# REVIEWS

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### IDEA Publications Overview

John O'Toole
IDEA Director of Publications

*Special Fields of Drama, Theatre and Education* is one of five new IDEA Publications to emerge from the 4th World Congress of Drama, Theatre and Education held in Bergen in July 2001, the others being *Playing Betwixt and Between*, *Nordic Voices, The IDEA Journal Vol. 2* (a collaboration with *NJ*) and *The Bergen Congress Video*. They follow in the footsteps of the successful *Drama, Culture and Empowerment* and *Reflections in the River: The IDEA Advocacy Video* in two ways — they spring from the triennial Congresses that are the biggest world gatherings of drama educators and they are mostly much more than collations of what happened. *Playing Betwixt and Between* is a themed anthology that forms a comprehensive reflection on the key theme of the Congress, drama's honoured place in the margins where action and innovation can take place. *Nordic Voices,* as it suggests, presents the key themes and concerns of the Congress' four Co-Hosts, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland, also of universal concern, of course.

*Special Fields of Drama, Theatre and Education* emerges both as a free-standing publication and a summation of a very important part of the IDEA vision and its Congresses. Each Congress has daily space allotted to in-depth, ongoing discussion, examination and debate on a crucial broad area of concern in our field, known — rather unfortunately to cognoscenti of on-line multi-user interactive domains — as Special Interest Groups or SIGs. The SIGs change only slightly from Congress to Congress and many of the richest insights and profoundest debate happen there. This book for the first time has attempted to distil that corporate wisdom into a manageable and readable form. The SIG group co-leaders were all invited to provide their own joint distillation from the very diverse discussions and practical activities in the SIGs. The result is chapters coherently written round a key theme rather than reports of discussion. The second function of the book is to provide reports on another crucial element of IDEA's ongoing core business, the IDEA Official and Associated Projects, in order for a wider public to gain access to what goes on in IDEA, the peak body of world drama and theatre educators. Drama Australia is a crucial and valued part of IDEA — a founder-member in 1992, host of the second Congress in 1995 and now also hosting the IDEA Secretariat.

**Hannu Heikkinen (Ed.)**
**Special Interest Fields of Drama, Theatre and Education:**
**The IDEA Dialogues**
**IDEA Publications and University of Jyväskylä**
**Department of Teacher Education**
**ISBN 951-39-1436-4**

Robin Pascoe
Murdoch University

The Special Interest Groups (SIG) have been a feature of IDEA Congresses from the beginning in Oporto. These groups are conceived as opportunities for sustained interaction, allowing for members to bond over several occasions during the congress and to explore significant ideas in extended ways.

*Special Interest Fields of Drama, Theatre and Education: The IDEA Dialogues* is one of a suite of IDEA 2001 Congress publications. It is published in English and skilfully edited by Hannu Heikkinen who played a leading role in the SIGs at the Congress. The subtitle, *The IDEA Dialogues*, signals the focus on the rich conversations of the congress in Bergen in July 2001. In his introduction, Hannu sets the agenda: this is to be 'incisive descriptions of and viewpoints on *research through practice, drama as research, practice as research* and *practice-based research*' (p.10). In keeping with the congress themes of *drama betwixt and between,* these articles are intent on 'defining practice in between tradition and innovation'.

The collection presents 12 reports grouped around 4 broad themes which draw from the ten SIGs. [Details of these SIGs are available on The Congress Handbook CD-ROM edited by Stig Eriksson]:

- Drama/Theatre and Education — building cultural competence
- Ethical and Political Dialogues
- Drama and Conflict Handling and Peace Culture
- New Dramatic Expressions in a Dramatised Society

There are a multiplicity of voices — including four Australians writing articles and many more involved in and quoted in the collection. However, it is also interesting to connect with those voices that are less familiar to Australian drama educators such as those from Nordic and Eastern European points of view.

Contributions in the first section deal with classroom practices and the relationships between pedagogy and art in the drama curriculum. This section raises fascinating questions about aesthetic education, the artistry of the drama educator and core characteristics of drama education that transfer to the world beyond the drama classroom.

The second section focuses on a range of inter-cultural, intra-cultural and multi-cultural issues including gender, politics, equality, identity and feminism. They ask: how can drama/theatre contribute to cross-cultural communication and development?

Drama as a tool for conflict handling and some of the border issues between learning and therapy are featured in the third section. These articles challenge us to consider how we can use drama to build a peace culture that reaches beyond the causes of violence.

In the final section writers speculate about the transformational power of drama — how drama/theatre adapt and re-invent the art form in response to changing contexts and technologies.

These articles springboard from the experiences of the SIGs yet somehow transcend those particular events. There is a remarkable optimism in this book that is reflected in Hannu's characterising of drama, theatre and education as a 'pedagogy for the future'.

Each of us will read such a diverse collection through our own autobiography and current interests. Yet, I also suspect that each of my re-readings will unpeel onion rings of discovery.

At this moment, I am most interested in John Somers' reflections on teacher education trends and discoveries. It is easy to endorse his sentiments when he writes '. . . it is difficult to see how teachers can obtain an insight into what art can achieve without practising the art form itself' (p.29). These thoughts relate strongly to the francophone position on *partenariat*. Of similar interest to me are Anna-Lena Østern's thoughts on the transformative processes of drama and drama as a 'metaphor for learning, multi-layered, complex learning' (p.33) that is 'dancing between the tree and the bark'.

Similarly, other readers will pick out rich ideas that resonate with their own experiences and points of view. They will also find interesting experiments with form itself, such as the dialogic discussion on Aesthetics and Theatre for Development between Tim Prentki, Marcia Pompero Noguiera and Christopher Odhiambo. This leads me to wonder when we will use technology to make reports from SIGs using video, CD-ROM and whatever opportunities technologies provide to capture and share the rich multiplicity of voices from these SIGs.

