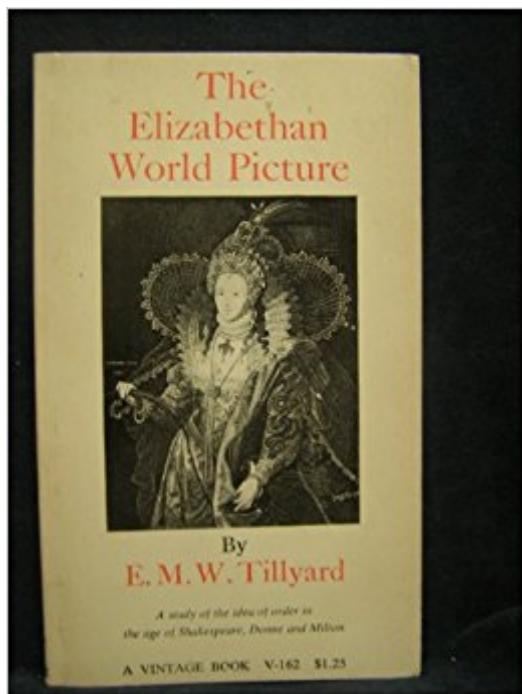


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The Elizabethan World Picture



Synopsis

This brief and illuminating account of the ideas of world order prevalent in the Elizabethan age and later is an indispensable companion for readers of the great writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—Shakespeare and the Elizabethan dramatists, Donne and Milton, among many others. The basic medieval idea of an ordered Chain of Being is studied by Professor Tillyard in the process of its various transformations by the dynamic spirit of the Renaissance. Among his topics are: Angels; the Stars and Fortunes; the Analogy between Macrocosm and Microcosm; the Four Elements; the Four Humours; Sympathies; Correspondences; and the Cosmic Dance—ideas and symbols which inspired the minds and imaginations not only of the Elizabethans but of all men of the Renaissance. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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Customer Reviews

This small book has come out of an attempt to write a larger one on Shakespeare's Histories. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Eustace Mandeville Wetenhall Tillyard was born in 1889. From 1945 to 1959 he had been Master of Jesus College, Cambridge; 1953-196 President of the International Association of University Professors of English. Among his better known works are : Milton, Poetry Direct and Oblique, Shakespeare's Last Plays, Studies in Milton, and The Epic Strain in the English Novel. He died in Cambridge at the age of seventy-three. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is a gem of a book that basically explores the Elizabethan way of viewing the world by examining popular literature and philosophies of the period. Quoting extensively from the likes of Shakespeare, Marlowe, Spenser and Sidney (among many others) and making reference to the Greek philosophers that influenced Elizabethan thought, particularly (pun intended) Plato, Tillyard explains the way people of the 15th and 16th centuries understood their relationship to the corporeal and spiritual world and how they established hierarchies of being from oysters through to lions; from paupers to kings. How these all existed in a complex and simple relationship, a chain of being within the cosmos. How this was all regarded as functioning within very ordered vertical and horizontal planes and within a deep religiosity, is also explored. While anyone familiar with Elizabethan literature and history will not be unfamiliar with Tillyard's ideas, it's the way they're explained and how literature and plays are used to both provide and support evidence that makes this book particularly delightful. I think the most surprising thing to come out of the text for me was Tillyard's summation that for all we think of the Elizabethan poets and dramatists as having some special relationship to their muses, the world and imagination, what they produced was quite "ordinary". What he means by this including the music of the spheres in a poem, or likening the queen to the sun or moon and stars, linking the macrocosm and microcosm - was rather commonplace thinking for the time. He is not diminishing the accomplishments of the poets etc but rather asking us to understand that all Elizabethans read the world in that way, so the language of Shakespeare, Milton and Marlowe etc. was speaking to like-minded people who lived and breathed the allusions rather than grasping at powerful and beautiful metaphors that prove elusive to so many now. While an obvious point, I loved reading it and have subsequently tried to read Spenser with that view of the world in mind. It really does change things and make them easier to grasp. Not as easy as I'd like, but for that to happen, I'd have to step back in time awhile. Now, where's my Tardis....?

A short & very good book that introduces the reader to the worldview of "pre-enlightenment" England & Europe. Remember that the authors goal was to contextualize the works of Shakespeare, Milton etc. It's the ancient classical platonic-hermetic view of reality, read through the Bible (olympian gods = judeo-christian angels. I would prefer if it had gone into more detail than it does, but there are other books for that purpose.

Basically the book is a study of the ideas and beliefs shared amongst authors in the age of Shakespeare, Donne, and Milton (the theological trends of the 16th Century) and quotes many authors of that time to put together an intricate puzzle of the world picture and cosmic order in its

divine harmony. Although Elizabethan (of English Renaissance Epoch) correspondencies are the same as Medieval, the Middle Ages used them more intellectually (like a mathematical formula) - occurring in Chaucer's "Astrolabe", where Hidgen the monk of Chester takes on the organization of the Universe with profound serenity; the Elizabethans allow for more passion and imagination, wonderfully full of fierce comparison. God is usually in the background sustaining the whole order of creation. In conclusion, there's more to divine order and the world picture that can be covered here - I urge you to study it by reading this amazing book. Elizabethan literature has great wealth of references to all possible ways of thinking about the stars, from our being merely the star's tennis-balls, to our faults not being in the stars but within ourselves.

The only improvement could be a reference as there are a lot of different ideas. Despite being organized, it's often hard to isolate particulars which is frustrating when you need to find a quote.

Tillyard is a classic, must-read for people who are studying Shakespeare, Elizabethan Theatre and Tudor history. The emphasis is on the Elizabethan idea of position and rank. All people and creatures have a specific place in the hierarchy of the universe--all people, all things in their proper place. A short introduction that will whet your appetite for something bigger: David Bevington, perhaps?

This small classic is a MUST for all those interested in history and English literature. The Elizabethan World Picture by Tillyard provides an important insight into Elizabethan thought and customs. It will serve you well: whether you are reading Shakespeare, or the contemporary, brilliant trilogy by Hilary Mantel on Thomas Cromwell, (which has won two consecutive Booker awards). Highly recommend!

Perfect, fills in knowledge from the era.

A relatively interesting book on the elements that made up of the Elizabethan worldview. It's given me a good insight into how people during those times see the world.

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