizens may regard themselves as disenfranchised. As Richard and Buckingham review the failure of the rumor to move the multitude, they proceed to stage a highly theatrical stunt that allows the people to confer popular authority, rather than ask them to negotiate the authority of birthright.

"An if you plead as for them/ As I can say nay to thee for myself,/ No doubt we'll bring it to a happy issue" (3.7.52-54), Richard informs Buckingham, cognizant that his reticence to assume authority invites the public to confer it upon him. But Richard's strategy here extends beyond a mere show of humility and reflects his understanding that his refusal of the crown enfranchises his public, allowing them, instead, to bestow it upon him, thereby granting the

citizens a sense of agency in his elevation. Such design emulates the promotion of popular celebrities, in which fame and status emerge from the acclaim of the people, and therefore, Richard rebuffs Buckingham's assertion that he is the rightful claimant to the throne only to acquiesce to popular demand, in effect, sidestepping questions of legitimate lineage and, instead, embracing the "usurped authoritie" of popularity. Appearing, as stage directions indicate, "aloft, between two bishops," he becomes a silent spectacle of Christian piety and humility, demonstrating, as he claimed in *3 Henry VI*, that he can successfully transform into any role, "add colours to the chameleon/ Change shapes with Proteus for advantages" (3.2.191-192), while Buckingham sings his praise to the gathered internal audience. Richard declines his inherent right to rule, noting, "So mighty and many my defects,/ That I would rather hide me from my greatness" (3.7.150-151), in both a feigned show of humility and, perhaps even more strategically, a humanizing acknowledgment of his disability. It is only when a nameless citizen, listed only as "Another," urges, "If you deny them, all the land will rue it" (3.7.212),[80] that Richard relents. "Will you enforce me to a world of cares?" (213), he asks. "I am not made of stone" (214).

The performance proves successful, with Buckingham's cry, "Long live kind Richard, England's worthy king!" finally meeting a chorus of support (3.7.230): "Amen," acknowledge "All but Richard" (231), as Richard maintains his display of humble reticence through its entirety.[81] But Richard's ascent to the throne is here achieved through decidedly unorthodox

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[80] The Oxford and Norton editions cite this character as "Another," as does the first quarto edition printed in 1597. Other editions, following the First Folio, attribute this line to Catesby.

[81] In Thomas More's *The History of King Richard III*, which likely served as a model for Shakespeare, the citizens recognize Richard's performance as "stagecraft," but offer their support anyway out of fear. The citizens' motivation to support Richard in Shakespeare's play is never specifically addressed. As More writes of the citizens, "And so they said that these matters be kings' games, as it were, stage plays, and for the more part, played upon scaffolds, in which

means and owes more to the conventions of theatrical celebrity than to the rites of kingship: kings are divinely appointed; theatrical celebrities are popularly promoted, and Richard, perpetually aware of his dubious claim to kingship through sanctioned channels, opts instead to rise to power on the people's love, however manipulated and, as it will prove, fleeting that love may be. By resisting all intimations of his legitimacy by birthright only to accede, finally, to the solicitation of "Another," who functions as a singular stand-in for the popular voice, Richard cunningly appropriates the conventions of celebrity by deferring authorship of his eminence to the public. His admission that he is "not made of stone" suggests the opposite: that he is soft, pliable, and has bent to the public will; that the public has, in fact, shaped him into their king. Richard's performance has empowered and compelled the otherwise disenfranchised public, making them co-authors of his royal authority, and thus, he functions much like a theatrical celebrity: publicly and multifariously authored, popularly appointed through performance.

As is the case with celebrity, the Richard upon whom the public has lavished its love is not the same Richard we find in his moments alone, or even, necessarily the Richard he played aloft with the bishops, but a kind of Richard of the public's own imagination, and it is this clash of various Richards that haunt him on the eve of his demise, almost as much as do the spirits of his seemingly endless train of victims. Waking up from fearful dreams, Richard frenetically asks himself,

> What do I fear? Myself? There's none else by.
>
> Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I.
>
> Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am.

---

poor men be but the onlookers. And they that wise be will meddle no farther. For they that sometimes step up and play with them, when they cannot play their parts, they disorder the play and do no good" (82-83).

> Then fly! What, from myself? Great reason. Why?
>
> Lest I revenge. Myself upon myself?
>
> Alack, I love myself. Wherefore? For any good
>
> That I myself have done unto myself?
>
> On no, alas, I rather hate myself
>
> For hateful deeds commited by myself.
>
> I am a villain. Yet I lie: I am not.
>
> Fool, of thyself speak well. – Fool, do not flatter.
>
> My conscience hath a thousand several tongues. (5.5.136-147)

Richard's near-pathological dissociation fittingly follows the parade of ghosts that have just tormented him in his dreams, as both moments reflect upon his usurpation of authority—first, in his murderous usurpation of the traditional hierarchy of royal lineage, and second, through the usurped authority of his popularly appointed kingship. As Richard confusedly alternates between "I," "Richard," myself," and finally, "conscience," it becomes clear that he has become infinitely fragmented and hears a multiplicity of voices in his head —voices that simultaneously love, hate, fear, and flatter him. He returns to the play's initial self-assessment, in which he claimed to "prove a villain," but even that notion, spoken earlier in such assured confidence, seems now only a lie he tells himself as he has lost any stable sense of self. The impetus for his self-fragmentation is ultimately revealed as the "thousand several tongues" of his conscience; as Richard addresses his conscience as a kind of dissociated, inner voice of personal authority, he finds it shattered in a thousand pieces, reflecting the means by which his public identity, his kingship, his person, have been shaped and crafted by the fickle voices of the multitude. The "tongueless blocks" he earlier derided have spoken, named him king, and now, as his co-authors,

continue to speak, but in disharmonized, destabilizing voices, quite literally at this moment, tearing him into pieces. As numerous early modern treatises on popularity caution, the voice of the people generally proves inconstant and erratic, with popular figures' fates governed by the oscillating whims of the many-headed multitude, and Richard's mental unrest only foreshadows his eventual demise, both of which are the result of his shaky foundation in popularity. If popular political support is easily won, as Richard demonstrated, it is also easily lost, and Richard finds only "cold friends" in place of the gaggle of retainers and momentary followers he once amassed (4.4.415). When Henry Tudor eventually bests Richard in combat, Stanley reminds the audience of Richard's illegitimate rise to power, snatching the crown from "this long usurped royalty" to place it on the head of Henry VII (5.8.4). King Henry, surveying the noble dead, commands his followers to "Inter their bodies as becomes their births" (5.8.15), suggesting a return to the traditional structures of authority. As progenitor to the royal line that would eventually place Elizabeth on the throne, which Henry acknowledges in his hope that his heirs will eventually "Enrich the time to come with smooth-faced peace" (5.8.33), the play likewise asserts the legitimate lineage and, therefore, sanctioned authority, of the sitting monarch to its contemporary audience.

Henry IV: A Public Wonder

Like Richard III, King Henry admits, in *1 Henry IV*, that he owes his position to popular "Opinion, that did help me to the crown" (3.2.42), and as the play opens, he likewise acknowledges the means by which a once coalescent public can fragment into dangerous, warring factions:

Those opposèd eyes,

> Which, like the meteors of a troubled heaven,
>
> All of one nature, of one substance bred,
>
> Did lately meet in the intestine shock
>
> And furious close of civil butchery. (1.1.9-13)

Believing the civil strife now brought to a close, Henry asserts that a common, external enemy and pious mission can renew the nation's solidarity and, thus, proposes a crusade to the Holy Land, by which he may also further solidify his authority in the model of the *Cœur-de-Lion*. But his designs are soon set aside by news of troublesome skirmishes along two of England's borders, and by the celebrated officer Hotspur's flouting of standard military procedure in his refusal to send his noble prisoners to the king. As is the case in *Richard III*, the opening scene of *1 Henry IV* introduces its audience to a paradigm of uneasy kingship in which divided public loyalties are met with grandiose gestures, and traditional structures of authority have broken down.

This opening scene also introduces the frictions between King Henry and his wayward son, Hal, given, as *Henry V* retrospectively assesses, to "open haunts and popularity" (1.1.160). The following scene, in which Hal is introduced, provides a striking juxtaposition to the stately matters and elevated persons of the first scene; in scene two, Hal and the corpulent, besotted Falstaff mock the monarchy, joke about drinking and dallying with whores, and finally plan a robbery, thus substantiating Henry's concerns, as do Hal's continued appearances in an Eastcheap tavern along with his merry band of thieves and drunkards. The continued juxtapositions between Henry's court and its pressing matters of state and Hal's drunken revelry situate the king and prince at opposite ends of a social spectrum, with the king sequestered and circumscribed by his noble entourage and Hal embodying popularity in its original Latin sense,

that is, occupying a space amongst the people. However, if Hal is the more popular royal, it is a popularity only *verbis* and not *rebus*, for as much as he has found companionship and learned the commoners' slang in Eastcheap, his exploits have earned him a common reputation but not garnered him the people's love. His father informs him that the people have grown "a-weary of thy common sight" (3.2.88), and Falstaff recounts to the prince that, "an old lord of the Council rated me the other day in the street about you" (1.2.74-75), admitting that both of them lack "good names" (1.2.73). Furthermore, the camaraderie Hal enjoys among the common folk is always mitigated by his thinly veiled contempt for what he calls "the unyoked humour of [their] idleness" (1.2.74)—a contempt divulged through his constant quips at Falstaff's expense, his willingness to terrify and rob a group of travelers (even if he plans to return the money), and his toying with the clueless drawer Francis. Though he situates himself among the people, he never courts their favor, but rather, considers them the background players in the spectacle of his own upcoming ascent:

> Yet herein will I imitate the sun,
>
> Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
>
> To smother up his beauty from the world,
>
> That when he please again to be himself,
>
> Being wanted he may be more wondered at
>
> By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
>
> Of vapours that did seem to strangle him. (1.3.175-181)

Likening the public to a contagious disease, as do so many early modern treatises on popularity, Hal figures his companions merely the base vulgarity that will, by contrast, illuminate his royal

presence when he ascends the throne, rather than as a part of a potentially supportive political body.

It is, in contrast, the sober and regal Henry who actually recognizes the public as a deliberating body and appreciates the complexities of popular favor. As has been amply noted by critics, both the king and his delinquent son understand the theatricality of kingship: Hal has already cast the parts in his planned reformation and proves able to play his father's role in a moment of impromptu play-making with Falstaff, and Henry announces his intent to mold his character into someone more "Mighty and to be feared" in order to mask his "smooth . . . soft" nature (1.3.6,7).[82] But only Henry, like Richard III, understands the complex psychology of his audience, not only that they desire enfranchisement, but, in a lesson that Richard of Gloucester learned only too late, that their affection is difficult to sustain. When Henry confronts the manner by which his son has become "So common-hackneyed in the eyes of men,/ So stale and cheap to vulgar company" (40-41), he echoes his son's contempt for the vulgar, yet simultaneously calls attention to the popular perspective, Hal's public image in "the eyes of men," as he reminds his son of the power of popular opinion, which both elevated Henry to the crown and dismantled his predecessor's authority. According to Henry, Richard II, "the skipping King," lost power by similarly debasing himself to the multitude:

> . . . he ambled up and down,
>
> With shallow jesters and rash bavin wits,

[82] In *Shakespearean Negotiations*, Stephen Greenblatt devotes much attention to both Henry and Hal's appropriation of theatrical convention in their ascents to power, noting, "Theatricality, then, is not set over against power but is one of power's essential modes" (46). Referring specifically to this scene, he writes, "'To be oneself' here means to perform one's part in the scheme of power rather than to manifest one's natural disposition" (46). See also Marjorie Garber in *Shakespeare After All*, who notes Henry's language of "disguise and false coining" (320), and David Scott Kastan's assertion of Henry's "spectacular sovereignty" in *Shakespeare After Theory* (126).

> Soon kindled and soon burnt, carded his state,
>
> Mingled his royalty with cap'ring fools,
>
> Had his great name profanèd with their scorns,
>
> And gave his countenance, against his name,
>
> To laugh at gibing boys, and stand the push,
>
> Of every beardless vain comparative. (3.2.60-67)

As Henry recounts, Richard dismantled the majesty of his kingship through frivolous pursuits of popularity, not only availing himself to, but entrenching himself within the common ranks. As is the case in *Richard III*, popular appeal here is likewise "soon kindled and soon burnt," as Henry assesses that, in short, Richard "Enfeoffed himself to popularity" (3.2.69), surrendering himself entirely to, rather than marshaling, the people's love. In turn, invoking a similar gastronomic metaphor as appears in *Coriolanus*, the people became "glutted, gorged, and full" of Richard's presence (3.2.84);[83] allowed to feed on their king without restriction, the public devoured him, satiating its desire for Richard to the point of disgust—not unlike the manner by which Richard III imagines the unconstrained masses similarly rip him to shreds. As Henry explains, honey, "being daily swallowed" (3.2.70), eventually causes men "To loathe the taste of sweetness" (73), as the multitude's desires, once satiated, quickly turn to contempt.[84]

As most contemporary celebrity studies theorize, the maintenance of celebrity involves something of a tightrope act in which stars must constantly renegotiate their relative accessibility and distance to their audience. The formulation provides a sort of economics of popular appeal,

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[83] See also Doty, who provides a sustained examination of gastronomic tropes in early modern treatments of popularity, including those found in the Henriad, in "Shakespeare and the Popular Appetite," pp. 4-5.

[84] Shakespeare revisits this idea in Sonnet 102 as "sweets grown common lose their dear delight" (12).

by which celebrities elevate or maintain their exchange value on the market by means of premeditated scarcity, lest they fall into overexposure and saturate the market, while occasionally availing themselves to the public in order to elicit desire. It is that space, according to Arjun Appadurai, "between pure desire and immediate enjoyment" that establishes value (3), and as Shakespeare stages Henry and Hal within his own contemporary culture of theatrical celebrity, Henry's instructions invoke the same economic model that perpetuates celebrity; he refuses to surfeit the public's appetite and thereby satiate popular desire to the point of its extinction. Instead, he calculatedly maintains the tensions between desire and enjoyment, and thus, "showed [himself] like a feast,/ And won by rareness" (3.2.58-59). Only "like a feast," but never the feast itself, Henry explains the means by which he was able to spur desire and maintain his value, without actually allowing the public to indulge. As he explains,

> By being seldom seen, I could not stir
> But, like a comet, I was wondered at,
> That men would tell their children, 'This is he.'
> Others would say, 'Where? Which is Bolingbroke?'
> . . . I did pluck allegiance from men's hearts,
> Loud shouts and salutations from their mouths,
> Even in the presence of the crownèd king,
> Thus did I keep my person fresh and new. (3.2.46-55)

Henry sums up his publicity strategy in five words: "ne'er seen but wondered at" (57). David Scott Kastan opts for a literal reading of this line, arguing, "The king is never seen, never subject to the gaze of his subjects: he is only wondered at, subjecting them to his spectacular presence" (126). However, considering that this five-word summation provides a near repeat of his earlier,

lengthier description in which he was "seldom seen" and "wondered at," I would position this assessment more figuratively as a concise, somewhat hyperbolic reflection of practice: Henry rarely stages himself to public viewing, yet when he does, he takes full note of his spectators' response to his presence, becoming not only subject to the public gaze, but a gazing subject dissecting his public's vocal and affective displays in order to assess his standing amongst them. Repeating the central core of his public relations policy, to be "wondered at" emerges as the king's highest value in the management of his image, a strategy by which he may extend popular desire while resisting popular consumption. Though Kastan figures Henry's preoccupation with wonder as part of a subjugating impulse that "denies that its viewing subjects are the source of his power" (126), on the contrary, I would argue that this strategy, the solicitation of wonder, in turn enfranchises his people; the prerogative to "wonder," not only to marvel, but to express curiosity, is also their agency: the ability to formulate and express desire, to seek out a sovereign rather than have one dictated, or fed to them, as the case may be. As Henry relays the public's commentary and questions, describes their "shouts and salutations," he illustrates for his son the potency of the people's wonder and casts a spotlight on the popular voice—the same voice that abandoned and urged the downfall of his royal predecessor once he had "blunted" their curiosity "with community" (77). Henry's reticence to stage himself to the public, therefore, echoes Richard III's reluctance to accept the crown, bestowing on both their publics a sense, however calculated, of agency in the selection of their monarch, and crafting, by withholding their persons, a space for curiosity and desire to emerge. Thus, the public, here as well as in *Richard III*, becomes the active co-author of the narrative of Henry IV's ascent to the throne.

