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978-1-107-03942-1 - Mapping Irish Theatre: Theories of Space and Place

Chris Morash and Shaun Richards

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## MAPPING IRISH THEATRE

Seamus Heaney once described the 'sense of place' generated by the early Abbey Theatre as the 'imaginative protein' of later Irish writing. Drawing on theorists of space such as Henri Lefebvre and Yi-Fu Tuan, *Mapping Irish Theatre* argues that theatre is 'a machine for making place from space'. Concentrating on Irish theatre, the book investigates how this Irish 'sense of place' was both produced by, and produced, the remarkable work of the Irish Revival, before considering what happens when this spatial formation begins to fade. Exploring more recent site-specific and place-specific theatre alongside canonical works of Irish theatre by playwrights including J. M. Synge, Samuel Beckett and Brian Friel, the study proposes an original theory of theatrical space and theatrical identification, whose application extends beyond Irish theatre, and will be useful for all theatre scholars.

CHRIS MORASH is Seamus Heaney Professor of Irish Writing at Trinity College, Dublin, having previously worked in the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. He is the author of *A History of Irish Theatre, 1601–2000* (Cambridge, 2002), which won the 2002 Theatre Book Prize and which has become the standard history of Irish theatre. He has published widely in the field of Irish theatre studies, and is also known for his pioneering work on Irish famine literature, *Writing the Irish Famine* (1995), and his more recent work on Irish media history, *A History of the Media in Ireland* (Cambridge, 2009).

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*Theories of Space and Place*

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*To Ann and Lucette*

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## *Acknowledgements*

One evening in Neachtain's pub, Galway, in 2001 we decided it would be a good idea to write a book together out of our shared interest in Irish theatre and sense that something was missing in the current critical approaches. In 2010 we presented our first joint presentation of papers on space and place in Irish theatre at the International Association for the Study of Irish Literatures (IASIL) conference at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. In the best part of a decade between having the idea and determining its actual focus, we not only turned a possibility into a never less than stimulating book project, but were progressively and continuously indebted to the unstinting support of a large number of people whose contribution, especially over the final period of its composition, has been inestimable.

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