



# William Shakespeare: A Popular Life

*Garry O'Connor*

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## **William Shakespeare was the greatest writer in the English language and the world's pre-eminent dramatist.**

Shakespeare married at the age of eighteen. His wife, Anne, was older than him. Despite this, they remained married. She bore him a daughter and a set of twins. To Shakespeare, this was a remarkable feat.

Drawing on his own experiences, Shakespeare nurtured his thoughts and used these to formulate the plots behind many of his famous plays.

He'd always been close to his mother, a theme that is seen clearly in some of his plays. Although his father tried, life and circumstances got in the way and he was unable to be the father he wanted.

The impact of a 'near-absent' father could have impacted Shakespeare's fascination with women.

The birth of his twins – a boy and a girl – also had a profound impact on Shakespeare. The death of his son, Hamnet, aged 11, brought on the creation of *Hamlet*.

Shakespeare spent few of his children's early years with them. He formed a relationship with the theatre and became embroiled in the political issues of the time, which led to dealings with the Queen herself.

Garry O'Connor portrays Shakespeare's life in clarity, starting with his family life, the troubles he had and the making of him ... through relating Shakespeare's life experiences to the plays Shakespeare wrote.

"... THIS GIVES A FRESH SPIN TO SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE AND WORK... O'CONNOR PRESENTS SHAKESPEARE AS A FULL-BLOODED PERSON AS OPPOSED TO THE NEARLY SAINTED PLAYWRIGHT OF SOME CRITICS' IMAGINATIONS." - *Library Journal*

"GARRY O'CONNOR PUTS SHAKESPEARE BACK WHERE HE BELONGS - IN THE THEATRE." - *USA Today*

"AN ILLUMINATING AND ENTERTAINING PICTURE of Shakespeare's milieu... a highly plausible life." - *Simon Callow, The Mail on Sunday*

"GARRY O'CONNOR'S SHAKESPEARE IS A CONTEMPORARY FIGURE... THE IDEAS JOSTLE EACH OTHER OFF THE PAGE IN THIS ENTERTAINING BOOK." - *John Mortimer, London Sunday Times*

"[HE] HAS BRIDGED THE VERTIGINOUS EXPANSE BETWEEN THE SUBLIMINITY OF THE SUBJECT AND THE MUNDANE INCONSEQUENCE OF THE DOCUMENTARY RECORD." - Samuel

Schoenbaum

"A CHALLENGING AND LIVELY PORTRAIT. IT IS GRATIFYING TO COME ACROSS A BARDOGRAPHER SO BOLDLY AND WISELY PREPARED TO PLUG THE GAPS IN THE RECORD."  
- *Independent on Sunday*

"A VIVID RE-CREATION OF SHAKESPEARE'S CAREER." - *Daily Telegraph*

"HIS KNOWLEDGE AND LOVE OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS WILL ENCOURAGE SOME READERS TO LOOK AT THEM AGAIN ON THE PAGE OR STAGE OR BOTH." - **Benedict Nightingale**, *London Times*

"O'CONNOR'S SHAKESPEARE IS A MAN OF THE THEATRE AND THE SMELL OF THE THEATRE IS NEVER FAR AWAY." - **Sir Peter Hall**

"IMAGINATIVELY RECONSTRUCTS THE WORLD OF ELIZABETHAN THEATRE." - *Sunday Telegraph*

**Gary O'Connor**, born in Edgware, London, is a novelist and biographer. His early writing career began with a column in the *Daily Mail*. His first book, *French Theatre Today*, was published in 1976, followed by many others. His biographies include the following subjects: Ralph Richardson, Alec Guinness, and Paul Scofield, amongst others.

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