

A decorative arrangement of five gold-colored shapes at the top of the cover: a central diamond flanked by two small squares, and two more small squares further out on the same horizontal line.

# DRAMA

C R I T I C I S M

V O L U M E

31

A decorative arrangement of five gold-colored shapes at the bottom of the cover: a central diamond flanked by two small squares, and two more small squares further out on the same horizontal line.



## C R I T I C I S M

**VOLUME 31**

江苏工业学院图书馆  
藏 书 章

Detroit • New York • San Francisco • New Haven, Conn • Waterville, Maine • London

**Drama Criticism, Vol. 31**

Project Editors: Thomas J. Schoenberg and  
Lawrence J. Trudeau

Editorial: Dana Ramel Barnes, Tom Burns,  
Elizabeth A. Cranston, Kathy D. Darrow,  
Kristen A. Dorsch, Jaclyn R.  
Hermesmeyer, Jeffrey W. Hunter, Jelena  
O. Krstović, Michelle Lee, Russel  
Whitaker

Data Capture: Frances Monroe, Gwen  
Tucker

Indexing Services: Laurie Andriot

Rights and Acquisitions: Margaret  
Chamerslain-Gaston, Kelly Quin, Aja  
Perales

Composition and Electronic Capture: Gary  
Leach

Manufacturing: Cynde Bishop

Associate Product Manager: Marc Cormier

© 2008 Gale, Cengage Learning

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. No part of this work covered by the copyright herein may be reproduced, transmitted, stored, or used in any form or by any means graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including but not limited to photocopying, recording, scanning, digitizing, taping, Web distribution, information networks, or information storage and retrieval systems, except as permitted under Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

This publication is a creative work fully protected by all applicable copyright laws, as well as by misappropriation, trade secret, unfair competition, and other applicable laws. The authors and editors of this work have added value to the underlying factual material herein through one or more of the following: unique and original selection, coordination, expression, arrangement, and classification of the information.

For product information and technology assistance, contact us at  
**Gale Customer Support, 1-800-877-4253.**

For permission to use material from this text or product,  
submit all requests online at [www.cengage.com/permissions](http://www.cengage.com/permissions).

Further permissions questions can be emailed to  
[permissionrequest@cengage.com](mailto:permissionrequest@cengage.com)

While every effort has been made to ensure the reliability of the information presented in this publication, Gale, a part of Cengage Learning, does not guarantee the accuracy of the data contained herein. Gale accepts no payment for listing; and inclusion in the publication of any organization, agency, institution, publication, service, or individual does not imply endorsement of the editors or publisher. Errors brought to the attention of the publisher and verified to the satisfaction of the publisher will be corrected in future editions.

*Gale*  
27500 Drake Rd.  
Farmington Hills, MI, 48331-3535

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOG CARD NUMBER 76-46132

ISBN-13: 978-0-7876-8115-9  
ISBN-10: 0-7876-8115-6

ISSN 1056-4349

# DRAMA

C R I T I C I S M

# Guide to Gale Literary Criticism Series

For criticism on	Consult these Gale series
Authors now living or who died after December 31, 1999	<i>CONTEMPORARY LITERARY CRITICISM (CLC)</i>
Authors who died between 1900 and 1999	<i>TWENTIETH-CENTURY LITERARY CRITICISM (TCLC)</i>
Authors who died between 1800 and 1899	<i>NINETEENTH-CENTURY LITERATURE CRITICISM (NCLC)</i>
Authors who died between 1400 and 1799	<i>LITERATURE CRITICISM FROM 1400 TO 1800 (LC)</i> <i>SHAKESPEAREAN CRITICISM (SC)</i>
Authors who died before 1400	<i>CLASSICAL AND MEDIEVAL LITERATURE CRITICISM (CMLC)</i>
Authors of books for children and young adults	<i>CHILDREN'S LITERATURE REVIEW (CLR)</i>
Dramatists	<i>DRAMA CRITICISM (DC)</i>
Poets	<i>POETRY CRITICISM (PC)</i>
Short story writers	<i>SHORT STORY CRITICISM (SSC)</i>
Literary topics and movements	<i>HARLEM RENAISSANCE: A GALE CRITICAL COMPANION (HR)</i> <i>THE BEAT GENERATION: A GALE CRITICAL COMPANION (BG)</i> <i>FEMINISM IN LITERATURE: A GALE CRITICAL COMPANION (FL)</i> <i>GOTHIC LITERATURE: A GALE CRITICAL COMPANION (GL)</i>
Asian American writers of the last two hundred years	<i>ASIAN AMERICAN LITERATURE (AAL)</i>
Black writers of the past two hundred years	<i>BLACK LITERATURE CRITICISM (BLC)</i> <i>BLACK LITERATURE CRITICISM SUPPLEMENT (BLCS)</i>
Hispanic writers of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries	<i>HISPANIC LITERATURE CRITICISM (HLC)</i> <i>HISPANIC LITERATURE CRITICISM SUPPLEMENT (HLCS)</i>
Native North American writers and orators of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries	<i>NATIVE NORTH AMERICAN LITERATURE (NNAL)</i>
Major authors from the Renaissance to the present	<i>WORLD LITERATURE CRITICISM, 1500 TO THE PRESENT (WLC)</i> <i>WORLD LITERATURE CRITICISM SUPPLEMENT (WLCS)</i>

## Preface

**D***rama Criticism (DC)* is principally intended for beginning students of literature and theater as well as the average playgoer. The series is therefore designed to introduce readers to the most frequently studied playwrights of all time periods and nationalities and to present discerning commentary on dramatic works of enduring interest. Furthermore, *DC* seeks to acquaint the reader with the uses and functions of criticism itself. Selected from a diverse body of commentary, the essays in *DC* offer insights into the authors and their works but do not require that the reader possess a wide background in literary studies. Where appropriate, reviews of important productions of the plays discussed are also included to give students a heightened awareness of drama as a dynamic art form, one that many claim is fully realized only in performance.

