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0521616085 - Woman's Theatrical Space
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In this book Hanna Scolnicov examines the configuration of the theatrical space as an icon of the problem of woman. Through her historical and comparative study, Scolnicov reveals the changing conventions of the theatrical space as faithful expressions of the changing attitudes to woman and her sexuality. The theatrical space has shifted accordingly from the front of the palace, to the street, the piazza, and then, progressively, into the drawing-room, the kitchen, the bedroom, narrowing down the scope and infringing on the privacy of intimate relations. Some contemporary playwrights have gone further, deconstructing the familiar naturalistic room to form a non-mimetic interior. From this unusual vantage point, Scolnicov looks at plays by a wide range of authors, including, among others, Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Plautus, Shakespeare, Jonson, Molière, Ibsen, Chekhov and Pinter, relating them to contemporary pictorial and architectural evidence.

The book will be of interest to scholars and students of theatre and theatre history, comparative literature and women's studies.

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To my best friend, Shmuel

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Allegories are things that Relate to Moral Virtues. Moral Virtues do not Exist; they are Allegories & dissimulations. But Time & Space are Real Beings, a Male & a Female. Time is a Man, Space is a Woman, and her Masculine Portion is Death.

William Blake, 'The Vision of the Last Judgment'

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Preface

This book grew out of a paper, 'Theatre space, theatrical space and the theatrical space without', presented at the 1985 London conference on the theatrical space and published in *Themes in Drama 9: The Theatrical Space* (Cambridge University Press, 1987). To James Redmond, organizer of the conference and editor of the series, must go my first thanks for his generosity, encouragement and interest.

That paper was the original nucleus of the book, and in it I attempted to make some basic distinctions and coin some terms necessary for the discussion of spatial structure in the theatre. Also, I tried to convey my excitement about finding an alternative, and to my mind powerful, approach to the analysis of drama, replacing the traditional analyses in terms of plot, character, theme and so on.

As the idea took shape, I discovered that the analysis of the theatrical space reveals not only the general ideology of the play, but, more specifically, its attitude to the place of woman in society. It suddenly became evident that woman is so closely associated with space that almost any articulation of space on stage or in the play is directly expressive of her position, her life style, her personality. In other words, I did not start my investigation from a feminist position: that position was forced on me by my material.

Looking at familiar plays from a woman's point of view made my work on the book simultaneously a voyage into myself, an examination of my own place as a woman in family, home and society at large. In this sense, although this book is devoted to masterpieces of dramatic art, it is also a very personal book.

My greatest debt is obviously to the members of my family, my three children who have, in their different ways, taken an active interest in the development of my book, and above all my husband, who supported my work from first to last and, in the process, became something of a feminist himself.

Many friends and colleagues made my 1988/9 sabbatical year in Cambridge a fruitful and enjoyable experience. Foremost is Peter Holland whose good advice and kindness helped me through many a difficult moment. Clare Hall provided the warm atmosphere and the intellectual stimulation necessary for developing one's ideas. With my friends there, chiefly Barbara and Bill Rosen, Sanae Asahara, Philip King and Tom Lundskaer-Nielsen, I discussed different aspects of the work, always receiving honest and constructive criticism.

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Chapter 5 is based on a paper, 'The woman in the window: A theatrical icon', written for the 22nd International Conference at the Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance in Tours and published in *Spectacle & Image*, ed. by André Lascombes (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1993). My thanks to André Lascombes, who also organized the conference, for permission to use material from the paper. Jean Chothia, of the Department of English at Cambridge, offered helpful criticism and suggestions.

Sarah Stanton, of Cambridge University Press, deserves a special word of thanks for seeing through and encouraging this project from its beginning with unfailing patience and optimism. I acknowledge with gratitude the thoughtful comments of the anonymous Reader. Victoria Cooper saw this work through the press at its last and exhausting stages.

Last but not least, I am indebted to my students in Israel, at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and at Tel-Aviv University, on whom I have tried out many of my interpretations. From my work with them, I became convinced that the analysis of the theatrical space is a readily understood and easily applicable technique.

I am grateful to the following for their kind permission to reproduce objects from their collections: William Francis Warden Fund, Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (Figs. 1a, 1b); The Trustees of the British Museum (Figs. 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 11); The Blacker-Wood Library, McGill University, Montréal (Fig. 13); Drottningholms teatermuseum, Stockholm (Fig. 14); Munch-museet, Oslo (Fig. 18). Fig. 8 is reproduced by permission of the Musei Vaticani; Fig. 17 is reproduced by permission of the Universitetsbiblioteket, Oslo.