According to Stephen Greenblatt, the "critical and humanizing power" of wonder evolved over the course of the sixteenth century from a "medieval sign of dispossession" to an early

modern “agent of appropriation” that ultimately charted and colonized the New World (*Wonders* 126); in Greenblatt’s formulation, then, the public’s curiosity and desire in *1 Henry IV* not only enfranchise, but elevate Henry’s public into a colonizing body, positioning Henry as the people’s yet uncharted national wonder, which may shed light on Henry’s ultimate failure to contain the popular appetite despite his carefully calculated publicity strategy. Despite devoting such careful consideration to the maintenance of popular opinion, Henry’s struggle to unify the disparate voices that once helped him to his crown persists, as his strategy to marshal popularity to political effect continues to factionalize his nation. His careful aloofness has translated to some in the nobility as cold contempt for those who once supported him, and his reluctance to appear before the people has opened opportunities for factious rebels to air their grievances at market crosses and churches (5.1.73), enticing “fickle changelings and poor discontents” to rebel against their king (5.1.76). In *2 Henry IV*, the Archbishop of York suggests that, as in *Richard III*, popularity has once again proven an unstable foundation upon which to base a kingship; as he notes of King Henry’s popular support,

> The commonwealth is sick of their own choice;
> Their over-greedy love hath surfeited.
> An habitation giddy and unsure
> Hath he that buildeth on the vulgar heart. (1.3.87-90)

His choice of the word “surfeited” points directly to the gastronomic metaphor Henry invoked in Part One, suggesting that no amount of careful calculation can stabilize the inherently erratic popular basis of “usurped authoritie,” especially as the Archbishop proceeds to explain, in highly graphic detail, the feeding habits of the public, who “art so full of him/ That thou provok’st thyself to cast him up” (95-96). In the Archbishop’s model, the public has not only fully

consumed Henry, just as Henry claims they did Richard before him, but they are now compelled to induce vomiting to be rid of him. As appetite devolves into disgust and wonder into colonization, both *Richard III* and *1 Henry IV* explore the risks and rewards of political celebrity as an attainable though unstable mode of authority, which remains in line with the work of contemporary celebrity theorists, who likewise note the phenomenon's "peculiar fragility" (Rojek 16).

If the conclusion to *Richard III* dismantles and delegitimizes popular authority only to restore the authority conferred through birthright and military conquest, the role of political popularity is left somewhat more ambiguous in the Henriad, even if Henry's choreographed absence failed to tame the gluttonous appetites of his people. As Henry succumbs to illness, his dying wish is that his son should rule with "better quiet/ Better opinion, better confirmation" (4.3.315-316), stressing the value of popular approval even on his deathbed—a value which King Henry V will appropriate to greater success. Signaling his obedience to his father, Hal severs ties with the Eastcheap gang, and as the Archbishop of Canterbury notes in *Henry V*, withdrew "from open haunts and popularity" (1.1.60), but though the king shed his popular reputation, he proceeds, throughout the course of the drama, to garner popular support, if by somewhat different means than his father prescribed. Like his father, he seldom displays himself to his men, even donning a disguise to mingle amongst them to ascertain popular opinion; that with only a cloak to veil his identity he circulates unrecognized suggests that he has remained "ne'er seen but wondered at." But when he does hold audience with his troops, he practices an alternate politics of enfranchisement—inviting them not to co-author his kingship, which proves an unstable and dangerous practice in *Henry IV* and *Richard III*, but to become co-authors of English history. He infuses his battlefield speeches with populist tropes that ennoble their status:

"There is none of you so mean and base," he proclaims, "That hath not noble lustre in your eyes" (3.1.29-30). As the Chorus in act four relays, he "calls them brothers, friends, and countrymen" (34), thereby assuring them that they, too, will occupy a space alongside him in the English national memory. In his rousing, highly populist St. Crispin's Day speech that inspires his men to an improbable victory against the French, the core of his message invites his soldiers to pen their names into the annals of history, to become active co-authors in a narrative of English victory, and to appropriate the Feast of Crispian as a memorial to their battlefield glory: "From this day to the ending of the world,/ But we in it shall be remembered" (4.4.58-59). Henry V demonstrates a greater fluency in the politics of popularity than his father ever held, incorporating the dynamics of political enfranchisement his father had suggested but to more profound effect, ultimately channeling popular support into military victory. Popularity in the second tetralogy is, therefore, far less easily dismissed than in *Richard III*; it proves, as in *Coriolanus*, both volatile and efficacious, capable of both fragmenting and solidifying the national spirit.

***Henry VIII* and the Power of the People**

Both *I Henry IV* and *Richard III* demonstrate the ways a monarch's authority may be conferred, if sometimes only temporarily, from the ground-up trajectory of popular support, illustrating the various strategies employed to manipulate such appeal—whether through Richard's staged performance, or in Henry's case, the calculated performance of absence, both of which, in turn, confer a sense of agency upon the people, allowing them to elevate and then deflate selected figures to and from prominence. In *Henry VIII*, Shakespeare and Fletcher turn more sustained attention to the people themselves, allowing them to speak their desires and

motivations more freely and frequently, while also depicting the elites' earnest attempts to unravel popular sentiment and appease the popular will. Shakespeare and Fletcher's given title, *All Is True*, seems a pointed, if slightly sardonic, commentary on the historical accuracy of the biography of the Tudor monarch, as more than any other play by Shakespeare, *Henry VIII* relies upon the circulating conversations of the public to relay its most crucial plot points. Buckingham's trial, Henry's marriage to Anne, the death of Wolsey, the birth of Elizabeth, and Anne's coronation as queen are all relayed through the gossip of unnamed gentlemen. If all is indeed true, then the play situates truth in the narrative exchanges of the *vox populi*, reaffirming the efficacy of the popular voice through a rhetorical reliance on the conversations traded among the king's subjects. The popular voice, here, is figured less as erratic and consumptive, though its potential to become so certainly looms over the elites' decision-making, but more often as generally unified, less manipulable, and highly potent. Though the play is remarkable in its extensive catalogue of *dramatis personae*, and the multiple rises and subsequent falls of a number of them, the action is curiously punctuated by two informal gatherings of gentlemen to relay outcomes only hinted at in enactment. The gentlemen meet first in act two to divulge the details of Buckingham's guilty verdict and share early intelligence on Henry's forthcoming divorce, and then reunite in act four where the First greets the Second, "You're well met once again" (4.1.461), before confirming Katherine's divorce and listening to a Third Gentleman's detailed description of Anne's coronation ceremony. As representative agents of the popular voice, the gentlemen's narrative spotlight illuminates the powerful role of the people in shaping the social and political status of their higher-born counterparts. *Henry VIII* legitimizes the popular voice, recording the conversations of the public sphere as an authoritative and "true" history.

The people's agency in the rise and fall of the privileged is illustrated early in the play when, in the second scene, Katherine alerts her husband to the commoners' grievances regarding a recently implemented tax, which she fears will elicit public ill will toward the king:

> . . . your subjects
> Are in a great grievance. There have been commissions
> Sent down among 'em which hath flawed the heart
> Of all their loyalties; wherein, although,
> My good lord Cardinal, they vent reproaches
> Most bitterly on you, as putter-on
> Of these exactions, yet the King our master—
> Whose honour heaven shield from soil—even he escapes not
> Language unmannerly, yea, such which breaks
> The sides of loyalty, and almost appears
> In loud rebellion. (1.2.20-29)

Katherine's concern demonstrates her recognition of the power of public sentiment, its capacity to factionalize the nation and overturn authority, and thus, she petitions less out of compassion for the plight of the common and more out of fear of their collective will. That Henry hears this news and immediately demands Wolsey revoke the tax and pardon those who resisted payment further signals the efficacy of his subjects' voice, which has here been heard and answered; the public voice has not only effected political change, overturning official economic policy, but has also lain the foundation of the cardinal's eventual undoing, providing the first moment in the play in which the king questions the honesty and motivation of his most trusted advisor, kindling

his further suspicion. Wolsey, unsurprisingly, urges the king to wield his monarchical prerogative against the common tongue:

> We must not stint
>
> Our necessary actions in the fear
>
> To cope malicious censurers, which ever,
>
> As rav'nous fishes, do a vessel follow
>
> That is new trimmed . . .
>
> . . . If we shall stand still,
>
> In fear our motion will be mocked or carped at,
>
> We should take root here where we sit,
>
> Or sit state-statues only. (1.2.77-81, 86-89)

Like Henry IV and Menenius, Wolsey figures the public as a consumptive body and heeding the public demand an inversion of power that invites the ravenous multitude to feed upon the elites. Fear of popular authority, he continues, dissolves the king's authority, reducing him to an empty figurehead, but the authenticity of Wolsey's position is quickly belied by the dual instructions he delivers to his secretary: "Let there be letters writ to every shire/ Of the King's grace and pardon" (1.2.103-104), he announces publicly, before privately instructing in an aside,

> The grievèd commons
>
> Hardly conceive of me. Let it be noised
>
> That through our intercession this revokement
>
> And pardon comes. (1.2.105-108)

As Wolsey circulates two competing reports—one official and in writing, the other a spoken fabrication—he reveals his own vested interest in popular opinion, that he, too, understands the potency of the people's voice, just as he reveals the strategy by which he aims to manipulate it.

Wolsey's dual instructions attest to his belief in the public's more ready acceptance of what they hear from their peers over what they read from official channels, and thus, like Richard III, he aims to sway the collective mind of the people by implanting a rumor, counting on their own gossip to restore his image. The cardinal, however, never considers his public's capacity for discernment, and the ruse amounts to little effect; as the First Gentleman in act two, scene one reveals, "All the commons/ Hate him perniciously" (50-51). But the Cardinal's cunning designs, which pit royal proclamation against popular hearsay, call attention to the two inverse forms of authority that shape the series of illustrious figures' fates, including his own, throughout the play: both royal and popular, which work, within the span of the drama, at times in tandem and, at others, in tension with each other.

Buckingham's trial and execution reveal the similarities and dependencies shared by both royal and popular authority, as both the accusations from below and the verdict from above eventually force him to a traitor's fate at the scaffold. When, for example, he is accused of treason early in the play, Katherine reveals that his accuser, named only as Buckingham's Surveyor, is motivated solely by disgruntlement: "You were the Duke's surveyor, and lost your office/ On the complaint o'th' tenants" (1.2.173-174), she confronts him. "Take good heed/ You charge not in your spleen" (174-175). As Katherine explains, the surveyor has suffered his own fall from grace, facilitated by the collective voice of commoners; in turn, she accuses, he is now attempting to similarly topple the Duke out of spite, forming a chain of dismantlement, all achieved from the ground up. But as Buckingham demonstrates, dangers to one's status can

emerge from both above and below; if the popular voice is frequently figured as capricious, Buckingham, appearing to the public before his execution, discloses the similarly unstable whims of royal preferment:

> My noble father, Henry of Buckingham,
> Who first raised head against usurping Richard,
> . . . was by that wretch betrayed . . .
> Henry the Seventh succeeding, truly pitying
> My father's loss, like a most royal prince,
> Restored me to my honours, and out of ruins
> Made my name once more noble. Now his son,
> Henry the Eighth, life, honour, name, and all
> That made me happy, at one stroke has taken
> For ever from the world. (2.1.108-109, 111, 113-119)

Though early modern treatises on popularity generally treat the people's love with mistrust and derision, citing its mercurial temperament and flimsy attachments, Buckingham, whose noble line offers some compelling evidence, demonstrates that the structures that bestow authority from the top down prove no less insecure. His public pitch somewhat nullifies one of the principal charges hurled against the popular, as no form of authority proves inherently stable, and the court of Henry VIII certainly demonstrates that royal preferment offers no safeguards against persecution.

In a play in which, as Walter Cohen notes, "Each gets a day in court—his or her fifteen minutes of fame" (3111), Buckingham's turn at the bully pulpit is sandwiched in the middle of a scene otherwise devoted to the nameless gentlemen who sift through and evaluate the news that

has trickled out of court. In fact, each of the central characters' declines is similarly couched within circulating report, transferring attention away from the elites to highlight the public's role in their shifting statuses. In regard to Buckingham, the people, it is revealed, generally hold him blameless, proclaiming that they "love and dote on, call him 'Bounteous Buckingham" (2.1.53), while pointing a finger at their reviled cardinal, who, the Second Gentleman asserts, "is the end of this" (2.1.41). As the play aims focus at their conversation, beginning and ending the scene with their assessments, the gentlemen, here, are endowed with the power of dissent; pitting sanctioned authority against its popular counterpart, they openly diverge from the king's verdict, accruing further relevance through their position as an internal audience that channels audience response. That their suspicions about Henry's upcoming divorce and disdain for Wolsey are quickly substantiated legitimizes their conversations as credible, and thus, their private chatter forges a rift between royal and popular authority, coaxing the audience, through their mirror position as internal audience to on-stage spectacles, to dismiss the official verdict and identify, instead, with the populace. While in *Richard III* and *I Henry IV*, the public is depicted as pliable to those who understand their motivations, in *Henry VIII*, the public, instead, becomes a savvy site of arbitration, where nameless everymen relay and evaluate matters of state and sift through official narratives to arrive at the truth, even to the point of discrediting the monarch.

Henry, for his part, lends further credence to the gentlemen, ironically reaffirming the public's powers of arbitration when he forbids the citizens to speculate about his impending divorce, commanding the Lord Mayor "To stop the rumour and allay those tongues/ That durst disperse it" (2.1.152-153). While in both *Henry VIII* and *Richard III*, publics prove capable of squelching or otherwise ignoring the rumors implanted in their midst, as the Second Gentleman explains here, the king is not only powerless to quiet the common tongue, but his demonstrated

concern has actually confirmed that "that slander, sir,/ Is found a truth now" (154-155). Popular opinion, here, is demonstrated to be less manipulable and more manipulative, as Wolsey feared, when a king bows to public demands and proves unable to dam the flow of sensitive court intelligence in his citizens' gossip. When, for example, a stubborn Cranmer proclaims to Henry, "I fear nothing/ What can be said against me" (5.1.126-127), Henry responds to his naïveté, "Know you not/ How your state stands i'the' world, with the whole world?" (127-128). The question not only asks Cranmer if he understands the status of his public regard, but if he understands the mechanisms of popular opinion, that one's state is dependent upon "the whole world," providing royal acknowledgment of the power the people wield in their circulating conversations. Wolsey's fall further illustrates the efficacy of popular opinion, as the people are the first to accuse the Cardinal of double-dealing in Henry's divorce. The Lord Chamberlain, in conference with the Dukes of Suffolk and Norfolk, informs them, "'Tis most true—/ These news are everywhere, every tongue speaks 'em" (2.2.36-37); popular suspicion, in turn, impels the king to intercept Wolsey's correspondence, which cements his duplicity, thus stripping the king's one-time favorite of his powerful office.

