

Excerpts from - Transfigured Stages: Major Practitioners and Theatre Aesthetics in Australia

By Dr Margaret Hamilton. For publication 2010.

(Amsterdam: Rodopi).

'Jenny Kemp's landscapes of the psyche'.

Kemp opens out performances as an expanse for the (feminine) psyche to transfigure the discrete, intentional and centered projection of the (classical) body.

Within the paradigm of Kemp's theatre it is not simply language that speaks, but images and spaces that evoke memory, dream and fantasy. This is indicative of the unconscious realm of bodies, sounds; the Bildräume of Benjamin's thinking. It could be considered to arise as a consequence of Kemp's scenographic approach to text and direction. Kemp opens a space for depicting the inner realm of the psyche with female life-stories based on disjunction.

Kemp's landscapes of the psyche suggest what Sugiera identifies as a shift from a conception of theatre as a metaphor of human life¹ to theatre, as a means of inducing the audience to watch themselves as subjects which perceive, acquire knowledge and partly create the objects of their cognition¹ (2006: 26). From this perspective Kemp's theatre demonstrates that the 'Every object ... of the theatrical mimesis has changed¹, a phenomenon that attests to the importance of Kemp to the Australian theatre scene, and directions in the field internationally (Sugiera 2004: 26).