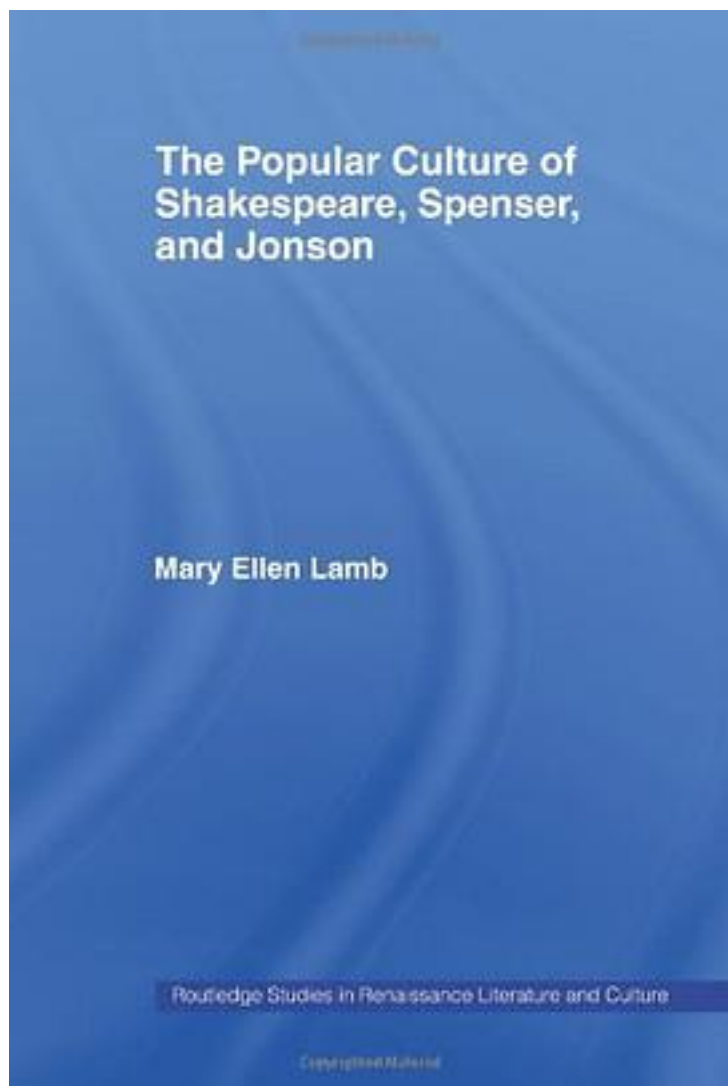


The Popular Culture of Shakespeare, Spenser and Jonson



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Breaking new ground by considering productions of popular culture from above, rather than from below, this book draws on theorists of cultural studies, such as Pierre Bourdieu, Roger Chartier and John Fiske to synthesize work from disparate fields and present new readings of well-known literary works. Using the literature of Shakespeare, Spenser and Jonson, Mary Ellen Lamb investigates the social narratives of several social groups - an urban, middling group; an elite at the court of James; and an aristocratic faction from the countryside. She states that under the pressure of increasing economic stratification, these social fractions created cultural identities to distinguish themselves from each other - particularly from lower status groups. Focusing on Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "Merry Wives of Windsor", Spenser's "Faerie Queene", and Jonson's "Masque of Oberon", she explores the ways in which early modern literature formed a particularly productive site of contest for deep social changes, and how these changes in turn, played a large role in shaping some of the most well-known works of the period.

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