

## Volume I: His World

The State: Government and Politics  
Under Elizabeth and James  
G. R. ELTON

The Church: Religion and Its  
Manifestations  
PATRICK COLLINSON

Law and Legal Institutions  
J. H. BAKER

Education and Apprenticeship  
ANTHONY GRAFTON

Economic Life in Shakespeare's England  
D. C. COLEMAN

Medicine and Sanitation  
MARGARET PELLING

Shakespeare and Warfare  
JOHN RIGBY HALE

Patronage of the Arts  
F. J. LEVY

Theaters and the Dramatic Profession  
ANDREW GURR

Printing and Publishing in the Tudor Age  
ARTHUR J. SLAVIN

The Sense of History in  
Renaissance England  
J. G. A. POCCOCK

The Literate Culture of  
Shakespeare's Audience  
S. K. HENINGER, JR.

Science, Magic, and Folklore  
MICHAEL MACDONALD

Travel by Sea and Land  
DAVID B. QUINN

"Style Is the Man":  
Manners, Dress, and Decorum  
LACEY BALDWIN SMITH

Daily Life in City, Town, and Country  
GEORGE P. GARRETT

Shakespeare and Foreigners  
JOHN L. LIEVSAY

Painting and Other Fine Arts  
WYLIE SYPHER

Forest, Field, and Garden: Landscapes and  
Economies in Shakespeare's England  
JOAN THIRSK

Sports and Recreations  
ROGER PRINGLE

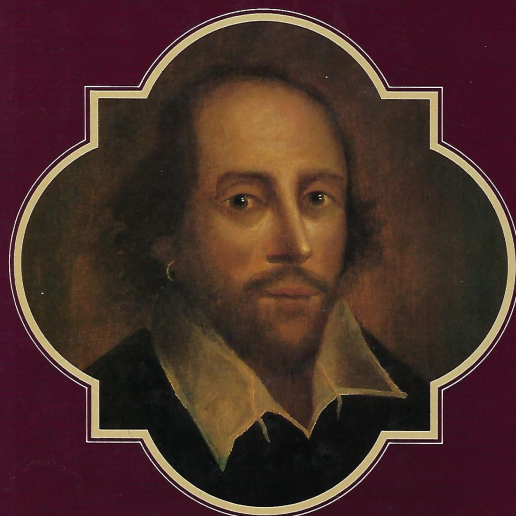


Charles Scribner's Sons • New York

ISBN 0-684-17851-6 (SET)

# WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

## *His World, His Work, His Influence*



## Volume I

# WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

## *His World • His Work*

## *His Influence*



VOLUME I

## HIS WORLD

*John F. Andrews*

EDITOR

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS • NEW YORK

## Introduction

In the early years of the seventeenth century, Ben Jonson eulogized William Shakespeare as the "soul of the age" his works had reflected and adorned. Coming from an erstwhile rival, this was extravagant praise; but Jonson didn't stop there. He went on to proclaim that Shakespeare was a writer whom posterity would acknowledge as "not of an age, but for all time." In the next century Samuel Johnson confirmed the accuracy of his predecessor's prophecy: "This therefore is the praise of Shakespeare," he observed, "that his drama is the mirror of life." Within a few years, the eighteenth century's preeminent actor was speaking in even more emphatic terms: "Shakespeare had a genius," argued David Garrick, "perhaps excelling anything that ever appeared in the world before him." By the nineteenth century, the playwright's stature was verging on deity. Samuel Taylor Coleridge called him "the greatest man that ever put on and off mortality." And Ralph Waldo Emerson accorded him a unique position in the pantheon of history's deepest thinkers: "He was inconceivably wise," asserted Emerson, "the others conceivably." Owing in part to George Bernard Shaw's dismissal of such Bardolatry, our own century has been somewhat less hyperbolic in its critical estimate of the great Renaissance playwright. But that has not prevented such testimonies as that of the author of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*; James Joyce referred to the creator of Hamlet and Prospero as the poet who "wrote the great Folio of the world," and his favorite name for this peerless artist was "Shakespeare."

