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This rich and varied portrait of the drama from 1660 to 1714 provides students with essential information about playwrights, staging and genres, situating them in the social and political culture of the time. No longer seen as a privileged arena for select dramatists and elite courtiers, the Restoration theatre is revealed in all of its tumult, energy and conflict. The fourteen newly-commissioned essays examine the theatre, paying attention to major playwrights such as Dryden, Wycherly and Congreve and also to more minor works and to plays by the first professional female dramatists. The book begins with chapters on the performance of the drama in its own time, on theatres, acting and staging, and continues with the main dramatic genres and themes, with a final chapter on the critical history of the drama. The volume also includes a thorough chronology and biographies and bibliographies of dramatists