One of the striking aspects of this collection is that, despite the diversity of topics, there is a rich commonality of purpose. I am also struck by the repeated calls for a common language for drama/theatre education. While allowing for the inevitable multi-cultural and cross-cultural differences, there is a need for a powerful project that will capture and acknowledge the richness of our shared experience and explain the differences (where they exist).

Another of the useful features of this book is that each contribution provides ideas for further reading and, in most cases, links to on-line resources.

Having been involved with SIGs for all four congresses, my observation is that the most effective SIGs have established contact before the meeting at the congress. Their leaders have negotiated and mapped out a range of possibilities and structures while allowing for new ideas to contribute as additional people join the group. The life of SIGs continues after the congress, often flowing into powerful projects, interactions and collaborations. As we look forward to the IDEA 2004 Congress (and beyond), this publication challenges and encourages participants to make the most of the opportunities, particularly in the quality of their reporting and depth of their thinking and sharing.

In an important addition to his introduction, Hannu challenges IDEA to understand and establish criteria for IDEA projects, emphasising the close connections between these SIGs and projects (the IDEA GMC in Montpellier April 2003 endorsed these criteria).

I extend this challenge: SIGs must move beyond being rich but isolated events tied to congresses and be transformed into the fertile ongoing life-blood of connection and communication in a vibrant international organisation dedicated to drama, theatre and education.

**Bjørn Rasmussen and Anna-Lena Østern (Eds.) (2002)**
**The IDEA Dialogues 2001**
**Playing Betwixt And Between**
**IDEA Publications and IDEA 2001 World Congress – Bergen**
**ISBN 82-995928-2-8**

Christine Comans
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If you were there, at the IDEA 2001 World Congress in Bergen, you'll be grateful for the opportunity this publication gives you to re-visit some of the papers you undoubtedly attended and enjoyed — and to read the ones everyone told you about in glowing terms that you didn't attend! If you weren't there, prepare to be impressed with what you missed! This volume brings together, in a very attractively designed package, thirty-three of the best presentations that, in a fascinating variety of ways, illuminates the aims of IDEA — to be a space for inter-cultural dialogue about and through drama and theatre, to develop lifelong education through drama and theatre and contribute to their use in the empowerment and enfranchisement of young people, especially those in situations of disadvantage and threat.

The editors, Bjørn Rasmussen and Anna-Lena Østern, have skilfully created a very contemporary picture of drama theory and practice by slotting in the chosen papers around three major headings: *Philosophical Perspectives on Drama, Theatre and Education*; *Drama, Theatre and the Socio-Cultural Realities*; and *Drama, Theatre and Education.*

*Philosophical Perspectives on Drama, Theatre and Education* includes the keynote addresses, for which I am personally thankful as I remember finding several of them quite difficult to take in during their 'live' presentation. Not so Kathleen Berry's however, which was as crystal-clear as a keynote address as it now is in 'hard copy'. Complete with the diagrams and dot-points so many of us struggled to record in the beautiful Grieghalle, *Theatre for Disequilibrium: Challenging the Hegemonic Practices of the Privileged* in this written version gives us the luxury of time to contemplate her ideas. I can remember wondering, as I listened to this presentation, at the contemporary significance for drama education of revisiting concepts such as hegemony, deconstruction and discourse. Now I think this is a very important paper and one I will be including in the Book of Readings for my tertiary Drama Education students. We take for granted that our tertiary students have 'picked-up' these political and philosophical concepts so crucial if we are to graduate students capable of constructing a drama curriculum with a

socially-critical dimension. The ideas in this paper may be thirty years old but they are perhaps more relevant than ever in our contemporary drama classrooms in a global situation noted for its 'disequilibrium'.

If you thought the debate about the oppositional positions re drama education attributed to Way, Ross, Bolton and Hornbrook was well and truly over, then, for a new spin on old arguments, you should read *Coping With Reality*, by the Danish keynote Niels Lehman. Embracing inclusivity, he would like to see their four approaches to drama considered as 'different means for different purposes' and that we should avoid 'getting stuck in one perspective' and 'begin to jump happily between different forms' — thus playing betwixt and between.

In another twist on the Congress theme, keynote speaker Tadashi Uchino from the University of Tokyo reports on a fascinating intercultural performance in his address *Playing Betwixt and Between: Intercultural Performance in the Age of Globalization.* Too complex to deal with in this review, I can tell you in brief that the project was based on Kuo Pau Kun's *The Spirits Play,* which deals with the Japanese occupation of Singapore and was directed by Ong Keng Sen in Singapore in 2000. It is a startling example of 'the interculterisation of Asian theatre practices up to now.'

It is also pleasing to see John O'Toole's very elegant *Pilgrim's Progress* in amongst the 'philosophy' offerings. Using the journey and the storytelling of *The Canterbury Tales* as a metaphor for the joy of drama teaching, and cross referencing to Julie Dunn's doctoral work on playfulness and Streb's 'playfulness' in performance (and his own very un-PC use of Dancing Dinah as a pre-text!), he reminds us drama teachers that as well as aiming for Heathcote's Moments of Awe, we should also be striving for Moments of Guffaw:

> The fragmentation, unexpected contingency of chaos and comic juxtaposition that are the guts of comedy and irony are the home territory of today's young people. The guffaw certainly exists right on the edge of the drama, and we fear it — I know I do. It punctuates pretension and challenges certainty . . . and it challenges the power of the drama leader.