If the multitude holds the power to topple the privileged, they can also elevate others to power. The public proves a powerful buttress to the rise of Anne, who appears only three times in the play; however, each of her appearances corresponds to an elevation in status: she emerges in act one as "Sir Thomas Boleyn's daughter" (1.4.95); receives word in act two that the king has appointed her "Marchioness of Pembroke; to which title/ A thousand pound a year annual support / Out of his grace he adds" (2.3.63-65); then silently proceeds across the stage in act four from her coronation ceremony. While her elevated positions are bestowed through royal appointment, the people simultaneously promulgate her virtues and elevate her popular status,

eventually, as discussed in Chapter One, heartily embracing her as their queen and declaring her a "star," forging an important bridge between the worlds of the court and the theater, the realms of the aristocrat and the celebrity. As the only member of Henry's inner circle to endure throughout the entirety of the play, Anne becomes the central of a number of unstable figures whose statuses both Henry and the people manipulate according to their desires, and the people exercise their considerable authority here in support of the king's favorite. When Anne makes her final, grandiose appearance, her coronation procession is, like Buckingham's speech, situated in the midst of a scene otherwise focused on the private conversations of gentlemen, who narrate the parade of highly ornamented nobles for the external, theatrical audience. Once again channeling audience response as an internal audience to the staged pageantry, the gentlemen justify Henry's divorce and praise his remarriage, declaring Anne "the goodliest woman/ That ever lay by man" (4.1.71-72); the Second Gentleman adds, "Our King has all the Indies in his arms,/ And more, and richer, when he strains that lady./ I cannot blame his conscience" (4.1.45-47). Their focus on Anne's sexuality likewise sanctions it, dismissing the charges of adultery that continued to haunt the former queen's legacy by the time the play was performed in 1613, as the gentlemen attempt to officiate a popular response that, once again, flouts authoritative record.

The scene of Anne's coronation procession also establishes an important link between political and theatrical popularity. As the elaborate pageantry functions as a kind of play-within-a-play and the gentlemen onlookers become a deliberative internal audience, the manner by which the gentlemen marvel at, assess, and shape the renown of the figures before them casts a reflective lens upon the ways the larger theatrical audience is simultaneously engaged in the same process, absorbing and evaluating the performers before them, deliberating their success or failure, elevating their chosen favorites to the position of stars. The scene likewise reveals the

political arena as a kind of theater, rendered all the more apparent by the nobles who might share the spotlight in the lords' rooms above the stage, becoming, like the Duke of Buckingham in the 1628 revival of *Henry VIII*, part of the spectacle, or by the royal name attached to the show's playbill, advertising a performance by "the Kings Majesties servants." Both kinds of popularity, whether enjoyed by aristocrats or theatrical celebrities, point, as does this play, to the popular audience as the arbiters of status, enfranchising the people to narrate their cultural environments through their celebrated figures.

When Wotton attended the infamous 1613 production of *Henry VIII* that razed the Globe, as he reported, "to the very grounds," he composed a brief review of the play in a letter to Sir Edmund Bacon:

> The Kings Players had a new Play, called *All is true*, representing some principall pieces of the raign of Henry 8, which was set forth with many extraordinary circumstances of Pomp and Majesty, even to the matting of the stage, the Knights of the Order, with their Georges and Garter, the Guards with their embroidered Coats, and the like: sufficient in truth within a while to make greatness very familiar, if not ridiculous. (426)

Despite its ceremonious majesty, Wotton still criticizes the production for reducing the great to familiarity, invoking a term nearly as loaded and multivalent as *popularity*. In the seventeenth century, *familiarity* referenced family members, household staff, and intimates as well as the simple and the common (*s.v.* familiar, adj. 1a, 5, 6b), and Wotton's commentary takes aim at the means by which *Henry VIII* dismantles the pedestal from beneath its illustrious cast of characters to render them laughable—a feat achieved, I would argue, in no small part by the power assigned the public.

To paraphrase Henry IV, *Henry VIII*, *Richard III,* and *1 Henry IV* all profane great names and mingle royalty with cap'ring fools, though to strikingly different ends. Richard III's quickly devised publicity stunt seizes only the most fleeting moment of popular authority before his flimsy support, and psyche, disintegrate, with his rule's endurance proportionate to the measure of actual agency he bestowed upon his subjects. Henry IV's extended performance of absence held his kingship aloft to his deathbed, seating his heir on the throne amidst unending political turmoil caused, in large part, by the elder Henry's failure to contain the popular appetite—an appetite his son was able to transform into enduring stability only by sharing space in the annals of English history with his common subjects. Of Shakespeare's monarchs discussed here, only Henry VIII enjoys a relatively stable kingship (the one threat posed by Buckingham is both quickly halted and dismissed as a fabrication early in the play), perhaps because Henry VIII, more than the others, places genuine stock in his public's ability to make and unmake kings: he easily acquiesces to their demands then proclaims his status to be dependent upon the whole world. In these three histories, popularity becomes increasingly stable the more—not less—agency is assigned the public.

In Shakespeare and Fletcher's version of his reign, Henry VIII emerges as a compelling picture of political celebrity, co-authored by his public to the extent that his public and various associates actually narrate more of his story than he does, yet his presence looms large over all the actions of the play. More spoken about than speaking, his exploits frustrate, delight, and fascinate his public, as the play shines a spotlight on the public's co-authorial status in the narrative of Henry VIII's reign, elevating the conversations of the nameless to prominence. This prominence is likely a large part of what so troubled Wotton: as the English people make demands of their sovereign, gossip about his personal affairs, gaze upon the high-born, and

narrate their ascents and declines, the people of *Henry VIII* become a unified and deliberative audience, proclaiming the power of popular authority and reducing the great to their popular spectacles.

Chapter Four:
Shakespeare's *Genius*

On the banks of the Thames in Hampton stands a grand, octagonal temple constructed in memory of Shakespeare, about fifteen miles along the river from where his theater once stood. Designed in the neoclassical Ionic style and commissioned by eighteenth-century actor and theater impresario David Garrick, who rose to international fame playing the title roles in *Hamlet* and *Richard III* among others, the Temple to Shakespeare, as it is now known, served as the actor's shrine to his idol (Cunningham 5), housing a collection of memorabilia reported to include one of the dramatist's gloves, a signet ring with W.S. stamped upon it, and a chair fashioned from a mulberry tree that Shakespeare was thought to have planted at New Place (Shapiro, *Contested Will* 30). In his temple, Garrick rehearsed lines and entertained guests, many of whom were asked to compose verse in memory of his beloved poet, then lay their lines at the feet of a statue of Shakespeare that Garrick commissioned French sculptor Louis Roubiliac to create as the shrine's centerpiece.[85]

In 1756, Garrick tapped his neighbor Horace Walpole to adorn the temple's exterior with a motto: *Quod spiro et placeo, si placeo tuum est* ("Garrick's Villa"), or "If I breathe and please, it is because of you." The motto precedes a few lines of verse, ending with "Shakespear, all I owe to you," but the motto could just as easily have emanated from within the temple walls, perhaps uttered by Garrick's prized statue, Roubiliac's *Shakespeare*, to Garrick himself, for in the eighteenth century, no one did more than Garrick to breathe new life into the departed dramatist. Establishing himself as the world's first Shakespearean—a term just coming into being during the mid-eighteenth century (*OED s.v.* Shakespearean, adj. 1, 2)—Garrick

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[85] Garrick later published some of these verses anonymously in London magazines ("Temple Trust"). Roubiliac's sculpture is now housed in the British Museum; his terracotta prototype is held at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C.

performed dozens of Shakespeare's leading roles and was also lauded as a competent adapter, editor, and publisher of Shakespeare's work. In 1769, Garrick organized and produced the first Shakespeare festival, the Stratford Jubilee of 1769, to which he transported his prized marble statue to serve as centerpiece. As James Granger observed in his 1769 *Biographical History of England*, "It is hard to say whether Shakespeare owes more to Garrick, or Garrick to Shakespeare" (qtd. in Stone and Karhl 198).

Garrick is generally characterized by what Celestine Woo calls his "giddy worship" of Shakespeare (2), and James Shapiro argues that Garrick "had few rivals as a bardolater" (*Contested Will* 30). At least one of Garrick's contemporaries, fellow actor and dramatist Samuel Foote, observed Garrick's apparent worship of his idol with some derision: "The . . . gentleman has, indeed, it is said, dedicated a temple to a certain divinity . . . before whose shrine frequent libations are made, and on whose altar the fat of venison (a viand grateful to the deity) is seen often to smoke" (qtd. in Thackeray 510).[86] However, Vanessa Cunningham has recently advanced the hypothesis that Garrick's professed devotion may have originated more as a commercial strategy than, as is generally maintained, an almost religious exaltation of a poet he held as a near-deity: "As manager," Cunningham argues, "Garrick seized the opportunities offered by the rising tide of bardolatry, and enthusiastically presented himself to the public as the high priest at Shakespeare's shrine" (5). Offering a subtle counterpoint to critical consensus, Cunningham's model reframes discussions of Garrick's relationship to Shakespeare, substituting a calculated appropriation in place of Garrick's putative prostration. Indeed, Garrick's supposed apotheosis of Shakespeare is undermined by the overtly liberal licenses he took with both the

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[86] Shapiro cites this satirical barb, and Garrick's devotion, as part of a lengthy discussion of Shakespeare's perceived "divinity" in the first chapter of *Contested Will*.

poet's memory and work. Though he claimed his intention as adapter and editor was to present a play "as Shakespeare wrote it" (qtd. in Dircks 80), his adaptations contained numerous omissions and emendations, "in deference to the exigencies of effective eighteenth-century stage presentation" (Dircks 80); for example, Garrick eliminated the first three acts of *The Winter's Tale* to avoid the confusion of the sixteen-year time lapse, then refocused the play's attention onto a less severe and more sympathetic Leontes, whose part Garrick played (Cunningham 91). He also circumscribed Shakespeare's memory within his own contemporary reputation and career, stamping his name upon the poet's legacy by commissioning, then mass-producing, numerous paintings that juxtaposed both men's images. During his 1769 Jubilee, for example, he placed Gainsborough's *Portrait of Garrick with the Bust of Shakespeare* on permanent display in Stratford's Town Hall ("Garickomania").[87] The installation of his portrait, his head nestled against the immobile shoulder of the watchful bard, wove Garrick's image indelibly into the fabric of Shakespeare's legacy at its point of origin, perhaps suggesting a sort of rebirth: the reanimation of Shakespeare in the body of his most diligent spokesman.

Far from sacrosanct, Garrick treated Shakespeare's memory and work as unfinished texts that invited revision—specifically, his own revision. In *Collaborations with the Past*, Diana E. Henderson positions the relationship between Shakespeare and his adapters in subsequent centuries as active "collaborat[ions] with a dead man" (8). Though she never aims her discussion specifically at Garrick and instead focuses primarily on writers and directors, Henderson's diachronic model offers another way of looking at the Garrick-Shakespeare relationship; located somewhere between Woo's "giddy worship" and Cunningham's calculated appropriation,

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[87] Gainsborough's painting is only one of many portraits to similarly juxtapose the images of both Garrick and Shakespeare. Benjamin Van der Gucht's *Mr. Garrick as Steward of the Stratford Jubilee*, for example, features the actor gazing upon a small, framed portrait of Shakespeare.

Henderson's model would suggest a more reciprocal exchange between active participants and unstable texts. However, while Henderson is chiefly concerned with the ways artists collaboratively engage with Shakespeare's texts, as in, for example, Sir Walter Scott's collaborative engagement with *Othello* in the production of his *Kenilworth*,[88] Garrick was perhaps just as invested in the textual body of Shakespeare's memory as he was with Shakespeare's body of work. For as much as he adapted and edited Shakespeare's plays, Garrick positioned himself, above all, as an embodied collaboration between two London actor-manager-playwrights, personifying Shakespeare's ethos and personal narrative in a reciprocal exchange that bestowed fame and fortune upon him, while in turn allowing his collaborative partner, in the words of an anonymous poet in 1752, to "breathe again!" (qtd. in Dobson 168). Perhaps nowhere is this collaborative enterprise rendered more visible than in Garrick's prized statue, Roubiliac's *Shakespeare*, as it is widely held that Garrick himself posed for its sculpture (Shapiro, *Contested Will* 30), providing the inspiration for the body as the Chandos portrait provided the source for Shakespeare's face.[89] Memorializing its patron as much as its subject, *Shakespeare* preserves in marble the human collaboration between two men and, in a rather dramatic inversion of the human's relationship to the divine, crafts the idol in his admirer's image.

In one of the poems that Garrick solicited from his temple's guests, the poet Paul Whitehead imagines a conversation between Garrick and his *Shakespeare*, further attesting to Shakespeare's reanimation through the eighteenth-century actor:

> . . . the marble God,
>
> Methinks I see, assenting, nod,

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[88] See *Collaborations with the Past*, pp. 39-103.

[89] As Michael Dobson observes of the statue and Garrick's assumed role in its creation, "Once more the actor is taking on the spirit not just of a Shakespearean character but of Shakespeare himself" (182).

And pointing to his laurell'd brow
Cry—"Half this wreath to you I owe:
Lost to the Stage, and Lost to Fame;
Murdered my Scenes, scarce known my Name;
Sunk to oblivion and disgrace
Among the common, scribbling race;
Unnoticed long thy *Shakespeare* lay,
To Dullness and to Time, a prey;
But now I rise, I breathe, I live
In You—my Representative!" (9-20)

Though he positions Shakespeare as a "marble God," Whitehead figures Garrick as this god's human representative, echoing what was by the eighteenth century an already archaic model of the monarch's divinity: Garrick, like the kings of old, serves as the marble god's corporeal embodiment on Earth. However, this god is not omnipotent and owes half his status, and hence, half his laurel wreath, to his human collaborator. The player-king has resurrected Shakespeare from a horrifying afterlife of literary obscurity where he had resided amongst the mass of lesser poets, his poetry bastardized then forgotten. Later in the poem, Garrick humbly protests his statue's gratitude, proclaiming himself "but the organ of thy spirit" (32), prompting the god Phoebus to intervene and settle the dispute. Offering Shakespeare a second wreath so that the statue might bestow his laurel entirely upon the actor to whom he owes his continued existence (36), Phoebus declares, "Each matchless, each the Palm shall bear/ In Heav'n the Bard, on Earth the Play'r" (38).

Bestowing twin wreaths upon "twin stars," as Garrick's tomb would later label the pair, Whitehead's poem not only figures Garrick as the human embodiment of Shakespeare, but equalizes the two in a mutual exchange of debt, gratitude, and acclaim. If Garrick's statue conflates both men in marble, this poem reflexively highlights the manner by which Garrick himself conflates both men in human form, while carefully distinguishing Shakespeare-as-divine-spirit from Shakespeare-as-human-incarnation. If the mythologized abstraction understood as the "Bard" resides in heaven, his accessible human form, "the Play'r," walks the Earth, and this final chapter similarly probes the epistemological divide between Bard and Player in Shakespeare's enduring legacy. Throughout the centuries, it is fair to say that Shakespeare has similarly inhabited a number of bodies, and not merely through the performance of his characters, but through the kind of deeply enmeshed collaboration that marked Garrick's career and has, since then, shaped the careers of actors such as Edmund Kean and Laurence Olivier; these actors, in turn, have refashioned Shakespeare for their contemporary audiences. Such embodied collaborations, as I will discuss in this chapter, involve diachronic relationships between texts, eras, and performances, but my primary concern here is the relationship between celebrity narratives and the means by which Shakespeare's various human incarnations in the bodies of subsequent theatrical celebrities have allowed Shakespeare's own celebrity to endure well beyond his death. As I argue, Shakespeare's celebrity plays a crucial role in his persistent relevance, providing an earthy and accessible counterpart, or Player, to his putative status as national poet, or more simply, the Bard.

In *The Comedy of Errors*, as discussed in Chapter Two, the day's errors meet their resolution when the twin Antipholi appear before the Duke, who assesses, "One of these men is *genius* to the other,/ And so of these, which is the natural man,/ And which is the spirit?"

