



Re-Humanising Shakespeare: Literary Humanism, Wisdom and Modernity

Andy Mousley

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Can Shakespeare help us with the question of how to live? Surely modern scepticism has put paid to the faith in the universally valid wisdom of sages? *Re-Humanising Shakespeare* provocatively argues that although Shakespeare himself contributed to the foundationless world of modernity, his work can still serve as a source of existential wisdom and guidance.

Differentiating literary humanism from anti-humanist caricatures of humanist thought, the book explores through close readings of Shakespeare's plays the conditions under which human beings flourish or perish. Love, ethics, emotion, vulnerability and humility are amongst the topics discussed as part of the book's argument that Shakespeare is continually at pains to reclaim the human from its complete liquefaction. Working with as well as against the trends associated with 'Theory', the book engages with sceptical perspectives by showing how Shakespeare unsettles belief in a fixed human nature, but simultaneously finds protection in his work against the total alienation of human beings from themselves.

This distinctive book discusses plays across all the major Shakespearean genres, from comedy and history play to tragedy and romance. Given the range and originality of its approach, *Re-Humanising Shakespeare* will make absorbing reading for all those interested in Shakespeare, ethics and questions of literary value.

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