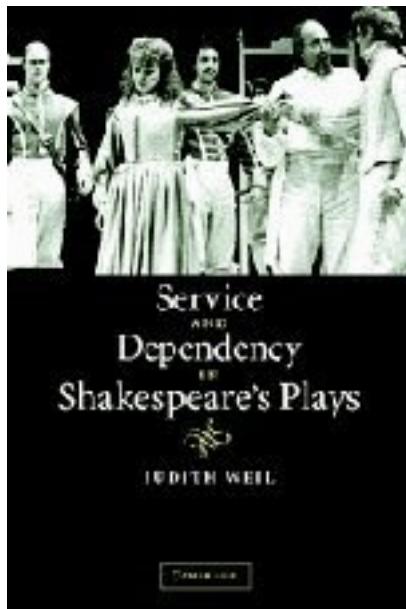


Service and Dependency in Shakespeare's Plays



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This is an unusual study of the nature of service and other types of dependency and patronage in Shakespeare's drama. By considering the close associations of service with childhood or youth, marriage and friendship, Judith Weil sheds light on social practice and dramatic action. Approached as dynamic explorations of a familiar custom, the plays are shown to demonstrate a surprising consciousness of obligations, and a fascination with how dependants actively change each other. They help us understand why early modern people may have found service both frightening and enabling. Attentive to a range of historical sources, and social and cultural issues, Weil also emphasises the linguistic ambiguities created by service relationships, and their rich potential for interpretation on the stage. The book includes close readings of dramatic sequences in twelve plays, including Hamlet, Macbeth, The Taming of the Shrew and King Lear.

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