

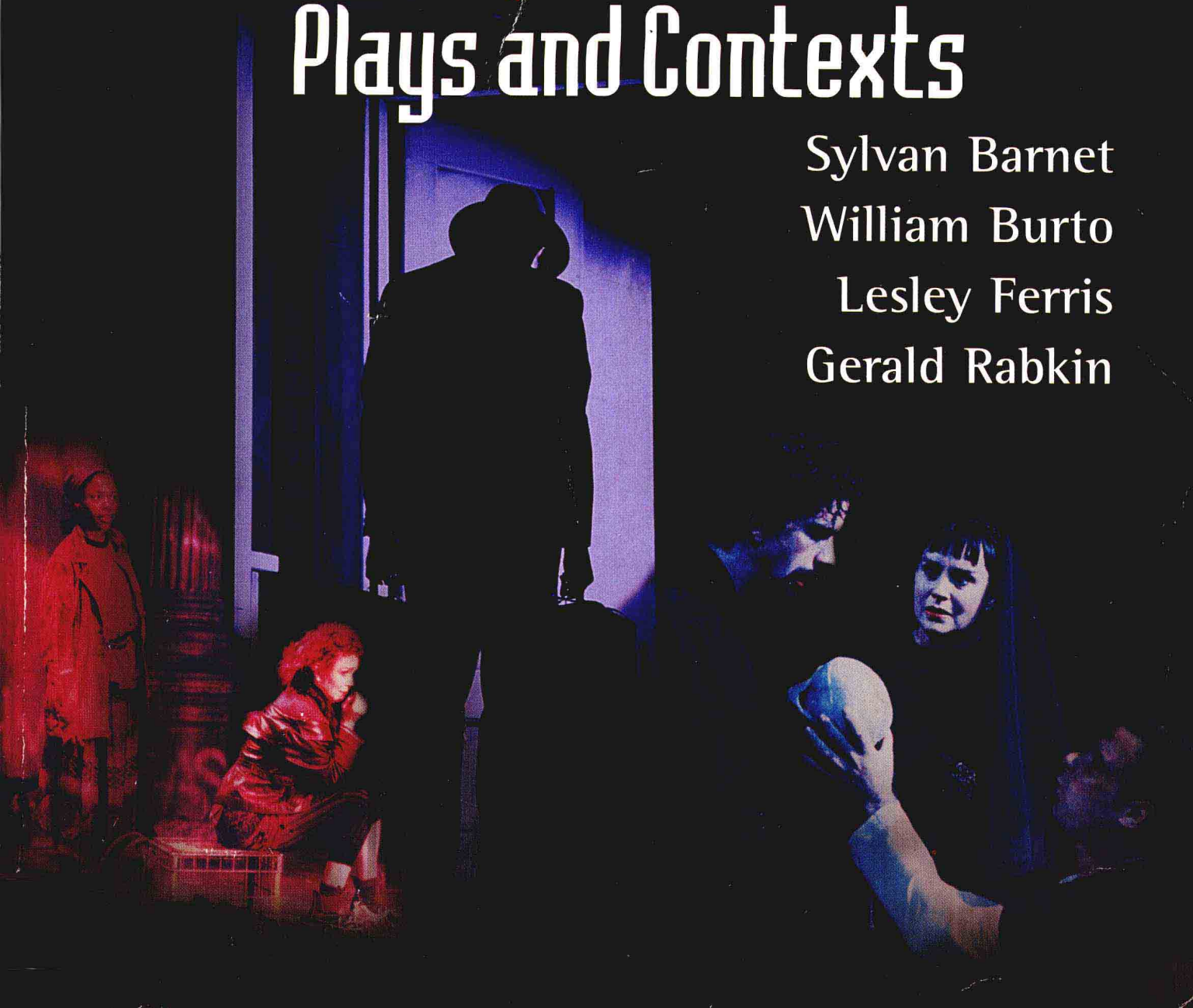
TYPES OF

DRAMA

EIGHTH
EDITION

Plays and Contexts

Sylvan Barnet
William Burto
Lesley Ferris
Gerald Rabkin





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EIGHTH EDITION

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Cover Photos: William Leach in *Death of a Salesman*, courtesy of the Utah Shakespearean Festival.
Scenes from *Hamlet* and *In the Blood* courtesy of Michael Daniel/The Public Theatre, New York.
Photo Research: Photosearch, Inc.
Manufacturing Buyer: Roy Pickering
Printer and Binder: Courier-Stoughton
Cover Printer: The Lehigh Press

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Types of drama : plays and contexts / Sylvan Barnet . . . [et al.].—8th ed.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-321-06506-9 (pbk.)
1. Drama—Collections. 2. Drama—History and criticism. I. Barnet, Sylvan.