No other dramatist, in English or in any other language, can approach Shakespeare's primacy as poet, psychologist, and philosopher, and no one else in any humanistic endeavor has projected a vision as comprehensive or commanded an influence as all-pervasive. Shakespeare's phrases and cadences have become so familiar to us that it is sometimes with a start that we realize how many of our everyday expressions were first minted in his fertile mind. When we utter a cliché like "one fell swoop" or misapply a sentiment such as "more honored in the breach than the observance," whether we recognize it or not, we are speaking Shakespeare. And when we attend a performance of *Kiss Me Kate* or *West Side Story* and participate in the lives and loves that Shakespeare's characters continue to enjoy outside the dramatic settings in which they first thought and spoke and moved, we are benefiting from just a few of the other ways in which Shakespeare has enlarged our world by imitating it. His poems and plays have inspired more than 800 symphonic and



operatic scores, and his themes have enriched the repertoires of composers as varied as Berlioz and Copland and Tchaikovsky and Verdi.

Shakespeare's resonance can be felt in the writings of hundreds of subsequent authors. We delight in the hilarious (and not always sweet) uses to which the Duke and the King put Shakespeare in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*. We wince at political lampoons like *Macbird* (an anti-LBJ polemic of the 1960s) and *Dick Detered* (a 1970s satire on Richard Nixon). We ponder William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, which can be approached, among other things, as a sustained allusion to Macbeth's "tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow" soliloquy. Or we savor such theatrical spinoffs as Edward Bond's *Bingo* (a "biographical drama" about Shakespeare the man) and Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (an absurdist redaction of *Hamlet* from the perspective of two innocents for whom the court of Renaissance Elsinore is as bewildering as the world their twentieth-century counterparts might encounter in a play like Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*).

Meanwhile, if we consider the dozens of Shakespearean scenes that have enriched the canvases of painters like Henry Fuseli and Eugene Delacroix and Pablo Picasso, we realize that Shakespeare has also expanded our visual horizons. No matter where we turn—whether we find ourselves chuckling over a New Yorker drawing in which a queen asks her husband "You gave your kingdom for a what?" or pausing for a doubletake at a Superbard T-shirt—we are continually reminded of the omnipresence of Shakespeare. In well nigh every nation that has a dramatic or literary tradition, Shakespeare is the playwright whose works are most frequently performed, the poet whose writings furnish the most accessible source of allusion. As ideological symbol or as standard of excellence, then, as literary model or as universal language, Shakespeare is part of us. And because he is so central to our lives, sooner or later we feel a desire to know and understand him better.

And that is the rationale behind this collection. *William Shakespeare: His World, His Work, His Influence* is designed to provide a multifaceted twentieth-century view of Shakespeare for the same kind of audience the compilers of the First Folio addressed in 1623 as "the great variety of readers." Most of us are familiar with the Shakespeare that students encounter in school. Others know the playwright who can still astonish us in the theater, or thrill us at the cinema, or fill our homes with enchantment through the technology of television and stereo. Many of us value Shakespeare as the supplier of wise saws and modern instances, a seemingly inexhaustible fountain of well-turned phrases for every occasion. Some of us draw on Shakespeare in our professional lives—as teachers, scholars, directors, actors, designers, critics, writers, lecturers, journalists, lawyers, or public servants. And millions of us treasure him as the companion we can beckon from our nearest bookshelf. But no matter how we respond to him, few if any of us are in a position to apprehend him from more than one angle. The historian who can elucidate a Shakespearean reference to Isis may be totally unaware of the echoes of Shakespeare in a given day's comic pages, popular song lyrics, or magazine advertisements. The theater professional who can perform Shakespeare's dialogue with metrical sophistication and fluid stage movement may be oblivious to what his words and gestures signify in the iconographic framework of a Renaissance art form. And the teacher who can analyze the image patterns of a Shakespearean soliloquy may sometimes feel at a loss to convey how those patterns relate to a dramatic design that is fully realized only in performance.

