

## SHAKESPEARE'S INDIVIDUALISM

Providing a provocative and original perspective on Shakespeare, Peter Holbrook argues that Shakespeare is an author friendly to such essentially modern and unruly notions as individuality, freedom, self-realization and authenticity. These expressive values vivify Shakespeare's own writing; they also form a continuous, and a central, part of the Shakespearean tradition. Engaging with the theme of the individual will in specific plays and poems, and examining a range of libertarian-minded scholarly and literary responses to Shakespeare over time, *Shakespeare's Individualism* advances the proposition that one of the key reasons for reading Shakespeare today is his commitment to individual liberty – even as we recognize that freedom is not just an indispensable ideal but also, potentially, a dangerous one. Engagingly written and jargon-free, this book demonstrates that Shakespeare has important things to say about fundamental issues of human existence.

PETER HOLBROOK teaches English Literature at the University of Queensland. He is the author of *Literature and Degree in Renaissance England: Nashe, Bourgeois Tragedy, Shakespeare* (1994), and edited, with David Bevington, *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque* (Cambridge, 1998). His work has appeared in many publications including *Shakespeare Survey*, *The Times Literary Supplement* and *Textual Practice*.

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*To Annie, William and Eloise*

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In relation to their systems most systematizers are like a man who has built a vast palace while he himself lives nearby in a barn; they themselves do not live in the vast systematic edifice. But in matters of the spirit this is and remains a decisive objection. Spiritually, a man's thoughts must be the building in which he lives – otherwise it's wrong.

Søren Kierkegaard, journal entry for 1846, *Papers and Journals: A Selection*, trans. A. Hannay (London, 1996), 212.

Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say...

*King Lear*

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