Included in the section on *Drama, Theatre and the Socio-Cultural Realities* are papers from South Africa, Nigeria, India, Brazil, Poland, UK, USA and Australia. As the editors note in their introduction, 'Read the cases of violence, illiteracy, poverty, AIDS, war traumas from South Africa, Nigeria, Brazil and India and note the differences between the rich and the poor world and how drama and theatre is applied differently'. Articles from the developed world by Anthony Jackson, Peter Wright and Jo Trowsdale remind us that the Western world is not immune from problematic 'socio-cultural realities' such as issues of self-esteem, youth pregnancy and the need for healing. However, such Western issues pale somewhat in their significance after reading about the South African 'trauma stories' in Hazel Barnes and Dale Peters' paper *Sticks and Stones: Telling Stories, Building Hope* or Beatriz Cabal's drama project carried out in a slum in Southern Brazil and designed to help children succeed at school, in *Interconnected Scenarios for Ethical Dialogues in Drama.*

I particularly recommend to you Shehla Burney's *Brecht in the Bashti: Performance and Meaning across Borders*. She writes beautifully and evocatively of an open-air performance of Brecht's *Lehrstück* (learning-play), *The Exception and the Rule* in

Hindustani translation performed to an invited audience of working class, non-literate people from Hyderabad, India. Reminding us that 'Brechtian theatre in the West has generally been considered 'cerebral', 'obtuse', and '*avant-garde*', her paper demonstrates that *other* audiences in *different* contexts do not necessarily see Brecht in this way. Indeed, her description of the audience discourse that followed the performance is the best evocation of *Verfremdungseffekt* having the 'effect' Brecht intended that I have ever read about.

There are fourteen excellent papers in the final section — *Drama,Theatre and Education.* Kim Flintoff , Mary Mooney and John Carroll write on drama and aspects of technology and media — interesting that Australians seem to be 'leading the way' in this area, as the editors noted. In *Of Bodies in Place or In Place of Bodies*, Flintoff poses the question, 'what degree of embodiment is required for our practice to still be regarded as Drama?' Declaring that at present we drama teachers are 'in that space betwixt and between the virtual and the real', he urges us to think more expansively about virtual environments and how they can support drama learning in our classrooms.

Mary Mooney's *Schlock Horror Student Video Drama* analyses secondary school video-makers move away from the dominant visual paradigm of realism to the schlock horror genre. Schlock qualities are illustrated *via* examples of students' video dramas whose thematic content includes rape, suicide, female exploitation, sexuality. Shocking as this content seems to me, Mooney supports these students 'post-modern screen representations' and their 'unregulated media voice which discloses the prevailing cultural forms of video/television production'.

John Carroll's *The Theatre of Surveillance* has some interesting observations to make about reality television shows such as *Big Brother* and *Temptation Island,* labelling them as 'culturally impoverished models of drama'. Examining them in relation to process drama, he concludes that 'The very techniques that process drama uses for educational purposes are here used in a cynical exploitation of unprotected emotional response packaged as a commodified cultural product'. The new theatrical form that he would like to explore through research (and he describes his own small-scale research project on the issue of 'surveillance' by way of illustration) is one that can 'transcend this technological determinism that masquerades as reality'.

I won't give you a precis of every one of the other papers in this section but I would like to mention a few more to whet your appetite to seek them out and read them. *The Skeleton in the Basement: Educational Drama, Science and Ethics* by Michael Carklin and Dion Van Nierkerk is particularly interesting as it explores the question, 'how can drama be used actively to explore difficult notions of ethics?' Then there is Brad Haseman's *The 'Leaderly' Process Drama and the Artistry of 'Rip, Mix and Burn'* followed by Jennifer Simons' response to Haseman's workshop in *Following the Leader: An Observation of the Work of Brad Haseman on 'Leaderly' Process Drama.* Read these two papers if you feel there must be possibilities in process drama beyond *The Seal Wife* and *The Kelly Drama*! Haseman says:

> The challenge which faces those working in process drama today is how to forge a contemporary practice which establishes a fresh relationship between aspects of structure which can be pre-planned and ordered in advance and those aspects of

> anti-structure which keep the work open, provisional, spontaneous and capable of surprise. One way of meeting this challenge is to create the drama using 'leaderly' authorial processes.

How do you do this? Read the articles and I promise you will be inspired to make a fresh start with process drama.

Cognitive psychologist Christopher Anderson in *Thinking As and Thinking About: Cognition and Metacognition in Drama in Education* begins by writing '. . . imagine my surprise when I first watched a process drama and observed the complicated levels of learning that emerged'. *Via* his description of the learning observed in The *Ice Blink* Drama, he shows how 'learners-in-role benefit from the cognitive and metacognitive benefits of thinking as and thinking about a role, respectively.' He would like to see drama methods incorporated into a whole range of non-drama teaching and learning situations but believes this is not happening. He offers these words of wisdom and those of us in tertiary institutions should take note:

> Part of the explanation is that drama-in-education practitioners are reluctant to engage in pedagogical evangelism in other faculties of the university. Too often, the drama-in-education practitioner is the neglected stepchild of education or theatre, campaigning to establish credibility within the home department. But as faculties in the humanities, sciences and professions are embracing intersdisciplinary and holistic approaches to education, drama-in-education is well positioned to contribute.

The final paper in this section is Julie Dunn's *Dramatic Worlds in Play Creating and Sustaining Illusions of Realness within the Dramatic Play of Preadolescent Girls.* Described by the editors as research on spontaneous play that 'stands out as a reflection on a pure human all-cultural and powerful phenomenon', this article reminds us vividly that central to the involvement of young people in drama is having fun and that what they like best is the 'realness' in dramatic play.

I'm very impressed with this volume of papers that has emanated from IDEA 2001. It is scholarly, readable and beautifully presented. John O'Toole (IDEA Director of Publications) sums it up nicely on the back page and I couldn't agree more:

> The editors . . . have chosen with care and flair from the many fine Congress presentations, to create a whole book that combines a coherent vision with cutting-edge contemporary ideas and practice in drama and theatre applied to educational needs and contexts.