*DC* was created in response to suggestions by the staffs of high school, college, and public libraries. These librarians observed a need for a series that assembles critical commentary on the world's most renowned dramatists in the same manner as Gale's *Short Story Criticism (SSC)* and *Poetry Criticism (PC)*, which present material on writers of short fiction and poetry. Although playwrights are covered in such Gale literary criticism series as *Contemporary Literary Criticism (CLC)*, *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism (TCLC)*, *Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism (NCLC)*, *Literature Criticism from 1400 to 1800 (LC)*, and *Classical and Medieval Literature Criticism (CMLC)*, *DC* directs more concentrated attention on individual dramatists than is possible in the broader, survey-oriented entries in these Gale series. Commentary on the works of William Shakespeare may be found in *Shakespearean Criticism (SC)*.

## Scope of the Series

By collecting and organizing commentary on dramatists, *DC* assists students in their efforts to gain insight into literature, achieve better understanding of the texts, and formulate ideas for papers and assignments. A variety of interpretations and assessments is offered, allowing students to pursue their own interests and promoting awareness that literature is dynamic and responsive to many different opinions.

Approximately five to ten authors are included in each volume, and each entry presents a historical survey of the critical response to that playwright's work. The length of an entry is intended to reflect the amount of critical attention the author has received from critics writing in English and from foreign critics in translation. Every attempt has been made to identify and include the most significant essays on each author's work. In order to provide these important critical pieces, the editors sometimes reprint essays that have appeared elsewhere in Gale's literary criticism series. Such duplication, however, never exceeds twenty percent of a *DC* volume.

## Organization of the Book

A *DC* entry consists of the following elements:

- The **Author Heading** consists of the playwright's most commonly used name, followed by birth and death dates. If an author consistently wrote under a pseudonym, the pseudonym is listed in the author heading and the real name given in parentheses on the first line of the introduction. Also located at the beginning of the introduction are any name variations under which the dramatist wrote, including transliterated forms of the names of authors whose languages use nonroman alphabets.
- The **Introduction** contains background information that introduces the reader to the author and the critical debates surrounding his or her work.

- The list of **Principal Works** is divided into two sections. The first section contains the author's dramatic pieces and is organized chronologically by date of first performance. If this has not been conclusively determined, the composition or publication date is used. The second section provides information on the author's major works in other genres.
- Essays offering **overviews of the dramatist's entire literary career** give the student broad perspectives on the writer's artistic development, themes, and concerns that recur in several of his or her works, the author's place in literary history, and other wide-ranging topics.
- **Criticism** of individual plays offers the reader in-depth discussions of a select number of the author's most important works. In some cases, the criticism is divided into two sections, each arranged chronologically. When a significant performance of a play can be identified (typically, the premier of a twentieth-century work), the first section of criticism will feature **production reviews** of this staging. Most entries include sections devoted to **critical commentary** that assesses the literary merit of the selected plays. When necessary, essays are carefully excerpted to focus on the work under consideration; often, however, essays and reviews are reprinted in their entirety. Footnotes are reprinted at the end of each essay or excerpt. In the case of excerpted criticism, only those footnotes that pertain to the excerpted texts are included.
- Critical essays are prefaced by brief **Annotations** explicating each piece.
- A complete **Bibliographic Citation**, designed to help the interested reader locate the original essay or book, precedes each piece of criticism. Source citations in the Literary Criticism Series follow University of Chicago Press style, as outlined in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993).
- An annotated bibliography of **Further Reading** appears at the end of each entry and suggests resources for additional study. In some cases, significant essays for which the editors could not obtain reprint rights are included here. Boxed material following the further reading list provides references to other biographical and critical sources on the author in series published by Gale.

## Cumulative Indexes

A **Cumulative Author Index** lists all of the authors that appear in a wide variety of reference sources published by Gale, including *DC*. A complete list of these sources is found facing the first page of the Author Index. The index also includes birth and death dates and cross references between pseudonyms and actual names.

A **Cumulative Nationality Index** lists all authors featured in *DC* by nationality, followed by the number of the *DC* volume in which their entry appears.

A **Cumulative Title Index** lists in alphabetical order the individual plays discussed in the criticism contained in *DC*. Each title is followed by the author's last name and corresponding volume and page numbers where commentary on the work is located. English-language translations of original foreign-language titles are cross-referenced to the foreign titles so that all references to discussion of a work are combined in one listing.

## Citing *Drama Criticism*

When citing criticism reprinted in the Literary Criticism Series, students should provide complete bibliographic information so that the cited essay can be located in the original print or electronic source. Students who quote directly from reprinted criticism may use any accepted bibliographic format, such as University of Chicago Press style or Modern Language Association (MLA) style. Both the MLA and the University of Chicago formats are acceptable and recognized as being the current standards for citations. It is important, however, to choose one format for all citations; do not mix the two formats within a list of citations.

The examples below follow recommendations for preparing a bibliography set forth in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993); the first example pertains to material drawn from periodicals, the second to material reprinted from books:

Morrison, Jago. "Narration and Unease in Ian McEwan's Later Fiction." *Critique* 42, no. 3 (spring 2001): 253-68. Reprinted in *Drama Criticism*. Vol. 20, edited by Janet Witlec, 212-20. Detroit: Gale, 2003.

Brossard, Nicole. "Poetic Politics." In *The Politics of Poetic Form: Poetry and Public Policy*, edited by Charles Bernstein, 73-82. New York: Roof Books, 1990. Reprinted in *Drama Criticism*. Vol. 20, edited by Janet Witlec, 3-8. Detroit: Gale, 2003.

