

EDITORIAL

By John O'Toole and Penny Bundy (Australia)

Change – both personal and social – is a dominant theme in applied theatre, along with our genre's obverse recognition of theatre's potential to conserve, develop and strengthen aspects of our lives, both personal and social. So too with this journal, and our twelfth edition will be the last in its current form. From 2012, the journal will come under the aegis of the major international academic publisher Intellect. It will appear both online and in hard copy, with a greatly improved layout and formatting, and a much-increased visibility and international profile. It will appear more frequently than our current annual production. It will even have a new and simplified title, *Applied Theatre Research*, and a far more accessible website. Most significantly, it will become a subscription journal, no longer entirely free; however, there are safeguards to protect our social justice agenda: many economically developing countries are exempted from fees, and applied theatre workers and aficionados in those countries will still be able to gain free online access. We are conserving some things – the journal's strengths, we hope:

- The international advisory board, comprising the most distinguished academics and practitioners in the field from all corners of the globe, in balanced representation, will be retained.
- So will our basic policy of seeking and publishing high-quality scholarship and praxis representative of a very broad and inclusive definition of applied theatre and drama education, and a diverse readership and writership.
- We intend to keep – at least informally – the close links with IDEA, the UNESCO-recognised international peak body in drama and theatre education, and with Griffith University in Australia, to ensure both artistic and academic grounding and credibility for the journal.
- Your editors will remain unchanged.

The first change is already happening in this edition. We welcome Professor Michael Balfour as our Reviews Editor, and we have instituted what will be a regular feature: critical reviews of key books (and other published media) in the field. We perhaps should say: 're-instituted', as alongside the first edition were two book reviews by our founding editor, Philip Taylor – still on the *ATR* website.

Looking forward from that first edition, we have had three editors: Philip Taylor produced the first three editions; John O'Toole was responsible for the next three; and the last six have been edited by our current team of Penny Bundy and John O'Toole. During this period, the nature and definition of applied theatre have become much clearer, and applied theatre has become more generally known as a distinct genre of theatre and field of scholarship. Editorials over the decade have, among other topics, speculated on the nature and placement of applied theatre in the international drama world; on applied theatre's relationship with drama education – and the relationship between the words 'drama' and 'theatre'; on ethics and ambiguity; on theatre for questions or theatre for answers – and on its potential for social change and disruption; and on the gaps and silences, inclusions and exclusions inherent in the words and in the work. We have published, including this edition, 86 articles by authors from 27 countries on all continents. These articles have been enormously diverse, though all have adhered to the basic principle of theatre applied to specific purposes beyond entertainment: from medieval Norwegian Christmas rituals to Turkish satirical folk-plays, from theatre in prisons and war zones to drama in schools and Shakespeare in the streets, from theatre for healing to theatre for training, from theatrical interventions with disempowered Sami people and African women to theatre dealing with such issues as self-esteem, democracy, the world of cyberspace and family violence ... and many more hot topics in the field.

This edition has a number of articles with related themes: a strong vein of advocacy runs through the first

five, all backed strongly either by research or powerful and verifiable personal experiences. This is balanced by the last two, which provide a counter by reminding us that not everybody is immediately, or even at all, bewitched by the magic of theatre and the purposes that we put it to.

