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PRINT AND THE POETICS OF MODERN DRAMA

What does it matter what we read? The question of the materiality of the book has surprising consequences when applied to dramatic writing, where the bookish qualities of dramatic literature, qualities emphasized by the dominion of print culture, have always seemed antagonistic to plays' other life on the stage. In *Print and the Poetics of Modern Drama*, W. B. Worthen asks how the print form of drama bears on how we understand its dual identity – as play texts and in performance. Beginning with the most salient modern critique of printed drama – arising in the field of Shakespeare editing – Worthen then looks at the ways playwrights and performance artists from George Bernard Shaw and Gertrude Stein to Harold Pinter, Samuel Beckett, Anna Deavere Smith, and Sarah Kane stage the poetics of modern drama in the poetics of the page.

W. B. WORTHEN is the author of *The Idea of the Actor* (1984), *Modern Drama and the Rhetoric of Theater* (1992), *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance* (Cambridge, 1997), and *Shakespeare and the Force of Modern Performance* (Cambridge, 2003). He has served as the editor of *Theatre Journal* and as the coeditor of *Modern Drama*, and has published widely in professional journals. He is also the editor of the widely used *Wadsworth Anthology of Drama* and of *Modern Drama: Plays/Criticism/Theory*, which won the 1995 Association for Theatre in Higher Education Research Award.

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