

Shakespeare and the History of Taste

A Humanities Institute
Summer 1990

Sponsored by
The Folger Institute
Center for
Shakespeare Studies

Supported by a
grant from the
National Endowment
for the Humanities

The Folger Institute
The Folger Shakespeare Library
201 East Capitol Street, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003

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THE Folger INSTITUTE

Ben Jonson praised Shakespeare's universality as "not of an age but for all time." Yet, paradoxically, each age has expressed its own particularity by its special accommodation to and appropriation of Shakespeare. If, as Shaw claimed, the Shakespearean canon is "a mirror to nature," the nature of things is reflected in very different prisms from age to age.

This N.E.H.-funded summer institute will approach "Shakespeare and the History of Taste" from two directions: first, the perception of Shakespeare in each age as illustrated in its editions, criticisms, theatrical performances, and visual representations; and second, his influence in each age upon literature, art, music, popular culture, and, frequently, politics.

Institute participants will explore the rich holdings of primary and secondary materials in the Folger Shakespeare Library: texts and translations, critical and historical studies, paintings and musical scores, theatrical records and memorabilia, unpublished memoirs and scrapbooks, newspaper clippings and popular miscellanies.

SHAKESPEARE IN HIS OWN AGE The institute will begin by examining the extent to which Shakespeare conformed to the traditions of Renaissance drama and to popular taste and the extent to which he was an experimenter against the fashions and prejudices of the time.

SHAKESPEARE FOR EACH AGE Participants will go on to examine how Shakespeare was viewed in the moral climate of the Restoration, under the neo-classical rules of the eighteenth century, through the romantic vision of the nineteenth century, into the twentieth century with his adoption as "our contemporary," and as imported into other cultures. Particular attention will be paid to what pleased, what offended in each period.

SHAKESPEARE AS LEGEND AND MYTH Group members will explore the steps by which Shakespeare's influence led from legend, to a full-blown mythology peopled by the characters he created, to the quasi-deification of "bardolatry," to a twentieth-century debunking of the myth that has not prevented the permeation of Shakespeare into every aspect of culture, from advertising to philosophy.

SHAKESPEARE AND THE THEATRE An especially rich source of investigation will be the records of performances over four centuries. Participants will attempt to recover the very different Hamlets, Shylocks, and Othellos of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries and of the astonishingly various cultures that have adopted Shakespeare.

The Folger Institute is a center for advanced study and research in the humanities that is sponsored by the Folger Shakespeare Library and a consortium of twenty-five universities. With additional support from such agencies as the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the John Ben Snow Memorial Trust, the Exxon Education Foundation, and the Hillsdale Fund, the Institute offers a cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural program of seminars, workshops, symposia, colloquia, and lectures. Founded in 1970, the Institute has recently established under its umbrella a Center for the History of British Political Thought and a Center for Shakespeare Studies.

The Folger Shakespeare Library, located two blocks from the nation's Capitol and across the street from the Library of Congress, holds the largest collection of English Renaissance books outside the British Isles, as well as extensive collections in the English seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in the Continental Renaissance, and in English and American theatre history from their beginnings to the twentieth century. The Folger is also the world's foremost repository of archival materials on Shakespeare, with an incomparable collection, not only of Shakespeare First Folios and quartos, but also of eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century editions, translations, critical and scholarly works, and theatrical materials ranging from programs and playbills to promptbooks, diaries, costumes, and scene designs. The Library also holds major films on Shakespeare, as well as paintings, prints, and music related to Shakespeare and the Elizabethan period.

Chairman: Barbara Mowat

Executive Director: Lena Cowen Orlin

Acting Executive Director, 1989-90: Patricia E.

Tatspaugh

Program Assistants: Pierrette Ashcroft and
Carol Brobeck



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ELIGIBILITY

"Shakespeare and the History of Taste" is open only to postdoctoral scholars. Enrollment will be largely limited to those eligible to receive N.E.H. support to attend the program (see below). A few places may be available, however, for independent scholars and for faculty members from colleges and universities outside the United States who are able to participate without stipend support; they are accordingly welcome to apply to attend.

STIPENDS

The Folger Institute will award fifteen \$3,000 stipends funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The following persons are ineligible for N.E.H. stipends: graduate students, secondary-school teachers, unaffiliated scholars, and teachers in institutions outside the United States (although non-citizens with permanent teaching appointments in U.S. institutions of higher learning are eligible). Anyone who has taken part in an N.E.H.-funded Humanities Institute or summer seminar in the last two years will be given lower priority in consideration for support from N.E.H. stipends. The home institutions of participants receiving N.E.H. stipends will be required to contribute 10% (that is, \$300) of the \$3,000 stipend, a cost-sharing stipulation of the N.E.H. Those applicants who are eligible for N.E.H. stipends will automatically be considered for them.

DATES

"Shakespeare and the History of Taste" will run for six weeks from June 18 through July 27, 1990.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

March 1, 1990. For application forms, interested scholars should write Patricia E. Tatspaugh, The Folger Institute, The Folger Shakespeare Library, 201 East Capitol Street, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003, or phone (202) 544-4600.

DIRECTOR

JOSEPH G. PRICE, Professor of English at the Pennsylvania State University, will direct "Shakespeare and the History of Taste." Professor Price is the author of *The Unfortunate Comedy: A Study of "All's Well that Ends Well" and its Critics* (1968). He has edited *The Triple Bond: Plays, Mainly Shakespearean, in Performance* (1975) and *"Hamlet": Critical Essays* (1985), and he is the general editor of a thirty-volume series on Shakespearean criticism published by Garland. His forthcoming book is on *Troilus and Cressida*.

PARTICIPATING FACULTY

JONATHAN BATE is a Fellow of Trinity Hall, Cambridge. He is the author of *Shakespeare and the English Romantic Imagination* (1986) and *Shakespearean Constitutions: Politics, Theatre, Criticism 1730-1830* (1989).

MARGRETA DE GRAZIA, Assistant Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania, has recently completed a book entitled *Modern Shakespeare and the Apparatus of 1790*.

TERENCE HAWKES, Professor of English at the University of Wales, is the author of *Shakespeare's Talking Animals: Language and Drama in Society* (1973) and *That Shakespeperian Rag: Essays on a Critical Process* (1986). He is the editor of *Textual Practice*.

JEANNE T. NEWLIN is Curator of the Harvard Theatre Collection, Senior Lecturer in Comparative Literature at Harvard University, and Adjunct Professor of Theatre History at Tufts University. She has edited *Richard II: Critical Essays* (1984) and has catalogued the *Shakespeare Promptbooks in the Harvard Theatre Collection* (1988).

STEPHEN ORGEL is Jackson Eli Reynolds Professor of Humanities at Stanford University. He is the author of, among many other works, *Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court* (with Roy Strong, 1973) and *The Illusion of Power: Political Theater in the English Renaissance* (1975). He has edited *The Complete Masques* for the Yale Ben Jonson (1969) and the Oxford *Tempest* (1987).

OTHER PARTICIPATING FACULTY MEMBERS will include staff members from the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Folger Consort, and the Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger. In addition, a major Shakespearean actor from London and Stratford-upon-Avon will demonstrate acting styles and preferences through the evolution of Shakespearean performance.