David Kelman explores the mythic power of stories to create deeper learning, and the power they have to deepen the understanding of the important issues for young people – not only in their own lives, but through archetypal connections. He makes the broader claim that using drama and theatre to reinterpret myth fulfils a deep desire in young people to create a sense of order in their world. Fadi Skeiker demonstrates further strong advocacy for the efficacy of applied theatre, this time as a vehicle for dispossessed Palestinian youngsters in Jordan to learn to express and explore their own stories (unlike Kelman, using not fiction but aesthetic shaping as an exploratory and protective mechanism). Like Kelman, however, he identifies the mythic and political power of story in the young people's lives; the article also provides an opportunity for the author to critique his own first venture into this territory. Mia Perry, theorising from her own practice about the potential of devising theatre for embodied learning and understanding of self, uses the useful, and now very familiar, frame of the rhizomatic nature of theatre practice to map and analyse intricately a young theatre-making group's development in emergent learning and self-reflection. Perry focuses on a detailed analysis of one participant, using that participant's invention and embodiment of a theatrical 'character'. David Wright argues that drama is a particularly rich pedagogy for developing an understanding of global ecology and the natural balances of the world, proposing a re-evaluation – or more exactly, a return to valuing highly – the somewhat out-of-fashion notion of using drama across the curriculum to explore ecological issues and dilemmas. Margaret Lepp and her colleagues in Sweden, Germany and, coincidentally, Jordan, explore intercultural dialogue in nursing education. Similarly to Wright, they advocate drama – in the forms of role-play and, in this study, forum theatre – as a rich and particularly appropriate pedagogy for educating nurses in three very diverse national and cultural settings to develop a global perspective. They argue that nursing education needs changing from a teacher-centred to a learner-centred approach, in order to support more global awareness of cultures, world-views and ethnic diversity. Rebecca Scollen's audience research into an ongoing Shakespeare in the Park festival, in contrast, provides sober reading and significant insights both into what makes outdoor theatre attractive (or not), and how theatre itself – and especially Shakespeare – are perceived in a typical country town community. Finally, Jack Shu's detailed analysis of drama pedagogy in second-language development in Hong Kong uncovers the perceptions of intending teachers, again with results that give cause for hope while preventing any delusions of grandeur.

We think that there are many, many applied theatre projects out there that give similar cause for hope, and many more analyses that can swiftly provide a critical counterpoint. We look forward to having plenty of submissions from our readers to our new and improved journal, and we hope that you will tell all those colleagues and strangers who are engaged in exciting praxis, practice or theory in the field to commit their inspiring work to paper and send us an article about it. Our thorough review process and distinguished reviewers are there to help you as well as us in our quest to make public, analyse and interrogate our work.

ABSTRACTS

Article 1

MYTHOLOGICAL TRANSLATIONS: DRAMA, POETRY AND THE LANGUAGE OF MYTH

By Dave Kelman and Jane Rafe (Australia)

Abstract

Cultural theorists Claude Lévi-Strauss and Roland Barthes describe myth as a symbolic metalanguage that conveys meanings which are deeply embedded in their socio-cultural context. Primary school children in a regional school working on Homeric mythology by integrating process drama, poetic writing and community performance interpreted myths in relation to their own lives. Some of them also attached broader socio-cultural and deeper personal meanings to the myths that they expressed through their poetic writing. This article argues that, through the act of translating myth into dramatic narrative and poetic writing, the children started to understand and express the deeper symbolism of the mythological narrative. Through this process, young people started to develop a critical awareness of mythology as a vehicle for generating contemporary meanings.

Authors' biographies

Dave Kelman is the Artistic Director of the Education Program of Western Edge Youth Arts in western Melbourne. He is a director, playwright and drama educator who completed his doctorate on socio-cultural meaning in young people's dramatised stories at the University of Melbourne in 2009.

Jane Rafe is a drama educator, writer and director working for Western Edge Youth Arts and her own company, Dog Theatre. She is also a researcher for the University of Melbourne and Deakin University.

Article 2

PERFORMING ORPHANAGE EXPERIENCE: APPLIED THEATRE PRACTICE IN A REFUGEE CAMP IN JORDAN

by

Fadi Fayad Skeiker
(Syria)

Abstract

This paper focuses on the role of applied theatre in empowering Palestinian youths who live in one of the biggest refugee camps in the Middle East. An applied theatre workshop, using personal stories of the participants, is analysed to examine the achievements and challenges that face the facilitator while leading the workshop. The facilitator's journey in organising, leading and reflecting on his practice serves as a microcosm for the case of applied theatre in the Middle East, a part of the world where applied theatre culture has not yet spread and/or is not yet fully recognised as a tool for addressing personal growth and the resulting social change.

Keywords

Applied theatre; personal stories; youth; refugee camp

Author's biography

Fadi Fayad Skeiker is Assistant Professor of Theatre Arts at the University of Jordan, Amman. He is also a founder of the Amman Theatre Lab, where he leads performing arts workshops in applied theatre, shadow theatre and acting. Fadi holds a PhD in Performance as Public Practice from the University of Texas at Austin and a Master of Arts in Theatre Education from Emerson College in Boston. Fadi has led applied theatre workshops in the United States, Jordan, Canada and Egypt. Fadi's research has been published in the *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education* and *Storytelling, Self, Society: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Storytelling Studies*, among others.

