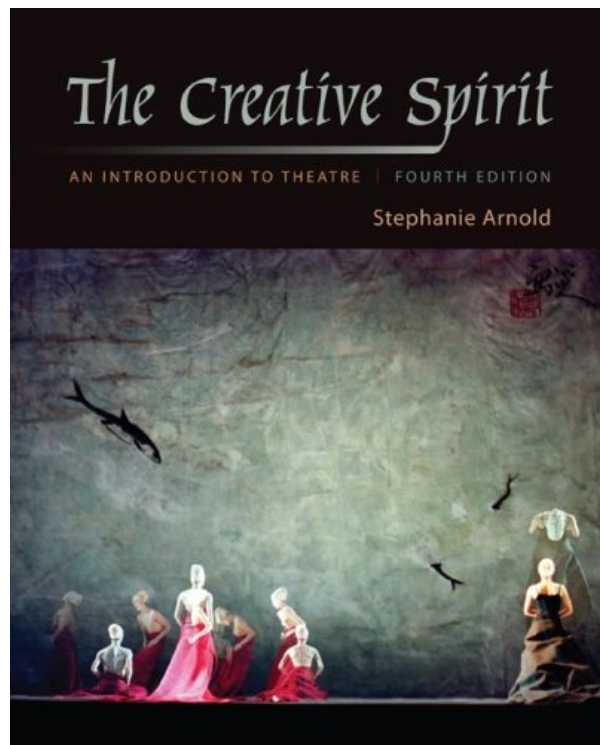


**THE CREATIVE SPIRIT: AN
INTRODUCTION TO THEATRE BY
STEPHANIE ARNOLD**



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About the Author

Stephanie Arnold received her B.A. degree in English from Stanford University and then continued her studies at the University of Wisconsin where she received an M.F.A. degree in directing and a Ph.D. in dramatic literature and theory. Before joining the Lewis & Clark College faculty in 1986, she taught at Mills College and the University of California, Riverside.

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Focusing on the collaborative and creative processes that go into productions, Stephanie Arnold introduces students to the theatre through the plays themselves and people who write them, create them, and act in them. A rich context is provided for each play with a discussion of the playwright's other works, sources for the play, timelines that provide historical and cultural background, and a section on a particular production of the play to give students a sense of experiencing the theatre industry at close hand. The Creative Spirit includes complete scripts of five plays: August Wilson's *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, Wakako Yamauchi's *And the Soul Shall Dance*, Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*, Milcha Sanchez Scott's *Dog Lady*, and Sam Shepard's *Buried Child*.

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10 of 10 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent Text for Introduction to Theater

By H. Andrews

THE CREATIVE SPIRIT takes a very refreshing, multicultural view to American Theater, while still giving good, basic information about theater history and the process of theater production. This text was written to accompany introductory theater courses, (perhaps in community colleges or in a theater for non-majors context), not to try to be a definitive guide to all theater. Hence, the subtitle "An Introduction to Theatre."

Reading plays is a huge part of learning about theater, and this text includes many plays for analysis and discussion. The plays included are each unique and important, reflecting the diverse experience of the people

of the United States (and probably the students who are reading them), while still teaching the same concepts as if they were reading the plays that most intro textbooks offer. Each play is preceded by contextual information including an author biography, the artistic and cultural influences that contributed to the inspiration of the writing, information about a production of the play, etc.

There are individual chapters about the role of each theater practitioner (director, designer, actor, etc.) which include interviews with professionals who discuss their craft.

New to recent editions is the addition of an entire chapter about musical theater. An important part of American theater, recent and historical musical productions are discussed.

The text is richly illustrated, with many color plates, black and white photos and drawings. Photos of Broadway, regional and college productions are included, as well as historically important people and places. In addition, the final chapter of the text (at least in the last edition, I have not seen the most recent edition) includes a number of project ideas for students to become the producers of a show, choosing directorial concepts, set and costume designs, etc. At the end of each of the other chapters are suggested discussion questions for that chapter's content as well.

Many of us practicing theater today could even benefit from reviewing some of the basic information in this book, or expanding our knowledge of what's out there by reading about and seeing photos from varied regional productions.

In my mind, *THE CREATIVE SPIRIT: AN INTRODUCTION TO THEATRE* is an excellent book for what it aims to be.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Not the Best Overview for Theatre

By Shakespearemom

I used this textbook for my last section of Theatre Appreciation, and it did not work out well, for two reasons:

1. The emphasis is overwhelmingly on modern American theatre, and the roots of theatrical history are almost entirely neglected. Only very brief details are given for most historical movements and playwrights, and even earlier American plays are not given the time and detail they should be. I found myself having to supplement the text to an extreme degree, for it just didn't include enough substance.

2. Not enough is done to show the technical workings of the theatre. Students may already come into the class with a preconceived idea that theatre is all about the actor (and perhaps the director), and if they read this book from cover to cover, they may very well believe their first ideas are right (except for that chapter on playwriting). Technicians and other aspects of theatrical production are given so little time that students without theatrical experience may very well believe they are unimportant--and yet this idea neglects what makes theatre so amazing, that so many artists bring their talents together to create a cohesive whole, with costumes, sets, lighting, props, etc. This book simply doesn't show students those aspects enough for them to see how they can all work together.

I am teaching another section of Theatre Appreciation, and I will not use this textbook again. I selected it the first time because it included the full scripts for five plays, but even these are not worth the gaping holes in the rest of the textbook's material.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Five Stars

By riles_89

great book, I think I'll have fun

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