



Queer Philologies: Sex, Language, and Affect in Shakespeare's Time (Material Texts)

Jeffrey Masten

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For Jeffrey Masten, the history of sexuality and the history of language are intimately related. In *Queer Philologies*, he studies particular terms that illuminate the history of sexuality in Shakespeare's time and analyzes the methods we have used to study sex and gender in literary and cultural history. Building on the work of theorists and historians who have, following Foucault, investigated the importance of words like "homosexual," "sodomy," and "tribade" in a variety of cultures and historical periods, Masten argues that just as the history of sexuality requires the history of language, so too does philology, "the love of the word," require the analytical lens provided by the study of sexuality.

Masten unpacks the etymology, circulation, transformation, and constitutive power of key words within the early modern discourse of sex and gender—terms such as "conversation" and "intercourse," "fundament" and "foundation," "friend" and "boy"—that described bodies, pleasures, emotions, sexual acts, even (to the extent possible in this period) sexual identities. Analyzing the continuities as well as differences between Shakespeare's language and our own, he offers up a queer lexicon in which the letter "Q" is perhaps the queerest character of all.

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