

## SHAKESPEARE, LOVE AND LANGUAGE

What is the nature of romantic love and erotic desire in Shakespeare's work? In this erudite and yet accessible study, David Schalkwyk addresses this question by exploring the historical contexts, theory and philosophy of love. Close readings of Shakespeare's plays and poems are delivered through the lens of historical texts from Plato to Montaigne and modern writers including Jacques Lacan, Jean-Luc Marion, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Jacques Derrida, Alain Badiou and Stanley Cavell. Through these studies, it is argued that Shakespeare has no single or overarching concept of love, and that in Shakespeare's work, love is not an emotion. Rather, it is a form of action and disposition, to be expressed and negotiated linguistically.

DAVID SCHALKWYK is a Professor of Shakespeare Studies at Queen Mary University of London. He was formerly Director of Research at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington DC and editor of the *Shakespeare Quarterly*. His books include *Speech and Performance in Shakespeare's Sonnets and Plays* (2002), *Literature and the Touch of the Real* (2004), *Shakespeare, Love and Service* (2008), *Hamlet's Dreams: The Robben Island Shakespeare* (2013) and *The Word against the World: The Bakhtin Circle* (2016).

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AND LANGUAGE

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*For Pip*

## Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	page viii
Introduction	I
1 Shaping Fantasies	17
<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> : "Thou art translated"	17
<i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i> : "Love . . . 'against the nature of love"	33
<i>Twelfth Night</i> : "One face, one voice, one habit, and two persons!"	57
2 Love's Troubled Consummations	77
<i>Troilus and Cressida</i> : "Truth tired with iteration"	77
<i>Othello</i> : "Tis yet to know"	102
3 The Impossible Gift of Love	126
<i>As You Like It</i> : "What 'tis to love"	126
<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> : "With all my heart"	146
4 The "Finality of the You"	168
<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> : "There is no love in you"	168
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> : "Take all myself"	183
5 Is Love an Emotion?	210
<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i> : "Husband, I come!"	220
<i>Bibliography</i>	241
<i>Index</i>	248

## *Acknowledgements*

This book has been a long time in the writing. I first had the idea of writing about love in Shakespeare while working on what became *Speech and Performance in Shakespeare's Sonnets and Plays* at the turn of the century. However, overwhelmed by the enormity of the task and increasingly intrigued by the affective dimensions of service in Shakespeare's text and society alike, I narrowed my focus in *Shakespeare, Love and Service* in 2008. But that was not the end of it. I continued to be haunted by the need to investigate love in Shakespeare that was neither bound by service nor reduced to desire or sex. Almost ten years later, *Shakespeare, Love and Language* has reluctantly pronounced that it is now or never. I might have called it "Love *not* service, and love *not* desire", but I have discovered that love and desire cannot be kept as chastely apart as I had first thought, and the saturation of the early modern period by the discourses of service meant that the latter had to be given its due, even if it is not the focus of the present study.

In the time it has taken to write the book I have incurred and accumulated an enormous number of debts to people with whom I have tried out, tested, described and argued for my ideas. Inevitably, those ideas have changed, sometimes radically, as a result of these interchanges.

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ix

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All the chapters in this book contain ideas and arguments, always reworked and rethought, that have been published elsewhere.

The section in Chapter 1 on *Twelfth Night* contains material originally published as "The Discourses of Friendship and the Structural Imagination of Shakespeare's Theatre: Montaigne, *Twelfth Night*, De Gournay", *Renaissance Drama* New Series 38 (2010): 141–172. Chapter 2 contains extensively reworked material from "Othello's Consummation" in *Othello*, Arden State of Play, ed. Ann Thomson and Lena Orlin (London: Bloomsbury, 2014). In Chapter 3, the work on *The Merchant of Venice* is an extension of "The Impossible Gift of Love in *The Merchant of Venice* and the Sonnets", *Shakespeare* 7.2 (2011): 142–155. Chapters 4 and 5 contain arguments first tried out in "'Love's Transgression': Service, Romeo, Juliet, and the Finality of the *You*", *The Shakespearean International Yearbook* 11 (2011): 111–48 and "Is Love an Emotion?: Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and *Antony and Cleopatra*", *Symploke: An Interdisciplinary Journal for the Mixing of Discourses*, 18.1–2 (2011): 99–130.