(5.1.333-335). Here, Shakespeare invokes the multivalent *genius*: in the classical conception, a divine attendant spirit attached to a mortal individual, but also more generally, a personified abstraction. This chapter examines how Shakespeare's ever-evolving *genius* works in tension with ideas about Shakespeare's putative genius. Ever since the days of Garrick when Shakespeare was first installed as a national poet, Shakespeare has continued a ceaseless ascent to the pinnacle of English eminence, hailed as a quasi-divine visionary and unparalleled genius. Shakespeare's second celebrity self, however, persists in resistance to, and not because of, such enduring assumptions, re-humanizing him from the abstraction of his mythical genius, and re-popularizing him from the elitist heights ascribed him. Celebrity, as I have argued throughout this project, is a populist movement, and one that enfranchises the public to craft its sphere through the elevation of its own cultural stars. Shakespeare's enduring celebrity narrative, intertwined with the celebrity narratives of the human vessels he has embodied, provides a counterbalance to the inaccessibly elite, disenfranchising Shakespeare promoted as English national poet.

After revisiting some central, relevant tenets of celebrity, this chapter pieces together the various narrative strands of Shakespeare's second celebrity self as it emerged and circulated within his own lifetime, followed by an exploration of the various celebrities who have, over the centuries, embodied the specter of Shakespeare's celebrity to become their era's contemporary personified abstraction of Shakespeare's narrative body. In the four hundred years of Shakespeare's enduring celebrity, a number of individuals have emerged to fill this role, but in this chapter, I have opted to focus only on three representative individuals to illustrate the human collaboration at the heart of Shakespearean celebrity: Garrick in the eighteenth century, Kean in the nineteenth century, and Olivier in the era of film. Each of these Shakespearean celebrities has

embodied Shakespeare's life and work both on and off the stage or screen, enfranchising the public once again to engage dialectically with Shakespeare as celebrity. Finally, I conclude with a brief look at new directions in Shakespearean celebrity culture and the ways in which new media both illuminate and reframe celebrity dynamics.

Heroes and Celebrities Revisited

In his 1992 book, *The Making of the National Poet*, Michael Dobson meticulously reconstructs and interprets the significant theatrical, literary, cultural, and political conditions of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries that culminated in the installation of Shakespeare as a national icon. Beginning with Shakespeare's fall from theatrical favor in the Restoration and concluding with Garrick's Jubilee, Dobson surmises that Shakespeare's position as an icon of British nationalism emerged in the 109-year span of his exploration, during which Shakespeare the mythologized man epistemologically severed from his body of work such that today, "the performance of Shakespeare's plays remains irrelevant to some of the major functions of his cult" (226, n.6). Shakespeare, in Dobson's model as well as in my own, exists as narratologically independent of, though certainly informed by, his plays and poems: he is a drama in his own right. But though my work is indebted to Dobson's research, we diverge in one crucial respect: where Dobson constructs a narrative of Shakespeare's transcendence to the elite strata of British iconography, I am more concerned with Shakespeare's particular ability to remain grounded in the popular imagination. In other words, while Dobson is interested in Shakespeare's ascent to the status of British "national hero or prophet" (Dobson 187), I am interested in Shakespeare's enduring presence as a celebrity.

In Chapter One, I discussed the theoretical distinctions between the hero and the celebrity, exploring the means by which *hero*, traditionally bestowed only as a posthumous honor, originally signified exemplary achievement, if not altogether superhuman attributes. Ultimately, however, I argue that the principal distinction between the hero and the celebrity involves temporal concerns, with heroes functioning as cultural memories and historiographic emblems while celebrities remain inevitably contemporary and offer an important means through which the public constructs its contemporary cultural environment. As Dobson demonstrates, Shakespeare's status as hero was already fairly solidly established by the end of the eighteenth century when he was posthumously memorialized in both Westminster Abbey and his hometown of Stratford during the 1769 Jubilee. Through these twin installations, Dobson argues, Shakespeare emerged as an embodiment of English national history and a celebration of its natural, native genius,[90] to which scores of subsequent accounts would similarly attest. In fact, one of the earliest and lengthiest theoretical treatises on heroes, Thomas Carlyle's 1840 lecture series *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, specifically addresses Shakespeare's heroic status. In his lectures, he divides heroes into six distinct types—the hero as divinity, prophet, poet, priest, man of letters, and king—and cites Shakespeare as a poet-hero. Citing the timelessness of the poet, Carlyle opines, "The Poet is a heroic figure belonging to all ages; whom all ages possess when once he is produced" (107). Poets, for Carlyle, differ little from prophets; both offer divine truths, but only the poet renders "The true Beautiful" (112). Of Shakespeare particularly, he notes,

> . . . perhaps the opinion one sometimes hears a little idolatrously expressed is, in fact, the right one . . . That Shakespeare is the chief of all Poets hitherto, the

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[90] See, particularly, Chapter 4: "Embodying the Author," pp. 134-184, and Chapter 5: "Nationalizing the Corpus," pp. 185-222.

> greatest intellect who, in our recorded world, has left record of himself in the way of literature. On the whole, I know not such a power of vision, such a faculty of thought, if we take all the characters of it, in any other man. (146)

Carlyle's formulation evokes the etymological origins of the hero, posthumously imbuing Shakespeare with a quasi-divine genius, and ironically, this kind of heroism, though rooted in notions of historicity, factors into many accounts of Shakespeare's enduring contemporaneity. In 1961, Jan Kott's highly influential *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, in which he discusses the ways Shakespeare's plays engage his own contemporary Cold War Poland, argued that, through his explorations of existential crises and absurdities, Shakespeare was, as Jonson hailed, "not of an age, but for all time." While stopping short of the idolatry of Carlyle, Kott yet ascribes to Shakespeare the capacity to speak in universal truths, and his work has found particular resonance among stage and film directors seeking to appropriate Shakespeare's plays as vehicles to discuss current political developments.

Kott's theories of Shakespeare's universality have, however, come under fire in the last several decades, particularly from the New Historicists, who aim to firmly resituate Shakespeare within his own age by exploring the ways his texts participate in a complex matrix of concurrent cultural production. But such formulations similarly paint Shakespeare as hero—not as a superhuman bearer of universal truth, but as a cultural memory, a means of constructing English history, or even a larger Western one. As David Scott Kastan argues in *Shakespeare After Theory*,

> The most familiar cliché of Shakespeare studies is that he is our contemporary, though the truth is that, somewhat like the promiscuous Hero of Claudio's tortured imagination, he has been everyone's contemporary . . . But though he

> does live on in subsequent cultures in ways none of his contemporaries do, it is not, I think, because he is in any significant sense timeless, speaking some otherwise unknown, universal idiom. Rather, it seems to me it is because he is so intensely of his own time and place. (12)

In Kastan's model, Shakespeare's endurance lies in his illumination of a history that foregrounds and structures the present; Shakespeare's work provides a vessel through which the reading and viewing public negotiates its cultural environment through its measurable difference from the concerns and assumptions that defined a previous era. Or, as Kastan observes, Shakespeare endures "because he enables each age to see for itself what it has been and . . . and to discover what it has become" (12).

Whether rooted in timelessness or timeliness, each of these critical models attempts to unravel the enigma of Shakespeare the hero and the means by which he has ascended to such a profound degree of cultural relevance. But Shakespeare's status as hero accounts for only a portion of the remarkable place he holds in the Western cultural consciousness; he is, after all, only one of several English literary heroes, alongside Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, or Shakespeare's contemporary Jonson. Yet it is only Shakespeare among these literary giants who appears regularly in the cinema, whose name generates 114 million Google hits,[91] and whose image has been immortalized as an action figure.[92] These regular appearances in the realm of film, new media, and commodity speak to Shakespeare's endurance as a celebrity, and his celebrity, I would argue, constitutes a large part of Shakespeare's longevity, albeit an often

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[91] As of March 2013, while Shakespeare generates 114 million Google results, Milton nets 4 million, Chaucer 7.8 million, Spenser 765,000, and Jonson 1.9 million.

[92] The novelty and toy manufacturer Accoutrements, for example, markets a Shakespeare action figure "With removable quill pen and book!".

critically neglected aspect of this enduring discussion.[93] Shakespeare's position as a hero is fairly indisputable, and as such, his heroic status positions him as a potent symbol of English national history, while simultaneously circulating his work and history to pervasive cultural depths such that he maintains influence even if often in unseen and unthinking ways. Marjorie Garber, for example, argues that Shakespeare has become so firmly established within Western culture that his work continues to inform successive cultures, even when they remain unaware of his influence. Each successive generation then reciprocally reimagines his work: "Shakespeare makes modern culture, and modern culture makes Shakespeare" (*Modern Culture* xiii), she writes.

Shakespeare's ubiquitous presence as elite hero, however, is always mitigated by a more accessible celebrity counterpart that reels him in from abstraction. While the heroic Bard circulates through the public sphere as curriculum and in monuments and gilded anthologies, Shakespeare the Player emerges, for example, as the dimwitted patsy in Roland Emmerich's 2011 *Anonymous*, yet also as the playful and seductive poet-romancer in John Madden's 1998 *Shakespeare in Love*. These decidedly human incarnations reflect upon the core of celebrity dynamics: Shakespeare, in such portrayals, becomes a pastiche of multifariously authored narratives of his person, arising from a mix of his dramas (though in *Anonymous*, he did not actually write those dramas), the mythology ascribed him, rumor, fantasy, and projection. Furthermore, these Shakespeares function less as icons of English nationalism, but rather, as I have argued of celebrity as a whole, as sites of present tensions and fixations. The Shakespeare of *Anonymous* becomes a site of conspiracy in line with an early twenty-first-century cultural

[93] In *Big-Time Shakespeare*, Bristol offers an examination of Shakespeare's role in contemporary print journalism, film, and advertisement, particularly in Chapter 4: "Crying All the Way to the Bank." His focus centers on Shakespeare's commercial value as a cultural commodity, which he ties to Shakespeare's place in "traditional high literary culture" (97).

fixation on conspiracy that made *The Da Vinci Code* the bestselling adult fiction book of the 2000s. The directionless young Shakespeare of *Shakespeare in Love* seeks fulfillment in his work, love life, and on his therapist's couch, not unlike the protagonists in a string of late 1990s television shows, such as *Friends,* centered on ambitious young professionals striving to fill the existential voids in their hearts. While Shakespeare as hero focuses on Shakespeare's singularity as author, the pastiche of cultural narratives that constitute Shakespeare's celebrity disperses authorial agency among the public, and Shakespeare himself becomes a publicly authored text that reflects upon the cultural present.

Basing his claim upon Shakespeare's "extraordinary . . . stamina" as a marketable cultural product (2), Michael Bristol argues in *Big-Time Shakespeare* that "Shakespeare is unusual in that he has . . . achieved contemporary celebrity" (2). Although I embrace Bristol's ends, I must complicate his means: celebrity, as I have argued throughout this project, is a collaborative construction, a reciprocal dynamic between live bodies by which the public actively co-creates cultural narratives embodied in present persons, offering the public a form of agency in the shaping of its social, economic, and political spheres, a means to craft and celebrate the present moment. Celebrity is an immediate, fragile exchange, and therefore, simply assigning Shakespeare, who has been dead for 400 years, to the realm of the celebrity based upon his fame and commercial cachet is a facile theoretical reach; the historical Shakespeare simply cannot reciprocate. Furthermore, no matter how popularly he is appropriated to meet cultural or commercial needs, his name, his work, and, indeed, his portrait remain, as Kastan argues, indelibly connected to the English Renaissance, so much so that he vies with the era's monarch, perhaps the most famous English queen in history, as the representative embodiment of that era.

His presence today, while ubiquitous and ever-evolving, is also mired in nostalgia and mythology.

But Shakespeare certainly *was* a celebrity according to Bristol's model, as extant records certainly seem to attest to his own contemporary cultural relevance and market cachet. His enduring celebrity presence, on the other hand, persists through a far more complex, collaborative matrix of interdependence than Bristol's formulation suggests; specifically, Shakespeare continues to function as a celebrity through the various live bodies he occupies in each successive age. Where Marvin Carlson speaks of theatrical ghosting, or the means by which theatrical entities and conditions haunt present performance, I speak here of possession. In every generation since the days of Garrick, new stars have emerged to define the unfinished text of Shakespeare's celebrity for their respective eras, offering a new "organ of [Shakespeare's] spirit," and becoming, much like Garrick's statue, conflated texts at once rooted in history yet immediately resonant. It is this kind of conflated celebrity narrative, I argue, that facilitates Shakespeare's unending contemporaneity, that allows audiences to continue to forge with him the complex bonds of celebrity dynamics and Shakespeare to continue to function as a site of present tensions.

King among the Meaner Sort

In *Will in the World*, Stephen Greenblatt describes the curious marginalia, jotted down sometime around 1598, of a London man named Adam Dyrmouth, who was listing a collection of speeches and letters he had transcribed when, "evidently, his mind began to wander" (17):

> Among the jottings that cover the page are the words "Rychard the second" and "Rychard the third," along with half-remembered quotations from *Love's*

> *Labour's Lost* and *The Rape of Lucrece*. Above all, the scribbler repeatedly wrote the words "William Shakespeare." He wanted to know, it seems, what it felt like to write that particular name as one's own. (17)

As contemporary references to Shakespeare go, Dyrmouth's scribbles reveal little to nothing about the man or his work, which perhaps explains why this document is rarely discussed in collections of sixteenth-century references to Shakespeare. What does emerge as fairly remarkable about these errant notations is that, long before the days of Garrick and, indeed, within Shakespeare's own lifetime, it seems that admirers had similarly attempted to embody the playwright, to speak not only for him, but as him, to claim his name as their own. These idle jottings, written as they may have been only in the spirit of distraction, suggest the seeds of the collaborative construction of Shakespeare's celebrity, crudely depicting one man's attempt to recreate what he imagined as the poet's process, placing quill to page, crafting verse, and stamping it with his name.

But what, exactly, would it mean to Dyrmouth "to write that particular name" as his own? What values and narratives, by 1598, were stored in that celebrated name? Extant materials position Shakespeare's publicly circulating reputation during his lifetime, even relatively early in his career, somewhere at the tipping point between a series of polarities: he is depicted at once as unlettered yet wise, popular and elite, a common player mired in scandal and a revered poet aligned with the greats of classical antiquity. Even within his own life, Shakespeare's celebrity encompassed notions of the Bard and the Player; as Jeffrey Knapp observes, turn-of-the-century accounts simultaneously depict Shakespeare as almost "royally singular" yet "vulgarly common" (43), at once establishing his fame as a gifted poet while circumscribing his renown within enduringly derisive views of popular theater generally and acting specifically. Not unlike

Shakespeare's treatments of royal and popular power discussed in Chapter Three, Shakespeare's own celebrity sign seems to have been located at an intersection of competing ideas about authority. He was figured as both privileged and popular, sophisticated and crude, and as with other theatrical celebrities concurrently escalating to fame and fortune, these disparate, multifariously authored treatments wielded Shakespeare's name as a narrative of transcendence, with a common player in possession of little Latin and less Greek ascending to the upper echelons of cultural significance.

