

Modern
American Drama:
Playwriting in
the 1990s

Voices, Documents,
New Interpretations

*Cheryl Black and
Sharon Friedman*

Series Editors: Brenda Murphy and
Julia Listengarten

Bloomsbury Methuen Drama
An imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc
B L O O M S B U R Y
LONDON • OXFORD • NEW YORK • NEW DELHI • SYDNEY

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements x

Biographical Note and Notes on Contributors xi

General Preface Julia Listengarten and Brenda Murphy xiii

- 1 Introduction to the 1990s 1
 - Politics 2
 - The Clinton presidency 2
 - International relations 4
 - Society 5
 - Terror on the home front 5
 - AIDS 6
 - Identity politics 7
 - Science and technology 13
 - Silicon Valley 13
 - Genetics 14
 - Space 15
 - Everyday life 15
 - Population and demographics 15
 - Religion 15
 - Domestic economy 16
 - Fads 16
 - Education 17
 - Media 18
 - Culture 18
 - Music 18
 - Film 21

Television	23
Sport	25
Literature	26
Art	28
Fashion	29
Food	29
The millennium approaches	30
2 American Theatre in the 1990s	33
The economic climate and funding sources in the 1990s	38
Censorship and the National Endowment for the Humanities: The 'NEA Four'	41
New business models for the theatre	43
The 'Broadway' theatre in the 1990s	44
Musical theatre	48
The megamusical: British and French imports and the Americanization of the genre	50
Disney on Broadway	53
Lower-budget musical productions in the non-profit theatre	54
Images of the nation in musical theatre	55
Drama and dramatists Off-, Off-Off-Broadway and beyond	60
Canonical playwrights	61
Themes of white male heteronormativity in the theatre of the 1990s	64
African-American, ethnic and feminist theatrical visions as genres and cultural practice	68
African-American theatre	69
Asian-American theatre	75
Latina/o theatre	78
Feminist theatre and the under-representation of women playwrights	81
Lesbian/gay/queer theatre	87

- Performance art 89
Conclusion: A theatre of diversity in form and intention 93
- 3 Terrence McNally 97
Introduction 97
Lips Together, Teeth Apart (1991) 101
A Perfect Ganesh (1993) 105
Love! Valour! Compassion! (1994–5) 108
Master Class (1995) 112
Corpus Christi (1998) 114
Conclusion 118
- 4 Paula Vogel 121
Introduction 121
The Baltimore Waltz (1992) 124
Hot 'n' Throbbing (1995) 128
The Mineola Twins (1997) 134
How I Learned to Drive (1997) 139
Conclusion 147
- 5 Tony Kushner 149
Introduction 149
Angels in America (1991–2) 154
Codas to *Angels: Slavs!* (1994) and *G. David Schine in Hell* (1996) 162
Adaptations: *The Good Person of Setzuan* (1994) 163
Adaptations: *A Dybbuk; or, Between Two Worlds* (1997) 165
Homebody/Kabul (1999–2001) 168
Conclusion 172
- 6 Suzan-Lori Parks 175
Introduction 175
Imperceptible Mutabilities in the Third Kingdom (1989) 184

The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World
(1989–92) 186

The America Play (1993) 188

Venus (1996) 191

In the Blood (1999) 193

Conclusion 196

Afterword 199

Introduction 199

Terrence McNally 205

Paula Vogel 208

Tony Kushner 211

Suzan-Lori Parks 213

Documents 217

Terrence McNally 217

Nathan Lane, *Playbill*, 2015 217

Interview by Mervyn Rothstein 218

Interview by Charlie Rose 219

Opera and Maria Callas 220

On the evolution of *Master Class* 221

Zoe Caldwell on McNally 221

In protest against *Corpus Christi* 223

McNally on *Corpus Christi* 223

Paula Vogel 224

Interview with Arthur Holmberg on *How I Learned to Drive* 224

Miriam Chirico on *A Civil War Christmas* 228

On teaching 229

On collaboration 230

Tony Kushner 231

Interview with Zeljko Djukic by Cheryl Black regarding
the Serbian premiere of *Homebody/Kabul* 231

Suzan-Lori Parks	239
Liz Diamond	239
Richard Foreman	241
‘An Equation for Black People Onstage’	241
Interview with Han Ong	242
Commencement Address at Mount Holyoke	243

Notes 245

Bibliography 277

Index 285