***If you would like to purchase a copy of* The IDEA Dialogues 2001*, see the IDEA Publications Order Form in this edition of* NJ.**

**Rasmussen, B., Kjølner, T., Rasmusson, V. and Heikkinen, H. (Eds.) (2001)**
**Nordic Voices in Drama, Theatre and Education.**
**IDEA Publications, Bergen.**
**ISBN 82-995928-0-1**

Peter Wright
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A number of years ago I read an article with a working title *Hearing the Voices—All of Them*. I was struck at the time by the strong assertion inherent in the title with its overtones of social justice and democracy and by the way the title resonated with so much of what we try and do in drama. Implicit in this title was the notion that there was indeed both a multiplicity of voices to be heard and that we could benefit from listening to them. In the same way, *Nordic Voices in Drama, Theatre and Education* does similar work through presenting the praxis of both emerging and established scholars from four Nordic countries — Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway.

This edited volume represents the cumulative efforts of four particular researchers who had a brief to present, through invited contributions, 'the state of drama and drama research in their country' (p.8). The result is a volume of seventeen individual contributions that reflect each editor's 'contacts and contemporary preferences' (p.8). It is this diversity that is both a strength and weakness of this volume.

The strength of the volume lies first in the way that the reader gains a perspective on what has been happening in the Nordic countries in the development of drama education. The editorial introduction provides a rich context for the book as a whole — a development not all that dissimilar to what has occurred in Australia. By way of difference, this introduction highlights what is negotiated and renegotiated each time this Nordic community meets, including language and systemic differences. Furthermore, the introduction also reveals the energy, effort and commitment invested in developing a community that is dedicated to enhancing both theory and practice, an experience that is congruent with our own.

A second strength of the volume lies in the blend of both emerging and established scholars, the former taking the field of drama education in new and innovative directions; the latter sharing work that has developed over many years of thoughtful inquiry. Some of this later group are well known to Australians through presentations at IDEA and contributions to journals such as *NJ*, and others are revealed (to Australians) for the first time.

What many of these chapters do is to share individual perspectives and research projects; some of these are well developed and articulated and others yet to be completed. In addition, the breadth of work covered includes a continuum from early childhood to tertiary education, practice that is both process and product orientated, and research that is conceptual and empirical. A number of these contributions offer new and unique insights into our developing field of inquiry and practice, whilst others seem oblique to drama/theatre education or are dense and hard to read.

What Australian readers will find interesting are the similarities in the development of Nordic and Australian drama education where there have been parallel debates, and differences in the range of directions in which scholarship has developed. The

development of Nordic scholarship, generally speaking, has been influenced by a long-standing profound interest in (predominantly European) theory. This is a characteristic not just limited to drama/theatre education but is also observable in many other fields of European inquiry. This influence reveals the diverse fields that have been important in the development of influential Nordic scholars whose teaching and writings have influenced many writers in this volume through supervision and, in the case of the Nordic journal *Drama,* editorial policy. Another observable feature is the diversity of interest and practice that exists within the Nordic community. This parallels our own Australian context.

This volume, launched at IDEA in Bergen 2001, features those voices informed by the unique development of Nordic research and practice, but also by the developing body of international scholarship made possible through the work of IDEA and the global sharing of information that is now so much part of our lives. It is both this shared and unshared history that enables us to see difference that is an essential element of experience and offers the opportunity for learning.

A weakness of the volume is that each contribution is not linked by issue or theme but rather through geography, and this results in a weaker package overall. In this context, a concluding chapter by the editors would have made the book stronger by drawing these disparate threads together and commenting on the links between them. However, the strength of many of the individual contributions makes this volume informative and thought provoking.

Australian readers will recognise throughout the book the influence of contemporary cultural theorists, sociologists and educationalists as well as the body of work that now makes up almost a required reading list for anyone attempting scholarly work in drama education. It is also interesting to note that Australians are represented in the reference lists in a number of these chapters, and the production of this particular text will ensure that Australian research and practice will also be informed by the scholarship that is represented by these Nordic Voices.

One disadvantage I often feel when participating in international events like IDEA is my lack of ability to communicate in any other language than English. I also feel a sense of humility at the way so many of our colleagues so generously work to make up for my deficiency when I am unable to reciprocate. This particular volume represents a significant investment of time, energy and good will in presenting a number of these voices. I welcome this addition to our professional literature and, as I search for references that currently appear only in either Danish, Finnish, Swedish or Norwegian, I hope to see more in translation so that our practice is informed through the recognition of difference and similarity.

***Théâtre-éducation au-delà des frontières***
***[Theatre Education Beyond Borders]***
**Émile Lansman (Ed.)**
**Lansman Editeurs, Les Éditions Lansman**
**November 2000**
**ISBN 2-87282-292-5**

Robin Pascoe
Murdoch University

In November 1999, a significant gathering of teachers, theatre artists and cultural commentators met in Paris for what was termed an Autumn University. Over 5 days these practitioners and pedagogues from France, Great Britain and the Wallonie-Bruxelles Community of Belgium compared and discussed trends in drama/theatre education.

This book provides a rich account of those discussions, often in participants' own words but occasionally synthesised and commented on. Published by the prolific Éditions Lansman [www.Lansman.org], these proceedings capture the flavour of what appears to have been a fruitful and useful meeting across borders. Of course, this is published predominantly in French (though there are occasionally speakers in English).

The edited transcripts in the book focus on key concepts:

- Approaches to theatrical creation in the three countries
- Actor training
- The place of theatre in the three education systems.

In addition, discussions of the workshops and performances are featured. While some of the speakers such as Joe Winston, Jean-Gabriel Carasso and Roger Deldime may be familiar to Drama Australia members through IDEA Congresses, this book opens up for many of us a range of other voices. Books like this underline the importance of opening our eyes and ears to other cultures, approaches and ways of conceptualising drama and education. While we are likely to be familiar with the ideas expressed from the United Kingdom (while not necessarily subscribing to them all) we still have much to understand about the ways drama and education is seen in francophone (and other non-Anglo) countries.

For example, in France there is a strongly doctrinaire preference for the 'partenariat' approach which is based on an active and dynamic partnership between a teacher (not a drama trained teacher) and a theatre artist. In his discussion of this approach, Joe Winston noted the 'absorption of both partners, teacher and artist, in the flow of what was happening . . . between the playful, flowing movement about the room, and the artistic rigour of what the students were being asked to do' (p.103).