Though Shakespeare never received the kind of hearty print accolades for his playing as were bestowed upon his contemporaries Alleyn or Burbage, Shakespeare's celebrity emerged, as with other early modern celebrities discussed in this project, from both the stage and the booksellers' stalls. Little is known about his life as an actor; the only plays he is definitely known to have performed in are Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour* and *Sejanus*, staged in 1598 and 1603 respectively, and he is also included in the cast list for his own plays appended to the First Folio. But the earliest extant print reference to Shakespeare, Robert Greene's bitter *Groatsworth of Wit*, not only singles him out as an actor—though, lamentably for the author, one recently turned playwright—but also introduces Shakespeare to the London literary scene by means of scandal.[94] Published posthumously by Henry Chettle in 1592, Greene rails against the young actor for presuming to join the ranks of university-educated playwrights like George Peele, Christopher Marlowe, and himself: "for there is an vpstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde,* supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and being an absolute *Iohannes fac totum,* is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a country" (Sig. C4). With plays on both Shakespeare's

[94] In *Big-Time Shakespeare*, Bristol discusses the ways that Shakespeare's celebrity is still informed by scandal, most notably in the authorship controversy (101-109).

name and a line from *3 Henry VI*, the reference is as unmistakable as the contempt within which it is couched, and the fleeting attack not only testifies to Shakespeare's presence on the London theatrical scene but also suggests something of his name recognition, as Greene's rhetorical structures bank upon his reading public's ability to isolate the referent amidst his rather unsubtle allusions. His choice of the word *upstart*, a word denoting "one who has newly or suddenly risen in position or importance" (*OED s.v.* upstart, adj. 1), sets the course for the celebrity narrative that would come to define Shakespeare within his lifetime. Here, he is labeled, quite early in his career, as socially mobile, able to transcend the barriers of class and his limited education to achieve a prominence substantial enough to elicit Greene's concern. As Jonathan Bate notes, "The word precisely denotes Greene's perception of Shakespeare: a man of low origins who has suddenly come on the scene and is being touted as an important new voice in the theater" (16).

Greene's invective appears to have stoked the fires of an emerging scandal within London's theatrical community as within months, two writers associated with the theater stepped forward to distance themselves from Greene's attacks. Chettle, the pamphlet's printer, submitted a public plea for forgiveness in his *Kind-Hart's Dreame*:[95]

> About three moneths since died M. Robert Greene, leaving many papers in sundry Book sellers hands, among other his Groats-worth of wit, in which a letter written to divers play-makers is offensively by one or two of them taken, and because on the dead they cannot be avenged, they willfully forge in their conceites a living author . . . I am as sory, as if the original fault had beene my fault, because myselfe have seene his demeanour no less civill than he excelent in the quality he

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[95] An ongoing controversy questions whether Chettle may have actually initiated this attack and attributed it to Greene in order to dodge reprisal. See Richard Westley, "Computing Error: Reassessing Austin's Study of *Groats-worth of Wit*," and Hanspeter Born, "Why Greene was Angry at Shakespeare."

> professes: besides divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing, that approoves his art. (Sig. B2r)

That Shakespeare is the intended target of his compensatory flattery is suggested by Chettle's references to both his graceful writing and excellent *qualitie*, which, according to the *OED*, signified in a now obsolete meaning, "Profession, occupation, business, *esp.* that of an actor" (n. 6a). Further, Chettle's hasty, public *mea culpa* offers some suggestion not only of the magnitude of the scandal but also of Shakespeare's growing popularity, considering the measures Chettle undertook to sever his name from Greene's pointed barbs. That same year, Thomas Nashe would, in his *Pierce Pennilesse*, similarly refute accusations that he authored the polemic, informing his readers that "a scald, trivial, lying pamphlet called Greene's Groatsworth of Wit is given out as being my doing. God never have any care of my soul, but utterly renounce me, if the least word or syllable in it proceeded from my pen, or if I were any way privy to the writing of it" (xv). Interestingly, in the same text wherein Nashe rebuts his supposed involvement in Greene's pamphlet, he also, like Chettle, heaps praise upon Shakespeare's drama. Of *1 Henry VI*, Nashe muses, "How would it have joy'd brave Talbot . . . to think that after he had lyne two hundred yeare in his tomb, he should triumph again on the stage, and have his bones new embalmed with the teares of ten thousand spectators at least" (60). Nashe's assessment of the play's reception shines a notably favorable light on Shakespeare's burgeoning career as dramatist, further testifying to his popular standing, with "ten thousand spectators at least" moved to tears by his dramatic offerings. But beyond signifying Shakespeare's popularity, the scandal cements Shakespeare's position at the intersection of Bard and Player; in many ways, and almost certainly quite contrary to his intention, Greene's attack planted the seeds of

Shakespeare's publicly crafted and circulated celebrity narrative, initiating him into the sphere of print as a transcendent upstart straddling social boundaries as well as the arenas of poetry and performance. That his pamphlet seems to have caused something of a public stir may have further popularized this particular assessment, as the twin notions of Shakespeare as both an emerging, important literary figure and a common player endured throughout his lifetime.

Though Shakespeare-as-actor has received considerably less critical attention than Shakespeare-as-dramatist, Shakespeare's contemporaries regularly noted both aspects of his career. When, for example, Shakespeare began to appear as the subject of printed commendatory verse toward the end of the 1590s, he was consistently lauded more for his poetry, but his playing received several nods as well. In 1603, John Davies likely praised Shakespeare, and players in general, with the following lines: "Players, I love yee, and your Qualitie,/ As ye are Men, that pass time not abus'd:/ And some I love for painting, poesie" (1-3). In a marginal note following the word "poesie," Davies adds the initials "W.S.R.B."; considering that Burbage, the leading actor of the King's Men, was also known as a painter, it seems likely that these initials aim to clarify which of his beloved players Davies specifically addresses: Burbage, whom Davies also admires for his painting, and Shakespeare, whom he admires for his poetry.
In 1611, Davies offers a more sustained commendation of Shakespeare in his *Scourge of Folly* with the poem "To Our English Terence Mr. Will. Shake-speare." Nestled in a collection that features similar tributes to such contemporary London luminaries as Jonson and Inigo Jones, Davies' poem in praise of Shakespeare highlights both his acting and writing, while reaffirming his position as an upstart:

> Some say (good Will) which I, in sport, do sing,
>
> Had'st thou not plaid some Kingly parts in sport,

> Thou hadst bin a companion for a King;
>
> And, beene a King among the meaner sort.
>
> Some others raile; but, raile as they thinke fit,
>
> Thou hast no railing, but a raigning Wit:
>
> And honesty thou sow'st, which they do reape;
>
> So, to increase their Stocke which they do keepe. (Epig. 159)

In the same volume in which Davies labels King's man William Ostler a "Roscius for these times" (Epig. 205), he deems Ostler's fellow Shakespeare "Our English Terence," employing a similar trope wherein contemporary celebrities are depicted as heirs to the players and poets of antiquity, celebrating the cultural present by displacing the past. Shakespeare functioned as this kind of symbol not only in Davies, but also when, in 1598, the Oxford scholar Francis Meres includes Shakespeare in his account of the famous English writers that define his era by comparing them to the authors of classical antiquity: "the Greek tongue is made famous and eloquent by Homer, Hesiod . . . and Aristophanes; and the Latine tongue by Virgil, Ovid . . . and Claudianus; so the English tongue is mightily enriched, and gorgeouslie invested in rare ornaments and resplendent abiliments by Sir Philip Sidney, Spencer, Daniel, Drayton, Warner, Shakespeare, Marlow and Chapman" (3324).

But Davies, here, specifically aligns Shakespeare with Terence, a gifted poet of humble origins who wrote in the common vernacular. One of the most popular Roman playwrights of both the English middle ages and the early modern era, Terence was born a slave and freed by the power of his celebrated verse. In declaring Shakespeare "our Terence," Davies not only reiterates the cultured-but-common transcendence of the Shakespeare narrative already in

circulation,[96] but also positions him as a possession of a proud public. “Our Terence” also recalls Terence’s simple, though direct, Latin, perhaps lauding Shakespeare’s language in light of the more scholastic stylings of Jonson or the university-educated playwrights that dominated the early days of the theater. According to Davies, Shakespeare’s plays trade in “honesty” as he possesses a “raigning wit,” playing off the multiple allusions to various notions of kingship throughout the poem. Shakespeare is, at once, a king of wit, a King’s Man, a player-king, and a would-be “companion for a king,” except that his theatrical pursuits of “kingship” have prevented him from becoming the latter. As Knapp argues, “From Davies’ perspective, the very medium that royalizes Shakespeare has also disgraced him” (24), and thus, Shakespeare’s ascent to the throne of wit becomes an obstacle to achieving legitimate authority, and he must be content to remain “a king among the meaner sort.” Echoing a persistent narrative of Shakespeare’s celebrity that was ironically initiated by one his harshest critics, this “king among the meaner sort” emphasizes singular achievement within a base arena. Focusing on the actor-playwright’s rise to fame and enhanced social status through the vulgar pathways of popularity, Davies circumscribes Shakespeare’s ascent to singularity within the limitations his “qualitie” can offer.

Nora Johnson has argued that “Shakespeare never cultivated a star persona” as an actor in the same manner as fellow actor-turned-playwright Nathan Field (163), but Shakespeare’s status as player certainly informed his emerging celebrity, providing the groundwork for the narrative of transcendence that he would come to embody. Furthermore, evidence suggests he did earn some clout as an actor: by 1595, already a member of the Lord Chamberlain’s Men, Shakespeare was playing for the most exclusive audiences, as evidenced by the Treasurer of the Queen’s

[96] Similarly, Yachnin describes the early modern theater in general as what he terms *populuxe*, or “classy but common” (183).

Chamber's payment to "William Kempe William Shakespeare & Richarde Burbage servauntes to the Lord Chamberleyne" for performances at Greenwich court (qtd. in Murray 91). Shakespeare continued to perform for such exclusive audiences when, close to a decade later, he is listed in the charter for the King's Men, in whose company he is counted as one of nine "Players" to receive four yards of red cloth for the investiture of King James, as recorded by the Master of the Great Wardrobe (3335). Even decades after his death, Shakespeare would continue to be remembered as both an actor and a dramatist. A 1640 edition of Shakespeare's poetry contains a tribute entitled "An Elegie on the death of that famous Writer and Actor, M. William Shakespeare," and in his 1633 *A Chronicle of the Kings of England*, Sir Richard Baker notes, "it might be thought ridiculous to speak of Stage-players; but seeing excellency in the meanest things deserves remembering . . . For writers of Playes, and such as had been Players themselves, William Shakespear and Benjamin Johnson, have specially left their Names recommended to Posterity" (Sig. Ddd3). Once again tying Shakespeare's name to common playing, Baker's observations, like Davies', laud Shakespeare as an exemplary representative of a base undertaking, a star amidst the rabble, while remembering him as both a player and playwright.

Certainly, however, it was his poetry that seems most to have enraptured his public, and as such, his popular following is often attributed to the seductive powers of his verse. The first extant praise poem to reference Shakespeare, Richard Barnfield's 1598 "A Remembrance of Some English Poets," aligns Shakespeare with Spenser, Daniel, and Drayton, but omits entirely his work for the stage, focusing solely on his longer poems:

> And Shakespeare thou, whose hony-flowing Vaine,
>
> (Pleasing the World) thy praises doth obtaine.
>
> Whose *Venus,* and whose *Lucrece* (sweete, and chaste)

> Thy name in fames immortall Booke have plac't.
>
> Live ever you, at least in Fame live ever:
>
> Well may the Bodye dye, but Fame dies never. (Sig. E2r, 13-18)

The poem suggests that by the time of its composition, Shakespeare had already received popular recognition for his literary achievements, and perhaps attempts, through its rather blatant omission of his stage-plays, to bestow upon Shakespeare a kind of legitimacy he thought unavailable in the theater.[97] Celebrating Shakespeare-as-Bard, the poem also inaugurates the trope of Shakespeare's honeyed verse, which reappears in commendatory poetry and prose throughout and after his career. As an early modern trope, according to Gabriel A. Rieger, honey was frequently figured as a seductive, almost intoxicating agent (43),[98] apropos here to the pleasure Barnfield asserts that the public takes in Shakespeare's poetry. If, as Johnson has proposed, Shakespeare's turns at playing did not cultivate a celebrity presence, his verse, as indicated by its frequent association with honey, may have amassed him a following. In Barnfield's rendering, Shakespeare's poetry has sweetly seduced and pleased the world, and the public has, in turn, bestowed fame upon him.

That same year, Meres praises the "mellifluous & honeytongued Shakespeare" for his poetry, and counts him "the best for Comedy and Tragedy" (3324), citing twelve plays as evidence. The first extant praise poem dedicated solely to Shakespeare, John Weever's 1599 "Ad Gulielmum Shakespeare," employs the same trope as he celebrates the writer's poems as well as plays:

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[97] Barnfield's poem is the only extant praise poem for Shakespeare, written during Shakespeare's lifetime, not to reference his plays.

[98] Rieger cites as example Ophelia's declaration that she has "sucked the honey" of Hamlet's "music vows" (3.1.157).

> Honie-tong'd *Shakespeare* when I saw thine issue
>
> I swore *Apollo* got them and none other,
>
> Their rosie-tainted features cloth'd in tissue,
>
> Some heauen born goddesse said to be their mother:
>
> Rose-checkt *Adonis* with his amber tresses,
>
> Faire fire-hot *Venus* charming him to loue her,
>
> Chaste *Lucretia* virgine-like her dresses,
>
> Prowd lust-stung *Tarquine* seeking still to proue her:
>
> *Romea Richard* ; more whose names I know not,
>
> Their sugred tongues, and power attractiue beuty
>
> Say they are Saints althogh that Sts they shew not
>
> For thousands vowe to them subiectiue dutie:
>
> They burn in loue thy children *Shakespear* het them,
>
> Go, wo thy Muse more Nymphish brood beget them.[99]

Figuring Shakespeare's characters as his children, the poem likewise focuses on Shakespeare's ability to seduce his audiences, focusing primarily on Shakespeare's dramatic lovers and positioning the poet as the virile father to an indefinite brood (with "more whose names I know not"). Once again constructing Shakespeare as seducer, Weever aligns the poet with his Adonis, assigning Adonis primary agency in Venus' attempted seduction as it is he that charms her to pursue him; Shakespeare has likewise dallied with the divine and impregnated a "goddess" who continues to bear him children that speak in "sugred tongues." Shakespeare's seductive arts are

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[99] As per a note in *The Norton Shakespeare*, modern spelling might interpret these lines as "They burn in love, thy children, Shakespeare, heated them./ Go woo thy muse, more nymphish brood beget them" (3328, n.6). The "Sts" at line 11 likely indicates "saints" (n.5).

further iterated in the poem's description of the thousands who vow "subjectiue dutie" to his characters and, by extension, him as well. Weever's commendatory verse, like Barnfield's, attributes Shakespeare's rapt audience to the poet's irresistible verse, while reaffirming Shakespeare's position between the high and low, establishing him as an intermediary between the divine and his thousands of admirers.[100]

Shakespeare, as celebrity, emerged throughout his career as socially transcendent due to his powerfully seductive capacities, and these same themes manifest in an amusing and salacious bit of early modern gossip, unusually preserved for posterity when London law student John Manningham recorded the anecdote in his diary in 1601:

> Upon a time when Burbage played Richard III there was a citizen grew so far in liking with him, that before she went from the play she appointed him to come that night unto her by the name of Richard III. Shakespeare, overhearing their conclusion, went before, was entertained and at his game ere Burbage came. The message being brought that Richard III was at the door, Shakespeare caused return to be made that William the Conqueror was before Richard III. (Marche 1601, Folio 29b)

Like Weever's poem, the anecdote figures Shakespeare as virile and seductive, this time marked not by his syrupy verse, but by a kind of roguish charm as he bests and playfully humiliates his masculine rival to seduce an amorous playgoer. The story further recounts, though highly dubiously, the exploits of a decidedly theatrical figure, and, more specifically, a decidedly Shakespearean one. Conflating both Bard and Player, the anecdote allows Shakespeare to play a

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[100] This treatment probably predates the satirical take on Shakespeare's "worshippers" found in the anonymously authored Parnassus plays, as the foolish patron Gulio in *The Return from Parnassus* declares, "I'le worshipp sweet Mr. Shakspeare, and to honoure him will lay his Venus and Adonis under my pillowe" (4.1).

role that seems to come out of his own body of work, invoking a number of his own favored tropes: disguise, the bed-trick, rival lovers, social transcendence, and behind-the-scenes glimpses into the offstage antics of actors. The story once again establishes Shakespeare as “a king among the meaner sort” as he plays a sort of carnivalesque version of William I, who conquers in the bedroom rather than the battlefield. Conflating various notions of Shakespeare’s seductive potential and his ability to transcend not only social status but the realms of acting and writing as well, this early example of celebrity gossip fashions various strands of the Shakespeare narrative into an unrecoverable celebrity body, a popularly traded narrative that mingles the names of kings and players.

