

# SHAKESPEARE AND DEMOCRACY

Gabriel Chanan

## **The self-renewing politics of a global playwright**

Shakespeare moves towards a democratic concept of society over the course of his plays. His dramatisation of how societies hold together or break apart has fresh significance in an age when democracy faces new challenges at a global level. These are some of the conclusions of Gabriel Chanan's illuminating new approach to Shakespeare's plays.

Chanan argues that even though Shakespeare could know nothing of modern democracy, he played a fundamental role in building the culture that underlies it. But democracy is still historically young, an incomplete global experiment, facing internal and external challenges and open to accusations of being misused to disguise exploitation. It needs continuing sustenance from Shakespeare's critique of autocracy and models of open-ended thinking.

Using abundant illustration from the plays, Chanan's argument is accessible to those without specialist knowledge, yet throws new light on academic debates. He traces the political significance of Shakespeare in terms of development across his work. There are critical turning points: from depicting the external actions of kings to their dreams and nightmares; from critiquing individual reigns to questioning the institution of monarchy; from exposing the errors and evils of rulers to the question of how others can repair the damage. There are also contradictory elements, but ultimately it is Shakespeare's method, even more than his subject matter, which is essential to democracy, showing that there is no fixed right perception of reality, which must be managed by the interaction of opposites.

Teachers will find this book immensely useful in explaining to pupils why Shakespeare is relevant now, and where the political themes of an individual play fit into the wider pattern of his work. It gives the essential historical context succinctly and tackles theory with a light touch.

**GABRIEL CHANAN** is a social policy researcher and writer. He was awarded an MBE for services to community development in 2009.

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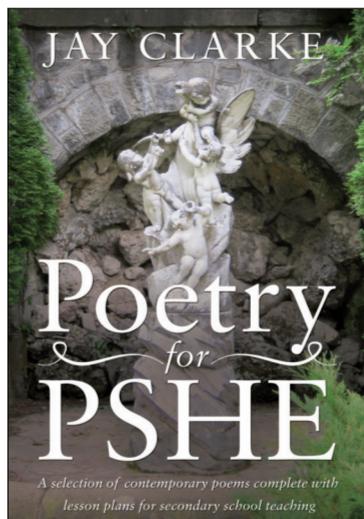
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# POETRY FOR PSHE

A SELECTION OF  
CONTEMPORARY POEMS

Jay Clarke

**A book designed specifically for young adults studying PSHE,  
but with the needs of the teacher very much in mind.**

*Poetry for PSHE*, or Personal, Social and Health Education, is a collection of poems for school children of secondary school age. It is an anthology of poems covering subjects such as friendship, families, and social media. The poems deal with the subjects in a way that makes pupils keen to read the next one, exposing them to common issues they may face, whilst also allowing them to learn solutions and ways to cope should they find themselves involved with the issues discussed.

*"I sometimes wonder about my friends,  
Are my choices based on latest trends?"*

The subjects covered in *Poetry for PSHE* are either rarely covered within a school curriculum or are spread between a number of disciplines, subjects and teachers. The Department for Education has said that PSHE is an important and necessary part of all pupils' education, underlining this anthology's relevance and importance. These poems – as well as the lessons built around them – will live with pupils long after the lesson has ended.

**JAY CLARKE** lives in Stamford, though she has lived most of her life in London and Liverpool. She is a Professional Mediator and a member of the Professional Mediators' Association. Jay has had supply teaching roles at schools from the most challenging – teaching children with special needs and those that have been excluded due to malicious behaviour – to the most outstanding schools, high on the UK league table. As well as being a poet who is on a mission to get young adults to read poetry, Jay has learned what makes pupils listen, engage and participate. She spent 30 years working in business, writing poetry and teaching adult literacy. She started up her own consultancy business whilst taking up supply teaching roles, where she found herself very successful in engaging children with poetry.

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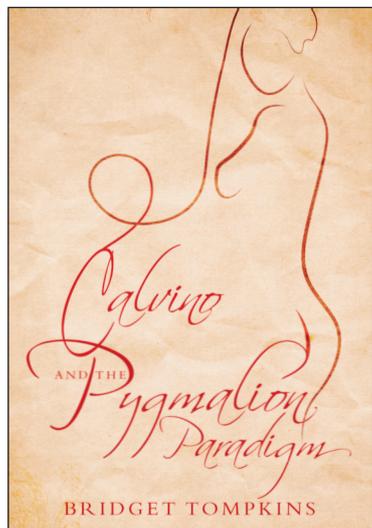
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# CALVINO AND THE PYGMALION PARADIGM

Bridget Tompkins

*Calvino and the Pygmalion Paradigm: Fashioning the Feminine in I nostri antenati and Gli amori difficili* is the first book-length analysis of the representation of the feminine in Calvino's fiction. Using the structural umbrella of the Pygmalion paradigm and using feminist interpretative techniques, this book offers interesting alternative readings of two of Calvino's important early narrative collections.

The Pygmalion paradigm concerns the creation by a male 'artist' of a feminine ideal and highlights the artificiality and narcissistic desire associated with the creation process. This book discusses Calvino's active and deliberate work of self-creation, accomplished through extensive self-commentaries and exposes both the lack of importance Calvino placed on the feminine in his narratives and the relative absence of critical attention focused on this area. Relying on the analogy between Pygmalion's pieces of ivory and Barthes' 'seme' and drawing upon the ideas underlying Kristevan intertextuality, the book demonstrates that, despite Calvino's professed lack of interest in character development, his female characters are carefully and purposefully constructed.

A close reading of Calvino's narratives, engaging directly with Freud, Lacan and the feminist psychoanalytical thinking of Kofmann, Kristeva, Kaplan and others, demonstrates how Calvino uses his female characters as foils for the existential reflections of his typically maladjusted and narcissistic male characters.

**BRIDGET TOMPKINS** is an independent researcher and writer living in New Zealand and working in the field of contemporary Italian literature and film. This book builds on her recently completed University of Auckland PhD thesis.

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