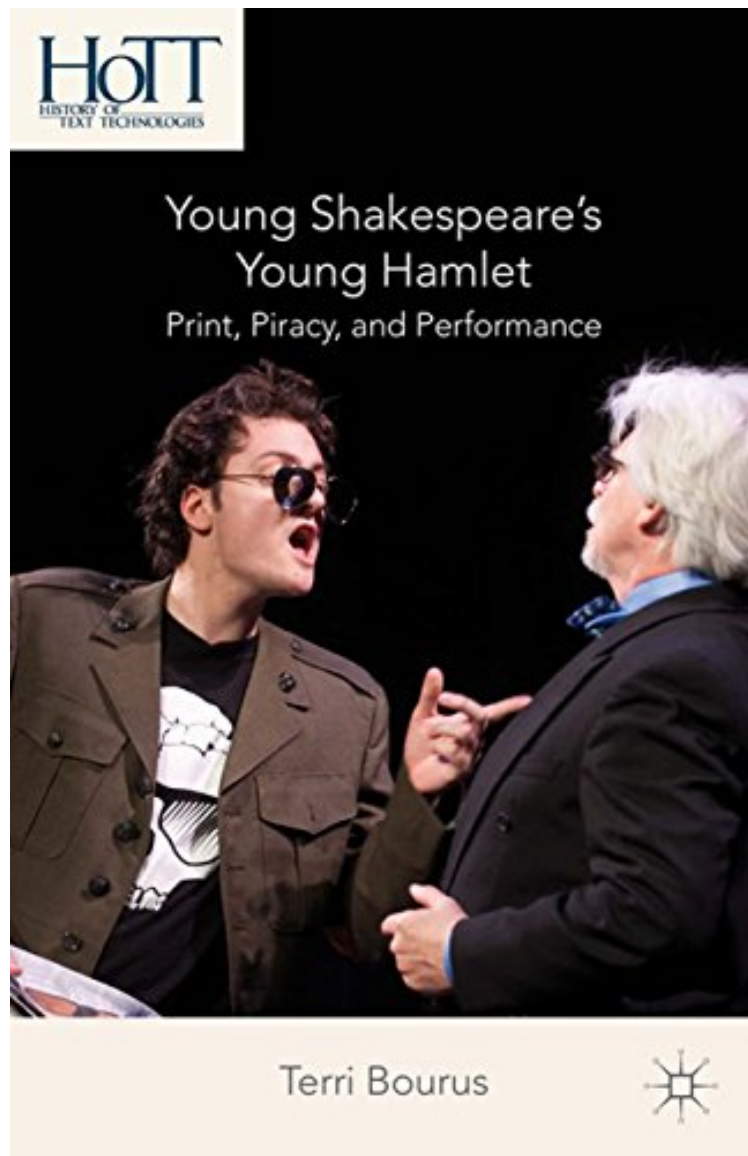


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Young Shakespeare's Young Hamlet: Print, Piracy, and Performance (History of Text Technologies)

T. Bourus

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T. Bourus : Young Shakespeare's Young Hamlet: Print, Piracy, and Performance (History of Text Technologies) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Young Shakespeare's Young Hamlet: Print, Piracy, and Performance (History of Text Technologies):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Hamlet a mystery no longer By Gerald Baker Hamlet isn't the