Article 3

DEVISING IN THE RHIZOME: THE 'SENSATIONAL' BODY IN DRAMA EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

By Mia Perry (Canada)

Abstract

This article investigates the possibilities of embodied inquiry and representation occurring through a theatre devising process with youth. Contemporary theatre methods, along with post-structural and performance theory, inform an alternative approach to dominant constructions of drama and theatre practices in education. The student in this project is considered a learning self in motion (Ellsworth 2005); the process and analysis taken up acknowledge the body as an emerging, phenomenological and relational corporeality. Exploring a sensational and rhizomatic approach to practice and research, this project loosens the body from the representational paradigm dominating applied theatre research, and brings it to the centre of the pedagogical and analytical endeavour.

Keywords

Devising; Deleuze; body; education; post-structural theory; Drama in Education

Author's biography

Mia Perry is an Assistant Professor of Drama, Theatre, and Education at the University of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. Working in the intersections of performance, pedagogy and philosophy, Mia has been a scholar, practitioner, and educator for over fifteen years. She has studied and practised at the Samuel Beckett Centre, Trinity College in Dublin; The Russian Academy of Theatre Arts in Moscow; the Central School of Speech and Drama in London; and the University of British Columbia in Canada. She has worked and taught in schools and community contexts in Canada, Ireland and Russia, and is published in a variety of academic and trade journals. Mia's current interests concern methodologies of embodiment in performance and education research, with a specific focus on contemporary cultural practices in educational contexts.

Article 4

THE PATTERN THAT CONNECTS: DRAMA AS A VEHICLE FOR ECOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING

By David Wright (Australia)

Abstract

This article offers another perspective upon a term familiar to most drama educators: 'drama across the curriculum'. It argues that this term, which was once central within advocacy for drama education (Pateman 1991), deserves to be reconsidered. This need for reconsideration is a consequence of a widespread expectation that education systems must actively engage with ecological concerns. This article works with a perspective that conceptualises ecology as underpinning all learning. Through this perspective, it argues that the skills and understanding made accessible through drama processes can be used to facilitate ecological understanding. Assuming that this understanding is central to the education required by students into the future, it argues for the enhanced relevance of drama and hence, reconsiderations of drama across the curriculum.

Keywords

Drama; ecology; ecological understanding; learning; systems

Author's biography

David Wright's research interests lie in the overlapping fields of drama, cognition, learning and systems thinking. He approaches this work through the lens of social ecology and ecological understanding, which looks at the relationships that facilitate learning. Central here is the creative communication of learning. David teaches at the University of Western Sydney in the overlapping fields of social ecology; transformative learning; creativity; and sustainability. He has published nationally and internationally on cognition, learning, drama, constructivism and creativity. He has written plays for performance as well as creative fiction.

Article 5

LEARNING THROUGH DRAMA IN THE FIELD OF GLOBAL NURSING

By Margret Lepp (Sweden), Jehad O Halabi (Saudi Arabia), Maysoon S. Abdalrahim (Jordan), Sepideh Olausson (Sweden) and Björn-Ove Suserud (Sweden)

Abstract

This article explores how nurses (nurse educators, and doctoral and masters students) from three countries experienced learning through drama in the field of nursing education. In this era of internationalisation, there is an urgent need to prepare nurses with global perspectives. This qualitative study builds on the fourteen participants' involvement in a drama workshop and their related reflective journals, which were the subject of a quality content analysis. Two categories and five sub-categories emerged in the analysis of the participants' journals. This study has implications for nursing education and curriculum activities in nursing programs related to the preparation of nurses with a global perspective using drama as core pedagogy. Through drama, participants can access their lifeworlds and share them with one another. Drama makes the experience-based knowledge visible, and in addition develops knowledge about a certain topic depending on the group's background and contribution.

Keywords

Applied drama/theatre; drama; global nursing; international education; international exchange; learning

Authors' biographies

Dr Margret Lepp, RN is Professor in Health Care Pedagogics at the Institute of Health and Care Sciences, The Sahlgrenska Academy, University of Gothenburg, Sweden. For several years she has involved applied drama/theatre in her work as a researcher and consultant, involving students, patients,

nurses and teachers of nursing, as well as schoolteachers.

