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Margreta de Grazia  
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## HAMLET WITHOUT HAMLET

*“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, the rhythms of world history, 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 they are 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*.

MARGRETA DE GRAZIA is Joseph B. Glossberg Term Professor in the Humanities, Department of English, University of Pennsylvania. She is co-editor, with Stanley Wells, of *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare* (2002); co-editor, with Maureen Quilligan and Peter Sallibrass, of *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture* (1996); and author of *Shakespeare Verbatim: The Reproduction of Authenticity and the 1790 Apparatus* (1991). Her work has appeared in many books and journals including *Shakespeare Survey*, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *Modern Language Quarterly*, and *Textual Practice*.

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*For Colin Thubron*

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## *Acknowledgments*

If writing were not for me such a hard act of self-absorption, this book would have come out better, and earlier. I hold Hamlet in part responsible. I mean the modern metaphysical Hamlet, the Hamlet this study would do without: the Wittgensteinian fly in the fly-bottle, endlessly spinning its cogitative wheels against the glass.

There are three friends who know the problem: Howard Zeiderman who always stood ready to help with muddles; Peter Stallybrass whose instruction to “Just print it out” still rings in my ears; and Colin Thubron who assured me again and again that there really was nothing left to be understood.

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### *Note on text used*

Except when otherwise indicated, I have quoted from a modern edition: that is, a composite of the two substantive early texts of *Hamlet* (the 1604/5 Quarto and the 1623 Folio), in modernized spelling and punctuation, within an editorial frame consisting of an introduction, stemma, notes, and appendices. I have chosen Harold Jenkins' compendious Arden *Hamlet* published in 1982.

It might be expected that a book purporting to counter the modern tradition would avoid editorial mediation altogether and return to the two substantive early texts. Quoting from the early Quarto or Folio would have had the distinct advantage of defamiliarizing what is, to be sure, the most familiar play in the language. But what then would prevent us from applying to the unedited text the same old interpretative procedures encouraged by the edited? This project would heighten rather than avoid the familiar by drawing attention to the editorial and critical maneuvers that have made *Hamlet* the supreme modern presence he continues to be. For this purpose, it is not the text stripped-bare that is required, but rather the edition most saturated with the modern critical tradition.

Though quotations are taken from the 1982 Arden, I frequently draw on the facsimile reproductions of the 1604/5 Quarto (Q<sub>2</sub>) from the Huntington Library and the 1623 Folio (F) from the Folger Library, as well as the truncated 1603 Quarto (Q<sub>1</sub>) from the British Library. I take the liberty of interspersing variants from these early texts whenever they open up possibilities limited or foreclosed by the modern edition. Such eclecticism, I would argue, is warranted by their relationship: although separate, they are by no means discrete, much less mutually exclusive. Furthermore the vagaries of textual production as well as of lexical and grammatical usage allow for considerable convertibility among their particulars.