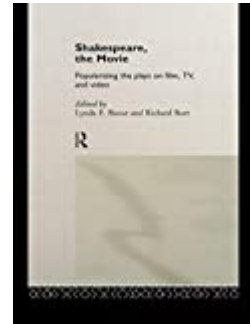


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Lynda E. Boose, Richard Burt, ed. *Shakespeare, the Movie: Popularizing the Plays on Film, TV and Video*. New York: Routledge, 1997. x + 277 pp. \$39.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-415-16585-3; \$150.00 (library), ISBN 978-0-415-16584-6.



Reviewed by Elizabeth Abele (Temple University)

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Lynda Boose and Richard Burt have collected quality essays that examine filmed Shakespeare from a variety of perspectives. Many of the essays do excellent work in viewing filmed Shakespeare within the context of Hollywood and/or international film, demonstrating how Hollywood colors Shakespeare and how Shakespeare colors Hollywood. The most unusual and effective in this regard is Katherine Eggert's "Age Cannot Wither Him: Warren Beatty's *Bugsy* as Hollywood Cleopatra." After demonstrating the uncanny plot parallels, Eggert does a brilliant job of tracing the hidden influence of *Antony and Cleopatra* throughout the history of Hollywood, erupting consciously or not in *Bugsy*. From the opposite perspective, James N. Noehlin discusses in "'Top of the World Ma': *Richard III* and Cinematic Convention" how film director Richard Loncraine transformed Richard Eyre's stage production into the Hollywood gangster idiom, quoting Cagney's *White Heat* and other films. Tony Howard's "When Peter Met Orson: The 1953 CBS *King Lear*" provides an interesting account of how one Shakespeare production was filmed, examining the conjunction of producer, director, star and Will.

Other essays use filmed versions of Shakespeare as an opportunity to compare different productions of the same play, a comparison that is problematic with stage productions that must be reconstructed from memory

and/or reviews, and that the reader is unlikely to have the opportunity to experience. In examining filmed productions, the critic has the opportunity to compare productions from the silent age to the modern day. Filmed versions of *Othello*, *Taming of the Shrew* and *King Lear* are compared in this book, and close readings of single productions are also included in this anthology. These essays provide a particularly valuable tool for classroom discussion.

What this anthology does not adequately address is Shakespeare's "popularity," in America or internationally. Lawrence Levine has written that Shakespeare lost its "low culture" appeal in the twentieth century. Do these essays prove a "popular" presence for Shakespeare in American culture—or are they attempting to "re-popularize" the Bard? Filmed versions examined move from "high culture" international and art films to "low culture" films like *Porky's 2*, films that vary in their relationship to "popular" or "popularizing." This anthology provides excellent readings of filmed Shakespeares (though with significant overlap), but more work needs to be done to determine the contemporary position of Shakespeare in our culture.

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