



Eight Tragedies of Shakespeare

Victor Kiernan

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The seventeenth century saw the brief flowering of tragic drama across Western Europe. And in the plays of William Shakespeare, this form of drama found its greatest exponent. These Tragedies, Kiernan argues, represented the artistic expression of a new social and political consciousness which permeated every aspect of life in this period. In this book, Kiernan sets out to rescue the Tragedies from the reductionist interpretations of mainstream literary criticism, by uncovering the wider historical context which shaped Shakespeare's writings. Opening with an overview of contemporary England, the development of the theatre, and a portrait of Shakespeare as a writer, Kiernan goes on to provide an in-depth analysis of eight of his Tragedies - from *Julius Caesar* to *Coriolanus* - drawing out their contrasts and recurring themes, and exploring their attitudes to monarchy, war, religion, philosophy, and changing relations between men and women. Featuring a new introduction by Terry Eagleton, this is an invaluable resource for those looking for a new perspective on Shakespeare's writings.

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