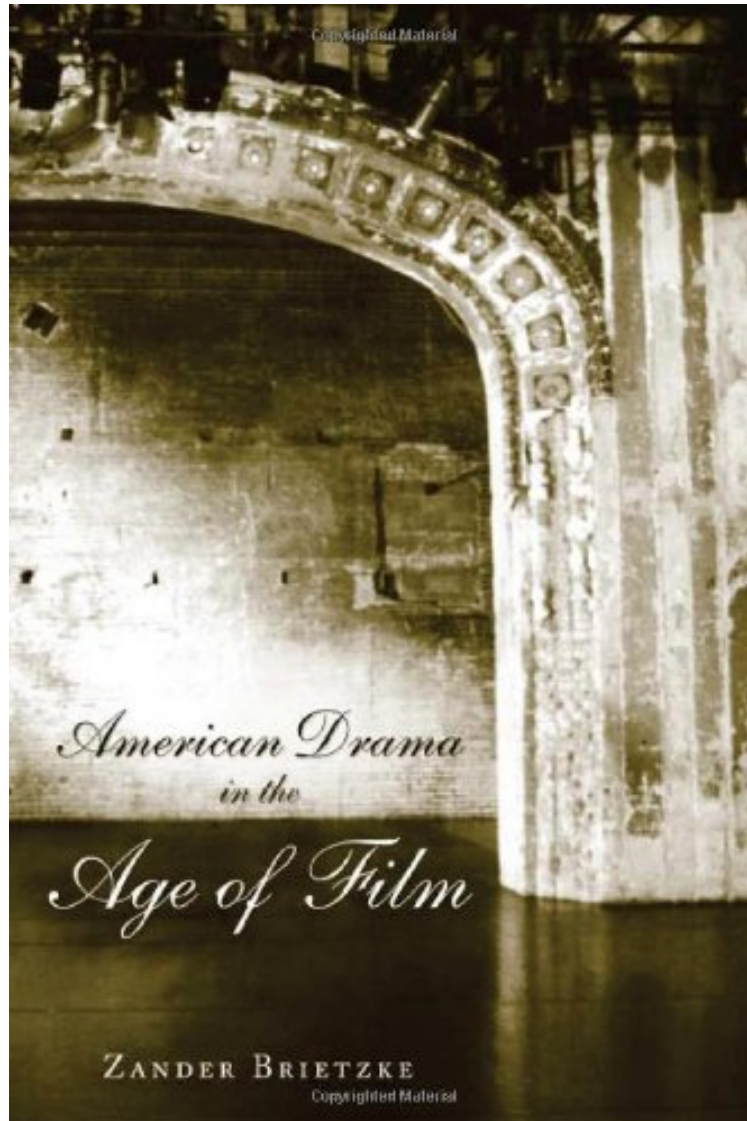


## American Drama in the Age of Film

*Zander Brietzke*

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#3934158 in Books University Alabama Press 2007-06-28 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x .90 x 6.00, 1.07 #File Name: 0817315713296 pages | File size: 71.Mb

**Zander Brietzke : American Drama in the Age of Film** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised American Drama in the Age of Film:

Is theater really dead? Does the theater, as its champions insist, really provide a more intimate experience than film? If so, how have changes in cinematic techniques and technologies altered the relationship between stage and film? What

are the inherent limitations of representing three-dimensional spaces in a two-dimensional one, and vice versa?

"Brietzke (adjunct, English, Suffolk Univ.) compares staged plays to their film and/or television adaptations to prove the intrinsic value of live drama. In chapter 1 the author questions the familiar validation of theater as 'live' and 'magical,' arguing instead that its defining qualities are spectacle and simultaneity. In chapter 2 he elaborates on the significance of the stage actor, who stands vicariously for the audience. The remaining chapters analyze ten plays, including the staples *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *Death of a Salesman*. There is frequent slippage between drama and theater, and for all Brietzke's emphasis on spectacle and the theories of Antonin Artaud, Bertolt Brecht, and Jerzy Grotowski, it is ironic that he focuses on written dramas that would almost all have made Aristotle proud. The book's value is in the play analyses; the film-theater juxtaposition often feels merely like an excuse for them. The work never reaches the theoretical breadth of Philip Auslander's *Liveness* (1999) or Peggy Phelan's *Unmarked* (CH, Jan'94, 31-2578), both of which provide much more insightful, albeit differing, analyses of the theater-film dynamic. In a final irony, the conclusion actually affirms Phelan's claim that the specificity of performance lies in its unrepeatability. Summing Up: Recommended. Lower-division undergraduates and general readers." CHOICE In his study of drama and film, Brietzke goes back to first principles, reconsidering the very basis for comparing the liveness of theater with the mediatized reality of film and television. His discussion of the theory is fresh and provocative. A great deal of the book's contribution is its original, thoroughly knowledgeable readings of plays and adaptations ranging from O'Neill, Hellman, and Williams to Wilson, Mamet, and Kushner. Brietzke's recognition of the way drama is taught and thought about by most of today's university teachers and students, with direct reference to the productions that are available on VHS and DVD, informs every chapter.