



## Shakespeare and Religion: Early Modern and Postmodern Perspectives

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The topic of Shakespeare and religion is a perennial one, and the recent "turn to religion" in historical and literary scholarship has pushed it to the fore. Besides speculating about Shakespeare's personal religious beliefs and allegiance, historians and literary critics writing about early modern England are reexamining the religious dynamics of the period and emphasizing the ways in which old, new, and emerging religious cultures coexisted in conflicting hybrid and unstable forms.

The contributors to *Shakespeare and Religion: Early Modern and Postmodern Perspectives* deal with the topic of Shakespeare and religion from two points of view not always considered complementary--that of the historical approach to Shakespearean drama in its early modern contexts, and that of postmodern philosophy and theology. The first illuminates the culture-specific features of the plays, whereas the second emphasizes their transhistorical qualities and the relevance of the deep religious and philosophical issues surfacing in early modern culture to contemporary religious struggles and awareness.

"Religion has assumed a surprising centrality in contemporary Shakespeare studies, generating an abundance of historical insights alongside a burgeoning interest in the spiritual possibilities of the plays for us today. This collection eschews either take on the field, preferring a more comprehensive view. It brings together nearly all the people one would most want to read on the topic, and the essays are notable for their lively seriousness. Here, the topic of Shakespeare and religion is a burning brand with which to illuminate the past *and* the present. A stimulating book! -- **Ewan Fernie, The Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham**

"*Shakespeare and Religion: Early Modern and Postmodern Perspectives* is lively, provocative, and original, and sure to occupy an important scholarly place within ongoing efforts to reinterpret religion in Shakespeare's works and world. The authors push scholarship on religion and Shakespeare past new historicism in productive, compelling directions." --**Phebe Jensen, Utah State University**

"This collection brings together a distinguished body of scholars to consider Shakespeare's treatment of religious issues, as read against his times and our own. Its essays offer innovative, sharp, and sometimes startling revaluations of familiar texts and topics, likely to capture the interest of students as well as academic researchers. The recent 'turn to religion' in early modern literary studies, and the related move towards seeing Shakespeare as an author deeply engaged with religious matters, is powerfully exemplified in these pages." --**Alison E. M. Shell, University College London**

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