
THE BEDFORD INTRODUCTION TO

DRAMA

T H I R D E D I T I O N



LEE A. JACOBUS

*The
Bedford
Introduction
to Drama*



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Acknowledgments

Greek Drama

Figure 1. Theater at Epidaurus from *The Theatre of Dionysus in Athens* by Arthur Wallace Pickard-Cambridge. Reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press.

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Preface for Instructors

In its third edition, *The Bedford Introduction to Drama* remains first and foremost the most comprehensive anthology available: a collection of forty-eight important plays that have shaped dramatic literature from the time of the early Greek dramatists to the present. The book incorporates a number of features that distinguish it from other introductions to drama. Most notably, it presents five major playwrights in greater than usual depth, with three plays by Shakespeare and two each by Sophocles, Ibsen, Tennessee Williams, and August Wilson. Commentaries by playwrights, directors, actors, reviewers and critics, thorough biographical and critical introductions, brief production histories, and photographs of landmark productions accompany these and all the plays in the book and offer drama students a unique opportunity to study and write about major figures in the development of drama.

Seventeen plays are new to this edition; among them are Aeschylus's *Oresteia* (*Agamemnon*, *The Libation Bearers*, and *The Eumenides*), Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*, Federico García Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba*, Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage*, Harold Pinter's *Betrayal*, David Mamet's *Oleanna*, and Tony Kushner's *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches*.

Also new to this edition is a large selection of classic and contemporary reviews of plays and a new section entitled How to Write a Drama Review, which analyzes professional reviews and offers suggestions for students writing reviews. These reviews complement the abundant collection of other kinds of commentary in the book—works by theater practitioners and literary and dramatic theorists. Thirty-one of the seventy-four commentaries are new to this edition.

The third edition continues the tradition of offering a strong representation of minority and women playwrights, including Aphra Behn's *The Rover*, Lady Gregory's *The Rising of the Moon*, Susan Glaspell's *Trifles*, Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, Wole Soyinka's *The Strong Breed*, Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls*, David Henry Hwang's *The Dance and the Railroad*, Marsha Norman's *'night, Mother*, María Irene

Fornés's *The Conduct of Life*, August Wilson's *Fences* and *The Piano Lesson*, Suzan-Lori Parks's *The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World*, and Anna Deavere Smith's *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*.

The Bedford Introduction to Drama offers a succinct but thorough history of Western drama. Even when it appears most timeless, all drama (like, of course, all literature) is a product of a language, an era, and a complex range of political, social, and ethnic influences. *The Bedford Introduction to Drama* highlights such influences. A general introduction gives an overview of the great ages of drama, the major genres and elements, and the cultural value of drama. Throughout the book, introductions to significant periods of drama, the playwrights, and the plays focus on the cultural contexts of the works and on their stage history.

Finally, *The Bedford Introduction to Drama* is a complete resource book for the beginning student of drama. In the general introduction, a discussion of the elements of drama defines the important terms and concepts and demonstrates these concepts in action, drawing its examples from Lady Gregory's one-act play *The Rising of the Moon*. The unusually large collection of theater photographs was increased by a third in this edition. Now nearly every play is accompanied by one or more striking photographs, and the plays by playwrights treated in depth are illustrated by photo essays often featuring more than one production to help students understand the plays as texts to be interpreted through performance.

Writing about Drama, the first appendix, shows students possible approaches to commenting on dramatic literature and points the way to developing ideas that can result in probing critical essays. From prewriting to outlining and drafting, the process of writing about drama is illustrated by reference to Lady Gregory's play, and a sample essay on the play provides one example of drama criticism. The new section, How to Write a Drama Review, will be especially useful for assignments involving attendance at theater productions.

The second appendix, Timelines for each period of drama, offers students a quick reference for noting the dates of important events in theater history, social and cultural history, and political history. This appendix, new to the third edition, can help students place events in theater history in a larger cultural context.

A third appendix, the Glossary of Dramatic Terms, defines concepts and terms clearly and concisely. When these terms are first introduced and defined in the text, they appear in small capital letters.

The Selected Bibliography, a fourth appendix, includes a list of reference works for the major periods of drama, the playwrights, and the plays by the five playwrights treated in depth. The cited general references, histories, biographies, critical studies, journal articles, reviews, and collections of plays are especially useful for research in drama.

While the book emphasizes the plays as texts to be read, a fifth appendix, the Selected List of Film, Video, and Audiocassette Resources, reinforces the element of performance. This list, accompanied by a list of distributors, can help instructors and students find an illuminating treatment of the plays in performance.

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For the second edition, experts in specific historical periods examined the introductions for accuracy and comprehensiveness. Each of the introductions was revised with their suggestions in mind. These reviewers were Michael Cadden, Princeton University; Mary Coogan, University of Colorado, Boulder; Anthony Graham-White, University of Illinois, Chicago; C. Fenno Hoffman; Robert D. Hume, Pennsylvania State University; Paul G. Reeve, University of Houston, University Park; Laurence Senelick, Tufts University; and Timothy Wiles, Indiana University, Bloomington.

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