



Housebound (Studies in German Literature Linguistics and Culture)

Monika Shafi

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In life and in fiction, houses are compelling objects that shape an impressive range of personal and public affairs. A house embodies experiences often intensely emotional, and it also represents both a major financial investment and a material reality embedded in architectural, aesthetic, and social traditions. The house, the place where we try to be at home, can be regarded -- as theorists from Gaston Bachelard to Edward S. Casey have argued -- as the key space for our constructions of selfhood and belonging. A host of contemporary German narratives featuring houses highlight this relationship between selfhood and domestic space. Beginning with a historical and theoretical overview of the house in German literature, *Housebound* analyzes the shelters -- often highly ambivalent spaces -- that writers such as Katharina Hacker, Arno Geiger, Walter Kappacher, Monika Maron, Jenny Erpenbeck, Judith Hermann, Barbara Honigmann, and Emine Sevgi Özdamar build in their texts and what these reveal about contemporary selfhood in Germany and its relationship to the social world. The concluding comparative analysis of Katharina Hacker's *Die Habenichtse* and the English novelist Ian McEwan's *Saturday* reveals these developments in another national literature and makes a case for the global appeal of the domestic as a major site of identity politics. Monika Shafi is the Elias Ahuja Professor of German and Chair of the Department of Women and Gender Studies at the University of Delaware.

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