Perhaps even more remarkable is that this same anecdote resurfaces in 1759 in Thomas Wilkes’ *General View of the Stage*, especially considering that Manningham’s diary was not discovered until the nineteenth century (Bate 24). The 1759 reappearance includes a number of enhanced flourishes befitting the trend in intrigue-laden domestic comedies that characterized the era: the citizen is now a married woman whose husband is away, she sends her lady to deliver the request to Burbage, they arrange a secret three-tap knock at the door to signal his illicit arrival, and Shakespeare emerges at the end, popping his head out the window to declare his victory. Bate surmises that the latter appearance of the story “provides independent corroboration of the incident’s underlying truth” (24), though I find no cause to infer the story’s credibility due to its longevity, any more than any given urban legend’s endurance testifies to its veracity. But the story’s independent circulation, uninformed by Manningham’s account, does testify to its sustained presence in, at the very least, the arena of idle chat, if not in ephemeral print sources, suggesting that the interwoven strands of Shakespeare’s multifariously authored celebrity narratives persisted, evolving and expanding even after his death. Further, this eighteenth-

century revision demonstrates not only that the second self of Shakespeare's celebrity maintained its presence long after his corporeal self expired, but the manner by which Shakespeare's celebrity was wielded in collaboration with the contemporary narrative trends of a subsequent era. That the story, in circulation for more than a century and a half, surfaces in print for the first time at the height of Garrick's fame as a Shakespearean actor and authority hardly seems coincidental.

Three Centuries, Three Shakespeare(an)s

According to the *OED*, the term *Shakespearean* (originally, *Shakespearian*) first appeared in print in the 1750s, denoting persons, texts, and experiences "having the characteristics of William Shakespeare or his dramatic or poetical productions" (adj. a), and it seems fitting that the term's emergence, signifying both a likeness to his person and his work, would coincide with Garrick's sustained efforts to establish himself as Shakespeare's living embodiment. Today, Shakespeare remains the only playwright whose name in adjective form signifies a type of actor,[101] and one marked with some distinction, constituting the largest share of English actors to have received knighthoods. But to be a Shakespearean does not confine one's body of work to the plays of Shakespeare; in fact, out of Laurence Olivier's 86 film credits over the span of five decades, only a small fraction—seven of them—were as Shakespeare's characters. Nonetheless, Olivier is generally regarded as the Shakespearean actor par excellence of the twentieth century. Shakespearean actors are designated as such even in their non-Shakespearean capacities, and thus, Shakespeare becomes part of the interwoven narrative of the actor's celebrity attached to his name. For example, Kenneth Branagh's name hardly surfaces in

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[101] See Garber, *Shakespeare and Modern Culture*, for a discussion of the many ideas this term continues to convey (xiv-xv).

print unless prefixed by "Shakespearean actor," such as in the 2001 *Film Force* headline, "Shakespearean Actor Kenneth Branagh Will Play the Flamboyant Professor Gilderoy Lockhart in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets.*"[102] To be a Shakespearean actor is to embody an extra-dramatic type, circumscribed not only by Shakespeare's texts, but by a style and ethos that transcend roles. According to Mario DiGangi, *types* perform the significant function of paradoxically rendering the strange in a familiar form, of presenting "recognizable figures of literary imagination and social fantasy" (5), and the collaborative Shakespearean celebrity, as a type, performs this function dialogically, at once bestowing the familiar Shakespearean narrative onto a strange, new body and, reciprocally, refamiliarizing audiences with the estranged presence of Shakespeare in a living, breathing body.

To become this type of celebrity is to engage in an active collaboration, as Henderson has observed, with a dead poet (*Collaborations* 8), filling in the blank spaces of the Shakespearean script through performance. As Phyllis Dircks has pointed out, Garrick and other Shakespearean actors return to Shakespeare's plays for their "actability" (79), in that their lengthy soliloquies, intense depictions of conflict and emotion, and brisk pace offer the actor an ideal vessel through which to make a name for oneself. To this end, Dircks speculates, Garrick revised the plays to best suit his career, restoring enough of the original material to claim to present a more authentically Shakespearean experience, while modifying it enough to please crowds and provide himself an apt showcase (80-83). Furthermore, Garber argues that Shakespeare's chosen genre, drama, provides ample room for evolving presentations of the playwright as well as the actor, as "the brilliant formal capacities of drama are such that the playwright's voice is many voices" (*After All* 6). Due to the flexibility of the dramatic structure, Garber posits, each successive age

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[102] With 57 film credits, Branagh has starred in five film adaptations of Shakespeare's work.

may sift through various characters' voices in order to arrive at what it will appoint the voice of the dramatist, allowing audiences, at various times, not only to identify with Antonio, or Portia, or Shylock, but to identify Shakespeare with any one of those characters as fits its cultural needs. Thus, the dramatic structure's relative ambiguity provides a vehicle for Shakespeare's seemingly ever-present cultural relevance. Dircks likewise cites the capacity of the dramatic form to accommodate many actors' voices, and indeed, one of the particularities of drama is that it continuously invites new embodiments, or new stars, to fulfill its roles. Drama, unlike other literary forms, circulates through the public sphere in performance as well as in print and, therefore, proves an innately more mutable form. Each production carries with it the capacity to reimagine the text in profound ways, opening a nearly endless array of possibilities for self-promotion.

But what Henderson and Dircks omit in their formulations is that to collaborate with Shakespeare is not only to engage with his verse, but with his celebrity as well. That is, though his plays are certainly actable, they are not necessarily inherently more actable than the rich work of his contemporaries. Shakespeare's plays, however, arrive throughout the centuries circumscribed by the celebrity body generated within his own lifetime: a narrative of mass-seduction and social transcendence that simultaneously accommodates elements of the vulgar and the elite, the Player and the Bard. Situated as it is between extremes, Shakespeare's celebrity, too, opens space for a wide array of voices. Thus, the Shakespearean actor is presented with the opportunity not only to embody his characters, but to provide a human home for his disembodied spectral celebrity self, and as Garrick demonstrated, the latter role, that of the Shakespearean celebrity, becomes a role one plays both on and off the stage. Reciprocally, the Shakespearean celebrity likewise lends his own celebrity to Shakespeare, and each of the stars

discussed here rendered Shakespeare decidedly more accessible than the institutionalizing impulses concurrently fashioning Shakespeare as a national, and then an international, hero of mythically extraordinary genius and unapproachable elitism. Garrick introduced the Shakespeare industry, providing the public with accessible Shakespearean artifacts and experiences; Kean reaffirmed Shakespeare's base humanity; and Olivier brought Shakespeare to film, rendering Shakespearean performance almost universally accessible.

Garrick was undoubtedly the first of this type, dedicating the bulk of his career to establishing himself as Shakespearean in every arena he inhabited. It is, perhaps, fitting that before Garrick assumed the role of Hamlet on the Drury Lane stage, for which he would be celebrated more than for any other of his Shakespearean roles (Dobson 166), that he would first perform the role of King Hamlet's ghost, a character who was strongly associated with the departed playwright. In a preface to his 1709 edition of Shakespeare's collected works, Nicholas Rowe reported a widely accepted, though unsubstantiated rumor that Shakespeare himself had acted the "the ghost of his own Hamlet" (xxxi); therefore, Garrick's performance in this role was seen by some, according to Dobson, as a sort of theatrical reincarnation (117), with the actor breathing new life into a spirit of the stage.

Aside from his many performances as Shakespeare's leading men and the productions he helmed, Garrick was also lauded by contemporaries as a competent editor, if not scholar, of Shakespeare's plays. Frequently celebrated for returning the works of Shakespeare back to Shakespeare, loosening the grip of the heavily reimagined, though popular, Restoration-era adaptations penned by Sir William Davenant or Nahum Tate,[103] Garrick not only staged but

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[103] Davenant, for example, crafted an operatic reworking of *Macbeth* and adapted *The Tempest* in his collaboration with John Dryden, *The Tempest, or The Enchanted Island*, which invented

published several editions of the plays he adapted. In his 1780 biography of Garrick, Thomas Davies noted of the actor-turned-editor, "when in the revival of Shakespeare's plays, he complied with the general taste as well as his own, he was determined to restore him to his genuine splendour and native simplicity, unincumbered with the unnatural additions, and gaudy trappings, thrown upon him by some writers who lived in the reign of Charles the second" (93). Despite his many amendments to Shakespeare's texts, Garrick was still considered something of an expert, able to deliver, as one letter-writer asserted, a "true sense and meaning" of the plays, when other "editors could give us neither" (qtd. in Cunningham 6).

Through Garrick's various enterprises in performance, print, and production, Cunningham argues that "a generation of playgoers came to 'know' Shakespeare primarily through Garrick" (5), as his standing within the English community of Shakespearean scholars and actors had swelled to the proportion that "few important Shakespeare-related projects could happen without his involvement" (5). Of course, with his representation and appropriation tied so exclusively to one man, the Shakespeare so popular with mid-eighteenth-century audiences proved an undeniable conflation of both celebrities. Garrick achieved remarkable celebrity status within his contemporary London. As Heather McPherson relays,

> His engaging, naturalistic style of acting instantly and indelibly established his reputation, but it was Garrick's genius for self-promotion and mastery of image-making and the media that set him apart. His features were recorded and widely disseminated in hundreds of images, which amplified his celebrity and posthumous reputation . . . Through self-fashioning and image control, Garrick transformed himself into a national cultural icon whose appeal transcended

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sisters for both Miranda and Caliban and a love interest for Ariel. Tate is best known for his "happy ending" version of *King Lear*.

> ordinary social and class divisions and narrow professional interests.
> ("Garrickomania")

As demonstration of his celebrity, more portraits of Garrick were created during the eighteenth century than of any other Briton (Burnim 185), and such portraits were frequently reproduced for public sale or in the pages of popular periodicals, where reports of his private life also circulated (Bertlesen 308).

Though he is generally credited with stoking the flames of bardolatry that quickly swept across England, then Europe, in the eighteenth century, it is certainly more accurate to say that he participated in, rather than initiated, the Shakespeare craze. Garrick's rise to fame did, after all, follow the installation of Peter Scheemakers' monument of Shakespeare in Westminster Abbey, which designated him, along with Chaucer, one of England's national poets, so the rising tide of reverence for the departed dramatist was already well underway. Even this installation seems to have answered a call that had begun in the years immediately following Shakespeare's death; William Basse, whose tribute likely predates Jonson's, argued in an elegy that Shakespeare should be interred alongside Chaucer, Spenser, and Beaumont:

> To lodge all four in one bed make a shift
> Until Doomsday, for hardly will a fifth
> Betwixt this day and that by fate be slain
> For whom your curtains may be drawn again.
> If your precedency in death doth bar
> A fourth place in your sacred sepulcher,
> Under this carved marble of thine own
> Sleep rare tragedian Shakespeare, sleep alone. (5-12)

Furthermore, the early eighteenth century gave rise to a fresh batch of Shakespearean rumor, enlarging the intangible narrative body of Shakespeare's celebrity, while reaffirming its central narrative strains, filling in with wild speculations the many biographical lacunae left behind. John Aubrey's *Brief Lives*, for example, claimed Shakespeare to be the son of a butcher, who "when he kill'd a Calfe he would doe it in a high style, and make a Speech" (334), while also offering the only extant physical description of the Stratford poet: "He was a handsome, well-shap't man" (334). Of greater intrigue, however, is his suggestion that Sir William Davenant, seventeenth-century adapter of Shakespeare's works, may have been Shakespeare's illegitimate son:

> Mr William Shakespeare was wont to goe into Warwickshire once a yeare, and did commonly in his journey lye at this house in Oxon, where he was exceedingly respected . . . Now Sir William would sometimes, when he was pleasant over a glasse of wine with his most intimate friends—e.g. Sam Butler . . . say, that it seemed to him that he writ with the very spirit that did Shakespeare, and seemed contented enough to be thought his Son. He would tell them the story as above, in which way his mother had a very light report, whereby she was called a Whore. (177)

As was the case during his lifetime, Shakespeare's celebrity body continued to affirm his seductive capacities and place him at the center of scandal, while likewise asserting his humble origins and the natural genius that would lift him from obscurity. Continuing in this tradition, in 1709, Rowe prefaced his six-volume edition of Shakespeare's complete works with the biographical sketch, *Some Account of the Life &c. of Mr. William Shakespear*, in which he claimed that scandal forced the young Shakespeare to the theater:

> He had, by a misfortune common enough to young fellows, fallen into ill company; and amongst them, some that made a frequent practice of deer-stealing, engag'd him more than once in robbing a park that belong'd to Sir Thomas Lucy . . . For this he was prosecuted by the gentleman, as he thought, somewhat too severely; and in order to revenge that ill usage, he made a ballad upon him. And tho' this, probably the first essay of his poetry, be lost, yet it is said to have been so very bitter, that it redoubled the prosecution against him to that degree, that he was oblig'd to leave his business and family in Warwickshire, for some time, and shelter himself in London. (xlvii)

Like Aubrey, Rowe offers a myth of origin to the Shakespeare narrative, birthing his reputation in scandal, as did Greene's bitter pamphlet, stressing his common upbringing as not only the antecedent to, but indeed, the very driving force behind his poetic career.[104] That accounts such as these circulated throughout eighteenth-century England concurrently with such reverent tributes as the installation of the Shakespeare memorial in Westminster Abbey continues to locate Shakespeare's enduring celebrity presence as a confluence of high and low, both a pinnacle of English culture and a common thief.

It is this celebrity body that Garrick engaged in active collaboration, both on stage and off. Like Shakespeare, Garrick was a small-town boy who moved to the big city to seek his fortunes, which he would find, like Shakespeare, in the theater as an actor-manager-playwright (Hartnoll 315). And Garrick, too, occasionally found himself the subject of scandal, particularly when he paid off a quarrelsome pamphleteer to withhold some unknown slanders about to go to

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[104] In another interesting tidbit from Rowe, he asserts that Shakespeare is responsible for launching Jonson's career, claiming that the Lord Chamberlain's Men had originally refused Jonson's work as inferior, until Shakespeare "found something so well in it" that he subsequently "recommend[ed] Mr. Jonson and his writings to the publick" (lii).

print; the slanders never saw the light of day, but Garrick's pay-off was circulated as "an immoral . . . and imprudent act" (T. Davies 184). The incident, according to a contemporary biographer, quickly faded from memory, but Garrick's reputation, not unlike Shakespeare's, was rooted in both scandal and reverence, both his humble origins and ascension to the theatrical bourgeoisie, and Garrick capitalized on such parallels. That Shakespeare's fame had already achieved a great deal of cultural force lends credence to Cunningham's speculation as to Garrick's commercial motivation to align himself with Shakespeare; the commercial draw of such a collaboration would have been readily apparent to a savvy impresario such as Garrick. If Garrick did not launch a cultural fixation with Shakespeare, it is fair to say that, as Woo asserts, he "tangibly enlarged Shakespeare's audiences and media of communication within society" (2). Shakespeare accompanied Garrick through the celebrity media of the eighteenth century, occupying spots in periodicals and at art sales, where reproduced prints of Garrick's portraits, situated, as he so often was, alongside Shakespeare, were sold to a mass public. If Shakespeare provided Garrick with a platform upon which to establish his presence, Garrick introduced Shakespeare to platforms unavailable in his own day, initiating him "into the realms of statuary, newspaper doggerel, and tourism sites" (Woo 2). Aside from providing the specter of Shakespeare's celebrity with a live host with whom audiences could once again interact in the theater, Garrick's enduring stamp on Shakespeare's ever-evolving second self rendered him limitlessly reproducible and attainable, reestablishing Shakespeare's contemporary cultural relevance within the emerging industry of the mass-media. Garrick effectively established Shakespeare as an industry, but, as savvy a businessman as he was, an industry predicated on Shakespeare's reemergence in Garrick, a collaboration of two men's celebrity narratives tied together in print, performance, and portrait. With Shakespeare already installed as one of

England's national poets, Garrick's industrialization of Shakespearean media once again positioned the poet at the forefront of discursive innovation. This same, highly enmeshed collaboration, likewise established Garrick as the first of his type: a Shakespearean, as the *OED* defines it, linked both to Shakespeare's person and his poetry.

