

[PDF] A Year In The Life Of William Shakespeare: 1599

James Shapiro - pdf download free book



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Author: James Shapiro
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Description:

From Publishers Weekly The year 1599 was crucial in the Bard's artistic evolution as well as in the historical upheavals he lived through. That year's output—*Henry V*, *Julius Caesar*, *As You Like It* and (debatably) *Hamlet*—not only spans a shift in artistic direction and theatrical taste, but also echoes the intrigues of Queen Elizabeth's court and the downfall of her favorite, the Earl of Essex. Like other Shakespeare biographers, Columbia professor Shapiro notes the importance of mundane events in Shakespeare's art, starting here with the construction of the Globe Theatre and the

departure of Will Kemp, the company's popular comic actor. Having a stable venue and repertory gave Shakespeare the space to write and experiment during the turmoil created by Essex's unsuccessful military ventures in Ireland, a threatened invasion by a second Spanish Armada and, finally, Essex's disastrous return to court. Shapiro is in a minority in arguing for Shakespeare initially composing *Hamlet* at the same time Essex was plotting a coup; there's little textual or documentary evidence for that dating. Still, Shapiro's shrewd discussion of what is arguably Shakespeare's greatest play, particularly its multiple versions, rounds out this accessible yet erudite work.

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From Instead of relying on the meagre evidence about Shakespeare's personal life, Shapiro's biography examines how public events left their mark on the four plays-"Henry V," "Julius Caesar," "As You Like It," and "Hamlet"-that Shakespeare wrote during 1599, the year in which the thirty-five-year-old playwright "went from being an exceptionally talented writer to one of the greatest who ever lived." The approach proves illuminating for the overtly political plays. Lines in "Henry V" allude to a rebellion in Ireland that Elizabeth I had recently sent the Earl of Essex to suppress. Chapters on "As You Like It" and "Hamlet" revert to more conventional textual analysis, interlarded with biographical speculations and digressions; for instance, Rosalind's journey to Arden may derive from Shakespeare's annual trip to Stratford to see his wife and daughters, and the "limbs with travel tired" of the twenty-seventh sonnet perhaps reflect the poor condition of English highways. Copyright © 2005 --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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