Roger Deldime, speaking of the Belgian francophone experience, identifies paradoxes familiar to Australians — the difference between the rhetoric for arts education and the reality of its delivery in schools. Yet he also notes that the limitations of institutional settings does not prevent the achievement of extraordinary initiatives and individuals. He discusses ways of initiating *l'élève-spectateur* and *l'élève-acteur* (the student as audience and the student as actor/maker).

I found fascinating his description of a range of initiatives that offer opportunities for young actors, writers and audiences to engage with drama/theatre. He also describes Le Centre de Sociology du Théâtre and an action research project called '*La montagne magique*'. This project of Le Théâtre des Jeunes de la Ville de Bruxelles proactively brings together young people as audience and makers of drama. This project is founded on partnerships with schools and theatre artists mediated by the artistry of the team that Deldime heads. Their purpose is *créer le desir culturel chez des jeunes* (to create a cultural need in the young, a place for them to naturally discover theatre). He describes classes that are initiations to the theatre as audience while at the same time offering students enriching creative experiences. He asks us to imagine what happens to the hearts and heads of young people when their lives are mediated by this synthesis of experience as audience and as maker.

Deldime emphasises partnerships as essential to his work. Connections between partners emerges as a theme of this book — *partenariat*!

It is well worth persevering with this text (even with my fractured French and trusty dictionary!). Hopefully parts of it will be translated so that the practices outlined can be further shared with wider audiences and the ideas debated. The discussions and debates documented here question our own practice and place it in a wider context.

There is a story (possibly an urban myth) that, when the opportunities for drama and media education in French schools were proposed, drama practitioners looked at what music and visual arts teachers were already doing in schools and were dismayed. They argued (so the story goes) that these art forms were being taught 'without the art'. They resolved that this divorcing of arts practice from teaching/learning would not happen for drama. And this was the basis for the 'partenariat' system where the two distinct modes — that of the teacher and that of the theatre artist — collaborate but do not lose their distinctive quality.

I am led to wonder:

- Are Australian drama educators both teachers ***and*** artists? — or perhaps the question should be phrased: ***how*** are Australian drama educators both teachers ***and*** artists?
- In what sense are we as drama educators in touch with the practice and profession of drama/theatre?
- Do drama teachers continue to read, see and discuss contemporary drama and actively engage with theatre culture?
- How can we keep our artistry alive?

I do believe in the artistry of teaching and I see around me drama educators who sustain their own life as theatre artists. But I also believe it is valuable to ask and answer these sorts of questions.

**Patrice Baldwin and Kate Fleming**
**Teaching Literacy through Drama: Creative Approaches**
**Routledge Falmer: London**
**ISBN-0-415-25578-3**

Jo O'Mara
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## Finding Spaces for Drama in the Curriculum:

It can be difficult for generalist primary teachers, who often have little or no drama training, to find spaces for drama in the already overcrowded curriculum. Patrice Baldwin and Kate Fleming are two British teachers who have provided an excellent source book for teachers to use as the basis for introducing or extending their use of drama in the literacy classroom. Their book, *Literacy through Drama: Creative Approaches*, also provides an extensive and well researched set of chapters that focus on the relationship between drama and literacy and the value of using drama in the literacy classroom.

The book has been written in response to the mandated 'two hour literacy block' in Britain. Baldwin and Fleming aim to 'make literacy teaching an exciting and creative experience for both teachers and learners, whilst meeting National Curriculum and National Literacy Strategy requirements' (p.3). The National Literacy Strategy in Britain has put stress on the time and resources available for drama education. Baldwin and Fleming, in the tradition of Ackroyd (2000) and Winston (2000), advocate strongly for both the need and opportunity to inject drama into the Literacy Hour:

> Starting from a realistic acceptance that the literacy objectives and the timetabled Literacy Hour remain fixed, there is still opportunity for creative teaching and learning through the Arts within the Literacy Hour and beyond. (p.5)

Their approach is cooperative and strategic — helping teachers to shift their classroom boundaries by building drama into the mandated space. As Wagner (1998, in Wagner and Barnett) has convincingly shown us through her writings, the ability to teach literacy through process drama is supported by a firm research base. While the teaching of literacy skills is not always the focus of a teacher leading a process drama, the form itself develops key skills required for literacy. Baldwin and Fleming's focus on the literacy teaching through their process drama units is logical and does not take away from the aesthetic experience and the possibilities held within the dramatic form.

Baldwin and Fleming acknowledge that many teachers, whilst seeing the need and value of drama, lack the confidence and expertise to plan drama-centred units of literacy work. They state that 'this is partly due to lack of professional development opportunities and limited initial teacher education opportunities for this in recent years' (p.3). This is true in Australia as well. It was alarming at the Drama Australia Symposium in Fremantle, 2002, to note how little drama education was being taught in universities as part of pre-service primary teaching courses. Pre-service teacher education courses are clearly neglecting drama education, as literacy and numeracy teaching skills are privileged. Very few graduating primary teachers in Australia are leaving university with the skills and confidence to implement drama in their classrooms.

*Literacy through Drama: Creative Approaches* is extremely accessible and Baldwin and Fleming have succeeded in supplying interested teachers with carefully scaffolded sets of lessons that they can follow step by step as a starting point for the development of their own practice. Experienced teachers who prefer to work in an open way can use the pretexts supplied as starting points for their own work, drawing on the lessons outlined according to the route their class takes through the dramatic world. All teachers interested in aligning their drama practice with literacy outcomes can learn from the detailed way in which the authors have systematically linked each episode of the drama to the National Curriculum. For Australian teachers, the rationales, while linked to British documents, can easily be related to Curriculum Standards Framework outcomes. In short, I do not see the detailed lessons as limiting but as facilitating, and feel that the book will be highly valuable to a wide range of practitioners.