But it would be the eccentric star of the nineteenth-century stage, Edmund Kean, who would become the first English actor accorded that label (*OED s.v.* Shakespearean, adj. a), at least in print, when John Keats noted in 1817, "The acting of Kean is Shakespearian" (60). For Keats, that meant that Kean dedicated every muscle of his body to the realistic performance of Shakespeare's characters: "The hand is agonized with death; the lip trembles with the last breath . . . The very eye-lid dies" (60). That Keats would so closely align both Kean and the label *Shakespearean* with the micro-gestures of an animate body suggests something of how Kean emerged in the early 1800s as the successive heir to Garrick's mantle,[105] that is, in stark, distinctly human counterbalance to the cerebral Shakespeare concurrently promoted by Romantic thinkers.

Kean's London debut as Shylock on the newly resurrected Drury Lane stage coincided with a powerful movement, led by the Romantic critics Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Hazlitt, and Charles Lamb, to reposition Shakespeare as a singular literary genius, isolating him more squarely on the page than the stage.[106] "Shakespeare was celebrated as a type of the ideal literary personality," writes Russell Jackson, "and his quasi-supernatural understanding of human nature and his ability to transcend circumstances remained as commonly acknowledged

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[105] In the years between Garrick's death in 1779 and Kean's emergence to Shakespearean stardom in 1814, the Kemble family of actors, including Charles Kemble, Sarah Siddons, and, most notably, John Philip Kemble were considered the reigning Shakespeareans of the London stage.

[106] I confine my discussion of Romantic writers to these three men; other Romantics, including Keats and Shelley, were admirers of Kean's work and wrote plays with him in mind.

'Shakespearean' attributes" ("Contemporary" 76). According to Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, Shakespeare was "the greatest genius, that perhaps human nature has ever produced" (151), a poet and philosopher who "stands alone, with no equal or second in his own class" (156); for Hazlitt, Shakespeare was the only poet able to deliver the "definite truth" (xx). As such, the fleeting theatrical event proved an inefficient vehicle through which to deliver the sheer magnitude of his poetic mastery and unparalleled insights. Hazlitt railed against "the exhibition of the most insupportable and hateful spectacles" of staged Shakespeare (xxii), arguing that "Hamlet himself seems hardly capable of being acted" (70). Similarly, Lamb asserted that "Lear is essentially impossible to be represented on a stage" (125). While Hazlitt did acknowledge that Shakespeare's great comic characters could "be properly seized by a great actor" (xxiii), he maintained, like Lamb, that the most profound truths offered in Shakespeare's plays could only be assessed by reading. Coleridge went so far as to assert that Shakespeare wrote for readers, not spectators, claiming, "Shakespeare, as secure of being read over and over . . . provides this for *his readers*, and leaves it to them" ("Lecture 5" 113).

"The Romantic's reservations about the stage brought privacy and individualism to the fore," writes Youngam Han. "They tried to keep Shakespeare's characters in a world of self-communings in solitude rather than leave them on the scale of public opinion" (19). Thus, they appropriated Shakespeare as a symbolic embodiment of their own Romantic ethos and figured the relationship between Shakespeare and the public as an intimate encounter with extraordinary genius, a quiet and studious affair in which they constructed their Shakespeare—the unmatched original and interpreter of the human condition—on the page, instead of in the playhouse. It is against the backdrop of this deferential and scholarly movement that the outrageous and undeniably theatrical Kean took to the London stage and provided an alternate Shakespeare, one

constructed, to borrow Han's model, in the theater of public opinion rather than in solitude. Though Coleridge is frequently quoted as bestowing the accolade upon Kean that "To see him act is like reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning" (qtd. in Fitzsimmons 1), the entire passage from which this assessment emerges is decidedly less flattering: "Kean is original, but he copies from himself. His rapid descents from the hyper-tragic to the infra-colloquial, though sometimes productive of great effect, are often unreasonable. To see him act, is like reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning. I do not think him thorough-bred gentleman enough to play Othello" (*Table Talk* 38). Far from the electrifying magnificence that the isolated quotation implies, Coleridge clearly deemed Kean unfit to embody Shakespeare's great tragic figures, seemingly suggesting that, like lightning, Kean could only offer the briefest flashes of illumination into the genius of Shakespeare's artistry. Furthermore, he paints the actor as the antithesis to the intimate reading experience he prescribed: Kean's Shakespeare is noisy, brisk, and uneven.

It is, perhaps, in counterbalance to the Romantic's intellectualization that Kean's electric performances of Shakespeare soared to the top of both popular and critical acclaim. Taken together, these disparate approaches positioned Shakespeare, once again, at the intersection of polarities: Kean's Shakespeare was popular and intensely charged; the Shakespeare of Coleridge, Hazlitt, and Lamb was the elite bearer of quiet truths. Though Kean emerged on the Drury Lane stage to almost instant fame, his career as a Shakespearean began when, as a toddler, he portrayed a goblin associate of the witches in *Macbeth* (Fitzsimmons 3). Though it is difficult to piece together an accurate biography of the actor since, as a consummate celebrity, he remained acutely aware of the value of a compelling personal narrative and fabricated much of his life story, it is known that he spent years traveling the English countryside in various acting troupes

before settling in London in 1814. Otherwise, little is known about his early life, including the year he was born or the identities of the parents he was born to: in various accounts, he claimed his mother was either an actress or a whore, or claimed his aunt to be his mother, and his father to be either Edmund Kean or the Duke of Norfolk (Fitzsimmons 5-6). But such eccentricities, which would later include a pet lion and a string of highly publicized affairs (Kahan 77, 95-97), only enhanced the celebrity he established on the stage.

When, on January 26, 1814, Kean stepped on stage as Shylock, he immediately and authoritatively announced a new trajectory in Shakespearean acting before he uttered a single word, surprising his audience when he appeared in a black wig and beard instead of the red ones that had, since Shakespeare's day, marked the stage Jew (Fitzsimmons 52). During his "Hath not a Jew eyes?" monologue, his brisk pace and impassioned anguish reportedly elicited such rousing applause that it startled the stagehands waiting in the wings (Kahan 16), and the following morning's reviews praised the profundity of his physical expression. Hazlitt, then working as a journalist for the *Morning Chronicle*, declared, "I am not one of those who, when they see the sun breaking from behind a cloud, stop to ask others whether it is the moon. Mr. Kean's appearance was the first gleam of genius breaking athwart the gloom of the Stage" (qtd. in Fitzsimmons 55). Kean would follow his breakout performance with the roles of Richard III, Othello, Hamlet, and Iago before assuming several more over the next twenty years, and his success lifted the Drury Lane Theater from the verge of bankruptcy, where it had been since it was reconstructed in 1812 (Kahan 46).

As was the case with Garrick, a new generation of London playgoers came to know Shakespeare primarily through Kean's performances; however, while Garrick performed a wide variety of Shakespeare's tragic and comedic characters, Kean, ever aware of which roles

provided the most apt showcases for his talent, rarely took on comedic roles. Kean was a skilled tragedian, particularly in villain roles, and he was also fiercely competitive with his fellow actors, soliciting his fan club, The Wolves, to boo and hiss at any potential rivals for the spotlight (Kahan 29). Thus, the nineteenth-century theater critic Elizabeth Macauley lamented,

> Some of the best plays of the inimitable Shakespeare are consigned to oblivion; [Kean] *cannot* play them nor will allow others to try their skill: his talent is restricted; it is of that peculiar sort, which was never meant for common use. The plays of Mr. Kean's choice, are for the most part, those where a character is of the malignant cast; those that are written or altered for him, the principal object is . . . but to collect a number of scenes, where the vilest passions of human nature are held out. (24)

Kean's emendation of the Shakespeare canon continued in his liberal revisions to suit his particular skills and provide star vehicles. Jeffrey Kahan observes that, "Kean, Bottom-like, assigned nearly all good speeches—no matter their logic in the story—to his own character" (45), including, for example, inserting lines from *King Lear* into *Richard II* to enhance Richard's death and assigning several of Warwick's lines to Richard in *3 Henry VI* (Kahan 45-46). Though he displayed little of the reverence for Shakespeare that Garrick professed, Kean became the first actor since 1681 to restore the tragic ending to *King Lear*, though not out of a sense of deference, but rather, in his own words, because audiences "have no notion of what I can do till they see me over the dead body of Cordelia" (qtd. in Iopolo 79).

Though such showboating might suggest bombast, reports of his acting style indicate quite the opposite: Kean was celebrated as the antithesis of John Philip Kemble's classical, and grandiose, style of Shakespearean acting. His performances are described as natural and simple,

yet magnetically charged and intense (Bratton 90). Moreover, critics remained particularly attuned, like Keats, to the actor's physicality, to the micro-details of his corporeal embodiment of character. As one reviewer noted of his Richard III: "His awakening from his nightmare with the groan, 'Give me another horse,' sent a shudder of terror through the audience. He staggered forward, leaning on his sword, sank on one knee, then started back, as if he wished to rise. His free hand, held high in the air, shook violently, even to the fingertips" (qtd. in Fitzsimmons 59). As the counterweight to Coleridge, Hazlitt, and Lamb's cerebral Shakespeare, Kean's Shakespeare was starkly corporeal, and while these Romantic critics fashioned their Shakespeare out of words and ideas, locating the ideal performance within the quiet spaces of the reader's own mind, Kean presented both Shakespeare and himself as an electrifying, human spectacle for a mass audience.

Though Kean's career crumbled as a result of a highly publicized affair with a married woman, as well as his own failing health, he carried his spectacular brand of Shakespeare with him even offstage; when, in 1825, he was tried and sentenced for adultery, his presence packed the courthouse full of spectators, who could not help but note the Shakespearean traces in his own situation: Kean had been discovered by the mishandling of his own illicit love letters (Kahan 95). Newspapers then mused about "Richard III" drinking his troubles away in local taverns (Kahan 97), and audiences, eager to glimpse the fallen idol, filled the theaters to point and whisper at a man who was becoming before them a real-life tragic hero—so much so that Kean felt compelled to stop performances to remind them of the divide between his personal life and his performance of Shakespeare (Kahan 98). But his pleas proved to be of little effect. Like his embodiment of character, Kean himself had emerged as an electrifying spectacle and had made a living by performing his private life for the public, his earthy portrayals of Shakespeare's

characters seemingly reaffirmed by his offstage fleshly exploits. He was a living Shakespearean entertainment, and perhaps even more so than Garrick, Kean emerged as a Shakespearean celebrity, affirming in human form the accessible, material body of Shakespeare as distinct from the universal genius of the Romantic imagination. Where Garrick presented himself as the embodiment of all things Shakespearean to all people, establishing himself at once as actor, scholar, and general spokesman, Kean defined himself as a Shakespearean among the meaner sort, carving out a niche for Shakespeare as entertainment severed from its scholarly ties. If the Romantics' Shakespeare was a quasi-divine teacher of the human condition, Kean's Shakespeare was decidedly human, flawed, and corporeal. Kean seized upon a number of the extremes offered up in Shakespeare's enduring narrative body, presenting a nineteenth-century Shakespeare that was popular, eroticized, and scandalous, and moreover, a Player. Kean divided into separate realms the various strands of the Shakespeare narrative that Garrick had worked so diligently to unite in his own person; his Shakespeare was a spectacle of flesh and searing humanity.

In many ways, Kean paved the course for the final Shakespearean celebrity I will consider in this chapter: Laurence Olivier, who performed the remarkable feat of introducing Shakespeare to Hollywood, and Hollywood to the ever-expanding Shakespeare narrative. Though it may seem natural that Shakespeare's plays would find their way onto the screen, it is important to note that many of the earliest filmmakers and film theorists strenuously resisted this development, delineating the new medium of film from the theater and celebrating the capacity of film to provide a new, and superior, mode of storytelling. Russian filmmaker and theorist Sergei Eisenstein remained quite vocal about such distinctions, circumscribing the theater by its limitation, its reliance on "physical action and behavior to convey to the spectator the inner

content" (183), while stressing, like his fellow early film theorist Erwin Panofsky, that film was not merely a kind of recorded stage play (Panofksy 96-97). Thus, it was with some measure of audacity that Olivier so boldly asserted *Henry V*'s stage history in his 1944 film adaptation, and then borrowed techniques lifted from Eisenstein for his battle sequences (Christie 114). The film, which Olivier both directed and starred in, begins with a title sequence that bears a striking similarity to early modern playbills, announcing that William Shakespeare's *Henry V* "will be played by the Lord Chamberlain's Men at the Globe Playhouse this day" in 1600. As the camera pans over a recreation of seventeenth-century London in wide-shot, it soars above the city until the Globe is in sight, then swoops in for a closer look, ultimately transporting the spectator within the walls, where various playgoers in Renaissance dress assemble before the actors emerge on stage, presenting the entire first act as a stage-play. It is not until the Chorus announces that "thence to France shall we convey you" (2.37), that he reveals the translucent curtain at the back of the stage—a metaphor for the silver screen—behind which is France, no longer circumscribed by the stage, but opened up as a distinctly cinematic, not a theatrical, space. By transporting the spectator behind the curtain, Olivier offered a bold announcement of Shakespeare's newest trajectory, off the stage and into the cinema, where the Chorus' apologies are now rendered irrelevant; film spectators, unlike the play's audience, no longer have to imagine what they cannot see.

The film likewise opened up Shakespeare-in-performance to a new and global audience, meaning that the ever-expanding body of Shakespeare's readership, too, could now appreciate the spectacle of performance. With Shakespeare already firmly entrenched in Western educational curricula and his texts mass-published in multiple editions, performed Shakespeare remained, at the beginning of the twentieth century, an elusive phenomenon for many, generally

available only within metropolitan areas—such as the subject of this project, London—or otherwise only sporadically by community companies or travelling troupes. Filmed Shakespeare expanded the playwright's viewership, and likewise, expanded the reach of the first Shakespearean film star. Olivier's successful introduction of film to Shakespeare, and Shakespeare to the world of film, especially when so self-consciously undertaken as in *Henry V*, allowed Shakespeare once again to stand at the forefront of a new narrative mode, enfranchising a global audience to participate in a cultural conversation to which they had previously only had limited access.

Olivier's *Henry V* was not the first film adaptation of a Shakespeare play, but it is generally considered the first critically and commercially successful one. Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks, for example, had starred in a 1929 version of *The Taming of the Shrew*; James Cagney took on the role of Bottom in a 1935 *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. But the box-office failure of George Cukor's 1936 *Romeo and Juliet* left Hollywood disenchanted with Shakespeare, and no new adaptations were produced for nine years;[107] furthermore, critic Graeme Greene had panned Cukor's film so severely that he asserted he was "less than ever convinced that there is an aesthetic justification for filming Shakespeare at all" (qtd. in Russell, "From Playscript" 21). But Olivier's *Henry V*, marketed as a wartime salute to British forces and no doubt boosted by the considerable celebrity his marriage to Vivien Leigh had imparted, proved a resounding success; hailed by film critic James Agee as "one of the cinema's great works of art" (qtd. in Macnab 191), the film garnered four Academy Award nominations and launched a new trajectory in Olivier's career as a Shakespearean film star.