The examples below follow recommendations for preparing a works cited list set forth in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 5th ed. (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1999); the first example pertains to material drawn from periodicals, the second to material reprinted from books:

Morrison, Jago. "Narration and Unease in Ian McEwan's Later Fiction." *Critique* 42.3 (spring 2001): 253-68. Reprinted in *Drama Criticism*. Ed. Janet Witlec. Vol. 20. Detroit: Gale, 2003. 212-20.

Brossard, Nicole. "Poetic Politics." *The Politics of Poetic Form: Poetry and Public Policy*. Ed. Charles Bernstein. New York: Roof Books, 1990. 73-82. Reprinted in *Drama Criticism*. Ed. Janet Witlec. Vol. 20. Detroit: Gale, 2003. 3-8.

### **Suggestions are Welcome**

Readers who wish to suggest new features, topics, or authors to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions or comments are cordially invited to call, write, or fax the Product Manager:

Product Manager, Literary Criticism Series

Gale

27500 Drake Road

Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535

1-800-347-4253 (GALE)

Fax: 248-699-8054



## Acknowledgments

The editors wish to thank the copyright holders of the criticism included in this volume and the permissions managers of many book and magazine publishing companies for assisting us in securing reproduction rights. Following is a list of the copyright holders who have granted us permission to reproduce material in this volume of *DC*. Every effort has been made to trace copyright, but if omissions have been made, please let us know.

### COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL IN *DC*, VOLUME 31, WAS REPRODUCED FROM THE FOLLOWING PERIODICALS:

*African American Review*, v. 40, summer, 2006 for "Baseball as History and Myth in August Wilson's *Fences*" by Susan Koprince. Reproduced by permission of the author.—*American Drama*, v. 6, fall, 1996. Copyright © 1996 American Drama Institute. Reproduced by permission.—*Comparative Drama*, v. 39, spring, 2005. Copyright © 2005, by the Editors of *Comparative Drama*. Reproduced by permission.—*The Critical Review*, 1965. Reproduced by permission.—*English Studies*, v. 43, October, 1962; v. 63, February, 1982. Copyright © 1962, 1982 Swets & Zeitlinger. Both reproduced by permission.—*Essays in Theatre/Études Théâtrales*, v. 17, November, 1998 for "Protecting Home: Patriarchal Authority in August Wilson's *Fences*" by Eric Sterling. Reproduced by permission by the author.—*The Journal of American Drama and Theatre*, v. 15, winter, 2003. Martin E. Segal Theatre Center © copyright 2003. Reproduced by permission.—*Journal of American Studies*, v. 1, April, 1967 for "Precision and Pseudo Precision in *The Crucible*" by Stephen Fender. Copyright © 1967 Cambridge University Press. Reprinted with the permission of Cambridge University Press and the author.—*Legal Fictions*, autumn, 1997 for "Rehearsing the Witch Trials: Gender Injustice in *The Crucible*," by Joseph Valente. Reproduced by permission of the author.—*The Midwest Quarterly*, v. 20, summer, 1979. Copyright © 1979 by *The Midwest Quarterly*, Pittsburgh State University. Reproduced by permission.—*Modern Drama*, v. 20, September, 1977; v. 28, December, 1985; v. 37, fall, 1994; v. 38, winter, 1995. Copyright © 1977, 1985, 1994, 1995 by the University of Toronto, Graduate Centre for Study of Drama. All reproduced by permission.—*New Theatre Quarterly*, v. 15, August, 1999 for "Sarah Kane: An Appreciation" by Dan Rebellato. Copyright © 1999 Dan Rebellato. Reproduced by permission of the author./v. 20, February, 2004 for "'Out Vile Jelly': Sarah Kane's *Blasted* and Shakespeare's *King Lear*," by Graham Saunders. Copyright © 2004 Cambridge University Press. Reproduced by permission of the author.—*North Dakota Quarterly*, v. 46, spring, 1978. Copyright © 1978 by The University of North Dakota. Reproduced by permission.—*PAJ*, v. 23, September, 2001. Copyright © 2001 by Performing Arts Journal, Inc. Reproduced by permission of The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.—*Theater*, v. 27, 1996. Copyright © 1996 by *Theater*. All rights reserved. Used by permission of the publisher.—*Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, v. 39, 1991. Copyright © 1991 Stauffenburg Verlag Brigitte Narr GmbH. Reproduced by permission.

### COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL IN *DC*, VOLUME 31, WAS REPRODUCED FROM THE FOLLOWING BOOKS:

Adler, Thomas P. From "Conscience and Community in *An Enemy of the People* and *The Crucible*," in *The Cambridge Companion to Arthur Miller*. Edited by Christopher Bigsby. Cambridge University Press, 1997. Copyright © 1997 Cambridge University Press. Reprinted with the permission of Cambridge University Press.—Alter, Iska. From "Betrayal and Blessedness: Explorations of Feminine Power in *The Crucible*, *A View from the Bridge*, and *After the Fall*," in *Feminist Rereadings of Modern American Drama*. Edited by June Schlueter. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1989. Copyright © 1989 by Associated University Presses, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.—Aston, Elaine. From *Feminist Views on the English Stage: Women Playwrights, 1990-2000*. Cambridge University Press, 2003. Copyright © Elaine Aston 2003. Reprinted with the permission of Cambridge University Press.—Bigsby, Christopher. From *Arthur Miller: A Critical Study*. Cambridge University Press, 2005. Copyright © Christopher Bigsby 2005. Reprinted with the permission of Cambridge University Press.—Blau, Herbert. From *The Impossible Theater: A Manifesto*. The Macmillan Company, 1964. Copyright © Herbert Blau 1964. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission of the author.—Bogumil, Mary L. From *Understanding August Wilson*. University of South Carolina Press, 1999. Copyright © 1999 University of South Carolina. Reproduced by permission.—Brewer, Gaylord. From "Holy and Unholy Ghosts: The Legacy of the Father in the Plays of August Wilson," in *Naming the Father: Legacies, Genealogies, and Explorations of Fatherhood in Modern and Contemporary Literature*. Edited by Eva Paulino Bueno, Terry Caesar, and William Hummel. Lexington Books, 2000. Copyright © 2000 by Lexington Books. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.—Cook,

