



# Philosophy and Theatre: An Introduction

*Tom Stern*

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The relationship between philosophy and theatre is a central theme in the writings of Plato and Aristotle and of dramatists from Aristophanes to Stoppard. Where Plato argued that playwrights and actors should be banished from the ideal city for their suspect imitations of reality, Aristotle argued that theatre, particularly tragedy, was vital for stimulating our emotions and helping us to understanding ourselves.

Despite this rich history the study of philosophy and theatre has been largely overlooked in contemporary philosophy. This is the first book to introduce philosophy and theatre. It covers key topics and debates, presenting the contributions of major figures in the history of philosophy, including:

- what is theatre? How does theatre compare with other arts?
- theatre as imitation, including Plato on *mimesis*
- truth and illusion in the theatre, including Nietzsche on tragedy
- theatre as history
- theatre and morality, including Rousseau's criticisms of theatre
- audience and emotion, including Aristotle on catharsis
- theatre and politics, including Brecht's Epic Theatre.

Including annotated further reading and summaries at the end of each chapter, *Philosophy and Theatre* is an ideal starting point for those studying philosophy, theatre studies and related subjects in the arts and humanities.

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