

Shakespeare The Biography Peter Ackroyd

The English see more ghosts than any other nation. From medieval times to the present day, stories have been told about ghosts who avenge injustice, souls who long for peace and spooks who just want to have fun.

Touching and tragic, ingenious, funny and vividly alive, this is Ackroyd at the top of his form in a masterly retelling of a 19th century drama which keeps the reader guessing right to the end.

The Genius of Shakespeare is a new kind of biography: a biography of Shakespeare's talent and reputation, beyond the limits of his actual life. Part One explores the origins and development of his works, Part Two traces their effects on succeeding generations, and demonstrates how Shakespeare came to be regarded as the supreme dramatist.

"In Civil War, Peter Ackroyd continues his dazzling account of England's history, beginning with the progress south of the Scottish king, James VI, who on the death of Elizabeth I became the first Stuart king of England, and ends with the deposition and flight into exile of his grandson, James II. The Stuart dynasty brought together the two nations of England and Scotland into one realm, albeit a realm still marked by political divisions that echo to this day. More importantly, perhaps, the Stuart era was marked by the cruel depredations of civil war, and the killing of a king. Ackroyd paints a vivid portrait of James I and his heirs. Shrewd and opinionated, the new King was eloquent on matters as diverse as theology, witchcraft and the abuses of tobacco, but his attitude to the English parliament sowed the seeds of the division that would split the country in the reign of his hapless heir, Charles I. Ackroyd offers a brilliant - warts and all - portrayal of Charles's nemesis Oliver Cromwell, Parliament's great military leader and England's only dictator, who began his career as a political liberator but ended it as much of a despot as 'that man of blood', the king he executed. England's turbulent seventeenth century is vividly laid out before us, but so too is the cultural and social life of the period, notable for its extraordinarily rich literature, including Shakespeare's late masterpieces, Jacobean tragedy, the poetry of John Donne and Milton and Thomas Hobbes' great philosophical treatise, Leviathan. Civil War also gives us a very real sense of the lives of ordinary English men and women, lived out against a backdrop of constant disruption and uncertainty." -- Page 4 of cover.

The Life of William Shakespeare is a fascinating and wide-ranging exploration of Shakespeare's life and works focusing on often neglected literary and historical contexts: what Shakespeare read, who he worked with as an author and an actor, and how these various collaborations may have affected his writing. Written by an eminent Shakespearean scholar and experienced theatre reviewer Pays particular attention to Shakespeare's theatrical contemporaries and the ways in which they influenced his writing Offers an intriguing account of the life and work of the great poet-dramatist structured

around the idea of memory Explores often neglected literary and historical contexts that illuminate Shakespeare's life and works

What accounts for Shakespeare's transformation from talented poet and playwright to one of the greatest writers who ever lived? In this gripping account, James Shapiro sets out to answer this question, "succeed[ing] where others have fallen short." (Boston Globe) 1599 was an epochal year for Shakespeare and England. During that year, Shakespeare wrote four of his most famous plays: Henry the Fifth, Julius Caesar, As You Like It, and, most remarkably, Hamlet; Elizabethans sent off an army to crush an Irish rebellion, weathered an Armada threat from Spain, gambled on a fledgling East India Company, and waited to see who would succeed their aging and childless queen. James Shapiro illuminates both Shakespeare's staggering achievement and what Elizabethans experienced in the course of 1599, bringing together the news and the intrigue of the times with a wonderful evocation of how Shakespeare worked as an actor, businessman, and playwright. The result is an exceptionally immediate and gripping account of an inspiring moment in history.

Publisher Description

Three Brothers follows the fortunes of Harry, Daniel and Sam Hanway, born on a post-war council estate in Camden Town. Marked out from the start by curious coincidence, each boy is forced to make his own way in the world – a world of dodgy deals and big business, of criminal gangs and crooked landlords, of newspaper magnates, back-biters and petty thieves. London is the backdrop and the connecting fabric of these three lives, reinforcing Ackroyd's grand theme that place and history create, surround and engulf us. From bustling, cut-throat Fleet Street to hallowed London publishing houses, from the wealth and corruption of Chelsea to the smoky shadows of Limehouse and Hackney, this is an exploration of the city, peering down its streets, riding on its underground, and drinking in its pubs and clubs. Everything is possible – not only in the new freedom of the 1960s but also in London's timeless past.