PN6112.T96 2000
808.82—dc21

00-048753

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Please visit our website at <http://www.ablongman.com/barnettod>

ISBN 0-321-06506-9
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10—CRS—03 02 01

Preface

You need three things in the theater—the play, the actors, and the audience, and each must give something.

—Kenneth Haigh, actor

Kenneth Haigh's statement is true. Most obviously this book gives the play—actually 52 plays. Insofar as it is possible, it also gives something of the play on the stage, since it includes 18 interviews with playwrights and directors, 19 reviews of productions, and numerous stage histories, all of which will give the reader a sense of the play in production. As for the third ingredient, the audience, that is where you come in. The spectator or reader, as Haigh suggests, by responding emotionally and intellectually—by seeing the play “in the mind's eye,” to use Hamlet's words—helps to bring the play to life and indeed gives meaning to the play. The apparatus in this book, for example the introductions to periods and the Topics for Critical Thinking, will help you to make your contribution to the life of the play.

Types of Drama, Eighth Edition is divided into three parts. **Part One: Getting Started**, a quick introduction to the language of the theater, moves from an examination of a play of only a few lines (the medieval *Whom Do You Seek?*) to brief discussions of basic matters such as audience awareness, plot, character, and theme. If we had to reduce all of this to a sentence, we might be tempted to quote one of Arthur Miller's remarks, “The structure of a play is always the story of how the birds come home to roost.” (We include Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, so you can test his comment against his own play, if you wish. You may also want to test Miller's remark against a play with a very different structure, such as Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls*.) This brief introductory unit includes a photo essay, “The Language of Drama/ The Language of the Theater,” where we illustrate points about theaters and performances with photographs, and we invite students to test our assertions against two short works, Susan Glaspell's *Trifles* and Rachel Rosenthal's *My Brazil*.

On the assumption that at this point most readers have read at least one short play and probably two and have thought about specific theatrical techniques, Part One then offers a review: “In Brief: How to Read a Play.” Next it sketches the chief traditional dramatic forms, tragedy, comedy, and tragicomedy. Because drama is not merely art but is also life—plays are supported by the public, and sometimes productions are subsidized by the government—we conclude with some questions concerning “Drama and Society.”

Part Two: A Collection of Plays is the heart of the book. The three short plays in Part One, with the editorial apparatus, were preliminary to the 49 plays of Part Two, ranging from plays of ancient Greece to the present; the most recent play is Suzan-Lori Parks's *In the Blood* written in 1999. Of these 49 plays, 20 are pre-twentieth century (if we may count Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, which in fact was produced in 1903). Here are the playwrights who for centuries have been accounted among the masters, for instance, Sophocles, Euripides, Shakespeare, Lope de Vega, Corneille, Molière, and Ibsen; among these classic writers, too, is Aphra Behn, immensely popular in her own day (the late seventeenth century) but later neglected and then rediscovered. We also include a *commedia dell'arte* scenario, never before published, and only recently translated from the Italian manuscript. Of the remaining 29 plays in this part, about one-third (for instance Odets's *Waiting for Lefty*, Brecht's *The Good Woman of Setzuan*, Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, and Arthur Laurents's *Gypsy*) are classics from the middle-third of the twentieth century; almost all of the remaining plays are from the last three decades of the twentieth century, with a strong representation of first-rate works by women and by minority authors (African American, Asian American, and Chicano).

Each play is preceded by a short biographical note and by an introductory commentary. The commentaries do not attempt to explicate the play, but they do contain, we think, useful and relevant points that will also be helpful with other plays. Thus, the introduction to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* includes a discussion of two traditions of comedy, "critical" (or "satiric") comedy and "romantic" comedy, material that is also relevant to other plays in the book, including Bernard Shaw's *Major Barbara* and Dario Fo's *We Won't Pay! We Won't Pay!* But even those commentaries that are sharply focused on a given play do not seek to utter the last word. On the contrary, they seek to provide material that will stimulate discussion in class or that may be the topic of a writing assignment. Following each play we give "Topics for Critical Thinking and Writing" (divided into "The Play on the Page" and "The Play on the Stage"); these are designed to assist readers to see the plays not only as literature but also as living theater—works written for the stage, or, if read, to be staged in the reader's mind.

To help readers envision the plays on the stage, we include stage histories for most plays, 19 reviews of productions, 10 discussions with directors—not only concerning productions of modern plays, such as the interviews with Jorge Huerta on Valdez's *Los Vendedidos* and with the Nigerian director Ezekiel Kofoworola, who recently staged Wole Soyinka's *The Bacchae of Euripides: A Communion Right*, but also concerning productions of classical plays, such as interviews with directors who have staged Sophocles's *Oedipus* and Euripides's *Medea*. In Part Two we also include 8 discussions by playwrights, as well as 4 additional photo essays: Ancient Greek Drama Today, Staging Shakespeare, Then and Now, African Americans on the Stage, and Representations of Gender in the Theater. Further, Part Two includes introductions to historical periods, and additional short essays on such topics as The American Musical, Hispanic American Theater, Women's Theater, and Asian American Theater.

