Bringing together recent scholarship on religion and the spatial imagination, Kristen Poole examines how changing religious beliefs and transforming conceptions of space were mutually informative in the decades around 1600. *Supernatural Environments in Shakespeare’s England* explores a series of cultural spaces that focused attention on interactions between the human and the demonic or divine: the deathbed, purgatory, demonic contracts and their spatial surround, Reformation cosmologies, and a landscape newly subject to cartographic surveying. The book examines the seemingly incongruous coexistence of traditional religious beliefs and new mathematical, geometrical ways of perceiving the environment. Arguing that the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century stage dramatized the phenomenological tension that resulted from this uneasy confluence, Dr. Poole’s groundbreaking study considers the complex nature of supernatural environments in Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* and Shakespeare’s *Othello, Hamlet, Macbeth,* and *The Tempest.*

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SUPERNATURAL ENVIRONMENTS IN SHAKESPEARE’S ENGLAND

Spaces of Demonism, Divinity, and Drama

KRISTEN POOLE

University of Delaware
To Martin
and
Corinna and Juliana
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Quarterly, 26 (2009), 127–52. And a much truncated version of Chapter 3 stands as “When Hell Freezes Over: Mount Hecla and Hamlet’s Infernal Geography,” Shakespeare Studies, 39 (2011), 152–87. For all of these, I benefited from the comments of the various editors – Mary Floyd-Wilson, Garrett Sullivan, and Carla Mazzio – and from some wonderful anonymous reader’s reports. I am grateful to those journals for permission to include parts of those articles in this book.

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Note on the text

For sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sources, I have retained original spelling (with the exception of modernizing the long s), although I have standardized capitalization in book titles. The place of publication is London unless indicated otherwise. In my extended discussions of Othello, Hamlet, Macbeth, and The Tempest I have used Arden editions. Throughout the book, unless a different edition is specified, references to other Shakespearean plays are from Stephen Greenblatt et al. (eds.), The Norton Shakespeare, based on the Oxford Edition (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Co., 1997).