



Defining Acts: Drama and the Politics of Interpretation in Late Medieval England (Paperback)

By Ruth Nisse

University of Notre Dame Press, United States, 2005. Paperback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. Defining Acts considers how the surviving English plays of the fifteenth century represent and transform competing late-medieval practices of interpretation. These works take up a series of contests over who could legitimately determine the meaning of texts - men or women, clerics or laity, rulers or subjects, Christians or Jews - and stage these texts for audiences far beyond their original academic contexts. Ruth Nisse focuses in particular on how theater translates the temporal ideas of textual exegesis into spatial models and politics. She situates medieval drama both in its vernacular literary setting, as a genre composed against the same cultural background as *The Canterbury Tales* and *Piers Plowman*, and in its performances, which negotiate a range of current social and political issues. Defining Acts begins with an introductory chapter that reveals the dangers and pleasures of theatrical representation in a reading of Chaucer's antic Miller's Tale and the violently anti-theatrical Wycliffite Treatise of Miracle Playing. Subsequent chapters engage problems such as the clash between civic rule and the authority of women's visionary experiences in the York Plays; competing ideas...



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