

SHAKESPEARE'S DIALECTIC OF HOPE

Closely examining the relationship between the political and the utopian in five major plays from different phases of Shakespeare's career, Hugh Grady shows the dialectical link between the earlier political dramas and the late plays or tragicomedies. Reading *Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth* from the tragic period alongside *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* from the utopian end of Shakespeare's career, with *Antony and Cleopatra* acting as a transition, Grady reveals how, in the late plays, Shakespeare introduces a transformative element of hope while never losing a sharp awareness of suffering and death. The plays presciently confront dilemmas of an emerging modernity, diagnosing and indicting instrumental politics and capitalism as largely disastrous developments leading to an empty world devoid of meaning and community. Grady persuasively argues that the utopian vision is a specific dialectical response to these fears and a necessity in worlds of injustice, madness, and death.

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From the Political to the Utopian

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To my grandchildren, with all hope for the future
Abigail Rose Linn (2018–)
Mason Mark Linn (2021–)

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“Reification, Mourning, and the Aesthetic in *Antony and Cleopatra* and *The Winter’s Tale*,” in *Shakespeare and the Urgency of Now: Criticism and Theory in the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Cary DiPietro and Hugh Grady (New York: Palgrave, 2013), 172–87, was drawn on for portions of Chapters 4 and 5. The illustration in Chapter 4 is used with the permission of © Trustees of the British Museum.

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