

administrator. On the one hand, perhaps this polyvocality is a strength of our highly specialized, and specializing, discourse. But it is also, surely, a shortcoming that needlessly perpetuates its inaccessibility. To refuse to offer a metahistory of “our discipline” is to refuse to let non-specialists in on the narrative. This is a dangerous elitism against which, I know, so many theatre scholar-practitioners otherwise labour.

The macrohistoricization of Canadian theatre has lain dormant for more than twenty-five years. We would do well to remember that histories must be told, retold, reframed, and redoubled or they cease to be known and embodied. Past performances and the essential practices of diachronic meaning-making live only in their retelling.

Applied Theatre and Performance Research in Canada?

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In the last decade, Canadian theatre researchers have taken interest in Applied Theatre and Performance practices, that is, practices with an explicit pedagogical, social, political or therapeutic aim that take place in educational, community, activist or health care contexts. Examples include theatrical elements of the sprawling Montreal Life Stories project reported on in recent years by Ted Little and Rahul Varma among others, and *Are We There Yet*, a participatory play by Edmonton-based playwright Jane Heather that toured extensively across the country educating young audiences about sexuality. I find it curious, however, that while these practices are being discussed using the term ‘Applied’ in international contexts, they seem to be taken up in more methodology- or discipline-specific conversations here in Canada such as drama- or theatre-in-education, ethnography, community theatre, theatre for development, art therapy, or practice-based research (to name some common possibilities). While I wouldn’t dispense with any of these specific conversations, I have wondered: why has the term ‘Applied research’ been less enthusiastically embraced in Canada than it has elsewhere? And is there reason to give it a warmer reception?

Indulging for a moment in that unfortunate Canadian habit of comparing ourselves to others, our lack of a professional association or a refereed journal focused on Applied Theatre and Performance research stands out. The UK journal *Research in Drama Education: The Applied Journal of Theatre and Performance* publishes an impressive four issues of refereed articles per year (and is loosely associated with the triennial International Drama-in-Education Research Institute, or IDIERI). Though Australia has a lower population than Canada and half as many universities, it punches above its weight on this subject with two refereed journals: *Applied Theatre Research* (affiliated with the International Drama-in-Education Association, or IDEA) and the online journal *N7* (affiliated with Drama Australia). The US has the Association for Theatre in Higher Education’s journal *Theatre Topics*, more pedagogical in focus than these others, but which does publish on Applied research topics.

Canada has no comparable organizations or journals, with the partial exception of

the online, refereed *Canadian Journal of Practice-based Research in Theatre*, co-edited by Monica Prendergast and Clare Borody, which has published one issue per year since 2009. Though the journal publishes on some Applied research, its focus is on providing a space for practitioner reflection on process and research (as per its title). Of course our other journals, *TRIC*, *CTR* and *alt.theatre*, can and do publish articles about Applied research, although the latter two are not refereed and have other interests and audiences to represent. In spite of these options, the lure of established international print journals is strong; by my count, between 2008 and 2013, the journals listed above printed thirty articles about Applied research either by Canadians or about research taking place in Canada. We should be proud of such international output, perhaps, but is the lack of a Canadian forum for this work preventing a more robust Applied research culture from developing?

Granted, it's probably true that Canada doesn't already have an Applied Theatre Research and Performance journal because the Applied paradigm is still new here. It is only popular in the UK and Australia on account of the fact that in those contexts, long-standing relationships between theatre, education, and social justice have formalized into undergraduate and graduate programs with an Applied orientation. But a journal is only one indication of a growing field of interest, and there are other signs that interest is growing in Canada. We now boast theatre programs focused on Applied Theatre at Victoria, Brock, and Concordia Universities, and there is increasing support for it in other schools besides. At the Drama Centre at the University of Toronto, many students enter the MA and PhD streams with some form of Applied program of study; these students can now be supported by any of three faculty cross-appointed to the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), U of T's Faculty of Education, with an interest in the area. While these programs may not be producing Applied researchers in large numbers, we can take from Australia's example that it isn't a critical mass of individuals so much as a critical mass of interest that's important.

The matter of what we call this growing, diverse field of practice and research has important implications for who is invited to the table, how disciplinary expectations are established, and which audiences we anticipate. While the diversity of methodologies and critical frameworks is a sign of vitality, I do wonder whether it isn't also an obstacle to organizing a larger community of scholarly interest. By defining itself by separating rather than unifying criteria, the field may miss an opportunity to build greater disciplinary legitimacy and organizing potential. Formal structures such as undergraduate and graduate programs, associations, and journals can only win support from institutions and funders if they can demonstrate a lot of heat in an area, which is more challenging when that area is distributed among a series of largely siloed conversations.

