

Shakespeare and the Rose of Love: A Study of the Early Plays in Relation to the Medieval Philosophy of Love



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Reviews

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(Jamar Stracke)

SHAKESPEARE AND THE ROSE OF LOVE: A STUDY OF THE EARLY PLAYS IN RELATION TO THE MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY OF LOVE

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Shepherd-Walwyn (Publishers) Ltd. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Shakespeare and the Rose of Love: A Study of the Early Plays in Relation to the Medieval Philosophy of Love, John Vyvyan, 'more perceptive and convincing than a great deal that has ever been written on the subject .close and attentive scholarship .shrewd and ingenious observations.' A.L.Rowse, Daily Telegraph Originally published by Chatto & Windus in 1960 as the second volume in a trilogy, this book has long been out of print. It offers a viewpoint seldom considered: an unusual and exceptionally clear insight into Shakespeare's philosophy. It does so with freshness, modesty and conviction. John Vyvyan continues his exploration into Shakespeare's philosophy, begun in *The Shakespearean Ethic*, which he believes to have been consistent, consciously held and profoundly Christian. However, appreciating the danger faced in writing at a time of major religious intolerance, for 'by the orthodox standards of his age, [such a] philosophy was heretical', Vyvyan explains how Shakespeare used the medieval allegory of love, *The Romance of the Rose*, to veil his ideas. The ultimate principle of his unorthodoxy, Vyvyan points out, was not original. It was one that had 'been getting the mystics into trouble repeatedly since the early Middle Ages. Shakespeare's view, that love leads to the recognition of unity, in essence is a poet's presentation of the doctrine of divine immanence. This is something the mystics are continually reasserting'. In *The Romance of the Rose*, the heroine symbolises the highest form of Love, not just romance, but also the qualities of purity and constancy, as Vyvyan reveals by discussing *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Romeo and Juliet* at length. He shows that, even in his earliest work, Shakespeare was moving towards the universal ideas of love, forgiveness and regeneration which found their...



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