Part Three: Writing is devoted to writing essays about drama. We take seriously the view that college students should not only experience plays but should also be able to express their responses thoughtfully in coherent analytic essays. Indeed, we believe that the very process of writing an essay helps students to deepen their responses to the material. We therefore include substantial advice on such matters as finding a topic, converting it into a thesis, organizing a comparison, writing a review (we give two examples by

students, which we annotate in an effort to help students to see the qualities that characterize an effective review), using the Internet as a research tool, and providing documentation.

A Glossary, Bibliography, and List of Video Resources conclude the book. The glossary contains more than two hundred terms, some defined briefly and some defined at length. Students and instructors have told us that the glossary can actually be read with interest, and that the definitions, far from perfunctory, are genuinely helpful.

The **Bibliography** begins with general works on theater, then gives works period by period and ends with works on each playwright represented in *Types of Drama*, Eighth Edition. This bibliography thus provides a starting point for students who wish to do further reading.

The **List of Video Resources** offers a range of general sources but, most important, for every play in the anthology we cite either a film/video version or background material on that playwright that is now available to instructors and students.

FEATURES OF THE EIGHTH EDITION

- **Expanded Coverage of Plays:** 52 plays are now included, 30 of which are new to this edition. Instructors in an introductory course in the history of theater will rightly expect a textbook to include such indispensable works as *Oedipus*, *Antigonê*, *Hamlet*, *Tartuffe*, *A Doll's House* and *Death of a Salesman*—these plays are indeed here, along with other classics—but instructors will also expect the anthology to go beyond the established canon, and to include (a) at least a few less familiar but nevertheless highly important older works (for instance a Noh play, *Dôjôji*, Elizabeth Robins's *Votes for Women*, and W. B. Yeats's *Purgatory*—a play influenced by the Noh tradition) and (b) a generous supply of contemporary plays. The canon today, in the early twenty-first century, is not what it was even in the late twentieth century, hence the extensive changes in the new edition of *Types of Drama*.
- **Expanded Coverage of Women and Contemporary Minority Authors:** Among the authors newly represented here are Elizabeth Robins, Sophie Treadwell, Gertrude Stein, Caryl Churchill, Maria Irene Fornes, Susan Yankowitz, Anna Deveare Smith, Suzan-Lori Parks, and the Caribbean playwright Derek Walcott.

- **Expanded Coverage of the Play in Performance:** The Topics for Critical Thinking (notably, The Play on the Stage), the interviews with playwrights and directors, the numerous reviews of productions, and the rich photographic program make it clear to students that the plays are dynamic works that come to life on the stage and that plays change in response to the views of each generation of viewers.
- **Expanded Coverage of Writing about Drama:** Recognizing that instructors require students to write papers but do not have the time to offer instruction in writing, we have amplified this section. It now includes an extended discussion of writing about a filmed version of a play, which explains that the usual film does not simply record an actual stage production from a fixed camera position, but, rather, uses the camera creatively (for instance by close-up shots, or quick cuts), thereby commenting on the action. This quick course in film techniques, which includes a sample essay by a student on Kenneth Branagh's *Hamlet*, will assist students who are writing analyses of a filmed version of a play. We also include material concerning the use of the Internet: We provide a Checklist for Evaluating WWW Sites, a list of websites that will assist students who are doing research on theater topics, and material concerning documentation, both of print and electronic sources.
- **Companion Website and Instructor's Manual:** Types of Drama Online at www.ablongman.com/barnettod, provides a wealth of resources for students and instructors. Students will find links to different authors and theatrical periods, critical analysis exercises, and timelines to help them contextualize the plays studied in the text. In addition students can interact online with the use of chat and message board capabilities available on the site.

Types of Drama instructors will have access to the full text of the Instructor's Manual, which is conveniently offered on the companion website. This flexible resource replete with discussion topics, lecture leads, and suggestions for in-class activities provides many useful ideas to enhance teaching. The heart of the manual is the "Teaching the Play" sections which offer classroom-tested tips and strategies on how to teach your students about each play through acting out scenes, collaborating in group exercises, and analyzing film productions and critical interpretations.

