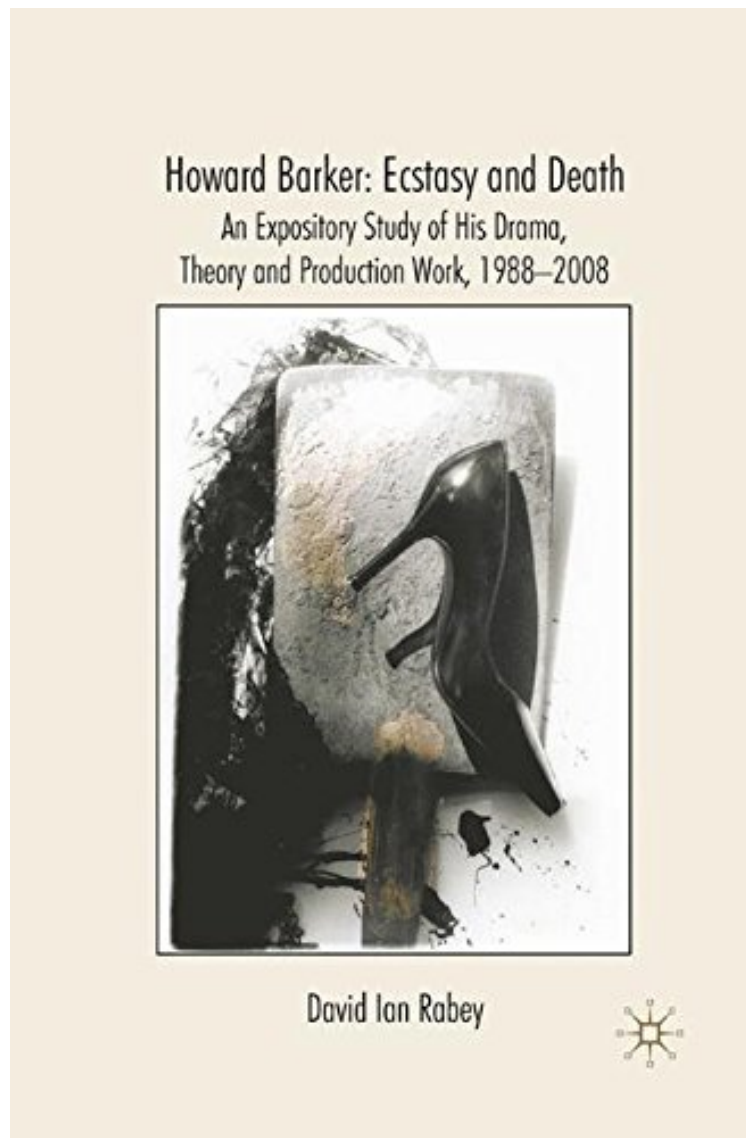


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## Howard Barker: Ecstasy and Death: An Expository Study of His Plays and Production Work, 1988-2008

*D. Rabey*

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**D. Rabey : Howard Barker: Ecstasy and Death: An Expository Study of His Plays and Production Work, 1988-2008** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Howard Barker:

## Ecstasy and Death: An Expository Study of His Plays and Production Work, 1988-2008:

Barker has been acclaimed as 'England's greatest living dramatist' in *The Times* and as 'the Shakespeare of our age' by Sarah Kane. His uniquely stylish work brings together startlingly original forms of classical discipline, moral ruthlessness and catastrophic eroticism. This study considers the full range of his theatrical achievements.

'The range of coverage is a principle strength; the study includes pieces that have been neither produced nor published, thus giving a perspective on the full range of Barker's dramatic writing (the chronology in the appendices is also particularly helpful)... Rabey's book, then, is a welcome addition to the growing body of critical work on one of Britain's most challenging contemporary playwrights.' - Rachel Clements, Royal Holloway, University of London

'Following on from his earlier book...Ecstasy and Death meticulously maps not only Barker's plays and productions of the last twenty years, but also his theoretical and self-conscious performative development as a practitioner...it evolves and offers the reader an insightful distillation of critical approaches via a play-based chronology...Through a careful weaving of chronology and critique, it offers a structured series of provocations that invite the reader to examine the last twenty years of Barker's plays and their production...It's pinpoint focus invites wider moments of reflection and challenges the reader not to fix Barker to one play, one aspect of the work or even one decade, but rather to engage with Barker over more time and to see his work as an ongoing evolution of language, aesthetics and theory.' - Sarah Goldingay, *Studies in Theatre and Performance*

'Rabey's criticism in these books offers a meditation, a critical and lyrical vision, not merely of Barker's theatre but of theatre's place in a 21st-century culture' - George Hunka, *Superfluities: A Journal About the Author*

DAVID IAN RABEY is Professor of Drama and Theatre Studies at Aberystwyth University, UK, and a dramatist, director and performer. His numerous critical publications include *Howard Barker: Politics and Desire*, *English Drama Since 1940* and (as co-editor) *Theatre of Catastrophe: New Essays on Howard Barker*. His dramatic writing includes two volumes, *The Wye Plays* and *Lovefuries*. He has directed and/or acted in eleven Barker productions to date, including performing in Barker's own production of *The Twelfth Battle of Isonzo*. He is an Associate of Barker's theatre company, *The Wrestling School*.