



# **The School of Shakespeare: The Influence of Shakespeare on English Drama 1600-42**

*David L. Frost*

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'The Jacobean dramatists make better sense if seen as working in Shakespeare's light'. This premise underlies Dr Frost's study of the influence of Shakespeare upon his contemporaries. Certain writers - Middleton especially - he shows to have been radically transformed, while Webster and Ford reacted against the dominant tragic mode, and yet exploited the master for their own purposes. Almost all Shakespeare's successors were happy to lift an idea, a phrase, a character or a scene. More important, Shakespeare's influence revolutionised two dramatic forms, the revenge play and the romance. In removing an artificial barrier that divided the isolated genius from 'the rest', this original 1968 publication illustrates Shakespeare's impact on his age, and produces supporting evidence from records of publication, play performance and contemporary comment to overthrow the long-held doctrine of relative neglect. Dr Frost's interest in literary indebtedness is critical as much as scholarly, while his discussion of the romance offers an approach to Shakespeare's final plays. His general thesis is challenging, and is likely to affect the readers' views on the history of drama and of taste, as well as their estimate of the writers themselves.

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