



How Shakespeare Put Politics on the Stage: Power and Succession in the History Plays

Peter Lake

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A masterful, highly engaging analysis of how Shakespeare's plays intersected with the politics and culture of Elizabethan England

With an ageing, childless monarch, lingering divisions due to the Reformation, and the threat of foreign enemies, Shakespeare's England was fraught with unparalleled anxiety and complicated problems. In this monumental work, Peter Lake reveals, more than any previous critic, the extent to which Shakespeare's plays speak to the depth and sophistication of Elizabethan political culture and the Elizabethan imagination. Lake reveals the complex ways in which Shakespeare's major plays engaged with the events of his day, particularly regarding the uncertain royal succession, theological and doctrinal debates, and virtue and *virtù* in politics. Through his plays, Lake demonstrates, Shakespeare was boldly in conversation with his audience about a range of contemporary issues. This remarkable literary and historical analysis pulls the curtain back on what Shakespeare was really telling his audience and what his plays tell us today about the times in which they were written.

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