

for

DRAMA *for Students*

Volume 1

DRAMA *for Students*

Presenting Analysis, Context and Criticism on
Commonly Studied Dramas

Volume 1



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The Study of Drama

We study drama in order to learn what meaning others have made of life, to comprehend what it takes to produce a work of art, and to glean some understanding of ourselves. Drama produces in a separate, aesthetic world, a moment of being for the audience to experience, while maintaining the detachment of a reflective observer.

Drama is a representational art, a visible and audible narrative presenting virtual, fictional characters within a virtual, fictional universe. Dramatic realizations may pretend to approximate reality or else stubbornly defy, distort, and deform reality into an artistic statement. From this separate universe that is obviously not “real life” we expect a valid reflection upon reality, yet drama never is mistaken for reality—the methods of theater are integral to its form and meaning. Theater is art, and art’s appeal lies in its ability both to approximate life and to depart from it. By presenting its distorted version of life to our consciousness, art gives us a new perspective and appreciation of reality. Although, to some extent, all aesthetic experiences perform this service, theater does it most effectively by creating a separate, cohesive universe that freely acknowledges its status as an art form.

And what is the purpose of the aesthetic universe of drama? The potential answers to such a question are nearly as many and varied as there are plays written, performed, and enjoyed. Dramatic texts can be problems posed, answers asserted, or

moments portrayed. Dramas (tragedies as well as comedies) may serve strictly “to ease the anguish of a torturing hour” (as stated in William Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*)—to divert and entertain—or aspire to move the viewer to action with social issues. Whether to entertain or to instruct, affirm or influence, pacify or shock, dramatic art wraps us in the spell of its imaginary world for the length of the work and then dispenses us back to the real world, entertained, purged, as Aristotle said, of pity and fear, and edified—or at least weary enough to sleep peacefully.

It is commonly thought that theater, being an art of performance, must be experienced—that is, seen—in order to be appreciated fully. However, to view a production of a dramatic text is to be limited to a single interpretation of that text—all other interpretations are for the moment closed off, inaccessible. In the process of producing a play, the director, stage designer, and performers interpret and transform the script into a work of art that always departs in some measure from the author’s original conception. Novelist and critic Umberto Eco, in his *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*, explained, “In short, we can say that every performance offers us a complete and satisfying version of the work, but at the same time makes it incomplete for us, because it cannot simultaneously give all the other artistic solutions which the work may admit.”

Thus Laurence Olivier's coldly formal and neurotic film presentation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (in which he played the title character as well as directed) shows marked differences from subsequent adaptations. While Olivier's *Hamlet* is clearly entangled in a Freudian relationship with his mother, Gertrude, he would be incapable of shushing her with the impassioned kiss that Mel Gibson's mercurial *Hamlet* (in director Franco Zeffirelli's 1990 film) does. Although each of the performances rings true to Shakespeare's text, each is also a mutually exclusive work of art. Also important to consider are the time periods in which each of these films were produced: Olivier made his film in 1948, a time in which overt references to sexuality (especially incest) were frowned upon. Gibson and Zeffirelli made their film in a culture more relaxed and comfortable with these issues. Just as actors and directors can influence the presentation of drama, so too can the time period of the production affect what the audience will see.

A play script is an open text from which an infinity of specific realizations may be derived. Dramatic scripts that are more open to interpretive creativity (such as those of Ntozake Shange and Tomson Highway) actually require the creative improvisation of the production troupe in order to complete the text. Even the most prescriptive scripts (those of Neil Simon, Lillian Hellman, and Robert Bolt, for example), can never fully control the actualization of live performance, and circumstantial events, including the attitude and receptivity of the audience, make every performance a unique event. Thus, while it is important to view a production of a dramatic piece, if one wants to understand a drama fully it is equally important to read the original dramatic text.

