



The Heart in the Age of Shakespeare

William W. E. Slights

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When Hamlet says he 'wears' Horatio in his 'heart of hearts', he is claiming that the strongest bonds between people are forged, stored, and understood in the heart. The Heart in the Age of Shakespeare sets out to trace the sources and subsequent impact of Hamlet's conviction. The book presents the case that by studying the interlocking anatomical, religious, and literary discourses of the heart between 1550 and 1650 we can open a new window on the culture that produced such works as The Faerie Queene, Catholic and Protestant emblem books, George Herbert's lyrics, and William Harvey's treatise on the circulation of the blood. By crossing several disciplinary boundaries and combining the material with the metaphorical, the book identifies a complex set of cardiological concerns in the dramatic works of Shakespeare and his contemporaries.



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