Baldwin and Fleming's commitment to drama education comes through in the tone of their writing — they are passionate about their subject and articulate about its value. They have an excellent understanding of teachers, classroom practices and students' learning and understand the impact that government policies can have inside classrooms.

Part One of the book provides a series of chapters that address the theory underpinning process drama as a teaching and learning medium and links process drama to the issues driving contemporary education debates. As well as the expected Drama and Imaginative Role Play, Drama as a Creative Teaching and Learning Medium and Drama and Literacy, Baldwin and Fleming also give us Drama and Thinking Skills, Drama and ICT (Information Computer Technology) and Assessment in and through Drama. Throughout these chapters, Baldwin and Fleming map process drama onto various educational theories and trends without compromising process drama's integrity or substance. For example, in the discussion on assessment, they enter into the 'process/product' debate in an informed, practical and helpful way. Particularly useful is their eclectic collection of drama strategies and conventions. These strategies and conventions are briefly outlined as a smorgasbord with little detail given but teachers using the book can easily obtain more detailed information about specific strategies from other texts (Morgan and Saxton, 1987; Neelands, Booth *et al*., 1991; Cusworth, Simons *et al*., 1997; Warren, 1999).

Part Two of the text focuses on practical units. The authors have written a range of fully developed drama units that use literature as a pre-text for the drama. The units are varied in content and illustrate the use of different dramatic strategies. They are written for a range of year levels. The lesson plans are clear, well laid out and illustrate good teaching practice. They can be 'lifted' and 'used as is' or developed in different directions. The 'drama strategy sets' could also be applied to other texts and themes. Some of the pieces of literature used are from the UK curriculum support books as the literature is based on the National Literacy Strategy framework and linked closely with UK strategies and testing. This should however provide no difficulty in terms of using the work for the Australian teacher. The story of the text is outlined at the beginning of each unit of work and the availability of the pretexts is also discussed. I tried sourcing the texts from my desk (through the library catalogue and internet) and in ten minutes could locate a version of every story.

Part Three of the text is a series of literacy support sheets that can be photocopied for classroom use.

My only criticism of *Literacy through Drama: Creative Approaches* is that I dislike the unwieldy A4 size of the book, which seems to be a popular format for classroom texts. Although I find it annoying to carry books of this size around, I recommend that you make space for this book on your shelves and in your satchel as it is an invaluable resource that we can all use to help find more space for drama in the curriculum.

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**Gavin Bolton (2003)**
**Dorothy Heathcote's Story: biography of a remarkable drama teacher**
**Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books**
**ISBN 1 85856 264 3**

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At the International Drama in Education Research Institute (IDIERI) in July 2003 an extraordinary event happened. One hundred and fifty people had gathered in the Pavilion Bar at University College Northampton to hear Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton discuss a new biography on Heathcote's life, written by Bolton. In itself, this may not seem out of the ordinary; however, in the opening minutes of this presentation many people's eyes were welling up with tears. For some, this was the first time they had heard Heathcote and Bolton speak and, as Heathcote movingly recalled the context of how the book came to be written, there was barely a dry eye in the house. Indeed, for my own students from New York University, some 40 graduate students from across the US, they spoke about how this 'Research Conversation' on biographical inquiry with Heathcote and Bolton, moderated by Cecily O'Neill, was a memorable event in their three weeks' study in the UK.

The writing of this new biography on *a remarkable drama teacher* followed shortly upon the death of Dorothy Heathcote's lifetime partner, Raymond, in 2001. As Heathcote explained at IDIERI, Raymond's tremendous support over her 50 year career was a major factor in her being able to forge the unforeseen impact she had on a generation of drama teachers.

The data for the book, including interviews from Heathcote, reminiscences from colleagues and friends and Bolton's own analysis of her praxis, was gathered during this period of mourning, as Heathcote recalls in a note to Bolton in the opening pages:

> When Raymond died and you asked me about a biography, once I got over my surprise that my life would have enough interest in it to invite a reader (I've always thought I just got up every day and got on with it — praxis!), I realised I wasn't surprised. You in your kindness and wisdom chose your moment well, realising that such a change from a long happy companionship to an uncertain 'singularity' could be a watershed from which one could see behind, and tentatively forward, usefully. (p.vii)

For Heathcote, this book was a cathartic experience as she contemplated her early years growing up as the only child to a single parent during the depression, her evolving interest in acting, her stumbling into teaching, her need to work regularly with children, the growing 'celebrity' mantle which she reluctantly adorned and which she did not seek. It is a fascinating account of how one's life context shapes who we are and what we aspire to become. Heathcote's interest in anthropology, in literature and history, in how things are made and sculpted, informs the concerns which shaped her teaching:

> Perhaps the greatest influence on Dorothy from the arts was the richness of words and other means of communicating, such as sound and colour and movement. The richness and subtleties and shades of difference made up a rainbow of meanings in a word/colour/sound/movement spectrum. Choice of word and choice of colour became compelling crafts. (p.13)

Heathcote was born Dorothy Shutt in 1926 and was raised in West Yorkshire. She did not complete formal educational training, leaving school at 14 to work in a mill. Through the inspired choice of Brian Stanley, she was appointed at the age of 24 to the University of Durham's Institute of Education and it was here that she carved out for herself an influential career as she worked in her own particular genre of drama process, quite different to what her contemporary Peter Slade and others were advocating. She did not self-promote her praxis as she travelled around the country and the world, leading workshops in the classrooms of her students and developing what became known as the 'demonstration' session.

However, it was her profiling on the 1971 BBC documentary series *Omnibus* which rocketed her into international limelight. This documentary was titled *Three Looms Waiting*, a reference to a quip made by the manager of the mill she was working at as a teenager that there would be a position waiting if her foray into acting did not pan out; it was the result of 80 hours of filming that was reduced to 58 minutes. This film was revolutionary as it revealed a teacher with a powerful sense of theatre form, sculpting improvisation and performance into significant aesthetic events. Working with children and youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, Heathcote revealed how artistry and learning, when carefully structured and embedded, can lead to significant transformative encounters. She promoted a particular view of teaching where students are activated as co-conspirators, and how their needs and interests should be layered into educational planning.

