



## 'Hamlet' without Hamlet

By Margreta de Grazia

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'Hamlet' without Hamlet sets out to counter the modern tradition of abstracting the character Hamlet from the play. For over two centuries, Hamlet has been valued as the icon of consciousness: but only by ignoring the hard fact of his dispossession. By admitting that premise, this book brings the play to life around man's relation to land, from graves to estate to empire. Key preoccupations are thereby released, including the gendered imperatives of genealogy, and man's elemental affinity to dust. As de Grazia demonstrates from the 400 years of Hamlet's afterlife, such features have disappeared into the vortex of an interiorized Hamlet, but they remain in the language of the play as well as in the earliest accounts of its production. Once reactivated, a very different Hamlet emerges, one whose thoughts and desires are thickly embedded in the worldly, and otherworldly, matters of the play: a Hamlet within Hamlet.

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## Editorial Review

### Review

"De Grazia persuasively and with many supporting examples argues for the structural rather than psychological function of this pattern, which, by a concluding and somewhat surprising punch-line, she relates to then 'parousial structure,' the deferred judgement, as in Everyman and Paradise Lost. Such bold gestures are part of the 'sweeping claim' of this book, which, even taken with a pinch of critical salt, offers a great deal of perceptive and original insight and fresh observation to make it one of the most rewarding critical accounts of this over-interpreted play to have appeared for some time."

-Dieter Mehl

"Hamlet without Hamlet is a powerful, tremendously erudite, and often brilliantly inventive reckoning of what time has done to our ability to read, and to comprehend, Shakespeare's play."

- Linda Charnes, Shakespeare Quarterly

"This book offers a dazzling interpretation of the play that deftly reprises the history of Hamlet criticism...But do we really need another book on Shakespeare, let alone Hamlet? This luminous study pronounces a resounding affirmative."

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