



Empty Figure on an Empty Stage: The Theatre of Samuel Beckett and His

Les Essif

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Empty Figure on an Empty Stage
The Theatre of Samuel Beckett and His Generation

Les Essif

An original and exciting approach to the theatre of the absurd.

This study considers the ways playwrights draw meaning from emptiness. With reference to actual performances of dramatic works, Les Essif examines drama associated with nonrealistic movement known as theatre of the absurd, focusing on the ways dramatists create an impression of emptiness not only on the stage but also in the body and mind of the central character. Essif makes a case for the meta-dramatic fusion of stage and character.

Empty Figure on an Empty Stage begins with a discussion of philosophical, socio-cultural, and theatrical implications of emptiness. Bringing together pioneers in theatre phenomenology Bert O. States and Stanton B. Garner, Jr., with theatrical thinkers Antonin Artaud and Gordon Craig, and socio-aesthetic thinkers Mikhail Bakhtin and Theodore Adorno, Essif formulates a fresh approach to drama and performance and presents an overview of the evolution of "empty" characters and "empty" space in Western drama. After examining Samuel Beckett's drama and performance, Essif studies works of other dramatists of this generation, primarily from France (Ionesco, Vian, Dubillard, Obaldia), but also from other Western national cultures (Bernhard, Pinter, Stoppard, Handke, Shepard). He supports his thesis with photographs of works of art as well as scenes from theatrical performances of the plays in question.

Les Essif is Associate Professor of Modern Languages and Literatures at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Drama and Performance Studies? Timothy Wiles, general editor

July 2001

272 pages, 18 b&w photos, 6 1/8 x 9 1/4, index, append.

cloth 0-253-33847-6 \$39.95 s / £30.50

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