The reader of a dramatic text or script is not limited by either the specific interpretation of a given production or by the unstoppable action of a moving spectacle. The reader of a dramatic text may discover the nuances of the play's language, struc-

ture, and events at their own pace. Yet studied alone, the author's blueprint for artistic production does not tell the whole story of a play's life and significance. One also needs to assess the play's critical reviews to discover how it resonated to cultural themes at the time of its debut and how the shifting tides of cultural interest have revised its interpretation and impact on audiences. And to do this, one needs to know a little about the culture of the times which produced the play as well as the author who penned it.

Drama for Students supplies this material in a useful compendium for the student of dramatic theater. Covering a range of dramatic works that span from the fifth century B.C. to the 1990s, this book focuses on significant theatrical works whose themes and form transcend the uncertainty of dramatic fads. These are plays that have proven to be both memorable and teachable. *Drama for Students* seeks to enhance appreciation of these dramatic texts by providing scholarly materials written with the secondary and college/university student in mind. It provides for each play a concise summary of the plot and characters as well as a detailed explanation of its themes and techniques. In addition, background material on the historical context of the play, its critical reception, and the author's life help the student to understand the work's position in the chronicle of dramatic history. For each play entry, a new work of scholarly criticism is also included, as well as segments of other significant critical works for handy reference. A thorough bibliography provides a starting point for further research.

These inaugural two volumes offer comprehensive educational resources for students of drama. *Drama for Students* is a vital book for dramatic interpretation and a valuable addition to any reference library.

Source: Eco, Umberto, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*, Indiana University Press, 1979.

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Introduction

Purpose of Drama for Students

The purpose of *Drama for Students* (DfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying dramas by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's "For Students" literature line, DfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific plays. While each volume contains entries on "classic" dramas frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary plays, including works by multicultural, international, and women playwrights.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the play and the work's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a drama; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the drama as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the play; analysis of important themes in the drama; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the play.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the play itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work.

This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the drama was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the play. A unique feature of DfS is a specially commissioned overview essay on each drama by an academic expert, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each play, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on each drama.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of DfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; *Reading Lists for College-Bound Students*; *The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges*; textbooks on teaching dramas; a College Board survey of plays commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of plays commonly studied in high schools; St. James Press's *International Dictionary of Theatre*; and Arthur Applebee's 1993 study *Literature in the Secondary School: Studies of Curriculum and Instruction in the United States*.

Input was also solicited from our expert advisory board (both experienced educators specializing in English), as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of “classic” dramas (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary dramas for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women playwrights. Our advisory board members—current high school teachers—helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in *DfS* focuses on one play. Each entry heading lists the full name of the play, the author’s name, and the date of the play’s first production or publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- **Introduction:** a brief overview of the drama which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- **Author Biography:** this section includes basic facts about the author’s life, and focuses on events and times in the author’s life that inspired the drama in question.
- **Plot Summary:** a description of the major events in the play, with interpretation of how these events help articulate the play’s themes. Subheads demarcate the plays’ various acts or scenes.
- **Characters:** an alphabetical listing of major characters in the play. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character’s role in the plays, as well as discussion of the character’s actions, relationships, and possible motivation.

Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed—for instance, the Stage Manager in *Our Town*—the character is listed as “The Stage Manager” and alphabetized as “Stage Manager.” If a character’s first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by the name.

Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the nickname “Babe” would head the listing for a character in *Crimes of the Heart*, but below that listing would be her less-mentioned married name “Rebecca Botrelle.”

- **Themes:** a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the play. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- **Style:** this section addresses important style elements of the drama, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- **Historical and Cultural Context:** This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate *in which the author lived and the play was created*. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the play is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the play is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- **Critical Overview:** this section provides background on the critical reputation of the play, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older plays, this section includes a history of how the drama was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent plays, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- **For Further Study:** an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.
- **Sources:** an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- **Criticism:** an essay commissioned by *DfS* which specifically deals with the play and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set separate from the main text:

- **Media Adaptations:** a list of important film and television adaptations of the play, including source information. The list may also include such variations on the work as audio recordings, musical adaptations, and other stage interpretations.
- **Compare and Contrast Box:** an “at-a-glance” comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author’s time and culture and late twentieth-century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the drama was written, the time or place the play was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after the mid-1970s may not have this box.
- **What Do I Read Next?:** a list of works that might complement the featured play or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.
- **Study Questions:** a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the play. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.