William W. From "Members and Lames: Language in the Plays of August Wilson," in *Black Theatre: Ritual Performance in the African Diaspora*. Edited by Paul Carter Harrison, Victor Leo Walker II, and Gus Edwards. Temple University Press, 2002. Copyright © 2002 by Paul Carter Harrison, Victor Leo Walker II, and Gus Edwards. All rights reserved. Used by permission of Temple University Press.—Elam, Harry J., Jr. From *The Past as Present in the Drama of August Wilson*. The University of Michigan Press, 2004. Copyright © 2004 by the University of Michigan. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.—Green, Tara T. From "Speaking of Voice and August Wilson's Women," in *August Wilson and Black Aesthetics*. Edited by Dana A. Williams and Sandra G. Shannon. Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. © Sandra Shannon and Dana Williams, 2004. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.—Harris-Lopez, Trudier. From *South of Tradition: Essays on African American Literature*. The University of Georgia Press, 2002. Copyright © 2002 by the University of Georgia Press. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.—Livesay, Lewis. From "Hegemony, Hatred, and the Scapegoat Mechanism in Two Miller Dramas: *Playing for Time* and *The Crucible*," in *Miller and Middle America: Essays on Arthur Miller and the American Experience*. Edited by Paula T. Langteau. University Press of America, Inc., 2007. Copyright © 2007 by University Press of America, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.—Luckhurst, Mary. From "Infamy and Dying Young: Sarah Kane, 1971-1999," in *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain, 1660-2000*. Edited by Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody. Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. Copyright © 2005 Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody. All chapters copyright © 2005 their respective authors. All rights reserved. Reproduced with permission of Palgrave Macmillan.—Martine, James J. From *The Crucible: Politics, Property, and Pretense*. Twayne Publishers, 1993. Copyright © 1993 by Twayne Publishers. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission of Gale, a part of Cengage Learning.—Monaco, Pamela Jean. From "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: From the Local to the Mythical in August Wilson," in *August Wilson: A Casebook*. Edited by Marilyn Elkins. Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994. © 1994 Marilyn Elkins. All rights reserved. Republished with permission of Taylor & Francis Company, conveyed through Copyright Clearance Center, Inc.—Morales, Michael. From "Ghosts on the Piano: August Wilson and the Representation of Black American History," in *May All Your Fences Have Gates: Essays on the Drama of August Wilson*. Edited by Alan Nadel. University of Iowa Press, 1994. Copyright © 1994 by the University of Iowa Press. All rights reserved. Reprinted with the permission of the University of Iowa Press.—Morgan, Edmund S. From "Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* and the Salem Witch Trials: A Historian's View," in *The Golden & The Brazen World: Papers in Literature and History, 1650-1800*. Edited by John M. Wallace. University of California Press, 1985. Copyright © 1985 by The Regents of the University of California. Reproduced by permission.—Moss, Leonard. From *Arthur Miller*. Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1967. Copyright © 1967 by Twayne Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission of Gale, a part of Cengage Learning.—Porter, Thomas E. From "The Long Shadow of the Law: *The Crucible*," in *Myth and Modern American Drama*. Wayne State University Press, 1969. Copyright © 1969 by Wayne State University Press. All rights reserved. Reproduced with permission of the author.—Rocha, Mark William. From "Black Madness in August Wilson's 'Down the Line' Cycle," in *Madness in Drama*. Edited by James Redmond. Cambridge University Press, 1993. Copyright © Cambridge University Press 1993. Reprinted with the permission of Cambridge University Press.—Schlueter, June, and James K. Flanagan. From *Arthur Miller*. Ungar, 1987. © 1987 by The Ungar Publishing Company. All rights reserved. Republished with permission of The Continuum International Publishing Group, conveyed through Copyright Clearance Center, Inc.—Schroeder, Patricia R. From *The Presence of the Past in Modern American Drama*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1989. Copyright © 1989 by Associated University Presses, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.—Selz, Jean. From "Raymond Rouleau among the Witches," in *Arthur Miller's The Crucible: Text and Criticism*. Edited by Gerald Weales. The Viking Press, 1971. Copyright © 1971 Gerald Weales. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission of Gerald Weales.—Shannon, Sandra G. From "The Role of Memory in August Wilson's Four-Hundred-Year Autobiography," in *Memory and Cultural Politics: New Approaches to American Ethnic Literatures*. Edited by Amritjit Singh, Joseph T. Skerrett, Jr., and Robert E. Hogan. Northeastern University Press, 1996. Copyright © 1996 by Northeastern University Press. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission of the author.—Strout, Cushing. From *The Veracious Imagination: Essays on American History, Literature, and Biography*. Wesleyan University Press, 1981. Copyright © 1981 by Cushing Strout. Reprinted by permission of Wesleyan University Press.—Weales, Gerald. From "Arthur Miller: Man and His Image" in *American Drama Since World War II*. New York, Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962. Copyright © 1962 by Gerald Weales. Reproduced by permission of the author.—Wolfe, Peter. From *August Wilson*. Twayne Publishers, 1999. Copyright © 1999 by Twayne Publishers. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission of Gale, a part of Cengage Learning.

# Gale Literature Product Advisory Board

The members of the Gale Literature Product Advisory Board—reference librarians from public and academic library systems—represent a cross-section of our customer base and offer a variety of informed perspectives on both the presentation and content of our literature products. Advisory board members assess and define such quality issues as the relevance, currency, and usefulness of the author coverage, critical content, and literary topics included in our series; evaluate the layout, presentation, and general quality of our printed volumes; provide feedback on the criteria used for selecting authors and topics covered in our series; provide suggestions for potential enhancements to our series; identify any gaps in our coverage of authors or literary topics, recommending authors or topics for inclusion; analyze the appropriateness of our content and presentation for various user audiences, such as high school students, undergraduates, graduate students, librarians, and educators; and offer feedback on any proposed changes/enhancements to our series. We wish to thank the following advisors for their advice throughout the year.

