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Hamlet (Arden Shakespeare: Third Series)



Synopsis

This self-contained, free-standing volume gives readers the Second Quarto text. In his illustrated introduction to the play's historical, cultural, and performance contexts, Neil Taylor presents a thorough survey of critical approaches to the play. He addresses the challenges faced in reading, editing, or acting a play with the depth of content and tradition that Hamlet possesses. He also establishes the historical and cultural context in which the play was written and explains the arguments about the merits and deficiencies of the First and Second Quarto and the First Folio. Taylor points to the many novelists, both men and women, whose work refers to or bears commonalities with Hamlet, to suggest an ongoing need to resolve "the continuing mystery of Hamlet" in print and on stage. An appendix contains the additional passages found only in the 1623 text, and other appendices on the editorial process, the traditions regarding the act division at 3.4/4.1, casting, and music are also included.

Table of Contents

General

editors' preface

Preface

INTRODUCTION

The challenges of Hamlet

The challenge of acting Hamlet

The challenge of editing Hamlet

The challenge to the greatness of Hamlet: Hamlet versus Lear

Hamlet in our time

The soliloquies and the modernity of Hamlet

Hamlet and Freud

Reading against the Hamlet tradition

Hamlet in Shakespeare's time

Hamlet at the turn of the century

The challenge of dating Hamlet

Was there an earlier Hamlet play?

Are there any early references to Shakespeare's play?

Can we date Hamlet in relation to other contemporary plays?

Hamlet's first performances

The story of Hamlet

Murder most foul

An antic disposition

^Sentences, speeches and thoughts

The composition of Hamlet

The quartos and the Folio

The quartos

The First Folio

The relationship of Q2 to Q1

The relationship of F to Q2

What, then, of Q1?

Editorial practice

Why a three-text edition?

Hamlet on stage and screen

Hamlet and his points

Enter the director

Hamlet and politics

Novel Hamlets

Hamlet meets Fielding, Goethe, Dickens and others

Hamlet and women novelists

Prequels and sequels

The continuing mystery of Hamlet

THE TRAGICAL HISTORY OF HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK (The Second Quarto, 1604-5)

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Folio-only passages

Appendix 2: Textual discussion

Appendix 3: Editorial conventions, sample edited passages and a comparison of scenes across the three texts

Appendix 4: The act division at 3.4/4.1

Appendix 5: Casting

Appendix 6: Music

Abbreviations and references

Abbreviations used in notes

Works by and partly by Shakespeare

Editions of Shakespeare collated

Other works cited

Index

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Customer Reviews

I cannot more highly recommend this particular book, No Fear Shakespeare's Hamlet. I am approaching 50 years old and my only real experience trying to read Shakespeare was in high school where we were assigned roles in class and made to read, without comprehension, Romeo and Juliet and Julius Cesar. In the interim, I tried watching a few plays and dragged my kids to see the play Taming of the Shrew, which they hated because they couldn't understand the language nor the plot. Rather than becoming a Shakespeare hater, I've always felt inadequate and dumb for this huge hole in my education. My current inspiration to try Shakespeare again was my desire to try and help my high school aged son become more educated and cultured than I have been. I tried first with the Folger annotated editions of Shakespeare. They look excellent and define the unfamiliar words, but I still could not make sense of a substantial portion of the dialogue. I guess maybe I'm just dumb, I don't know. Anyway, I saw good reviews about this No Fear series, and I ordered several. So far I have read the modern English translations of Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, King Lear, and The Tempest. While I feel a bit like I'm 'cheating', I actually have really enjoyed all the plays and at least now I know the plots and the characters and even some of the more subtle themes. I can't answer the complaints that the translations don't adequately translate Shakespeare's meanings. There are a few side notes that point out double meanings and things like that, though there are not extensive footnotes or sidenotes.

I find this very interesting, at least one of the reviewers who gave such a low review not only reviewed this book, but every other book in this Ignatius Critical Series edit by Joseph Peace. In each one, he gives only one star, basially saying the book is a waste of time and money. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark! Why would someone, keep on reading all the books in this series, and then say that reading them is a waste of time? It just does not make sense! Not only that, but the majority of the book is giving nothing but the text of Hamlet. How can any true fan of Shakespeare give that one star. Just the text of Hamlet alone would make it at least 2 stars. So it seems to me that there are some here who have a hidden agenda of not wanting me to read this book - not because of its allegedly poor literary value. So the more they protested, the more I was intrigued. So I got the book, and I am so glad I did! For the first time, Hamlet came alive to me. The footnotes were enough to hep be understand the arachaic phrases, but I was not overwhelmed with them. The editor wanted Shakespear to speak for himself. None of the footnotes tried to persuade you to their interpretations. That was left to the commentaries after you read the Hamlet story. The commentaries were extremely insightful, looking at Hamlet from a Catholic perspective. And why not? Other commentaries look at Hamlet from a modernist or a feminist perspective. Why not from a Catholic perspective? Again, I do not understand these one-star critics. If they were really fans of Shakespeare, they would be happy to see a book like this that would broaden Shakespeare's audience.

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