Peter Ackroyd's method is to position Shakespeare in the close context of his world. In this way, he not only conjures up the texture of Shakespeare's life, but also imparts an amount of vivid, interesting material about place, period and background. Originally published: London: Chatto & Windus, 2005.

"Edgar Allan Poe served as a soldier and began his literary career composing verses modelled on Byron; soon he was trying out his 'prose-tales' - often horror melodramas such as The Fall of the House of Usher. As editor of the Literary Messenger he was influential among critics and writers of the American South. His versatile writings - including for example The Murders in the Rue Morgue and The Raven - continue to resonate down the centuries. Peter Ackroyd's biography of Poe opens with his end, his final days --- no one knows what happened between the time when friends saw him off on the steam-boat to Baltimore and his discovery six days later dying in a tavern. This mystery sets the scene for a short life packed with drama and tragedy (drink and poverty) combined with extraordinary brilliance. Tennyson described him as

'the most original genius that America has produced'. He has been claimed as the forerunner of modern fantasy, and credited with the invention of psychological dramas (long before Freud), science fiction (before H.G. Wells and Jules Verne) and the detective story (before Arthur Conan Doyle). He influenced European romanticism and was the harbinger of both Symbolism

'Thames' is about the river from source to sea. It covers history from prehistoric times onwards, the flora & fauna of the river, paintings & photographs inspired by the Thames, its geology, smells & colours, its literature, laws & landscape, its magic & myths, its architecture, trade & weather.

William Shakespeare was the most brilliant writer in the history of the English language. But his life is a complete mystery to us. No biographies were written for almost a hundred years after his death. His friends, family, and all those who knew him as a poet in London's theatrical scene died before anyone could ask them: who was Shakespeare? What was he like? What were his habits, his amusements, his passions? Nearly the only answers we have are those we can divine from reading his plays and poems. Shakespeare's uncanny ability to grasp the technical languages of skilled professions makes it difficult to judge what precisely he got up to during his "lost years"-the two periods of life in which he disappears from the historical record entirely. In this book, you will learn what it is we know for certain about William Shakespeare, and by delving into the plays, you will discover all that can be surmised about his uneasy relationship with authority, the religious conflicts in his family, his relationship with the father who fulfilled his lifelong dream to become a gentleman, and his own unexpected ambition: to become a wealthy, respectable country landlord in his hometown of Stratford.

London Under is an atmospheric, imaginative introduction to everything that goes on under London, from original springs and streams and Roman amphitheatres to Victorian sewers, gang hideouts and modern Underground stations.

ShakespeareThe BiographyRandom House

"One man in his time plays many parts, His acts being seven ages." In this illuminating, innovative biography, Jonathan Bate, one of today's most accomplished Shakespearean scholars, has found a fascinating new way to tell the story of the great dramatist. Using the Bard's own immortal list of a man's seven ages in *As You Like It*, Bate deduces the crucial events of Shakespeare's life and connects them to his world and work as never before. Here is the author as an infant, born into a world of plague and syphilis, diseases with which he became closely familiar; as a schoolboy, a position he portrayed in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, in which a clever, cheeky lad named William learns Latin grammar; as a lover, married at eighteen to an older woman already pregnant, perhaps presaging Bassanio, who in *The Merchant of Venice* won a wife who could save him from financial ruin. Here, too, is Shakespeare as a soldier, writing Henry the Fifth's St. Crispin's Day speech, with a nod to his own monarch Elizabeth I's passionate addresses; as a justice, revealing his possible legal training in his precise use of the law in plays from *Hamlet* to *Macbeth*; and as a pantaloon, an early retiree because of, Bate postulates, either illness or a scandal. Finally, Shakespeare enters oblivion, with sonnets that suggest he actively sought immortality through his art and secretly helped shape his posthumous image more than anyone ever knew. Equal parts masterly detective story, brilliant literary analysis, and insightful world history, *Soul of the Age* is more than a superb new recounting of Shakespeare's experiences; it is a bold and entertaining work of scholarship and speculation, one that shifts from past to present, reality to the imagination, to reveal how this unsurpassed artist came to be.