Other Features

DfS includes “The Study of Drama,” a foreword by Carole Hamilton, an educator and author who specializes in dramatic works. This essay examines the basis for drama in societies and what drives people to study such work. Hamilton also discusses how *Drama for Students* can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading/viewing experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the *DfS* series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the *DfS* series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to

broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in **boldface**.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from stage productions, and stills from film adaptations.

Citing Drama for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of *Drama for Students* may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed.

When citing text from *DfS* that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

“Our Town,” *Drama for Students*. Ed. David Galens and Lynn Spampinato. Vol. 1. Detroit: Gale, 1997. 8–9.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from *DfS* (usually the first piece under the “Criticism” subhead), the following format should be used:

Fiero, John. Essay on “Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992.” *Drama for Students*. Ed. David Galens and Lynn Spampinato. Vol. 1. Detroit: Gale, 1997. 8–9.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of *DfS*, the following form may be used:

Rich, Frank. “Theatre: A Mamet Play, ‘Glengarry Glen Ross’.” *New York Theatre Critics’ Review* Vol. 45, No. 4 (March 5, 1984), 5–7; excerpted and reprinted in *Drama for Students*, Vol. 1, ed. David Galens and Lynn Spampinato (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 61–64.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of *DfS*, the following form may be used:

Kerr, Walter. “The Miracle Worker,” in *The Theatre in Spite of Itself* (Simon & Schuster, 1963, 255–57; excerpted and reprinted in *Drama for Students*, Vol. 1, ed. Dave Galens and Lynn Spampinato (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59–61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of *Drama for Students* welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest dramas to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via E-mail at: **david_galens@gale.com**. Or write to the editor at:

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Literary Chronology

- c. 496 B.C.:** Sophocles born in Colonus, Greece, c. 496 B.C.
- c. 480 B.C.:** Euripides born in Athens, Greece, c. 480 B.C.
- 442 B.C.:** *Antigone* is written as the last work in Sophocles's "Theban Trilogy."
- 431 B.C.:** *Medea* debuts at the Great Dionysia, a festival in Athens, 431 B.C.
- 430 B.C.:** *Oedipus the King*, the second play in Sophocles's Theban Trilogy, is produced at the Great Dionysia of 430 B.C.
- c. 406 B.C.:** Euripides dies an expatriot in Macedonia, c. 406 B.C.
- c. 406 B.C.:** Sophocles dies in Athens, Greece, c. 406 B.C.
- 1564:** Christopher Marlowe is born in Canterbury, England, in February of 1564.
- 1593:** Marlowe is killed by a dining companion during a tavern fight, May 30, 1593, in Deptford, England; there is considerable speculation as to whether the murder was a random act or an assassination.
- 1594:** An early version of Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* is posthumously produced by a theatrical troupe known as the Earl of Nottingham's Men.
- 1728:** The son of a minister, Oliver Goldsmith is born November 10, 1728, in Ballymahon, Ireland.
- 1773:** Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* debuts in England in 1773.
- 1774:** Goldsmith dies on April 4, 1774, in London, England; he is buried in Temple Church in London, with a monument erected to him in Westminster Abbey.
- 1828:** Henrik Ibsen born March 20, 1828, to Knud and Marichen (Altenburg) Ibsen, in Skien, Norway.
- 1856:** George Bernard Shaw is born on July 26, 1856, to George Carr and Lucinda Elizabeth (Gurly) Shaw, in Dublin, Ireland.
- 1860:** Anton Chekhov is born on January 16, 1860, to Pavel Yegorovitch and Yevgeniya Yakovlevna (Morozov) Chekhov in Taganrog, Russia.
- 1868:** Edmond Rostand is born on April 1, 1868, in Marseilles, France, to Eugene Rostand and his wife.
- 1879:** *A Doll's House* published on December 4, 1879 and first performed in Copenhagen, Denmark, on December 21, 1879.
- 1888:** Eugene O'Neill is born on October 16, 1888, to James and Mary Ellen (Quinlan) O'Neill, in New York City.

