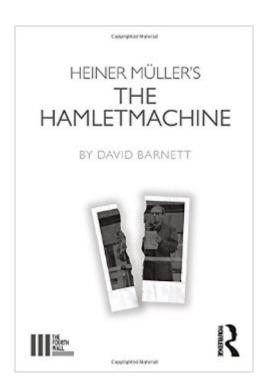
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Heiner Müller's The Hamletmachine (The Fourth Wall)





Synopsis

"lâ ™m good Hamlet giâ ™me a cause for grief" At first glance, readers of The Hamletmachine (1979) could be forgiven for wondering whether it is actually a play at all: it opens with a montage of texts that are not ascribed to a character, there is no vestige of a plot, and the whole piece lasts a total of ten pages. Yet, Heiner MÃ Ilerâ ™s play regularly features in theatresâ ™ repertoires and is frequently staged by university theatre departments. In four short chapters, David Barnett unpicks the complexities of The Hamletmachineâ ™s writing and frames its author as an experimental, politically committed writer who confronts the shortcomings of his age. In considering the problems MÃ Iler poses for the playâ ™s performance, he also discusses two exemplary productions in order to show how the work can engage very different audiences. This book examines why such a compact, radically open, and yet seemingly obscure play has proved so popular.

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