**Barbara M. Bibel**  
Librarian  
Oakland Public Library  
Oakland, California

**Dr. Toby Burrows**  
Principal Librarian  
The Scholars' Centre  
University of Western Australia Library  
Nedlands, Western Australia

**Celia C. Daniel**  
Associate Reference Librarian  
Howard University Libraries  
Washington, D.C.

**David M. Durant**  
Reference Librarian  
Joyner Library  
East Carolina University  
Greenville, North Carolina

**Nancy T. Guidry**  
Librarian  
Bakersfield Community College  
Bakersfield, California

**Heather Martin**  
Arts & Humanities Librarian  
University of Alabama at Birmingham, Sterne Library  
Birmingham, Alabama

**Susan Mikula**  
Librarian  
Indiana Free Library  
Indiana, Pennsylvania

**Thomas Nixon**  
Humanities Reference Librarian  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Davis  
Library  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

**Mark Schumacher**  
Jackson Library  
University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
Greensboro, North Carolina

**Gwen Scott-Miller**  
Assistant Director  
Sno-Isle Regional Library System  
Marysville, Washington

# Contents

Preface vii

Acknowledgments xi

Literary Criticism Series Advisory Board xv

<b>Sarah Kane 1971-1999</b> .....	1
<i>English playwright and screenwriter</i>	
<b>Arthur Miller 1915-2005</b> .....	52
<i>American playwright, essayist, screenwriter, short story writer, nonfiction writer, novelist, and autobiographer</i>	
<i>Entry devoted to the play The Crucible (1953)</i>	
<b>August Wilson 1945-2005</b> .....	218
<i>American playwright, poet, and essayist</i>	

Literary Criticism Series Cumulative Author Index 339

Literary Criticism Series Cumulative Topic Index 451

DC Cumulative Nationality Index 467

DC Cumulative Title Index 469



# Sarah Kane

## 1971-1999

(Also wrote under pseudonym Marie Kelvedon) English playwright and screenwriter.

### INTRODUCTION

Sarah Kane was a British dramatist of the late twentieth century, whose violently graphic and politically charged plays generated controversy among both critics and audiences in the 1990s. Her first and best-known play, *Blasted* (1995), is often considered a landmark work that initiated a shift in British theater from naturalism to experimentalism. The plays that comprise Kane's relatively small body of work employ experimental formal techniques while addressing themes such as violence, love, sexuality, torture, and death. They are characterized by a spare and intensely poetic language. Kane's oeuvre, particularly her controversial first play, is often compared to Edward Bond's *Saved* (1965), which also shocked audiences with its graphic scenes and difficult subject matter, but critics have also made connections between her work and the plays of Samuel Beckett, Howard Barker, and Georg Büchner. Although Kane's promising literary career ended prematurely with her suicide in 1999, many commentators consider her contribution to British theater to be significant. Dan Rebellato has maintained that "since her death, there have been many testimonies to her inspiring presence as a teacher of playwriting, in rehearsal, and as an actor and director. But cruelly these memories will fade, and when the last eyes that saw her are closed, it will be as a writer that she will be remembered. Hers was a short career, comprising no more than four or five slim, unflinchingly pared-down pieces of writing for the stage, but it is one which has enriched British playwriting more powerfully and enduringly than any other writer of her generation."

### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Kane was born on February 3, 1971, in Brentwood, Essex. Her mother was a teacher, and her father, a journalist, worked as a correspondent for the *Daily Mirror*. During her childhood and youth, Kane embraced her parents' faith in evangelical Christianity but later came to reject it as a young adult. She claimed, however, that her early reading of Scripture partly inspired the violent imagery of her plays. In 1989 she matriculated at the

University of Bristol, where she studied drama; she graduated in 1992, with honors. Kane enrolled in the master's course in playwriting at the University of Birmingham, and while studying under the direction of David Edgar began constructing her first play, *Blasted*. Early scenes of the play were performed in a workshop on July 3, 1992.

After graduating Kane became involved with the Bush Theatre in London, where she assumed a literary associate position in March of 1994. She continued working on *Blasted*, and in January 1995 James Macdonald staged the first production of the finished play at the Royal Court Theatre. Although Kane maintained a relationship with the Royal Court throughout her brief career, she also worked with other companies. The Gate Theatre in Notting Hill commissioned her second play, *Phaedra's Love* (1996), which was the only one of her works that Kane directed. In 1996 she became the writer in residence for Paines Plough, an experimental company that performed at the Bridewell Theatre. The play *Crave* (1998), written under the pseudonym Marie Kelvedon, was presented there at a lunchtime reading. It was later performed at the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh, during the Edinburgh Festival, under her real name.

At the request of Channel 4, the most experimental of England's television channels, Kane produced the screenplay *Skin*, which premiered in 1997. Kane returned to the Royal Court Theatre in 1998, however, with the production of *Cleansed*. Her last play, *4.48 Psychosis*, was commissioned by the Actors Touring Company and dealt with the subject of suicide. Shortly after completing the play, Kane, who had a history of depression, attempted to kill herself. She was taken to Kings College Hospital in London. A few days later, on February 20, 1999, she hanged herself by her shoelaces in the hospital bathroom. *4.48 Psychosis* was produced posthumously at the Royal Court Theatre in 2000.