- 1889:** George S. Kaufman is born November 16, 1889, to Joseph S. and Nettie Schamberg (Myers) Kaufman, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- 1890:** Agatha Christie is born on September 15, 1890, to Frederick Alvah and Clarissa Miller, in Torquay, Devon, England.
- 1895:** Oscar Hammerstein is born on July 12, 1895, to William and Alica Vivian (Nimmo) Hammerstein, in New York City.
- 1897:** Thornton Wilder is born on April 17, 1897, to Amos Parker and Isabella Thornton (Niven) Wilder, in Madison, Wisconsin.
- 1897:** Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* is first produced at the Porte Saint-Martin Theater in Paris, France, on December 28, 1897.
- 1900:** *The Cherry Orchard*, under its original Russian title of *Vishnyovy Sad: Komediya v chetyrykh deystriyakh*, is first produced in Moscow, Russia, at the Moscow Art Theater on January 17, 1900.
- 1902:** Richard Rodgers is born on June 28, 1902, to William Abraham and Mamie (Levy) Rodgers, in New York City.
- 1904:** Chekhov dies of tuberculosis July 2, 1904, in Badenweiler, Germany; he is buried in Moscow, Russia.
- 1904:** Moss Hart is born on October 24, 1904, to Barnett and Lillian (Solomon) Hart in New York City.
- 1906:** Ibsen dies from complications resulting from a series of strokes on May 23, 1906, in Oslo, Norway.
- 1906:** Samuel Beckett is born on April 13, 1906, to William Frank and Mary Jones (Roe) Beckett, in Foxrock, Dublin, Ireland.
- 1906:** Lillian Hellman is born on June 20, 1906, to Max Bernard and Julia (Newhouse) Hellman, in New Orleans, Louisiana.
- 1911:** Tennessee Williams is born on March 26, 1911, to Cornelius Coffin and Edwina (Dakin) Williams, in Columbus, Mississippi.
- 1914:** William Gibson is born on November 13, 1914, to George Irving and Florence (Dore) Gibson, in New York City.
- 1914:** *Pygmalion* is first produced in London, England, at His Majesty's Theatre, April 11, 1914.
- 1915:** Arthur Miller is born on October 17, 1915, to Isidore and Augusta (Barnett) Miller, in New York City.
- 1915:** Jerome Lawrence is born on July 14, 1915, to Samuel and Sarah (Rogen) Lawrence, in Cleveland, Ohio.
- 1918:** Rostand dies on December 2 (one source says December 22), 1918, in Paris, France.
- 1918:** Robert E. Lee is born on October 15, 1918, to Claire Melvin and Elvira (Taft) Lee, in Elyria, Ohio.
- 1920:** Alice Childress is born on October 12, 1920, in Charleston, South Carolina.
- 1924:** Robert Bolt is born on August 15, 1924, to Ralph and Leah (Binnion) Bolt, in Sale, Manchester, England.
- 1925:** Gore Vidal is born on October 3, 1925, to Eugene Luther and Nina (Gore) Vidal, at the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York.
- 1927:** Neil Simon is born on July 4, 1927, to Irving and Mamie Simon, in Bronx, New York.
- 1928:** Edward Albee is born on March 12, 1928, probably in Virginia; adopted by Reed A. and Frances (Cotter) Albee.
- 1930:** Lorraine Hansberry is born on May 19, 1930, to Carl Augustus and Nannie (Perry) Hansberry, in Chicago, Illinois.
- 1936:** Eugene O'Neill awarded the Nobel Prize in literature; he is only the second American to receive this honor.
- 1936:** *You Can't Take it with You* is first produced on Broadway at the Booth Theatre, December 14, 1936.
- 1936:** Hart and Kaufman are awarded the Pulitzer for their comedy.
- 1937:** Tom Stoppard is born on July 3, 1937, to Eugene Straussler and Martha Stoppard, in Zlin, Czechoslovakia.
- 1938:** *Our Town* is first produced in Princeton, New Jersey, on January 22, 1938; produced in New York City at the Henry Miller Theatre, February 4, 1938.
- 1939:** Wilder's play receives the Pulitzer Prize despite initially mixed reviews of the drama.

