Shakespeare in Theory and Practice
Catherine Belsey

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World-renowned critic Catherine Belsey puts theory to work in order to register Shakespeare's powers of seduction

‘These are essays of love, as well as about love, and this makes them unusually sensitive... Belsey's insistence on the anarchy of desire seems both timely and genuinely radical.’
– Peter Holbrook, Times Literary Supplement

The Author
Catherine Belsey is currently Research Professor at Swansea University and formerly Distinguished Research Professor at Cardiff University.

Readership
Academics, researchers and graduate students in sociology and history, especially those working in memory and visual studies and on national identity.

Description
In these essays, brought together here for the first time, world-renowned critic Catherine Belsey puts theory to work in order to explore Shakespeare's powers of seduction, placing him in the context of his moment in history. Teasing out the meanings of the narrative poems, as well as some of the more familiar plays, Shakespeare in Theory and Practice demonstrates the possibilities of an attention to textuality that also draws on the archive. A reading of the Sonnets, written specially for this book, analyses their intricate and ambivalent inscription of desire.

Belsey has been a vital figure in poststructuralist theory as it has emerged and developed in the English-speaking world. These essays trace the progress of theory over three decades, with influence from Barthes, Althusser, Lacan and Derrida. The introduction offers a narrative and analytical overview, from a participant's perspective, of some of the key implications of the essays that follow.

Written with verve and conviction, this book shows how texts can be seen to offer access to the dissonances of the past when theory finds an outcome in practice.

Key Features
• A major critic writing on the central figure of English literature
• Demonstrates poststructuralist theory at work
• Pays particular attention to desire as a theme and as a component of interpretation
• Provides close readings of the texts combining the historical and theoretical