



Shakespeare's Dramatic Transactions

Michael Mooney

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Shakespeare's Dramatic Transactions uses conventions of performance criticism—staging and theatrical presentation—to analyze seven major Shakespearean tragedies: *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Richard II*, and *Richard III*. As scholars and readers increasingly question the theoretical models used to describe the concepts of “mimesis” and “representation,” this book describes how the actor’s stage presentation affects the actor’s representational role and the ways in which viewers experience Shakespearean tragedy.

Michael Mooney draws on the work of East German critic Robert Weimann and his concept of *figurenposition*—the correlation between an actor’s stage location and the speech, action, and stylization associated with that position—to understand the actor/stage location relationship in Shakespeare’s plays. In his examination of the original staging of Shakespeare’s tragedies, Mooney looks at the traditional interplay between a downstage “place” and upstage “location” to describe the difference between non-illusionistic action (often staged near the audience) and the illusionistic, localized action that characterizes mimetic art. The innovative and insightful approach of *Shakespeare's Dramatic Transactions* brings together the techniques of performance criticism and the traditional literary study of Shakespearean tragedy. In showing how the distinctions of stage location illuminate the interaction among language, representation, Mooney’s compelling argument enhances our understanding of Shakespeare and the theater.

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