- 1939:** *The Little Foxes* is first produced in New York City at the National Theatre on February 15, 1939.
- 1944:** *The Glass Menagerie* is first produced in Chicago, Illinois, in 1944; the play is produced on Broadway the following year.
- 1947:** Williams's play is first published in 1947; the play has productions staged in both Boston and New York.
- 1947:** Marsha Norman born on September 21, 1947, to Billie Lee and Bertha Mae (Conley) Williams, in Louisville, Kentucky.
- 1947:** David Mamet born on November 30, 1947, to Bernard Morris and Lenore June (Silver) Mamet, in Chicago, Illinois.
- 1948:** Williams's play is awarded the Pulitzer for drama in addition to winning the New York Drama Critics Circle Award.
- 1948:** Ntozake Shange born on October 18, 1948, to Paul T. and Eloise Williams, in Trenton, New Jersey.
- 1949:** *Death of a Salesman* first produced on Broadway at the Morosco Theatre, February 10, 1949.
- 1949:** Miller's play receives the prestigious Pulitzer as well as the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for best play of the year.
- 1950:** Shaw dies November 2, 1950, in Ayot Saint Lawrence, Hertfordshire, England.
- 1950:** Anna Devere Smith is born on September 18, 1950, to Devere Young and Anna (Young) Smith, in Baltimore, Maryland.
- 1951:** Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The King and I* makes its debut on Broadway in 1951.
- 1951:** Tomson Highway born on December 6, 1951 (some sources say 1952), in Northwest Manitoba, Canada.
- 1952:** Beginning its record-breaking run, *The Mousetrap* is first produced on the West End of England, at the Ambassadors' Theatre, November 25, 1952; produced Off-Broadway at the Maidman Playhouse in 1960.
- 1952:** Beth Henley born on May 8, 1952, to Charles Boyce and Elizabeth Josephine (Becker) Henley, in Jackson, Mississippi.
- 1953:** *Waiting for Godot* is first produced in Paris, France, at Theatre de Babylone, January 5, 1953.
- 1953:** O'Neill dies of pneumonia on November 27, 1953, in Boston, Massachusetts; he is buried December 2, 1953, in Forest Hills Cemetery, Boston.
- 1954:** *A Man for All Seasons* is first broadcast as a radio play by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in 1954; a televised adaptation airs on BBC-TV in 1957; a full-length play is produced in London in 1960 and in New York the following year.
- 1955:** *Inherit the Wind* is first produced on Broadway at the National Theatre (now the Nederlander Theatre, also formerly the Billy Rose Theatre), April 21, 1955.
- 1955:** *A Visit to a Small Planet* is produced as a radio play; an expanded edition has its first Broadway production at the Booth Theater on February 7, 1957; the play is adapted by Edmund Beloin and Henry Garson as a film starring Jerry Lewis in 1960.
- 1956:** Following O'Neill's instructions that the play not be produced until after his death, *Long Day's Journey into Night* is first produced in Stockholm, Sweden, at the Kungliga Dramatiska Teatern, February 10, 1956; the play is produced on Broadway at the Helen Hayes Theatre, November 7, 1956.
- 1956:** Following a posthumous production in Sweden, the first published edition of O'Neill's play receives the Pulitzer.
- 1957:** *The Miracle Worker* debuts as a television play produced by the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) for the anthology series *Playhouse 90* in 1957; the play is rewritten for the stage and produced on Broadway at the Playhouse Theatre, October 19, 1959; it is adapted for film and produced by United Artists in 1962; the play comes full circle with another television adaptation by the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) in 1979.
- 1959:** Hansberry becomes the first black female playwright to have her work produced on Broadway when *A Raisin in the Sun* debuts in 1959. She later becomes the first black playwright to win the New York Drama Critics Circle Award; she is also the youngest playwright to receive this honor.
- 1959:** *Zoo Story* is produced for the first time in Berlin, Germany, on September 28, 1959, at the Schiller Theatre Werkstatt; the play debuted off-

