

Shakespeare: Becoming Human

Rudolf Steiner



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"Like so much of Renaissance art, Shakespeare's work bears an open secret. The esoteric spiritual content is undisguised, though it may be unexpected and not always immediately recognized. Like all the great artistic achievements, this work remains incomplete until we recognize and respond to its open invitation that we become active participants." (from the introduction)

Shakespeare's core themes explore the challenges of the human condition while celebrating the human potential to achieve and develop in earthly life. But what is it that enables Shakespeare's characters to live and breathe beyond the confines of their written roles some 400 years after the plays were first performed?

In these lectures, edited by and with an extensive introduction by Andrew Wolpert, Rudolf Steiner sheds new light on the Bard's work, describing the on-going life that flows from it and the profound spiritual origins of Shakespeare's inspirations. He shows how Shakespeare can enliven us in our longing for contemporary ideals and truths and in our goal of becoming fully human. By engaging with the plays, not just as actors and directors, but also as students and members of an audience, we can become a co-creative participants in the redemptive potential of Shakespeare's enduring legacy.

Steiner speaks of Shakespeare in connection with the evolution of poetry and drama and the transitions between cultural epochs. He recalls the sources and characteristics of classical Greek drama, as well as Aristotle's definition of drama as catharsis, pointing to Shakespeare's connection to and development of those cultural and historical wellsprings.



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