### MAJOR DRAMATIC WORKS

In *Blasted*, Kane juxtaposes violent sexual exchanges between a couple in a hotel room with images of war. Ian, a xenophobic and homophobic journalist, and Cate, his epileptic girlfriend, arrive at a hotel room in Leeds, where they engage in various sexual acts. Between scenes, however, Ian rapes Cate. Halfway through the

play, war intrudes and the action onstage seems to move beyond England to another location, though Kane provides no direction. Cate escapes as a soldier (known only as the "Soldier") arrives, who rapes Ian. Ian is further wounded when a mortar bomb demolishes the hotel room. The soldier sucks out Ian's eyes, eats them, and finally commits suicide. While Cate is away, another victim of the war entrusts her with the care of a baby. She returns to the hotel room with the child, but it dies soon after, and Ian tries to eat it. Cate leaves once again and returns with food, and Ian thanks her. The play ends on an ambiguous note: according to a brief stage direction, Ian "dies with relief," though he continues to speak and eat after his apparent death. Kane indicated in interviews that the war scenes in the play were written in response to the war in Bosnia, although it is not explicitly mentioned. While the thematic focus of the drama is concerned with alienation, as well as the connection between personal and political violence, some critics have argued that hope is another important theme in *Blasted*. Cate's decision to care for the estranged baby and share food with Ian, despite the violence he has inflicted on her, suggest that goodness is possible, even in the midst of violence. Critics have also observed the play's formal attributes. Christopher Wixson has noted that "with *Blasted*, Kane seeks to dismantle the old psycho-geographical dramaturgy and construct onstage a new model of place and identity from the devastation." Wixson adds that in this work Kane "strives to represent onstage what is often only implied or relegated offstage, moving the margins to the center. She attempts to represent the political, ethical, and existential unconscious while avoiding euphemism through abstract symbolism or metaphor," concluding that she "resists the neoclassical discretion in her representation of violence, mandating us to confront what comfortable theatergoers in the West put aside in our day-to-day lives."

Love, torture, and purification are the predominant themes of *Cleansed*, Kane's third production. The play is set in an institution, called a university, which exists to purge society of undesirable people. Grace, a subject in the institution, searches for her brother Graham, an addict. She discovers that he has been murdered by Tinker, a doctor-like figure with sadistic tendencies. Grace gradually draws closer to Graham by wearing his clothes, dancing with his spirit, and having sex with him. Finally, after she is given a penis transplant, Grace becomes Graham. Love and betrayal are the central tensions between the other characters in the play, including Carl and Rod, and Robin, a mentally disturbed teenager who falls in love with Grace. Carl is repeatedly mutilated, suffering amputation each time he expresses his love for Rod. Loss of selfhood and the fluidity of personal identity are other important themes in *Cleansed*. By the end of the play, several identities shift, so that most of the characters are either trans-

formed or have taken on the traits of other figures. Amidst the horrors of torture and symbolic mutilation, however, some critics have maintained that love is the primary focus of the play. Dan Rebellato has averred that throughout *Cleansed* "love is tested unendurably in torture and in a series of maiming injuries. The play strips romantic love of all its unknowable promises, its claims of eternity, and asks what is left. What the critics seemed hardly to notice is that there *is* something left, and this irreducible core is the extraordinary and hard-won affirmation of the play." Rebellato concludes that *Cleansed* "shows us a world that is unremittingly cruel, bleak, and harsh, yet the play is none of these things."

Some critics have described *Crave*, Kane's fourth production, as a tone poem rather than a play. The work consists of exchanges between four characters, named A, B, C, and M, who communicate about their desires in spare, poetic dialogue, which intermittently alludes to the work of T. S. Eliot, William Shakespeare, and the King James Bible. Each of the characters is distinct, with clear personality traits, but their relationships with each other are undetermined and left open to interpretation. A is described as a pedophile, C is a victim of abuse, M communicates a desire to have a baby, and B longs to be seduced. At the end of the play the characters embrace death, proclaiming that they are "happy and free." In addition to its formal differences, *Crave* also avoids the graphic and violent acts that were typical of Kane's previous work. Elaine Aston has argued, however, that while "bodies may not be hacked to pieces as they are in *Cleansed*," the play "charts a process of dissonance and disintegration; one that is arguably much bleaker than before." She concludes that the characters in the play "endure lives without meaning and live through, feel through, love through, black existential despair," which brings them to the "point of breakdown leading ultimately to the release of death."

## CRITICAL RECEPTION

When *Blasted* was first produced on the London stage in 1995, many critics were initially horrified. Reacting mainly to the relentless portrayal of graphic violence, some reviewers described the play as obscene and immoral. Others complained that its major themes of brutality and violence had already been explored in dramatic works by other playwrights, and that Kane had failed to offer new insights. The Royal Court Theatre, which had a reputation for staging contentious plays, supported Kane, despite the controversy, and continued running the play. In fact, the furor that surrounded the work increased ticket sales and contributed to Kane's sudden notoriety. In the years since, critics have continued to focus on Kane's depiction of violence, brutality, and graphic sexuality, but many

have defended her ability to shock audiences. Tom Sellar has asserted that, by venturing into "extremity, terror, and social decay," Kane "brings an explosive reality into our theater that the larger culture would rather deny." Sellar concludes that "we can challenge, deny, repudiate, or endorse Kane's line of thought. But above all we must hear and see it, opening ourselves stoically to the ugly social truths it puts before us."

Since her suicide in 1999, Kane has emerged as an important figure in contemporary British theater, heralding the arrival of a new school of writers who offered an unwavering examination of sexuality and violence in modern society. This group of writers, which shared political and aesthetic tendencies, was sometimes described as the "New British Nihilists" or the "New Brutalists." While some critics have continued to regard the violence in Kane's plays as "dehumanizing," others have argued that it brought audiences closer to humanity. For instance, Graham Saunders has claimed that "the extreme states and situations that operate" in Kane's dramatic work are presented "to shock us into regaining our humanness." Saunders argues that this effect "removes her work from the slick, modish, and often socio-realist concerns of her contemporaries, and places her closer to the tradition of Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists such as Marlowe and Webster."