- Broadway at the Provincetown Playhouse on January 14, 1960.
- 1960:** Hammerstein dies on August 23, 1960, in Doylestown, Pennsylvania.
- 1961:** Hart dies on December 20, 1961, in Palm Springs, California.
- 1961:** Kaufman dies following a heart attack, June 2, 1961, in New York City.
- 1965:** Hansberry dies of cancer on January 12, 1965, in New York City. She is buried in Beth El Cemetery.
- 1965:** *The Odd Couple* debuts on Broadway in March of 1965.
- 1966:** Childress's *Wedding Band* receives its first production in 1966; due to concerns about the play's interracial themes, a production is not mounted on Broadway until 1972.
- 1966:** *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is first produced as an amateur production in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1966; it has subsequent productions in London and New York in 1967.
- 1975:** Shange's *for colored girls . . .* is first produced in New York City at Studio Rivbea, July 7, 1975; it is later produced Off-Broadway at the Anspacher Public Theatre in 1976; it is produced on Broadway at the Booth Theatre, September 15, 1976.
- 1975:** Wilder dies of a heart attack, December 7, 1975, in Hamden, Connecticut.
- 1976:** Christie dies January 12, 1976, in Wallingford, England.
- 1979:** Rodgers dies on December 30, 1979, in Manhattan, New York.
- 1979:** *Crimes of the Heart* is first produced in Louisville, Kentucky, at the Actors' Theatre of Louisville, February 18, 1979; produced on Broadway at the John Golden Theatre, November 4, 1981.
- 1981:** Henley is awarded the Pulitzer Prize in drama for her first play.
- 1982:** Norman's *'night, Mother* is first produced at the American Repertory Theatre, Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1982; it is later produced on Broadway at the Golden Theatre in 1983.
- 1983:** *Glengarry, Glen Ross* is first presented at the Cottesloe Theatre of the Royal National Theatre, in London, England, on September 21, 1983; the play's American premier takes place at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago, Illinois, on February 6, 1984; with one cast change, the production then transfers to Broadway's Golden Theatre on March 5, 1984.
- 1983:** Norman wins the Pulitzer for drama just two years after her southern colleague Beth Henley.
- 1983:** Williams chokes to death on February 24, 1983, in his suite at Hotel Elysee in New York City; he is buried in St. Louis, Missouri.
- 1984:** Mamet's play about business and greed, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, is awarded the Pulitzer for drama.
- 1984:** Hellman dies of cardiac arrest on June 30, 1984, in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts.
- 1986:** *The Rez Sisters* is first produced at the National Canadian Centre in Toronto, Ontario, in 1986.
- 1986:** Highway's play wins both the Dora Mavor Award and is runner-up for the Floyd F. Chalmers Award for outstanding Canadian play of 1986.
- 1989:** Beckett dies of respiratory failure, December 22, 1989, in Paris, France.
- 1993:** Following the Los Angeles riots that inspired the work, *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* begins its premier run on May 23, 1993, in Los Angeles, California, at the Center Theatre Group/Mark Taper Forum.
- 1993:** Smith's play garners several major awards, including an Obie Award, Drama Desk Award, Outer Critics Circle Award.
- 1994:** Childress dies of cancer, August 14, 1994, in Queens, New York.
- 1995:** Bolt dies on February 20, 1995, in Hampshire, England.

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