It is appropriate that Gavin Bolton, often acknowledged as the leading theoretician of drama education, would write this biography. From his early career, he was greatly influenced by Heathcote's pedagogy. As he lived and worked nearby, he was privileged to see her teaching evolve over a forty year period. Their friendship and respect is acknowledged clearly in this book and was certainly evident at IDIERI as they shared anecdotes, completed each other's sentences, laughed their way through the challenges of creating a living history.

Bolton is aware of how his own value-ladenness might prompt a concern about the text's truthfulness and authenticity. Peppered throughout the text are critiques of Heathcote's work, explorations of those sessions she taught which did not unfold as planned. As well, there is a rich description of how educators have applied and adapted Heathcote's work in a range of contemporary settings. Readers might have expected a more comprehensive exploration from Bolton of how his own career was shaped by the educational movement that Heathcote created but, given the constraints of word limits and perhaps a desire to constrain his perspective to Dorothy Heathcote's story, he does not examine how his own teaching grew in relation to hers.

Heathcote is a controversial figure. For those who encountered her for the first time at IDIERI, her engaging personality, her authority, her wisdom and dreams were clearly in evidence and one could see how her impassioned viewpoints could ruffle feathers. 'I never asked to be a guru,' she exclaimed, 'it was others who put this label on me'. As one reads *The Dorothy Heathcote Story* it is clear that Ms Shutt did not intend the celebrity many gave to her. She just got out of her bed everyday and got on with the work.

I found this book an absorbing read and difficult to put down. This was not just because I was exposed to numerous videos of Heathcote's work as an undergraduate and have an interest in her work but because I discovered things about the pioneers of drama education that I was not familiar with before. As Cecily O'Neill commented to me after first reading this biography, she (O'Neill) could see her own life pass before her as she re-encountered the movements, the names, the struggles in the field over the decades.

I am thrilled that my own students now are reading this biography in a research methods class I am teaching. The book prompts important questions about the human qualities that teachers have to embrace if they want to be effective and good with children, as well as asking readers to reflect upon their own journeys as educators, what they value and what they don't. Perhaps more importantly it confirms for me the power of reflective praxis for, even if we don't always agree with what Heathcote espoused in her career, we celebrate the extraordinary accomplishment of a teacher just trying to figure out what makes for good teaching.

**Michelle Arrow (2002)**
**UPSTAGED: Australian women dramatists in the limelight at last**
**Currency Press, NSW**
**ISBN 0 86819 690 8**

Angela O'Brien
The University of Melbourne.

*Upstaged* provides an account of the contribution of Australian women playwrights writing between 1928 and 1968. Author Michelle Arrow describes these dates as 'bookends' in that 'they mark respectively the beginning and the decline of women's prominence in playwriting in Australia'. Her thesis, embodied in the title of her text, is that these women playwrights were 'effectively upstaged by their younger, brasher (male) counterparts in the 1970s'. Arrow's purpose is primarily compensatory, an attempt to reclaim a place in theatre history for a group of twenty-four identified women including Mona Brand, Oriel Gray, Gwen Meredith, Dymphna Cusack and Catherine Duncan. It is clear from the author's introduction that she is fully engaged by her subjects, almost as though it has become her mission to rescue 'these remarkable women' from the margins to which they have been relegated by the generation that followed. As such, *Upstaged* reads as a celebration of the lives and work of the playwrights rather than a critical evaluation of their contribution to Australian theatre or dramatic literature.

Since the publication of Drusilla Modjeska's *Exiles at Home* (Angus and Robertson: 1981), there has been a growing interest by academics and cultural historians, generally women, in documenting theatre history prior to 1960 and particularly the unsung contribution of women. This has extended to their contribution to radio and television drama. Many of the playwrights of whom Arrow writes have become better known in the past decade because of their association with the New Theatre movement. This affiliation of left-wing theatre companies, which sprang up in most capital cities in Australia during the 1930s, had no place in cultural history twenty years ago. It is now relatively well archived and documented, not only by historians in each state but through a spate of autobiographies written (and often self-published) by the women playwrights involved. Arrow's thorough research draws from all these sources as well as her own interviews and correspondence with the subjects.

A distinguishing strength of Arrow's text is her examination of the socio-political and historical forces which facilitated the emergence of playwriting as a potential profession for women during the thirties and forties. She outlines how the coalescence of a number of factors between 1928 and 1968, including the rise of repertory theatre, the growth of political theatre, wartime exigencies and the emergence of new entertainment media, particularly radio, created an environment which allowed women playwrights to reassess their artistic and professional potential. *Upstaged* documents a passionate commitment by a number of the women playwrights to using their art for social critique and change in a time of political upheaval. At the same time, many of these women began playwriting to earn money, often because they needed to. In Chapter 4, 'Writing for Cash, Not Immortal Fame', Arrow analyses the ways in which the rise of radio during World War II, and the temporary absence of men, provided women with an opportunity to earn money as 'career playwrights'. The remuneration was poor, and the profession unstable but playwriting provided a viable occupation for women carrying domestic responsibilities.

*Upstaged* is of particular interest to drama teachers concerned to introduce students to aspects of Australian theatre history beyond the traditionally published and critiqued works, primarily written by men post-*The Doll* and produced by professional theatre companies. As such, it is a useful companion piece to Peter Fitzpatrick's classic text, *After the Doll*. Arrow's Appendix provides useful brief resumés of the women playwrights discussed in the text and includes listings of the plays written and any publication details. Her bibliography is excellent and references little known works as well as key texts in the field of Australian drama between 1928 and 1968. *Upstaged* will also be of interest to teachers of Australian history.