Peter Ackroyd's insightful new four-part biography positions Shakespeare in the close context of his world, conjuring up the texture of his life and imparting an amazingly vivid feel to place, period and background. Walk through sixteenth century London and Stratford as Ackroyd uncovers the intimate circumstances of Shakespeare's life, and the theatrical world in which he lived.

'Droll, provocative and crammed to bursting with startling facts' Simon Callow, Guardian In this powerful Sunday Times bestseller Peter Ackroyd looks at London in a whole new way – through the history and experiences of its gay population. In Roman Londinium the city was dotted with lupanaria ('wolf dens' or public pleasure houses), fornices (brothels) and thermiae (hot baths). Then came the Emperor Constantine, with his bishops, monks and missionaries. And so began an endless loop of alternating permissiveness and censure. Ackroyd takes us right into the hidden history of the city; from the notorious Normans to the frenzy of executions for sodomy in the early nineteenth century. He journeys through the coffee bars of sixties Soho to Gay Liberation, disco music and the horror of AIDS. Today, we live in an era of openness and tolerance and Queer London has become part of the new norm. Ackroyd tells us the hidden story of how it got there, celebrating its diversity, thrills and energy on the one hand; but reminding us of its very real terrors, dangers and risks on the other.

An accessible and entertaining journey through the life, times, and work of the Bard - Enigma. Master of language. The greatest comedian in history? The most famous writer in the world. But isn't he a little bit boring? This is an essential guide for anyone who has previously avoided the Bard, and is the perfect introduction for first time students or seasoned theatre lovers. The book contains a full commentary of all the plays by bestselling and renowned writer Peter Ackroyd as well as full descriptions of the cast and the drama; not forgetting the best speeches, and the wit and wisdom from across the works. There is also an opportunity to explore the poems and a complete set of sonnets, as well as an investigation of who the dark lady might have been. Contains: The complete sonnets; the greatest speeches; the best lines. Perfect for students struggling through their first play or for theatre lovers anywhere. Entertaining, accessible, Shakespeare without the boring bits.

When Peter Ackroyd, one of Britain's undisputed literary masters, writes a new novel, it is a literary event. With his last novel, *The Trial of Elizabeth Cree*, "as gripping and ingenious a murder mystery as you could hope to come across," in the words of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, he reached a whole new level of critical and popular success. Now, with his trademark blending of historical fact and fictive fancy, Ackroyd has placed the towering poet of *Paradise Lost* in the new Eden that is colonial America. John Milton, aging, blind, fleeing the restoration of English monarchy and all the vain trappings that go with it ("misrule" in his estimation), comes to New England, where he is adopted by a community of fellow puritans as their leader. With his enormous powers of intellect, his command of language, and the awe the townspeople hold him in, Milton takes on absolute power. Insisting on strict and merciless application of puritan justice, he soon becomes, in his attempt at regaining paradise, as much a tyrant as the despots from whom he and his comrades have sought refuge, more brutal than the "savage" native Americans. As always, Ackroyd has crafted a thoroughly enjoyable novel that entertains while raising provocative questions--this time about America's founding myths. With a resurgence of interest in the puritans (in the movie adaptations of *The Scarlet Letter* and the forthcoming *The Crucible*), Milton in America is particularly relevant. It is also entirely absorbing--in short, vintage Ackroyd.

Journalism, reviews, essays, short stories, lectures from the chief book reviewer for the Times.

He was the very first icon of the silver screen, and is one of the most recognisable faces in Hollywood, even a hundred years on

from his first film. But what of the man behind the moustache? The director holding the camera as well as acting in front of it? Peter Ackroyd's new biography turns the spotlight on Chaplin's life as well as his work, from his humble theatrical beginnings in music halls to winning an honorary Academy Award. Everything is here, from the glamour of his golden age to the murky scandals of the 1940s and eventual exile to Switzerland.