enigmatic puzzle-play you think it is. There's an early short version of the play that makes perfect sense and answers all the problems people have had with it over the years. The reason we don't realise it is that the short version has been neglected for decades by scholars and editors, though theatre people have done a bit better with it. Terri Bourus is a theatre person and a scholar-editor and her book pretty much demolishes everything we thought we knew about the short version. It's not a version thrown together from memory by bit-part actors for a catchpenny publisher, it's Shakespeare's own first pass at the most famous play by the world's most famous dramatist. It's the version that probably launched his career and brought him to popular and intellectual recognition. Bourus explains all the specialist terms and contexts in a way that scholars don't always do, so her argument can be followed by non-specialists as well. She's got a lively sense of how actors work and how plays get on stage. And her book means we have to rewrite the history of Shakespeare's early career and the history of the theatre world he worked in. NB I posted this review originally on UK, where .com reviews are visible. The function seems not to work the other way, so I have re-posted on .com, because the implications of this book are seismic for Shakespeare studies and early modern theatre history.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Bourus is a wonderful scholar-adventurer!! By Jane C. Mallison I loved this book! I'm not a textual scholar--just a high school English teacher who knows "Hamlet" well and loves it. This book held me riveted as I relished Bourus's combination of scholarship and commonsense. Someone who knows all about the early 17th century publisher Nicholas Ling (first name an anagram for a phonetic spelling of "honeysuckle"! but can quote the Yahoo movie misquotation list to make a telling point is to be cherished. So if you've ever wondered why there are three versions of "Hamlet" (or why most modern editions are a conflated 4th version), you'll like this book. And if you've ever heard people talk about the "Ur-Hamlet," you'll really enjoy Bourus's destruction of its mysterious non-existence.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Bourus writes for an intelligent reader interested in Shakespeare's stage as much as his poetic prowess. By Paige Ambroziak Not too long ago I came across "Shakespeare's Badass Quarto" in the "Chronicle of Higher Education," which details the latest controversy about the first edition of "Hamlet." Though I have worked on "Hamlet" and am inclined to linger over its narrative aspects, debates about the historicity of the text are riveting, nonetheless. For anyone who doesn't know, there are three printed versions of the tragedy, the First Quarto (1603), the Second Quarto (1604), and the First Folio edition of 1623. The First Quarto has always been suspect and a bit of a bastard child, if it is even considered the master's offspring. I happen to love that edition best. It is shorter, tighter, and less about a hesitant and incapable prince than a young heir facing a suspect stepfather. The differences between the editions have been widely examined and discussed, as well as prove viable as evidence for both sides, which brings me to my point. After reading Ron Rosenbaum's article in the "Chronicle," I picked up Terri Bourus's "Young Shakespeare's Young Hamlet," which he had discussed in depth since it convincingly heralds a much needed change to our perception of Shakespeare's most famous tragedy. Bourus claims the 1603 "Hamlet" is the playwright's original version, first performed on the Elizabethan stage in 1589. Thankfully, books by academics are becoming less and less jargon-laden, and are now some of the most fluid and comprehensible texts written. There are practical reasons for writing for a general audience, and it can be done without dumbing down content or stripping away erudition. I won't belabor the point, but, simply put, a theory is useless if no one understands it. I like to think those invested in literary criticism have picked up on this since academic book sales are in desperate need of a revival. Bourus's work is well-researched and a fine example of what I'm talking about. One need not jump-start his or her brain every few passages, rebooting lost connections due to dense material that requires grand assimilation. Bourus writes for an intelligent reader interested in Shakespeare's stage as much as his poetic prowess. I found myself gobbling up her arguments as each of my questions was answered at every turn. There seems to be little that Bourus has not considered. She faces other critics head-on, even those whose work has become canonical and most certainly considered an authoritative voice on the matter. I would venture to say that she untangles "Hamlet's" textual web, and impressively so. Some of the theories she dismantles concern piratical publishers, stealing a copy of the text to publish without authority for financial gain; piratical actors, compiling sides to make a full copy of the text to sell to a publisher for financial gain; and piratical reporters, watching the play in performance and taking notes, transcribing most from memory to put together a completed text to sell to a publisher for financial gain. It is clear that the belief until recently has been that the only possible reason for this bastard copy was for someone other than the playwright to make a profit. But Bourus's argument goes further, taking on Hamlet's age, a bane with which some of the greatest literary critics of the twentieth century have grappled. The First Quarto seems to support the notion that Hamlet is in fact a teenager, not yet university age, and perhaps not old enough to step in as King of Denmark upon Old Hamlet's death. Not only does Bourus turn to the source material, Belleforest's "Amleth," but also the reasonable argument that Ophelia is more likely Juliet Capulet's age than the twenty-something she seems to be in the 1604 and 1623 editions. Her age analysis digs deeper still, tackling the maturing Richard Burbage, the historical evidence that supports political issues of a young heir, Gertrude's relationship to her son, as well as her second marriage, and uses of certain terms, such as young and old, in the early modern period. The clarity Bourus brings to