[107] For more on early film adaptations of Shakespeare, see Anthony R. Guneratne, *Shakespeare, Film Studies, and the Visual Cultures of Modernity* and Kenneth S. Rothwell, *A History of Shakespeare on Screen: A Century of Film and Television*.

Olivier had already and quite self-consciously established himself as a Shakespearean stage actor; as he confessed, he purposefully set out to acquire this title:

> My ambition required it. I required it of myself. I knew it wouldn't happen unless I crashed that market. So I had to go on with the critics giving me bad notices, saying I couldn't speak the verse to save my life and all that, and I just went on and on, and after about a year the Press referred to me as "that Shakespearean actor." Then I knew it had been done. (qtd. in Coleman 80)

Modeling his career on that of Garrick or, more recently, the first knighted actor Sir Henry Irving, Olivier turned to Shakespeare in a bid to boost his gravitas, to become known as a Shakespearean and thus mingle the strands of the Shakespearean narrative with his own emerging celebrity. He sought out this opportunity at The Old Vic where, luckily, they were looking for "a so-called star to whom they need pay only £25 a week" (Coleman 82), and Olivier began his career as a Shakespearean in the role of Hamlet, though he achieved greater notoriety when he alternated the roles of Romeo and Mercutio with John Gielgud in a West End production of *Romeo and Juliet* (Coleman 62). There, intertwining his own burgeoning career with Shakespeare's well established one, he noted of his performance alongside the accomplished Gielgud, "I was the upstart" (qtd. in Coleman 63), embodying the accusation that helped to define Shakespeare's own celebrity.

Though Olivier had already performed in numerous films by the time he took on *Henry V*, the film's success, followed by the success of his filmed *Hamlet* in 1948, which won Best Picture and Best Actor Oscars, allowed him to transfer his London esteem as a notable Shakespearean to worldwide celebrity. As occurred with both Garrick and Kean, Olivier's successful cinematic adaptations meant that new generations of filmgoers came to know

Shakespeare, at least as performed, primarily through Olivier; Olivier had, like his theatrical forebears, provided a new human architecture in which to house the spectral body of Shakespeare's celebrity, and he not only self-consciously acknowledged, but seemed to relish his role as Shakespearean celebrity. He frequently gestured to his active collaboration with Shakespeare, claiming, for example, in a 1983 interview, "Mr. Shakespeare and I are very close, you know. We've done a lot for each other" (qtd. in Lewis 164). Further promoting the special, highly enmeshed relationship the two shared, he claimed a kind of intuitive, nearly empathic understanding of Shakespeare. Of his straightforward delivery style, he mused, "I didn't have to sing it, because I spoke Shakespeare naturally. I spoke Shakespeare as if that was the way I spoke" (qtd. in Coleman 63), and English playwright Charles Bennett declared of Olivier, "He could speak Shakespeare's lines as naturally as if he were actually thinking them" ("Olivier"). Figured as an actor who both spoke and thought like Shakespeare, Olivier, notes Roger Lewis, was perceived as Shakespearean, a term he was actively redefining just as it defined him, even in his non-Shakespearean roles, as audiences and critics noted the traces of *Richard III* in *Marathon Man* and *Othello* in *Khartoum* (164).

Off-screen, Olivier became the quintessential embodiment of the intersections between high and low art that characterized Shakespeare's celebrity. Defining his own early career as that of an "upstart," for the next several decades of his career, Olivier simultaneously became known as both a common player and, in a label attached to him by 1949, "the greatest actor in the world" (Holland, "Olivier's Celebrity" 216). His subsequent, critically lauded turns in Shakespeare had bestowed the latter title upon him, and his numerous acting awards and knighthood in 1947 sealed it,[108] even as he proceeded to star in a number of popular, commercial

[108] At 39, Olivier remains the youngest actor ever to be knighted (Lewis 195).

productions often deemed beneath his stature, like the 1957 *The Prince and the Showgirl* opposite Marilyn Monroe. In 1957, Olivier, already knighted and deemed “the greatest actor in the world,” licensed his name to Benson & Hedges for the Olivier brand of cigarettes (Holland, “Olivier’s Celebrity” 217),thus offering himself up further to the commoditizing impulse of Hollywood and, in the eyes of some, debasing both his title and his esteem as a Shakespearean. A Lieutentant-Colonel of the Royal Navy admonished Olivier for the move in a letter in 1957, calling it “inconceivable that one who had received the honour of a knighthood from his sovereign could so besmirch the dignity conferred upon him as to sell his name for such an ignominious purpose as to boost a brand of cigarettes” (qtd. in Coleman 270). Olivier, however, remained unapologetic, reminding his critics that Sir Gerard du Maurier also had a brand of cigarettes (Holland, “Olivier’s Celebrity” 217), in effect, suggesting the inherent commoditization of the player and the enhanced commercialization of the celebrity.

In 1963, an ad for Olivier cigarettes in *Woman* magazine proclaimed, “Women like us like our very own things. Like fashion. Like Olivier. So beautifully cool and smooth. So elegantly packed. So sensibly priced. Our very own Olivier” (qtd. in Holland, “Olivier’s Celebrity” 217). The ad speaks to the manner by which, through his availability as saleable commodity, the public could claim communal ownership of the star, reeling Olivier in from his otherwise elitist position as knight and “greatest actor in the world.” Olivier, for his part, treated the branding as an alternate form of honor, though a particularly Hollywood-style, rather than English, one—a problematic perspective for a man who was becoming nearly as much an icon of Englishness as his collaborator, Shakespeare. But just as Shakespeare’s celebrity provides a humanizing counterpart to his position as national poet, Olivier’s overtly commercial enterprises offered a counterbalance to his increasingly elite status. Diving even further into the commercial

abyss, in the 1970s, the Shakespearean actor and newly appointed member of the House of Lords, appeared in a televised ad for Polaroid. Seconds into the commercial that never calls him by name, Olivier commands his audience to “Come a bit closer,” offering himself up to public consumption, just at the point in his career when a barony suggested an unapproachable elitism. Olivier was mocked for this move in multiple forums—popular and elite alike—but his commercially motivated streak found precedence in Shakespeare’s own career and, indeed, in the careers of the Shakespeareans who had preceded him. Olivier’s transcendent position, located at the intersection of an emerging Hollywood aesthetic, marked by glamour and commercialization, and English national pride, echoed Shakespeare’s own position at the confluence of various polarities, between the bawdy realm of the theater and the classical tradition of poets, Player and Bard.

Where Olivier went throughout his career, Shakespeare followed, and thus, Olivier did much to introduce Shakespeare to what Bristol calls “the big time.” Douglas Lanier has argued that as today’s audience’s primary mode of contact with performed Shakespeare occurs not in the theater, but at the cinema, “It has become a popular commonplace that had Shakespeare been born in the twentieth century, he would have been a filmmaker” (61). This formulation, according to Lanier, redefines Shakespeare in fundamental ways, privileging the visual elements of the play over the language and recharacterizing Shakespeare as a writer who imagined his worlds in the wide open spaces of film, rather than confined to the parameters of his wooden O, prompting readers, too, to imagine his work in such terms. The consequences of such views, Lanier argues, ripple across popular and critical reception, altering perception in ways that, due to film’s ubiquity, occur almost at precognition. Though such considerations of how Hollywood has changed Shakespeare certainly do not lay with just one man, it was Olivier who ushered him

through that translucent curtain, irretrievably infusing Hollywood into Shakespeare's celebrity narrative.

YouShakespeare

If the spectral body of Shakespeare's *genius* has seemingly achieved immortality over the centuries due to its capacity to continuously achieve new incarnations in the bodies of Shakespearean celebrities, the premise of *Kill Shakespeare*, a twelve-issue series of graphic novels launched in 2010, complicates that phenomenon. As the series opens, Hamlet, the protagonist, has just offed Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in a bid to return home and avenge his father; however, in a liberal revision of narrative, Hamlet nearly drowns at sea only to awake in the presence of Richard III, a seemingly benevolent, but ultimately violently ambitious ruler who invites Hamlet to partake of an epic quest to find Shakespeare, steal his magic quill, and free all of his characters from the playwright's tyrannical rule of bloodshed and misery. Though perhaps more indebted to Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* than to anything written by Shakespeare, even with the appearances of more than a dozen of his characters, *Kill Shakespeare* both participates in and reflects a growing trend in twenty-first-century transmedial Shakespeare: namely, the dismantling of Shakespeare's authority as hero in favor of its dispersal among the populace. Shakespeare, figured here as both a reclusive wizard and, as in Weever's sixteenth-century tribute, the potent father of all his characters (he calls them "my children"), becomes a site of oppression, imprisoning his characters within the narrative frameworks he has constructed, mirrored by the graphic frames that circumscribe their words and actions. Hamlet's quest, then, becomes one for narrative autonomy, which requires, perhaps, an even more literal realization of "The Death of the Author" than Barthes' model prescribes.

In the end, Hamlet cannot bring himself to kill Shakespeare, and Shakespeare, aware of the evil his characters have wrought, is forced to kill Richard for the well-being of all his children, before wandering off into the sunset, never to be seen—except magically and only by Hamlet—again. The conclusion does not, as the series' title suggests, eradicate the author, but rather, permits him to reside somewhere unseen in the ether. His characters are free, but his specter looms and monitors, metaphorically speaking, perhaps, to post-Barthes, post-Foucault ideas displacing the centralized role of singular authorship generally, but more specifically to an emergent ethos of shared authorial agency endemic to twenty-first century new media. "New media culture brings with it a number of new models of authorship which all involve different forms of collaboration" (1), argues new media theorist Lev Manovich. Among those new models, he cites such interactive forms as sampling, remixing, and open-source technologies, in which artistic or technological inventions are no longer figured as forms of individual property, but sites of ongoing and active collaboration. Such models of authorship lie at the heart of what media studies scholar Henry Jenkins labels our "convergence culture," characterized by "the flow of content across multiple media platforms" and a "participatory culture" that blurs distinctions between media producer and consumer (2-3). This is not to say, however, that active participation dismantles the notion of authorship entirely, but rather, that authors such as Shakespeare remain but part of the flux of forms and contributors that converge in online media.

Fittingly, contemporary trends in transmedial Shakespeare, or the appropriation and adaptation of Shakespeare across platforms, reflect the ethos of the convergence culture these various forms participate in, releasing Shakespeare from the dual modes of page and performance that have defined him, while stressing the collaboratively constructed, user-generated basis of new-media authorship. As Kate Rumbold demonstrates, Shakespeare's earliest

forays into the Web, especially through cultural institutions like the British Museum or the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, focused on bestowing "access" to Shakespeare, implying his intrinsic value as a cultural object and English national hero that could be imparted to the public; however, "'Access' has now gradually been superseded by a more active language of 'participation' and 'engagement' . . . locating 'intrinsic' value in people's 'experience'" (321,323). Thus, Shakespeare's Internet presence is now informed by Web 2.0 social sensibilities, inviting user participation in the construction of the cultural products that represent, define, and reshape him. The participatory culture of Shakespeare 2.0 disperses not only Shakespeare's authorial agency, opening his texts up to perpetual revision, but the editorial agency of the scholars and institutions that interpret him as well, resulting in an overtly collaborative Shakespeare "experience" online.

As P. David Marshall has argued, new media is quickly redefining concepts not only of authorship, but of celebrity as well. Traditional structures of celebrity, he argues, involved "representational" media ("New Media" 636), through which audiences used celebrities and their high visibility as a means of asserting cultural concerns and negotiating values; new media offers "presentational" opportunities, through which audiences may offer themselves up to broadcast such concerns and values (637), achieving a kind of fleeting celebrity that has resulted in the viral sensations of, for example, "Obama girl," "double-rainbow guy," or "David after dentist."[109] In realization of Andy Warhol's "fifteen minutes of fame," the opportunities offered in new media are starting to erase some of the more deeply etched boundaries between

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[109] With over 25 million *YouTube* views, "Obama girl" rose to brief fame on the Internet in 2008 when she published her "Crush on Obama" video. "Double-rainbow guy" has achieved, to date, more than 36 million views on *YouTube* for his enraptured reaction to a double rainbow caught in his "Yosemite Bear Mountain Giant Double Rainbow" video posted in 2010. "David after dentist," a groggy seven-year-old captured in the wake of dental anesthesia, has garnered 118 million *YouTube* views since posted in 2009.

celebrities and their publics, allowing members of the public to present themselves as narratives alongside the celebrities they likewise construct in spaces of new media. If Shakespeare's celebrity is sustained through its persistent reincarnation in the new, live bodies of Shakespeareans, then the Shakespearean of the twenty-first century may be, in a sense, *you*.

Call it *YouShakespeare*: an active, unauthorized narrative in a perpetual state of play. Peter Holland has recently published an account of his exploration of Shakespeare on *YouTube*, claiming that a search for "shakespeare" results in 27,000 hits ("Web Community" 255). Now, a few years since his 2009 essay, the same search garners 1.8 million results, but the content is mostly the same as what Holland describes: pirated clips from film and television, often remixed; shaky cell phone videos of live performances; student productions and class projects; along with an assortment of both genuinely creative and insipidly uninspired adaptations and appropriations reimagined through song, animation, dance, montage, and, as Holland notes with particular delight, Legos (255). What most interests Holland, however, is the community of producers and receivers, and the blurry lines between them, engendered in *YouTube*'s format, where members comment upon and link to each other's work and post response videos, which he asserts "requires a reformulation of what it means to watch or to share watching Shakespeare on screen as well as redefining what Shakespeare on screen might include" (256). Indeed, such effaced distinctions, whether between producer and consumer or between stars and their publics, characterize much of the transmedial Shakespeare experience, which extends well beyond *YouTube* and into the realms of video games and other forms of social media. Consider, for example, *Hamlet*, a video game launched for PC in 2010 and rebooted as both an Android and iPhone app in 2012. The game's protagonist, a time-travelling scientist, enters Hamlet's world quite by accident, crash-landing his time machine onto the tragic hero, decapitating him just

before he is about to save Ophelia from imprisonment by her father. The game none-too-subtly dismantles the authoritative text at the same moment it severs Hamlet from his head; Hamlet is rendered a lifeless textual body in need of new direction, and the player's scientist-hero must assume his mission to save Ophelia, liberating her from confinement in Elsinore just as it asks the player to liberate *Hamlet* from the confines of the canon. The game invites the player to collaboratively rewrite Hamlet's story, to become a new Shakespeare fashioning a new text, providing a mode, as Rumbold notes, of active participation in a cultural product; that the player arrives by means of a time machine suggests another component of his mission: to rewrite the past through the discursive modes offered in present technologies. Similarly retrospective revision occurs in social platforms like Facebook and Twitter, where users not only "engage" with Shakespeare, but become him, rewriting not only his dramatic texts, but the narrative body we call Shakespeare as well. "Shakespeare" has several Facebook accounts, with more than 6 million "friends" between them. "Shakespeare" also maintains an active Twitter presence, where, for example, @shakespeare recently tweeted, on March 15, a bit of advice for a friend: "Take a sick day, mighty Caesar. Thou hast job security."

In many ways, *YouShakespeare* returns us to the dynamics of what I have argued in this project is an old phenomenon that has performed similar cultural work long before the advent of new media: celebrity. Shakespeare 2.0 renders particularly visible the means by which celebrity is the product of collaborative construction, dispersed authorial agency, and popular acclaim, as users quite consciously insert themselves into Shakespeare's evolving narrative body. Transmedial Shakespeare, like the Shakespearean celebrities discussed in this chapter, offers a highly accessible, popular form of engagement as a counterbalance to otherwise institutionalized forms. New media Shakespeare experiences likewise highlight the means by which the public is

both the producer and consumer of Shakespeare's celebrity sign, and Shakespeare, as an ever-evolving celebrity, continues to provide a site upon which the public may negotiate present tensions through his persistent possession of new bodies, new media, and new technologies.

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