

David Schalkwyk. *Shakespeare, Love, and Service*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. ISBN-13: 9780521886390. Pp. x + 317. U.S. \$93.

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David Schalkwyk's book makes a splendid climax to the recent surge of publications on Shakespeare and service, following important work by Richard Strier, Mark Thornton Burnett, Michael Neill, Linda Anderson, Judith Weil, and me. Schalkwyk takes much from his precursors, then adds much of his own. The book needs to be read by everybody who wants to understand fully the social and emotional relationships that give structure and texture to most of Shakespeare's plays. The work has, as well, important implications for the thoughtful consideration of service relationships in fields far removed from Early Modern English drama.

Indeed, in the aftermath of this study, it becomes difficult to understand how service could have gone as largely unnoticed and unconsidered as it did for as long as it did, until 1988, when Strier's essay on faithful and disobedient service in *King Lear* (following up, indeed, an earlier but largely disregarded essay by Jonas Barish and Marshall Waingrow, 1958) can be said to have peered over the wall, and led others to come and look. Before then, across four centuries, the people who read and watched Shakespeare took domestic service—the hewing of wood and drawing of water, the carrying of messages and ironing of clothes—more or less for granted. Servants, so called, were by definition and in dramatic practice marginal figures: fungible, to use a term important in

Schalkwyk's analysis, lacking the individuality and self-consciousness so crucial to neoclassical, romantic, and modern criticism. (Some comic figures—Juliet's nurse, Feste, Lear's Fool—did get a little more attention.) Even when post-modern Marxist materialism shoved economic and political power relationships to the center of critical discourse, the earlier attitudes constrained Burnett's pioneering book on service in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama (1997) to focus on characters in the lower ranges of the hierarchy. Neill, it was, who first strongly showed that ideals and practices of service informed relationships within the higher ranks, as well (2000).

Neill, however, and the three of us who published books in 2005, kept *service* as our defining term. Schalkwyk's bunker-busting achievement is to add *love*, in all the senses of that complex term to the equation. The word, of course, was commonplace in Shakespearean criticism from Dryden on—almost entirely, however, with reference to erotically charged relations between men and women. Schalkwyk, however, stretches the term to include its other traditional meanings, not just *eros* but *agape*, *philia*, and *nomos*, and then, prompted by the complex play of the terms in the *Sonnets*, to explore the wonderfully rich and dynamic interaction of love and service in the drama. Love, he proposes, is “a complex of interwoven orientations to the self and the world, embodied in forms of action rather than confined to the inscrutability of an interior affect . . . [and] is not merely a value produced within an abstract system of differences but is constituted out of its changing, lived relations with concepts such as desire and friendship, as well as tenderness and anger, indignation and generosity, want and repletion, satisfaction and resentment, pleasure and pain, exultation and grief”

(7-8). The treatment of love and service in Shakespeare's plays arose out of the fact that Shakespeare and his theatrical associates were servants themselves, in a society in which service relationships deeply affected virtually everyone (the metatheatrical elements of the book, many of which take off from the work of Robert Weimann, are stimulating). This treatment informs and is informed by other relationships not established through the formal subordination of servant to master.

Schalkwyk carries forward my own argument that the Protestant ideology of service incorporated in dynamic ways the paradox that when undertaken by what at least appears inwardly to be free choice, service actually becomes a form of freedom. Schalkwyk here calls on Hegel's anatomy of the ineluctable interdependence of master and servant. Neither can exist without the other. Whereas the master's consciousness only depends on recognizing the servant as a reflection of the master, hence remaining inherently dependent, the servant's consciousness is, however, truly independent (40). He, or she, is consequently enabled to seek elements of freedom from within the subordinate's role.

The argument begins with the recognition that the theology of service expressed in a large corpus of early modern didactic treatments of service insisted on reciprocity without equality as an essential feature of divinely ordained master-servant relationships. In actuality, however, and in that life as represented in the drama, there was (and remains) an inescapable central tension "between the duties of reciprocal care that were supposed to inform all relations between master and servant and the personal demand for *affective* equality in relations of friendship and love that, unfulfilled, could turn to resentment. . . ."

These feelings are not typically provoked by disparities of wealth and power. “Shakespeare seems to be less interested in ambition and avarice than in the complexities of abjection that arise from deeper forms of personal intimacy: the need for love, friendship, and devotion; willing self-sacrifice; and the attendant anxieties and forms of resentment that arise from feelings of rejection, betrayal, and neglect” (39).

