

Shakespeare Seminar

William Shakespeare



Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft

Ausgabe 17 (2020)

Shakespeare and Dance

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PUBLICATIONS FREQUENCY

Shakespeare Seminar is a free annual online journal. It documents papers presented at the Shakespeare Seminar panel of the spring conferences of the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft. It is intended as a publication platform especially for the younger generation of scholars. For the current Call for Papers, please see our website: www.shakespeare-gesellschaft.de

INTERNATIONAL STANDARD SERIAL NUMBER

ISSN1612-8362

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CALL FOR STATEMENTS – SHAKESPEARE SEMINAR 2021

Shakespeare's Politics – Politicising Shakespeare

In Roland Emmerich's *Anonymous*, the playwriting Earl of Oxford looks on from the galleries of the Globe as a performance of his/Shakespeare's *Henry V* whips up a large crowd of groundlings, just as the Earl had intended it. Earlier the Earl had already enthused over a match of tennis about the possibilities of theatre – “That’s power.” This year’s Shakespeare Seminar seeks to discuss the countless ways in which Shakespeare, his works, early modern culture as well as later performances of Shakespeare’s works are political or have been politicised. To what extent can his plays be seen to endorse certain power politics? Are politics in Shakespeare ultimately a question of genre? What impact did the transition from Elizabethan to Stuart rule have on ‘Shakespeare’s politics’? As Elizabeth Frazer notes, Shakespeare’s works feature “numerous styles of political action and role, from statesmanship and the competition for state office or for sovereignty, to the everyday relations of kinship and friendship that interact with state government and law” (2016: 503). Widening the perspective beyond the early modern context, the seminar also endeavours to explore the myriad ways in which Shakespeare – the icon and his plays – have been used for political purposes in contexts that often seem to be far removed from the political realities of Tudor or Stuart England. Thus, John J. Joughin observes that “over the last four hundred years the playwright has been adopted by almost every faith, political hue and persuasion,” including “neo-Conservative, Protestant, Catholic, Republican, Liberal, Tory, Marxists, high Anglican, and so on” (*Shakespeare and Politics* 1). When groups ‘adopt’ the playwright as an advocate of their politics, they often adapt and appropriate his plays in ways that are far from obvious. As Linda Hutcheon has pointed out, “the politics of transcultural adaptations can shift in unpredictable directions” (*A Theory of Adaptation* 148). It is this inclusive view on Shakespeare’s ‘politics’ that this year’s Shakespeare Seminar seeks to address. Topics may include, but are not restricted to

- Shakespeare as political writer
- political approaches to Shakespeare and his works
- censorship and the politics of authorship
- royal succession
- acting troupes and/as rivaling politics
- Shakespeare and class
- Shakespeare and revolution
- Shakespeare and (post)colonialism
- Shakespeare and the Holocaust
- identity politics
- politics and/in the sonnets

Our seminar plans to address these issues with a panel of six papers during the annual conference of the German Shakespeare Association, *Shakespeare-Tage*, which is scheduled to take place from 12–14 November 2021 in Weimar, Germany. Should travel be restricted or deemed unsafe by participants we endeavour to host the seminar as an online or hybrid event. As critical input for the discussion, we invite papers of no more than 15 minutes that present concrete case studies, concise examples and strong views on the topic. Please send your proposals (abstracts of 300 words) by **15 June 2021** to the seminar convenors

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