In the week that I was reading *Upstaged* for the purposes of this review, I was distressed to read an article in *The Age* (3 July 2003), 'Oriel Gray, "playwright of ideas", dies aged 83'. My response to Oriel's death was complex and included sadness and guilt. As noted by Arrow, while Oriel's play *The Torrents* shared equal first prize with Ray Lawler's *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* in the Playwrights' Advisory Board Competition of that year, the latter has become a legend in Australian theatre mythology while Oriel Gray 'doesn't exist'. One of Oriel's greatest desires was that *The Torrents* might receive a professional production in Melbourne; she and I had discussed it optimistically on a number of occasions. My disappointment that it never eventuated was because of my commitment to Oriel rather than a belief that the play would still engage a contemporary audience. I suspect it wouldn't — but we still should have tried harder!

Because of my own relationship with Gray, Brand, Duncan and Roland, it does not surprise me that Michelle Arrow so passionately engages with her subjects, her *Dramatis Person*æ as she describes them, arguing a place for them rather than providing a much needed comparative evaluation of their works. What is the contribution of these women to Australian cultural history? Does it lie in the work or in their status as trailblazers and their self-determination to construct and maintain themselves as career playwrights against all odds? More than twenty years after my own initial engagement with the works, I accept (reluctantly) that *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* is a better play than *The Torrents.* I also recognise that there are a number of neglected male writers of the period, particularly Jim Crawford, George Farwell, George Landen Dann and Sumner Locke Elliot, all of whom, to her credit, are mentioned by Arrow.

In her final chapter Arrow returns to her thesis that Australian theatre and drama criticism has been generated almost entirely from a post-1960s perspective and that the responsibility for the neglect of women playwrights rests largely with the New Wave generation. Her conclusion is compelling but fails to recognise that, given the ephemeral and immediate nature of plays in performance, very few translate well to stage for later generations of audiences. It is timely that a re-evaluation of the New Wave is emerging, an evaluation which might further assist in restoring the balance between them and the earlier generation of playwrights — men as well as women. Through *Upstaged*, Arrow has made a significant contribution to this much-needed reconstruction of our cultural history. A final comment — a found place in history for the passing generation of women playwrights should not lay the path for neglect of the current generation.

**Bryan Nason (2003)**
**The Journey Plays**
**Playlab Press: Brisbane,**
**ISBN 0908156758**

Bruce Burton
Griffith University

Bryan Nason is unique in Queensland and almost certainly in Australia as a significant, professional theatre practitioner. He has gone his own way for morethan thirty years, operating largely outside the established theatre companies and without consistent government funding. During this time he has developed an extraordinary canon of theatrical work, both classical and devised, which draws on and feeds back into the whole world of theatre.

This collection of plays is therefore doubly valuable; the first published record of his work that also provides a valuable range of narrative texts for use in the classroom and on stage. Three of the five texts in this volume are extracts from full-length works, focusing on scenes from the three plays which deal with the journeys undertaken by the characters. The other two texts in this volume are full-length plays adapted from other sources and first performed 20 years apart.

*Bacchoi* is Nason's 1970 adaptation of Euripides' masterpiece. It is relatively faithful to the original text whilst contextualising the play in Bjelke-Petersen's Queensland of the 1970s. This contextualisation is achieved through Nason's direction and design rather than radical changes to the original text. The city guards are identified as motorcycle police and the costuming of the chorus in the production photos is straight from the Hippie era.

However, the most notable features of this adaptation are the intense exploration of the fundamental conflict between ecstasy and repression personified by Dionysus and Pentheus and the expressive chorus work using song and the interweaving of voice to powerful dramatic effect. The structuring of the chorus language provides exciting opportunities for choreographed movement and, indeed, vivid physicality has been a consistent feature of Nason's work.

This version of *Bacchoi* is particularly accessible without distorting the form or power of the original and would be valuable in any study of Greek theatre. As an introduction to the structure and meaning of the text, it provides interesting and engaging approaches to both character and chorus.

The second complete text is *Beauty and the Beast*, Nason's adaptation of de Beaumont's French text. This version was first performed in a theatre restaurant setting and its beguiling blend of fairy tale and contemporary ironic observation undoubtedly worked well in this context. It provides an effective model of traditional narrative theatre appropriate to the drama classroom.

There is an interesting blend of formal and vernacular dialogue, which would be particularly appealing to a range of students in the drama classroom and this text, and particularly extracts from it, would provide a worthwhile model for the improvisation and performance of narrative texts.

*Gilgamesh* and *The Tale of Monkey* are both adaptations of ancient Asian epic stories. Nason's adaptations of these two narratives clearly reveal the influence on him of Peter Brook's search for a world theatre in the great creation myths of Asia. *Gilgamesh* was in fact first performed in a quarry in suburban Brisbane after Nason had seen Brook's *Mahabharata* at the Adelaide festival. In both *Gilgamesh* and *The Tale of Monkey* the language is formal in style but fluid in structure and the storytelling is literate and dramatic. What Nason has succeeded in doing is making these myths accessible to Australian audiences without westernising them or colonising the culture which gave birth to them. It is the stories and their possibilities as narrative drama that interests Nason and these come alive on the page.

The third text extract is from Nason's adaptation of Dickens *A Tale of Two Cities* and represents the most stunningly original of all five plays. Nason has managed to distil the essence, and the drama, of Dickens's sprawling novel into a piece of fascinating theatre with a named cast of just three actors playing a variety of roles and working with puppets. The great narrative set pieces have been preserved almost intact from the original novel but blended with short, cinematic scenes characterised by spare, muscular dialogue. Just reading the text is exciting and engrossing and it cries out for performance. As an exemplar of the powerful translation of a great narrative to the stage using minimal resources, it could hardly be bettered. It leaves the reader wishing that this text at least had been published in its entirety.

Theatre practitioners and teachers will find this overdue celebration of Nason's more than three decades of work a valuable and challenging addition to their libraries and their practice. The fact that Nason still continues to practice his craft with the same commitment and energy is cause for further celebration.