Other commentators have noted the playwright's treatment of themes associated with love, hope, and kindness. Ken Urban, for instance, has remarked that "rather than distinguishing right from wrong, the core of all moralistic enterprises, or conversely, flirting with a cynical amorality, where anything goes, Kane dramatizes the quest for ethics." Urban concludes that "hers is a theatre that offers neither solutions nor redemption. But Kane emerges from calamity with the possibility that an ethics can exist between wounded bodies, that after devastation, good becomes possible."

One unfortunate aspect of Kane's suicide, as a number of critics have noted, is that it shifted attention from her plays to her life, and has tended to overshadow many critical assessments of her literary career. Some theater critics have suggested that Kane's death, rather than her talent, has fueled interest in her work. Commenting on this situation, Mary Luckhurst has observed that "what really distinguishes Kane's notoriety as a postwar British playwright is the sheer intensity of the hostility directed towards her as a dramatist," as well as a "concerted attempt to marginalise" her work. Luckhurst notes that though *Blasted* generated considerable controversy, "very few critics asserted that she could write well, and none argued for her theatrical genius. This makes the gradual iconisation of her after her death all the more troubling." According to the critic, "Kane's suicide was deployed as evidence that she was a 'great' writer but she is still remembered more for her

iconoclasm than for her artistic credentials and whether her fame will endure in Britain is rather doubtful."

In 2001 the Royal Court devoted a season to the production of Kane's work, in an effort to make her plays accessible to a wider audience, but many scholars have maintained that while her work has gained exposure, it is still widely misunderstood. Despite the controversies surrounding the playwright's life and work, many critics agree that Kane's brief literary career left its mark on the direction of British theater at the close of the twentieth century. In the words of Ken Urban, "Kane's *Blasted* remains the defining moment of British theatre in the 1990s, not because of the media brouhaha, but because it was a wake-up call: the critics had to recognize changes occurring in British playwrighting."

---

## PRINCIPAL WORKS

### Plays

*Blasted* 1995  
*Phaedra's Love* 1996  
*Skin* (television play) 1997  
*Cleansed* [as Marie Kelvedon] 1998  
*Crave* 1998  
*4.48 Psychosis* 2000

---

## OVERVIEWS AND GENERAL STUDIES

### Dan Rebellato (essay date August 1999)

SOURCE: Rebellato, Dan. "Sarah Kane: An Appreciation." *New Theatre Quarterly* 15, no. 3 (August 1999): 280-81.

[In the following essay, Rebellato appraises Kane's plays, including *Blasted*, *Cleansed*, and *Crave*, asserting that her "faith in love" emerges from the pain of her work.]

I First Saw Sarah Kane on stage at Bristol University as a strutting, raging, passionate Bradshaw in *Victory* by Howard Barker, the writer she described as the 'Shakespeare of our age'. Her performance has returned to me several times since her death: Bradshaw's fierce moral sense but relentless testing of the limits of the body, her sympathy for the oppressed but grim understanding of

the oppressor, seems to find its echo in many areas of Sarah's work. The last time I met her, in November 1998, we talked about Barker's *The Castle*, and she burst into enthusiasm at the thought of playing Skinner, the feminist witch tortured and demonized but ultimately invited into the sanctuary of male power. 'That's the part I was born to play', she said. This is only one of the promises that Sarah Kane's suicide earlier this year has robbed us of seeing fulfilled.

Sarah initially wanted to direct but, discovering that there weren't enough plays she liked, decided to write her own. A small number written while she was at Bristol were followed by the play she wrote on the Playwriting MA at Birmingham, *Blasted*. In the first half of the play a young girl and a middle-aged journalist play dangerous sexual games in a hotel room in Leeds. Half way through the play, an explosion blows the wall open and, without apparently having shifted location, we seem to be caught up in the siege and scouring of Srebrenica.

The play opened in February, a conventionally quiet month, at the Royal Court's Theatre Upstairs, in 1995. The response, perhaps partly cooked up by critics wanting to cause a stir, but also occasioned by the play's horrifying confrontation with the terrors and tortures of war in the former Yugoslavia, spilled onto the front pages of the tabloids. It was denounced as 'a disgusting feast of filth' and worse. Kane was patronised, vilified, hounded by reporters, who preferred to believe that the events in the play were the product of a young woman's mind rather than the daily experience of tens of thousands of Bosnian Muslims.

The play, despite having been seen in this country by no more than 2,000 people, has become a landmark. It increasingly seems clear that for many people British theatre in the 1990s hinges on that premiere. In a decade once again dominated by low-key naturalism, the play's stylistic rupture and terse, flint-like dialogue revived again an enthusiasm for formal experimentation and imaginative daring in British new writing.

§

The critics focused exclusively on the violence of the play. And while this theme undeniably haunts and shapes her work, perhaps especially *Phaedra's Love* (1996), her riotously unblushing take on Seneca, in her last two plays, *Cleansed* and *Crave* (1998), it became ever clearer that what Kane was writing about was love. Near the start of *Cleansed*, Carl professes undying love for Rod. Throughout the play, this love is tested unendurably in torture and in a series of maiming injuries. The play strips romantic love of all its unknowable promises, its claims of eternity, and asks what is left.

What the critics seemed hardly to notice is that there *is* something left, and this irreducible core is the extraordinary and hard-won affirmation of the play. As Rod says:

I love you *now*.

I'm with you *now*.

I'll do my best, moment to moment, not to betray you.

Now.

That's it. No more. Don't make me lie to you.

It's the most genuinely romantic speech in contemporary British playwriting. *Cleansed* shows us a world that is unremittably cruel, bleak, and harsh, yet the play is none of these things. Looking across the span of Sarah's work, her faith in love, however minimally advanced, emerges more and more strongly from the pain of the work. Hers was, as a character says in Eliot's *The Cocktail Party*, 'the kind of faith that issues from despair'.

