



**THE POST-TRAUMATIC THEATRE
OF GROTOWSKI AND KANTOR**

History and Holocaust
in *Akropolis* and *Dead Class*

MAGDA ROMANSKA



The Post-traumatic Theatre of Grotowski and Kantor

History and Holocaust in ‘Akropolis’ and ‘Dead Class’

Magda Romanska, with a Foreword by Kathleen Cioffi

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A historical and critical analysis of the post-traumatic theatre of Grotowski and Kantor, examining the ways they represent Auschwitz in their respective pivotal works ‘Akropolis’ and ‘Dead Class’.

“[A] valuable resource for those looking to better understand the complex creativity of Grotowski and Kantor within their Polish historical, social, and literary context. [...] It is not only a rich explanation of these dramatists, but also serves as an engaging overview of the Polish literary tradition.” —Alena Aniskiewicz, “Pol-Int.org”

“[Romanska’s] richly documented chapters interweave primary sources, critical commentary, and contemporary theory (for example, Adorno, Agamben, Bettelheim, Améry) on each topic. [...] Through its argumentation and design, the book demonstrates a sophisticated dramaturgical strategy for re-historicizing and recontextualizing theatre and performance events [...] The book also introduces English-language students to a significant national literature and encourages them to undertake equally rigorous, culturally specific readings in their fields of interest.” —Mary Karen Dahl, “Theatre Journal”

Despite its international influence, Polish theatre remains a mystery to many Westerners. This volume attempts to fill in current gaps in English-language scholarship by offering a historical and critical analysis of two of the most influential works of Polish theatre: Jerzy Grotowski’s ‘Akropolis’ and Tadeusz Kantor’s ‘Dead Class’. By examining each director’s representation of Auschwitz, this study provides a new understanding of how translating national trauma through the prism of performance can alter and deflect the meaning and reception of theatrical works, both inside and outside of their cultural and historical contexts.

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