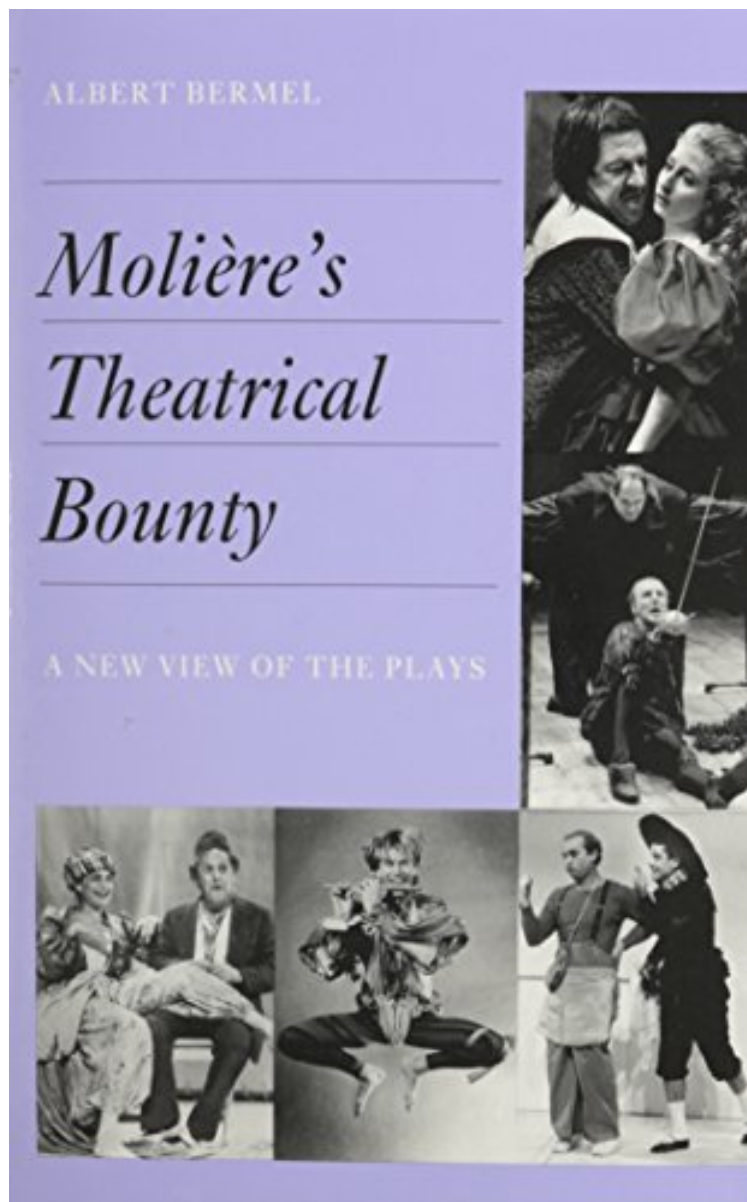


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Moliere's Theatrical Bounty: A New View of the Plays

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Exploring each of Moliere's 33 plays (including the divertissements) for its theatrical possibilities, Bermel deals with dramatic structures, settings, roles and their interactions, original productions, and outstanding recent stage performances in France, Britain, and the United States. His emphasis is theatrical rather than literary, philosophical, or biographical, although he necessarily brings these considerations to bear when discussing certain plays. Bermel introduces a new methodology, one featuring the type of scrutiny directors, actors, and designers apply to any play before and during rehearsal. Thus he studies the dramatic implications of each scene or part of a scene by noting which characters are present, which ones are absent, and why. He analyzes each role, explores interactions among characters, traces the significance of structure, considers how much information is provided and who provides it, and examines such notable background factors as setting, season, and scenic arrangement. Using this methodology, Bermel provides new interpretations of Moliere's most celebrated plays and demonstrates that many of the less famous plays also deserve attention. Previous Moliere critics have been conservative, especially in that they favor traditional stagings; Bermel, however, encourages new explorations of the plays. His main intention is to keep Moliere alive and vital for present and future readers and audiences. Nowhere is this more apparent than in his attention to, and sympathy for, female characters and their points of view.