Almost 400 years after his death, William Shakespeare is still acclaimed as the world's greatest writer, and yet the man himself remains shrouded in mystery. In this absorbing historical detective story, the acclaimed broadcaster and historian Michael Wood takes a fresh approach to Shakespeare's life, brilliantly recreating the turbulent times through which the poet lived: the age of the Reformation, the Spanish Armada, the Gunpowder Plot and the colonization of the Americas. Drawing on an extensive range of sources, Michael Wood takes us back into Elizabethan England to reveal a man who is the product of his time - a period of tremendous upheaval that straddled the medieval and modern worlds. Using a wealth of unexplored archive evidence the author vividly conjures up the neighbourhoods of the Elizabethan London where Shakespeare lived and worked during his glittering career. Full of fresh insights and fascinating new discoveries, this book presents us with a Shakespeare for the twenty-first century: a man of the theatre, a thinking artist, playful and cunning who held up a mirror to his age, but who was also, as his friend Ben Jonson said, 'not of an age, but for all time'.

In a series of essays, Nicholas Humphrey invites us to take another look at a variety of central and not-so-central issues, of contemporary psychology including: the evolution of consciousness, multiple personality disorder and cave art. This volume covers the whole of English cultural history from its roots in the Anglo-Saxon period, through the centuries, to numerous entertaining examples from our own times.

In this novel the light and the dark sides of 19th-century London flow into each other, attracting the attention of famous names such as Marx and Gissing, but also of less well-known characters, who play a significant role in a tale that is a mixture of fable, adventure and Gothic comedy.

How did plague turn Shakespeare from a jobbing hack into a courtly poet? How did Bottom's dream rewrite the Bible? How did Shakespeare's plays lead to the deaths of an earl and a king? And why was he the one dramatist of his generation never to be imprisoned? Weaving a dazzling tapestry of Elizabethan beliefs and obsessions, private passions and political intrigues, *Soul of the Age* leads us on an exhilarating tour of the extraordinary, colourful and often violent world that shaped and informed Shakespeare's thinking. Written by one of the world's leading experts, it combines almost everything there is to know about the man and his work in one sensational narrative, and brings us closer than ever to understanding what being Shakespeare was actually like.

Based upon an examination of original sources, this is a biography in which the figure of Charles Dickens and the moving spirit of his age are combined. The author also wrote "The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde", "Hawksmoor", "Chatterton", "T.S.Eliot" and "First Light".

Examines current debates about the actual authors of Shakespeare's plays, citing challenges from famous historical figures while discussing the sources of modern doubts and the author's own beliefs.

In this perfect companion to *London: The Biography*, Peter Ackroyd once again delves into the hidden byways of history, describing the river's endless allure in a journey overflowing with characters, incidents, and wry observations. *Thames: The Biography* meanders gloriously, rather like the river itself. In short, lively chapters Ackroyd writes about connections between the Thames and such historical figures as Julius Caesar and Henry VIII, and offers memorable portraits of the ordinary men and women who depend upon the river for their livelihoods. The Thames as a source of artistic inspiration comes brilliantly to life as Ackroyd invokes Chaucer, Shakespeare, Turner, Shelley, and other writers, poets, and painters who have been enchanted by its many moods and colors.

An old man named Pickleherring, living in Restoration-era London and claiming to be the actor in Shakespeare's troupe who originally played the Bard's most famous female roles, offers an instructive, salacious, and altogether delightful reminiscence of the Shakespeare he knew. 10,000 first printing.

'There is no Light without Darknesse and no Substance without Shaddowe.' So proclaims Nicholas Dyer, assistant to Sir Christopher Wren and man with a commission to build seven London churches to stand as beacons of the enlightenment. But Dyer plans to conceal a dark secret at the heart of each church - to create a forbidding architecture that will survive for eternity. Two hundred and fifty years later, London detective Nicholas Hawksmoor is investigating a series of gruesome murders on the sites of certain eighteenth-century churches - crimes that make no sense to the modern mind . . . Cover art by: Barn 'whether the book addresses graffiti explicitly, evoke a city from the past, or are considered cult classics, the novels all share the quality - like street art - of speaking to their time.' Guardian Gallery

