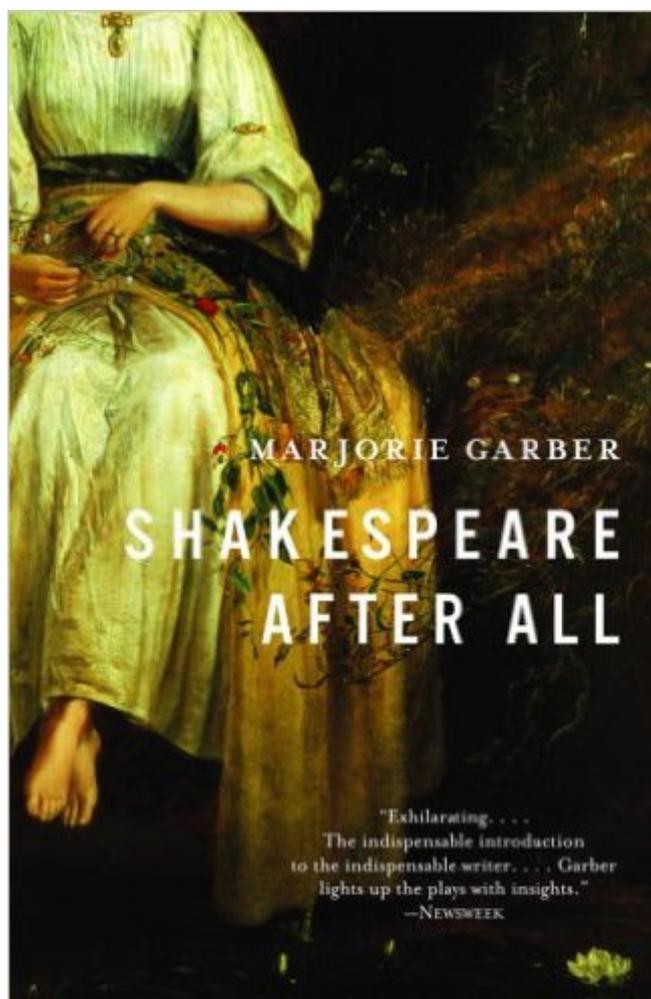


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# Shakespeare After All



## Synopsis

A brilliant and companionable tour through all thirty-eight plays, *Shakespeare After All* is the perfect introduction to the bard by one of the country's foremost authorities on his life and work. Drawing on her hugely popular lecture courses at Yale and Harvard over the past thirty years, Marjorie Garber offers passionate and revealing readings of the plays in chronological sequence, from *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* to *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Supremely readable and engaging, and complete with a comprehensive introduction to Shakespeare's life and times and an extensive bibliography, this magisterial work is an ever-replenishing fount of insight on the most celebrated writer of all time.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I bought this book on the strength of Marjorie Garber's excellent past Renaissance scholarship. I was expecting something more theoretically informed and original, but as it is this is a very worthwhile book, and I predict it will be an essential reference book for teachers and students. It's a BIG book with a substantial chapter on each play (but not the sonnets), as with Harold Bloom's book on Shakespeare. Garber, however, is less idiosyncratic than Bloom; She synthesizes the best of recent scholarship, but without footnotes or extensive theorizing a la Derrida and Lacan. Garber combines close attention to language with valuable historical background and context. For example, in her chapter on *Macbeth*, she relates a "new critical" analysis of the clothing imagery to sumptuary laws regarding clothing (laws which served to enforce the social hierarchy of Renaissance England).

The strengths of this book are her comprehensive discussions of the play, which sum up what we know for sure about the plays including the relevant historical contexts, and her brilliant analysis of Shakespeare's language, i.e., close reading. While her work is illuminated by recent scholarship, she avoids the Stalinesque imperatives of political correctness. Compare Garber's intelligent discussion of the problem of gender in *Macbeth* with Stephen Orgel's "introduction" in *The Complete Pelican Shakespeare*, in which he reductively reads the play as a "misogynist fantasy." The only reason I docked the book one star is that, based on the chapters I've read so far, she doesn't really make a major original contribution to Shakespeare studies (in contrast to, for example, Greenblatt's recent bio of Shakespeare, *Will in the World*) so much as synthesize what we already know. All in all, a very valuable reference book that I will be consulting regularly in my college teaching. Highly recommended for high school teachers, English majors (undergraduate and graduate), and all fans of Shakespeare.

My husband and I are lawyers who have recently returned to reading Shakespeare, decades after college. We wanted literary criticism that was qualitative superior to the plot summary readers guide--criticism that would help us explore the imagery, themes and metaphors of the plays. Marjorie Garber is the answer to our prayers. We recommend to readers returning to Shakespeare that they purchase a paperback edition of each play with good notes to help with line specific language issues--the Arden series is the best--and then supplement/enrich the experience with Garber's insights. It is a pleasure for us to carefully read each play and then see what treasures she has mined based on her own reading and that of prior critics. We considerably prefer Garber to Bloom as a single compendium. Garber packs an enormous amount of insight into a single 30 page chapter. Shakespeare is surely worth the detail she provides. I would also suggest that you purchase the Ambrose DVD set of tapes of the great BBC plays--after you have read the plays it is wonderful to watch Jacobi et al. The DVD format enables captions which is very helpful to savoring every line.

This is a monster of a book packed full of insight into the plays of William Shakespeare. Another reviewer has criticized the way Professor Garber tackles each play, but I think she pitches her analyses pretty spot on. As she describes a play she will stop and detour into some aspect of the cultural mores of the England of Shakespeare's day and come back. I find ( as a layman ) that is exactly what I wanted. I wasn't looking for Heavy Textual Criticism that might only be understandable to other Eng Lit Professors. This is an excellent book for the layman - if you are

prepared to concentrate and forgive Professor Garber when she does occasionally throw in a semantics term that you have never heard of - USUALLY she explains them. But not always.

This is a wonderful, rich, exploratory book that holds nothing back; a meditation about the Shakespeare canon that resonates in all planes at once. It is certain to be [...] by college teachers everywhere, and so it should be; together with Shapiro's 1599 as a biography and a solid encyclopaedia like the Oxford Companion to Shakespeare, this is one of the only supplementary volumes you'd ever want to shelf next to the Complete Works. This is the kind of full-service critical homage and investigation Shakespeare has been waiting for all these years. I hope he and Marjorie Garber meet in Heaven, and that someone leaks the resulting sonnets.

William Shakespeare's immortal words will live forever. In this excellent book of criticism Professor Garber of Harvard examines each of the 38 plays from "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" through "The Two Noble Kinsman." Her work is detailed and insightful for anyone who seeks more knowledge and understanding of Shakespeare and his plays. As we explore Shakespeare we also learn more about what it is to be human being in the world! Garber writes about each play as she analyzes the characters and their motivation; the history of the play's production and how the play is related to other plays and characters in the Shakespearean canon. Along the way we learn the derivation of words used by the bard; what was going on in England and the world at the time the play was written and such various topics as sumptuary laws (dealing with clothing); class structure and the growth of the English language. Shakespeare's life is covered in an insightful introduction. Marjorie Garber must be a brilliant person to listen to in the lecture hall! I wish these insightful looks at each play would be available in tape format! Her book is a classic which should be required reading for anyone teaching Shakespeare in high school, college and adult education classes. I was fascinated by her depth of scholarship and ability to relate Shakespeare to our day. My highest appreciation to this wonderful book on our great treasure of poetry and the art of drama William Shakespeare!

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