This manual is sure to be a valuable reference tool for the novice and experienced instructor alike. To access the Instructor's Manual, simply go to the Instructors Resources section of the website where you will have the opportunity to view and/or print the manual directly from the website.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We have been fortunate in getting permission to reprint important plays and distinguished translations of older plays; we are grateful to the authors, translators, and publishers who have cooperated. They are all acknowledged starting on page 1553.

In preparing the eighth edition, we are grateful for the help we received from Barbara Bretcko, Raritan Valley Community College; Steve Budd, Bentley College; Barry Cavin, Biola University; Julie Empric, Eckerd College; Verna A. Foster, Loyola University; Leigh Harbin, Angelo State University; Christopher C. Hudgins, University of Las Vegas; Rob Jacklosky, College of Mount Saint Vincent; Albin W. Sandau, Black Hills State University; David K. Sauer, Spring Hill College; Janet M. Spencer, Wingate University; Salaam Yousif, California State University-San Bernardino; and Edward Zlotkowski, Bentley College; Mark Evans Bryan, Laura Farkas, Tonia Krueger, Karin Maresh, and Christy Stanlake (for the List of Video Resources), all at Ohio State University; and Esther Kim, University of Illinois-Champaign-Urbana. Ren Draya, Blackburn College, made valuable contributions to the preceding edition.

At Longman, we are indebted to Ben Morrison, whose contribution to this book cannot be overstated. His suggestions were invaluable, and (no less important) his patience was boundless. Lois Lombardo effectively presided over the process of converting an unwieldy manuscript into a book, and Marcy Lunetta equally effectively handled the difficult job of obtaining permission for copyrighted material. We wish every author such assistance.

We are also grateful to the many teachers who have given advice over the years: Jacob Adler, Purdue University; Joanne Altieri, University of Washington; Charles Bachman, Buffalo State College; Leonard Berkman, Smith College; David Boudreaux, Nicholls State University; Oscar Brockett, University of Texas at Austin; Terry Browne, State University of New York, Geneseo; Leslie Phillips Butterworth, Holyoke Community College; Michael Cadden, Princeton

University; Victor Cahn, Skidmore College; Kenneth Campbell, Virginia Commonwealth University; Lou F. Caton, University of Oregon; Cynthia Clegg, Pepperdine University; Douglas Cole, Northwestern University; Dorothy Crook, Central Connecticut State University; Joseph J. DaCrema, Villanova University; Charles L. Darn, University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown; E. T. A. Davidson, State University of New York/Oneonta; Sherri R. Dienstfrey, Idaho State University; Cheryl Faraone, State University of New York, Geneseo; Jeanne Fosket, El Paso Community College; John C. Freeman, El Paso Community College; Catherine Gannon, California State University at San Bernardino; Russell Goldfarb, Western Michigan University; Anthony Graham-White, University of Illinois at Chicago; Charlotte Goodman, Skidmore College; John Gronbeck-Tedesco, University of Kansas; Virginia Hale, University of Hartford; Elsie Galbreath Haley, Metropolitan State College/Denver; Thomas Hatton, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale; JoAnn Holonbek, College of St. Catherine; Richard Homan, Rider College; Kathleen Klein, Southern Connecticut State University; Thomas Kranidas, State University of New York/Stony Brook; Jayne Lewis, University of California at Los Angeles; Helen Lojek, Boise State University; Mary J. McCue, College of San Mateo; Shannon M. McGuire, Louisiana State University; Grace McLaughlin, Portland Community College; Michael McVey, Miami University Middletown; Thomas J. Manning, Univer-

sity of Wisconsin-Oshkosh; Tim Martin, Rutgers University; Susan Vaneta Mason, California State University-Los Angeles; Don Moore, Louisiana State University; Lee Orchard, Northeast Missouri State University; John B. Pieters, University of Florida; Paige Price, University of Oregon; George Ray, Washington and Lee University; Bruce Robbins, Boise State University; Eric Rothstein, University of Wisconsin; Beverly Simpson, Ball State University; Gail Salo, George Mason University; David K. Sauer, Spring Hill College; Myron Simon, University of California at Irvine; Jyotsna Singh, Southern Methodist University; Keith Slocum, Montclair State College; Iris Smith, University of Kansas; Lucille Stelling, Normandale Community College; Edna M. Troiano, Charles County Community College; Robert L. Vales, Gannon University; Charles Watson, Jr., Syracuse University; Paul Wood, Villanova University; and Bruce E. Woodruff, Baker University.

We also gladly acknowledge our debts to Jeanne Newlin, formerly of the Harvard Theatre Collection; Arthur Friedman, University of Lowell; Lydia Forbes, Blackburn College; Roy Graham, Blackburn College; Dan McCandless; Laurence Senelick, Tufts University; and Marcia Stubbs, formerly of Wellesley College.

SYLVAN BARNET
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LESLEY FERRIS
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