

At Home in Shakespeare's Tragedies

Geraldo U. de Sousa



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Bringing together methods, assumptions and approaches from a variety of disciplines, Geraldo U. de Sousa's innovative study explores the representation, perception, and function of the house, home, household, and family life in Shakespeare's great tragedies. Concentrating on King Lear, Hamlet, Othello, and Macbeth, de Sousa's examination of the home provides a fresh look at material that has been the topic of fierce debate. Through a combination of textual readings and a study of early modern housing conditions, accompanied by analyses that draw on anthropology, architecture, art history, the study of material culture, social history, theater history, phenomenology, and gender studies, this book demonstrates how Shakespeare explores the materiality of the early modern house and evokes domestic space to convey interiority, reflect on the habits of the mind, interrogate everyday life, and register elements of the tragic journey. Specific topics include the function of the disappearance of the castle in King Lear, the juxtaposition of home-centered life in Venice and nomadic, 'unhoused' wandering in Othello, and the use of special lighting effects to reflect this relationship, Hamlet's psyche in response to physical space, and the redistribution of domestic space in Macbeth. Images of the house, home, and household become visually and emotionally vibrant, and thus reflect, define, and support a powerful tragic narrative.



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