

Contents

List of Illustrations, *ix* Acknowledgments, *xv*

ONE. The Form and Pressure of the Time	3
TWO. Problems, Challenges, and Ambiguities	11
I. The Challenge, 11 II. The “Questionable” Ghost, 14 III. Retribution in Doctrine and Fact: The Darnley Murder, 29 IV. Tyrants, Tyrannicide, and the Monarchomachs, 38 V. Born to Set it Right: Hamlet and Others, 71	
THREE. The Court and the Prince	76
I. Multiple Scandals, 76 II. Marriage Feasts and Incestuous Sheets, 77 III. Most Wicked Speed, 82 IV. Burrio and Bridegroom: The Fall of Mary Queen of Scots, 102	
FOUR. Choosing Sides	111
I. Thinkers and Non-Thinkers, 111 II. Prudentia Bifrontis and Fortuna Bifrons, 113 III. The Conscience of the King, 131 IV. Laertes Dares Damnation, 139 V. Gertrude’s Mirror of Confession, 151	
FIVE. The Deliberate Prince	167
I. The Prince and His Problems, 167 II. The Ideal: Mars and Mercury, 171 III. Hamlet and Conscience, 177 IV. Early Deliberations, 184 V. To Be or Not To Be, 188 VI. To Drink Hot Blood, 193 VII. The Last Soliloquy: Fortitude and Vanity, 199	
SIX. The Prince amid the Tombs	205
I. Drawing to an End, 205 II. Introducing Skeletons and Skulls, 206 III. Young Men with Skulls, 213 IV. Encounters Among the Tombs, 220 V. Decay, My Lady Worm, and the <i>Transi</i> , 227 VI. Hamlet’s Imaginary Dance of Death, 237 VII. Laying Ophelia to Rest, 244	

CONTENTS

SEVEN. Finale	254
I. Providence, Death, and Readiness, 254	
II. Perfect Conscience, 259	
III. Election, Succession, and the Dying Voice, 264	
IV. Final Judgments within the Play, 269	
APPENDICES	281
APPENDIX A. The Mirror up to Nature: Artifact, Metaphor, and Guide, 281	
APPENDIX B. Claudius on Stage and in Hamlet's Mind, 293	
APPENDIX C. Ophelia's Funeral, 297	
I. Contradictory Views, 297	
II. Suicide and Madness, 298	
III. The Burial of Suicides in Shakespeare's England, 301	
IV. The Anomalous Funeral and the Churlish Priest, 304	
V. The Denial of Song, 305	
Notes, 311	
Bibliography, 367	
Indices, 383	