Fakes, forgeries and plagiarism abound in Ackroyd's brilliant historical novel, set in the 19th century during the excavation of the Bronze Age site of Troy. "I cannot wait to bring you to the plain of Troy. To show you the place where Hector and Achilles fought. To show you the palace of Priam. And the walls where the Trojan women watched their warriors in battle with the invader. It will stir your blood, Sophia." Sophia Chrysanthis is only 16 when the German archaeologist, Herr Obermann, comes wooing: he wants a Greek bride who knows her Homer. Sophia passes his test, and soon she is tying canvas sacking to her legs so that she can kneel on the hard ground in the trench, removing the earth methodically, identifying salient points, lifting out amphorae and bronze vessels without damaging them. "Archaeology is not a science," Obermann says. "It is an art." Obermann is very good at the art of archaeology -- perhaps too good at it. The atmosphere at Troy is tense and mysterious. Sophia finds herself increasingly baffled by the past . . . not only the remote past that Obermann is so keen to share with her in the form of his beloved epics of the Trojan wars, but also his own, recent past -- a past that he has chosen to hide from her. But she, too, is very good at the art of archaeology . . . "From the Hardcover edition."

David Wright's prose version of Chaucer's classic.

Alfred Hitchcock was a strange child. Fat, lonely, burning with fear and ambition, his childhood was an isolated one, scented with fish from his father's shop. Afraid to leave his bedroom, he would plan great voyages, using railway timetables to plot an exact imaginary route across Europe. So how did this fearful figure become the one of the most respected film directors of the twentieth century? As an adult, Hitch rigorously controlled the press's portrait of himself, drawing certain carefully selected childhood anecdotes into full focus and blurring all others out. In this quick-witted portrait, Ackroyd reveals something more: a lugubriously jolly man fond of practical jokes, who smashes a once-used tea cup every morning to remind himself of the frailty of life. Iconic film stars make cameo appearances, just as Hitch did in his own films. Grace Kelly, Carey Grant and James Stewart despair of his detached directing style, and, perhaps most famously of all, Tippi Hedren endures cuts and bruises from a real-life fearsome flock of birds. Alfred Hitchcock wrests the director's chair back from the master of control and discovers what lurks just out of sight, in the corner of the shot.

Little is known of the wife of England's greatest playwright. In play after play Shakespeare presents the finding of a worthy wife as a triumphant denouement, yet scholars persist in believing that his own wife was resented and even hated by him. Here Germaine Greer strives to re-embed the story of their marriage in its social context and presents new hypotheses about the life of the farmer's daughter who married our greatest poet. This is a daring, insightful book that asks new questions, opens new fields of investigation and research, and rights the wrongs done to Ann Shakespeare.

International bestseller Bill Bryson brings us this brilliantly readable biography of the world's greatest playwright, William Shakespeare. William Shakespeare William Shakespeare is one of the most recognizable names in the world. Regardless of country, language, age, or gender, people are familiar with the Bard's work and his contributions to literature, theatre, art, and music. His genius was so evident that he became famous and respected throughout England in his own lifetime, eventually earning the attention and patronage of the king himself. Inside you will read about... - A Legend is Born - The Lost Years - Early Career - The Golden Years - Poetic Works - The Death of William Shakespeare And much more! From his humble birth to his sudden death, William Shakespeare's life is traced through the theatrical legacy he left behind.

Peter Ackroyd's *The Life of Thomas More* is a masterful reconstruction of the life and imagination of one of the most remarkable figures of history. Thomas More (1478-1535) was a renowned statesman; the author of a political fantasy that gave a name to a literary genre and a worldview (Utopia); and, most famously, a Catholic martyr and saint. Born into the professional classes, Thomas More applied his formidable intellect and well-placed connections to become the most powerful man in England, second only to the king. As much a work of history as a biography, *The Life of Thomas More* gives an unmatched portrait of the everyday, religious, and intellectual life of the early sixteenth century. In Ackroyd's hands, this renowned "man for all seasons" emerges in the fullness of his complex humanity; we see the unexpected side of his character--such as his preference for bawdy humor--as well as his indisputable moral courage.

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