the confusion about Hamlet's age should more than convince any reader of her weighty scholarship. The real strength of her argument, however, lies in her reliance on the elements of performance to explain quite readily some of the more puzzling details about the 1603 text. Bourus is an academic, an equity actor, and a theatre director who has directed performances of "Hamlet" among other theatrical whales. As they say in the biz, she is a triple threat, and uses her firsthand experience both on stage and with dramatic texts to peel away some of the critical layers under which "Hamlet's" script has lain for centuries.

The different versions of Hamlet constitute one of the most vexing puzzles in Shakespeare studies. In this groundbreaking work, Shakespeare scholar Terri Bourus argues that this puzzle can only be solved by drawing on multiple kinds of evidence and analysis, including book and theatre history, biography, performance studies, and close readings.

"Bourus takes on the tripartite role of detective, historian, and theatrical laboratory technician in Young Shakespeare's Young Hamlet. Methodically, she dismantles fossilized assumptions about one of Shakespeare's greatest tragedies, leaving one to wonder how such a mess of ill- or unfounded propositions could have held currency for so long. Bourus's important book will change the face of Hamlet scholarship. When you get to her conclusion, you will say, with young Hamlet, 'ay, there's the point!'" - Regina Buccola, Associate Professor, Literature and Languages, Roosevelt University, USA and Scholar in Residence, Chicago Shakespeare Theater "For about two centuries we have been seeking answers to the various riddles surrounding the three texts of Hamlet. Previous commentators have worked from bibliographical, literary-historical, or theatrical perspectives and have not come up with fully satisfactory answers. However, Bourus combines all these approaches, since she is trained in all these areas, and comes up with surprising and very satisfactory answers. Anyone seriously interested in Hamlet must read this book." - William Proctor Williams, Adjunct Professor of English, University of Akron, USA, and author of *An Introduction to Bibliographical and Textual Studies*, 4th edition (2009) "A must-have, must-read book for any Shakespearean scholar, editor, theatre practitioner, teacher, and anyone whose work intersects all these areas, Young Shakespeare's Young Hamlet is, without question, a game-changer in studies of Shakespeare's most important and influential play. Disrupting our centuries-old assumptions about the three texts of Hamlet, Bourus dares to ask the questions that uncover a fresh, contemporary perspective on this play and teach us more about Hamlet than we thought possible." - Lori Leigh, Lecturer, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand "Bourus's book, crammed with astute observations, presents a vigorous challenge to orthodox views on the texts of Hamlet and on the provenance of the Ur-Hamlet. This is an important addition to scholarship on Shakespeare's best-known play." - MacDonald P. Jackson, Emeritus Professor of English, University of Auckland, New Zealand "A meticulous study of a long-standing issue, with a wonderfully firm conclusion." - Andrew Gurr, Professor Emeritus, University of Reading, UK "Figuring out the relationship between the first three editions of Hamlet, published in 1603, 1604-5, and 1623, is one of the most intractable problems in Shakespeare studies. Dates of printing tell us only the latest moment by which a play must have been written, and in search of the earliest origins of Hamlet Bourus brilliantly combines a fresh consideration of the historical evidence. Her startling conclusion is scrupulously grounded in a masterly synthesis of all that we know." - Gabriel Egan, Professor of Shakespeare Studies and Director of the Centre for Textual Studies, De Montfort University, UK About the Author Terri Bourus is Associate Professor of English Drama and Director and General Editor of the IUPUI-New Oxford Shakespeare Project at Indiana University Purdue University, USA.