Abstract

This collection of essays is part of a new phase in Shakespeare studies. The traditional view of Shakespeare is that he was a man of the theatre who showed no interest in the printing of his plays, producing works that are only fully realised in performance. This view has recently been challenged by critics arguing that Shakespeare was a literary poet-playwright, concerned with his readers as well as his audiences. Shakespeare's Book offers a vital contribution to this critical debate, and examines its wider implications for how we conceive of Shakespeare and his works. Bringing together an impressive group of international Shakespeare scholars, the volume explores both Shakespeare's relationship with actual printers, patrons, and readers, and the representation of writing, reading, and print within his works themselves. The essays are theoretically, critically, and methodologically wide-ranging. What all of the contributors share, however, is a sense of the importance of the books Shakespeare read, the books he represented within his works, and the books within which his works were first read to our understanding of Shakespeare's cultural significance for his contemporaries and for us. Shakespeare's book will be of particular interest to students and scholars of Renaissance literature, theatre and cultural history, textual bibliography, and the history of the book.

Citation

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