In *Crave*, four characters, A, B, C, and M, talk. The writing is spare and poetic, foregrounding rhythm and repetition over literal reference. The longest speech in the play is a wonderfully tugging, insistent expression of the minutiae of a loving relationship ('And I want to play hide-and-seek and give you my clothes and tell you I like your shoes and sit on the steps while you take a bath and massage your neck and kiss your feet and hold your hand and go for a meal and not mind when you eat my food and . . .').

Yet, as ever, the moment is enriched with moral complexity: although the text does not precisely specify, the speech is probably being spoken by a paedophile to a young girl. The relationships spiral through the play, sometimes gentle and questioning, sometimes cruel and exploitative. The play ends with the four characters entering into their deaths and finding themselves to be 'Happy / So Happy / Happy and free'.

It is easy to look back and find hints of Sarah's life in the work, but to do so is to do a disservice both to the work and the life. Sarah spoke powerfully about the lazy reviewer's habit of simply listing the atrocities that stud her plays and calling it a review; for these events are always made meaningful and derive their force from the exceptional sense of stage action, of narrative movement, and her complex drawing of character. It is cruelly ironic to see those critics who seemed incapable of finding narratives in her plays being able to detect a narrative only in her death, retrospectively finding presentiments of suicide in the pained gestures of the work.

Her final play, *4:48 Psychosis*, will bear a weight of expectation and prurient reading from which it will take some time to emerge. It would be a second tragedy if



her death were to become an easy way of not confronting the seriousness of her work. As David Greig said so eloquently at her memorial, Sarah Kane was not some petulant *enfant terrible* who simply gloried in shocking audiences; she was a committed, sophisticated, challenging playwright who had a fine sense of the traditions she came from, and had a generous respect and love for and from the community of writers she moved in.

In October, I invited Sarah to come to Royal Holloway to talk to my students about her work. Given the famously fractious relationship she had with the two institutions at which she studied, it is not surprising to find that the psychiatric torture camp that is the setting of *Cleansed* is said to have been built on the site of a university; yet to my surprise she agreed to come.

My students, having just read *Blasted*, *Cleansed*, and *Crave*, went to the event with some trepidation. And she charmed everyone. Her passionate seriousness about the theatre, her ability to locate the real source for every one of the brutalities in her plays, her wit and ease with her work and reputation were inspirational.

Since her death, there have been many testimonies to her inspiring presence as a teacher of playwriting, in rehearsal, and as an actor and director. But cruelly these memories will fade, and when the last eyes that saw her are closed, it will be as a writer that she will be remembered. Hers was a short career, comprising no more than four or five slim, unflinchingly pared-down pieces of writing for the stage, but it is one which has enriched British playwriting more powerfully and enduringly than any other writer of her generation.

#### Ken Urban (essay date September 2001)

SOURCE: Urban, Ken. "An Ethics of Catastrophe: The Theatre of Sarah Kane." *PAJ* 23, no. 3 (September 2001): 36-46.

[In the following essay, Urban evaluates Kane's overall body of work and argues that the production of *Blasted*, in which an "image of good" emerges out of catastrophe, was the "defining moment of British theatre in the 1990s."]

What I can do is put people through an intense experience. Maybe in a small way from that you can change things.

—Sarah Kane

In the spring of 2001, London's Royal Court Theatre devoted an entire season to the plays of Sarah Kane, each one receiving either a production or a reading in the large Jerwood Theatre Downstairs. Kane, during her

brief career, created a substantial body of work that altered the landscape of British theatre in the 1990s, and the season was a chance to reflect on this accomplishment.

Kane's first play *Blasted*, set in an expensive hotel room in Leeds, charts the violence that befalls the dying journalist Ian and his unwilling sexual partner Cate, a mentally-deficient young woman plagued by fits. *Blasted*'s exploration of personal violence erupts into a far more bloody spectacle when the hotel room is transformed into ground zero for a war. The play was greeted with a maelstrom of abuse by critics when first produced by the Royal Court in 1995. Respected newspapers, TV programs, trashy tabloids, all relished describing their disgust at this play and speculating about the "sick" twenty-three-year-old female author who wrote "this disgusting feast of filth," as *Daily Mail*'s Jack Tinker not-so-subtly put it.

Despite this rancorous reception at home, Kane was welcomed by European theatre. *Blasted* was quickly recognized as one of the most important British plays of the decade. Her plays were produced throughout the continent, two of which won awards for Best Foreign Language Play in Germany. What seemed the start of a lengthy career was cut painfully short when Kane committed suicide in February 1999 at the age of twenty-eight. Though admired abroad, Kane remained a little-understood playwright in her own country. The critical tide had finally begun to turn by 1998 with *Crave*, but with her sudden death, her plays again became prime targets for biographical speculation.

Recognizing Kane's status as the most-talked about, least-seen British playwright, the Court decided to consolidate her work and make it available to a much wider audience. The season included new productions of *Blasted* and *Crave*, a transfer of the Theatre Upstairs production of *4:48 Psychosis* (posthumously staged in the summer of 2000), and readings of *Phaedra's Love* (1996) and *Cleansed* (1998). This would allow the curious an opportunity to see her plays, the critics a chance to revisit them, and her supporters a means to celebrate her talent.

Inspired by the Royal Court's season, this article aims to do something similar for an American audience. While Kane is becoming more well-known in this country, her plays have still not been staged in New York City, bar one unsuccessful production in Fall 2000 (the Axis Theater production of *Crave* featuring Deborah Harry), or in other theatre capitals across the U.S. Here, Kane is becoming a recognizable name, but her work remains misunderstood. This is due, in part, to the lack of understanding regarding changes in contemporary British theatre.

The Kane season at the Royal Court made clear the formal innovations of the plays, which stray far from