Hence the justification for a reference set that gathers into one convenient place a collection of essays on virtually every aspect of the phenomenon we refer to as Shakespeare. It is not enough to be acquainted with the few surviving biographical records of Shakespeare the man; we need to be able to interpret those records in the context of the institutions, customs, and modes of thought and feeling that gave the

ence. The first half of the anthology surveys the growth of Shakespeare's reputation from his time to ours, with articles on such subjects as the editing and publishing of his works, the fortunes his plays have had in the theaters of Great Britain, North America, and the rest of the world, his emergence as a literary figure of international standing, his penetration of such twentieth-century media as film and television, and his impact on art forms like painting and music. The second half of the volume features a series of personal viewpoints on Shakespeare today. Anthony Burgess talks about Shakespeare and the modern writer; Peter Ustinov muses on Shakespeare and the modern playwright; Jonathan Miller comments on Shakespeare and the modern director; Sir John Gielgud ponders tradition, style, and the Shakespearean actor today; and John Simon considers the ways in which Shakespeare tests the mettle of the modern critic. Along with Ralph Berry's assessment of today's major Shakespearean institutions, Joseph Price's study of Shakespeare as a cult object, and Jacques Barzun's reflections on Shakespeare and the humanities today, these personal observations should prove especially engaging. And they should set the stage for the two articles that round out the collection, Homer Swander's meditations on past and present in the teaching of Shakespeare and Maurice Charney's speculations about where current trends in Shakespearean interpretation are likely to lead us in the years ahead.

Appropriately, many of the essays in this collection elicit at least as many queries as they answer, for it is not the purpose of *William Shakespeare: His World, His Work, His Influence* to attempt definitive solutions to any of the problems that the study of such an unfathomable subject occasions. As Matthew Arnold observed in his famous sonnet about Shakespeare, "Others abide our question. Thou art free." This reference set will have achieved its aims if the reader emerges with an enhanced awareness of the complexity of Shakespeare's world and an expanded appreciation of the playwright's incomparable mastery of the means to immortalize that world through the writings for which we continue to turn to him. Ideally, that awareness and appreciation will carry with it the impulse to pursue the quest for Shakespeare beyond the confines of these pages. There, no doubt, the artist who inspired Arnold's sonnet will remain just as elusive as ever. But that is as it should be. Meanwhile, it may be hoped that future readers will be helped to the same discovery that Arnold wrote about—the revelation that one of life's most liberating experiences is the privilege of falling under the spell of William Shakespeare.

A concluding word about the image of Shakespeare that adorns the dust jacket. A derivative of the Chandos portrait, it comes, fittingly enough, from the collection of the Folger Shakespeare Library, under whose auspices it toured the country several years ago as part of the exhibition "Shakespeare: The Globe and the World." The original is painted on a large mahogany oval, and it found its home at the Folger through the generosity of the distinguished scholar and collector Mary C. Hyde. What makes this rendering of the poet especially suitable as the cover illustration for *William Shakespeare: His World, His Work, His Influence* is that for more than a decade it served as the shop sign of the Shakespeare Head, Jacob Tonson's eighteenth-century printing establishment in the Strand. As the publisher of several significant collections of Shakespeare's works, including Nicholas Rowe's seminal multi-volume edition of 1709, Tonson symbolizes an august tradition with which it is an honor for a new undertaking to be associated.

Among the dozens of people to whom this reference set is indebted, I wish first to thank the sixty distinguished authors who were kind enough to join me as contributors to the pages that follow. Many have provided indispensable counsel not only about their own articles but also about other aspects of the project; in this regard I think especially of Leeds Barroll, Geoffrey Elton, John Pocock, Sam Schoenbaum, and

era of Elizabeth and James its peculiar form and pressure. It is not enough to know Shakespeare's poems and plays as individual texts; we must also be able to understand them in relation to one another and in relation to the other literature and drama of the period in which they were produced. Nor, for many of us, will it suffice to have a general notion of the vicissitudes of Shakespeare's reputation over the four centuries since he made his first entrance on the London theatrical scene; we also want to know the particulars of his reception in and influence on the various languages and cultures that have been affected by his life and work.

