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Hugh Grady
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SHAKESPEARE AND IMPURE AESTHETICS

Shakespeare and Impure Aesthetics explores ideas about art implicit in Shakespeare's plays and defines specific Shakespearean aesthetic practices in his use of desire, death, and mourning as resources for art. Hugh Grady draws on a tradition of aesthetic theorists who understand art as always formed in a specific historical moment but as also distanced from its context through its form and utopian projections. Grady sees *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Timon of Athens*, *Hamlet*, and *Romeo and Juliet* as displaying these qualities, showing aesthetic theory's usefulness for close readings of the plays. The book argues that such social-minded 'impure aesthetics' can revitalize the political impulses of the new historicism while opening up a new aesthetic dimension in the current discussion of Shakespeare.

HUGH GRADY is Professor of English at Arcadia University in Glenside, Pennsylvania. He is the author of *The Modernist Shakespeare: Critical Texts in a Material World* (1991), *Shakespeare's Universal Wolf: Studies in Early Modern Reification* (1996) and *Shakespeare, Machiavelli and Montaigne: Power and Subjectivity from Richard II to Hamlet* (2002). He is editor of *Shakespeare and Modernity: From Early Modern to Millennium* (2000) and co-editor (with Terence Hawkes) of *Presentist Shakespeares* (2007).

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To Constance Claire Grady

The first in time and the first in importance of the influences upon the mind is that of nature. Every day, the sun; and after sunset, Night and her stars. Ever the winds blow; ever the grass grows. Every day, men and women, conversing – beholding and beholden. The scholar is [s]he of all men [and women] whom this spectacle most engages.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, 'The American Scholar'

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