

De Grazia, Margreta and Peter Stallybrass. "The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text."
Shakespeare Quarterly 44.3 (1993): 255-83.

Margreta De Grazia's and Peter Stallybrass' "The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text" interrogates the post-Enlightenment assumption of an authentic Shakespearean original and demonstrates the value of examining the "materiality" of Renaissance texts in order to deconstruct this erroneous assumption. De Grazia and Stallybrass show that Formalism and historicism—the two (then) primary contemporary modes of criticism—are undermined by their assumption of the modern Shakespearean edition as an established standard. De Grazia and Stallybrass commend the New Bibliographers for returning to Renaissance texts but propose that, unlike the New Bibliographers, they using "materiality" of the text to look "at" rather than see "through" early Renaissance texts. De Grazia and Stallybrass ultimately seek to promote a shift from the perspective of searching for an authentic, transcendent Shakespeare in the texts to the perspective of looking at the Shakespearean text in itself to engage with the heterogeneous, dynamic nature of the "absorbent surface of the Shakespearean text" (De Grazia and Stallybrass 283).

The article is structured by the primary post-Enlightenment categories that De Grazia and Stallybrass interrogate: the "category of a single work", the "discrete word", the "unified character", and the "autonomous author" (De Grazia and Stallybrass 257). Their interrogation of the "category of a single work" and a "discrete word" preemptively dismantle the subsequent categories of the "unified character" and the "autonomous author" to bring the critic back to the "surface" of the text. Literally, De Grazia and Stallybrass end at the surface of Renaissance "paper" that brings the article's reader to their position. Just as the article's reader interacts with De Grazia and Stallybrass's text, de Grazia and Stallybrass suggest that the reader interact with the surface rather than something transcendent.