



## Avant-Garde Hamlet: Text, Stage, Screen (The Fairleigh Dickinson University Press Series on Shakespeare and the Stage)

By R. S. White

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*Hamlet* stands as a high water mark of canonical art, yet it has equally attracted rebels and experimenters, those avant-garde writers, dramatists, performers, and filmmakers who, in their adaptations and appropriations, seek new ways of expressing innovative and challenging thoughts in the hope that they can change perceptions of their own world. One reason for this, as the book argues, is that the source text that is their inspiration was written in the same spirit. *Hamlet* as a work of art exhibits many aspects of the “vanguard” movements in every society and artistic *milieux*, an avant-garde vision of struggle against conformity, which retains an edge of provocative novelty. Accordingly, it has always inspired unorthodox adaptations and can be known by a neglected portion of the company it keeps, the avant-garde in every age. After placing *Hamlet* alongside “cutting edge” works in Shakespeare’s time, such as Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* and Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy*, chapters deal with the ways in which experimental writers, theatre practitioners, and film-makers have used the play down to the present day to develop their own avant-garde visions. This is a part of the uncanny ability of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* to be “ever-now, ever-new.”

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## **Editorial Review**

### Review

There is certainly much to welcome in this new study of Hamlet's afterlives.... White writes with real felicity, and he has done us all a service in providing so much useful information so intriguingly packaged.... This is a hugely worthwhile and abundantly provocative book. (*Renaissance Quarterly*)

### About the Author

**R. S. White** is a chief investigator for the Australian Research Council's Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions and Winthrop Professor of English at the University of Western Australia. He is author of *John Keats: A Literary Life*.

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