The twenty articles in Volume I of this collection are intended as an introduction to the world that conditioned and is to some degree mirrored in the poems and plays of William Shakespeare. For if the last four hundred years have demonstrated that Shakespeare was indeed for all time, they have also helped us see that he was very much a man of his own age. The more we know about government and society under the two monarchs who ruled England during Shakespeare's lifetime, the more likely we are to register the nuances of political maneuvering in plays like *Richard II* and *Henry V*. The more we know about patronage of the arts during this period, the more we are able to infer about Shakespeare's own professional career from such evidence as the dedications to the Earl of Southampton that precede his two narrative poems of the early 1590s. The more we know about daily life in city, town, and country, the more we are able to garner from those scenes in which we see Shakespeare's characters engaged in ordinary activities like eating, drinking, attiring themselves for courtship, and hunting for game.

The articles in the first half of Volume I are focused primarily on the institutions and professions that shaped the age: the church, the legal system, the schools and apprenticeship programs that prepared young people for entry into adult life, the economic and social constraints on getting and spending, the health standards of the time and their effect on everyday commerce, the military establishment and the modes of warfare that would have been familiar to Shakespeare and his fellow citizens, and the two industries that most directly concerned Shakespeare himself, theater and publishing. Building on these articles as a foundation, the second half of Volume I provides an overview of the many facets of life and thought in Shakespeare's England. The first three essays gauge the intellectual climate of the period: its sense of history, its literary culture, and its fascinating mixture of what we would now classify as science, magic, and folklore. The remainder treat subjects as diverse as travel, dress and decorum, sports and recreations, and farming and gardening.

Volume II is devoted to an examination of Shakespeare's work. Once again, the first half of the volume is intended to lay a broad foundation for the ten essays that comprise the second half. Beginning with an article on the problems involved in reconstructing a life of Shakespeare, this part of the collection proceeds to studies of Shakespeare's thought and sensibility, his professional career, his relationship to his fellow poets and playwrights, and his deployment of the tools of his chosen trade: his language, his poetic techniques, his prose strategies, his dramaturgical devices, his use of music, and his appropriation of the visual arts in his poems and plays. The second half of the volume then takes up Shakespeare's work both generically—with articles on the sonnets, the nondramatic poems, the English history plays, the plays on Roman history, the comedies, the tragedies, and the tragicomedies and romances—and topically—with articles on Shakespeare's audiences, his treatment of ethical and theological questions, and his insights into human behavior. Taken together, the twenty articles in Volume II should place the reader in a position to deal intelligently with all of Shakespeare's writings, both in terms of the characteristics of individual poems and plays and in terms of the larger motifs that link one work to another.

Volume III offers a variety of perspectives on Shakespeare's reception and influ-

Lacey Baldwin Smith. And then I think of a number of scholars who offered encouragement and advice even though they were finally not able to accept my invitation to contribute to the collection: Stephen Booth, Stephen Greenblatt, O. B. Hardison, Stephen Orgel, and Norman Rabkin are among those who will remember conversations in which they helpfully responded to my questions about one matter or another. I'm grateful to Terry Barker for her assistance in transcribing the interview upon which the article by Jonathan Miller was based. I've profited from the support and good judgment that Eileen McWilliam has provided at many points along the way. And I've found it valuable to keep my family and friends ever before me as potential readers. My greatest debts, however, are to the wonderful people at Scribners who have labored so tirelessly to bring this collection into being. I enjoyed working with Marshall De Bruhl and Christiane Deschamps in the early going, and in recent months it has been a pleasure to work with Steven Sayre. But more than anyone else, Charles Scribner, Jr. is the grand progenitor of *William Shakespeare: His World, His Work, His Influence*. I shall always be grateful to Charlie for asking me to serve as Editor in Chief, and it will give me immense satisfaction if the result is as he likes it.

JOHN F. ANDREWS