

Shakespearean Educations: Power, Citizenship, and Performance



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Shakespearean Educations examines how and why Shakespeare's works shaped the development of American education from the colonial period through the 1934 Chicago World's Fair, taking the reader up to the years before the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (popularly known as the GI Bill), coeducation, and a nascent civil rights movement would alter the educational landscape yet again. The essays in this collection query the nature of education, the nature of citizenship in a democracy, and the roles of literature, elocution, theater, and performance in both. Expanding the notion of 'education' beyond the classroom to literary clubs, private salons, public lectures, libraries, primers, and theatrical performance, this collection challenges scholars to consider how different groups in our society have adopted Shakespeare as part of a specifically 'American' education. Shakespearean Educations maps the ways in which former slaves, Puritan ministers, university leaders, and working class theatergoers used Shakespeare not only to educate themselves about literature and culture, but also to educate others about their own experience.

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