Dr Jehad O. Halabi, RN is Associate Professor and Associate Dean, Clinical Affairs, King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences, National Guard College of Nursing, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. He was Project Director and Coordinator of Swedish-Jordanian Exchange Programs from 1998 until 2011.

Dr Maysoon S. Abdalrahim, RN is Assistant Dean for Quality Affairs, Department of Clinical Nursing, Faculty of Nursing, University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan.

Sepideh Olausson, RN, MSc is a PhD student in the School of Health Sciences, University of Borås, Sweden and the University of Jönköping, Sweden. Her research concerns patient safety in relation to the design of the patient room.

Dr Björn-Ove Suserud, RN is Associate Professor in Emergency Care, in the School of Health Sciences, the University of Borås, Sweden. His research is in pre-hospital emergency care and learning. He has published numerous scientific articles and is a co-author of textbooks in this field.

***RN= Registered Nurse**

Article 6

DOES THE 'SHAKESPEARE' IN SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK MATTER? AN INVESTIGATION OF ATTENDANCES AT AND ATTITUDES TO THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK FESTIVAL

by Rebecca Scollen (Australia)

Abstract

In 2010, the annual University of Southern Queensland (USQ) Shakespeare in the Park Festival (SitPF) was held in Queens Park, Toowoomba, Queensland for the seventh consecutive year. This large outdoor theatre event was established to encourage greater attendances to performances of Shakespeare's plays by making them more accessible to the public. Attendance levels at SitPF have grown by 170 per cent since its inception in 2004. In 2009, audience research was conducted to ascertain the barriers to attendance, as well as patrons' opinions of SitPF. Results showed that the primary deterrent to attendance was the fear that the Shakespearean content would not be understood or enjoyed. Only one-third of the 2009 SitPF audience, and of the repeat SitPF patrons, attended primarily because of the Shakespearean content. Interestingly, the Shakespearean content did not play a significant part in the overall enjoyment of the event for either type of SitPF audience.

Keywords

Shakespeare; audience research; outdoor festival; attendance; regional Queensland

Author's Biography

Dr Rebecca Scollen is the manager of Artsworx at the University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba, Australia. Artsworx produces and promotes a range of performing and visual arts events throughout the year for the local region. Rebecca is also a member of the USQ Public Memory Research Centre. Her research interests include audience research, reception and development; community engagement; and sustainable practices for the regional arts sector.

Article 7

TEACHER AS ACTOR: FUTURE ENGLISH TEACHERS' TRAINING IN THE NATURAL APPROACH USING DRAMA

by Jack Shu (Hong Kong)

Abstract

For some time, Hong Kong students and teachers have been enthusiastic about learning English through drama, but studies on relevant teacher development have been scarce. This study was an attempt to find out pre-service English teachers' perceptions of learning English through drama by exposing them to some sessions of drama learning, with specific experience in a process drama during which the data in this study were mainly collected. Participants also expressed their views about what drama training is essential for English teachers. The findings were contextualised with the use of the Natural Approach to teaching English as a second language, the practice of drama learning and the current views in education reform in order to organically merge the learning processes of the two areas of learning to inform future drama training for English teachers.

Author's biography

Jack Shu obtained his MA in Drama Education and Cultural Studies and a PhD from the University of Warwick. He is currently Assistant Professor at the Open University of Hong Kong, offering drama courses including the MEd in Drama and Language Education. He is also the chairperson of the Hong Kong Drama/Theatre and Education Forum. His publications include the Chinese translation of *Structuring Drama Work* and *Planting Trees of Drama for Global Vision in Local Knowledge: IDEA 2007 Congress Dialogues*, and he is the co-editor of *The Journal of Drama and Theatre Education in Asia*.

BOOK REVIEWS

Helen Nicholson, *Theatre, Education and Performance: The Map and the Story*, Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills, 2011, ISBN 978 0 230 57423 6, £16.99 (pb)

Review by Michael Balfour

Jonathon Shailor, *Performing New Lives: Prison Theatre*, Jessica Kingsley, London, 2010, ISBN 978 1 84905 823 0, \$37.95 (pb)

Review by Linda Davey