



# Speech and Performance in Shakespeare's Sonnets and Plays

*David Schalkwyk*

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## **Speech and Performance in Shakespeare's Sonnets and Plays** David Schalkwyk

David Schalkwyk offers a sustained reading of Shakespeare's sonnets in relation to his plays. He argues that the language of the sonnets is primarily performative rather than descriptive, and bases this distinction on the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein and J. L. Austin. In a wide-ranging analysis of both the 1609 Quarto of Shakespeare's sonnets and the Petrarchan discourses in a selection of plays, Schalkwyk addresses such issues as embodiment and silencing, interiority and theatricality, inequalities of power, status, gender and desire, both in the published poems and on the stage and in the context of the early modern period. In a provocative discussion of the question of proper names and naming events in the sonnets and plays, the book seeks to reopen the question of the autobiographical nature of Shakespeare's sonnets.



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