Having established these principles through a closely reasoned and widely supported argument far too rich to be summarize here, Schalkwyk substantiates their critical utility through detailed analysis of eleven plays, ranging across all four of the traditional generic clusters, plus the sonnets. The organization is thematic rather than chronological, although it does begin with an early comedy, *Taming of the Shrew*, and ends with *Winter’s Tale*. (The relatively tight coverage means that readers interested in service aspects of many plays in which they are important will want to consult the more comprehensive studies by Anderson and me; the tight focus on Shakespeare means that Burnett and Neill remain primary sources for non-Shakespearean texts.) The analysis is uniformly intriguing, informative, illuminating, with fresh insights on virtually every page: even the treatments of *Lear* and *Othello*, the plays subjected to the most extensive study by other scholars, use the focus on love to open new perspectives.

Only in Chapter 5, on the two parts of *1 and 2 Henry IV* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, does the level seem to me to drop a little; I think this is because Schalkwyk fails to perceive how his own emphasis on the tension between reciprocity and inequality can lead a reader to see that the desirable state of affective reciprocity is rigidly closed off to monarchs, the only members of

classical and early modern societies who could, by definition, have no equals. That fact means that we do not have to fall back on the materialistic emphasis on power that has dominated recent criticism of the *Henriad*, at least, to explain why Hal must change his relationship to Falstaff when he is crowned, or why Antony can only restore the close affective relationship of the war-leader with his band after it is clear that the loner Octavius, who scorns reciprocity from his first appearance in *Julius Caesar* and shows affection for no one but his sister, is going to be the emperor.

The final two chapters, however, are brilliant, and the last one, on *Winter's Tale*, opens the lens even wider by its highly persuasive expansion of the argument to incorporate matters of gender. The topic is lightly touched in the treatments of *Shrew*, *Othello*, and *Twelfth Night* that precede it. In this late play, however, the development of Paulina most perspicuously amplifies the profound connections between the dynamics of patriarchy and the dynamics of service. She provides “resistance, healing, and restoration . . . the epitome of service in the Shakespearean canon”, repeating and amplifying the effects of Perdita’s words and acts on Polixines. (The process provokes a fine irony: the brother kings learn the virtues of servants from the women they thought were made to serve them.) Resistance is crucial. Obedient service to tyrannical masters cannot be true service; in crisis, “Disobedience, critical opposition, and judicious counsel are . . . the essence of service” (263). For their own reasons, the male servants, Antigonus and Camillus, are unable to supply these. Paulina, however, remains remarkably faithful to both mistress and master. Her counsel leads him a remarkable place, a willingness to let her choose for him a second wife; her

disobedience and resistance allow her to produce something that feels like a miracle. Leontes' decision, Schalkwyk says, uniquely enacts the paradox of freedom in service—nowhere else embodied in a king (285). In the domestic setting of the final scene, metatheater reappears: the kings are obliged to be spectators as well as actors, “as if the player were to be held accountable for his actions in the part” (292-92). At the very end, Paulina retreats, as servants are wont to do, to the sidelines. Leontes gets the final words. But as Schalkwyk does not go on to notice, most of that speech is given to rewarding her with a version of the gift she has just given him, a loving spouse, and the final sentence can be read as bestowing on her the first place in this society: “Good Paulina, / Lead us from hence . . . lead away” 5.2.152-56), a final expression, in an act of service, of the abjection that has led him back to love and the world.

Together with the pervasive importance in the argument of the interaction of love and service within the quotidian work of the theater, this extension of the argument into couples and families beckons us to think about service in our own lives and work—as theater people, teachers, children, parents, citizens. When I was still teaching, I used to say, sometimes with conviction, that I loved my work. David Schalkwyk's book has got me thinking about where and how I found love *in* my work—how in serving my students and colleagues and readers I increased the quantity of love in my life, in myself, and in others. I am persuaded that the world would be a better place, a more loving place, if everybody in it thought about such things.

At the risk of bathos, I want to end with an all too familiar complaint about the copyediting of this expensive book. It is littered with errors, mostly small, but

cumulatively irritating—misspellings, misnumberings, solecisms, of which “Hall” instead of “Hal” is only one of the more obvious. One of our most prestigious academic presses should be ashamed. As the absence of any reference to the book’s copyeditor in Schalkwyk’s acknowledgments (especially in the Cavellian sense of that word that the book frequently employs) testifies, it is hard to love and serve well somebody half a world away with whom your only contact is the mechanical exchange of files on the Internet. It would serve us all better if publishers took that service more seriously.