

# Competing discourses of love and sexuality in the relationships between men and women in Renaissance drama

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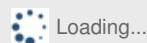
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### Abstract

This thesis is an examination of the ways in which competing discourses of love and sexuality, ranging from the literary and philosophical to the religious, have influenced the portrayal of men and women in the drama of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The structure of the thesis is in two parts: the first concerns what might be termed normative relationships, underlying which is the ideal of mutual affection in marriage, and the second, relationships which undermine, or challenge that ideal. My central proposition is that the conflict between the demands of the body and the spirit, rooted in the ascetic heritage of the Middle Ages, lies at the heart of all discourse on love and sexuality. This is demonstrated in the tension between the Petrarchan idealisation of love and women, and their denigration; between sublimation and sexual fulfilment. Underlying the idealism associated with love is the fear of disillusionment and betrayal, arising out of a deep-rooted association of sexuality with sin, which finds expression in anxiety about female sexuality. The playwrights dramatise these tensions, placing them in a context of changing values in which traditional views of morality come into conflict with a cynical acceptance of human frailty.

**Type of Work:** Thesis (Doctorates > Ph.D.)

**Award Type:** Doctorates > Ph.D.

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	Wiggins, Martin	UNSPECIFIED	UNSPECIFIED

**Licence:**

**College/Faculty:** [Schools \(1998 to 2008\)](#) > [School of Humanities](#)

**School or Department:** School of English, Drama and American & Canadian Studies, The Shakespeare Institute

**Funders:** None/not applicable

**Subjects:** [P Language and Literature > PN Literature \(General\) > PN2000 Dramatic representation. The Theater](#)  
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**URI:** <http://etheses.bham.ac.uk/id/eprint/3629>

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Women's bodies are still generally presumed to be sexually available to men. Moreover, any attraction is generally assumed to be sexual, despite the asexual community's efforts at subdivision (sexual/romantic/sensual elements, etc). And as sexual attraction is treated as the most important and irresistible component of love, non-sexual relationships are deemed unimportant. Weighty, but a fascinating read on the history of relationships between women and, more interestingly, the drastic changes in perception about physical and intense emotional interaction. Within 20 years of 1900, having a close female friend as the center of your emotional life went from completely normal and expected, to being the sign of a diseased mind. Competing discourses of love and sexuality in the relationships between men and women in renaissance drama 1 edition. By Sue Marilyn Knott. Competing discourses of love and sexuality in the relationships between Sue Marilyn Knott. Competing discourses of love and sexuality in the relationships between xClose. 1 2 3 4 5. Want to Read. Are you sure you want to remove **Competing discourses of love and sexuality in the relationships between men and women in renaissance drama** from your list? There's no description for this book yet. Can you add one? 1 edition The vitality of Renaissance drama in England is deeply enmeshed in the struggles that characterized every aspect of English culture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This analysis attempts to show a parallel development between discussions of women, eros, and marriage in moral and religious writing and changing representations of love and sexuality in the drama, and to relate these changes to alterations in dramatic forms. Second, it is crucial to assert at the outset that the importance of English Protestant sexual discourse in the Renaissance lies not in its originality, but in its I hope to show that these polarizations of women and sexuality inevitably coexist in the same discursive formation, one pole implying the other.