The notion of Applied research is useful for gathering together an exciting mix of individuals with different training, critical frameworks, and vocabularies, but common goals. Perhaps instructive here are the comments made in 2009 by Helen Nicholson, editor of *Research in Drama Education*, on the occasion of the journal adding the 'strap line' to its title: *The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*. Nicholson pleaded with the journal's readership not to see the adoption of 'Applied' as some "new orthodoxy" that would "delimit a scholarly field and its creative practices," but as a way for the journal to more accurately announce its original vision of being an "eclectic meeting place for research" (325). Nicholson's idea was to celebrate interdisciplinarity and turn diversity into a virtue. Given

Canadians' own investment in the value of diversity, Nicholson's logic could and should be embraced here.

Eclecticism has its challenges. A problem I've found in the existing international Applied research community is a propensity toward naval-gazing discussions of terminology of the "Are-we-doing-drama-in-education-or-theatre-in-education?" variety (the bit from Monty Python's *Life of Brian* about "People's Front of Judea" or the "Judean People's Front" springs to mind). One of the best academic papers I have ever heard was a keynote delivered by Australian drama-in-education scholar John O'Toole at the 2009 meeting of IDIERI in Sydney, Australia. O'Toole's paper, titled "I, meta-fellow on the stair," was a meta-analysis of research taking place within the IDIERI scholarly community. O'Toole's keynote was a beautifully crafted and fearlessly honest analysis of the field's aims, scholarly standards, and its future. In an audacious move that few could get away with, O'Toole's 'analysis' in the paper treated the entire set of abstracts submitted for that conference—written by all the people present in the room for his keynote—as a 'data set' which he analyzed to determine what it said about the state of the field. He had plenty good to say; for instance, he found the abstracts revealed a healthy spirit of advocacy in the group (281-2). But he also leveled criticism at what he saw as unoriginal and weak research and writing, citing dozens of specific transgressions in the abstracts. It was an uncomfortable exercise, and I suspect he made some new enemies that day. But to my mind, O'Toole was usefully trying to shift the conversation away from territorial battles over particular terms or practices and toward setting a high scholarly standard for the community's research and writing. (For the record, my own abstract was not spared; I was called-out for over-quoting and for citing my own work—for shame! [280])

In a less confrontational attempt to imagine what an Applied research community would look like, Penny Bundy (together with the same John O'Toole, an Editor of *Applied Theatre Research*) held a workshop at the IDIERI meeting in Limerick, Ireland in 2012 to discuss what the community desired in a scholarly journal. I found it a lively and productive exchange, and afterward, Bundy merged participants' suggestions into a single wish-list:

[We] want to engage with the story of the research. We want a short, relevant, manageable read, with new, up to date, emerging ideas. As readers, we seek a paper that challenges us; that invites dialogue; that has a useful and credible reference list; that gives us something to take away. We want a sense of the practitioner and of the theoretical framework. [We] want an aesthetically pleasing paper, a writer who appears genuine, metaphor, subtitles and signposts. We don't want utilitarian, formulaic writing. We want work that offers a sense of the context; that offers a sense of the writer and contains the writer's passion. (Bundy and O'Toole 4)

A good recipe for any journal, perhaps, but the statement reveals something of the multiplicity of interests that are attracted to the notion of Applied research. One of the special challenges to creating any forum for Applied research would lie in keeping it open to academics, educators, and practitioners of different backgrounds, while also insisting on a high level of analytical rigour, regardless of which practice-based or intellectual traditions were in play. This multiplicity would be both the greatest challenge to and the greatest value of any formal scholarly forum on the subject if it were realized in Canada.

In her keynote at the 2013 meeting of CATR in Victoria, Julianna Saxton, a pioneering practitioner and scholar in the field of drama-in-education, argued that in a cultural context in which “the arts are running on thinning oxygen,” Applied practices may be as important as ever, and I would agree. Regardless of whether we need more of a home for Applied Theatre and Performance research in Canada, or whether the existing international venues fill the void for now, developing a culture of rigorous, scholarly reflection on our various Applied research practices are important to the vitality of Theatre and Performance Studies more generally. Benefits have accrued from the slow divorce of Canadian Theatre programs from English Literature departments, but leaving that familial embrace has also left our programs to fend for themselves in the cold—and the wolves are howling in the distance. My sense is that Applied researchers are all separately learning that our hands-on, community-engaged, interdisciplinary, experiential education projects are attracting attention in a post-secondary education environment that has itself become more Applied or vocational in orientation. We don’t—and won’t—need any new organization or journal to tell us that this work is important, but such formal gathering places can foster a training and research culture that will encourage a new generation of Theatre and Performance Studies artists and scholars to imagine doing it in the first place.

For the Future, the Past: LGBT2Q Theatre, Performance, and Scholarship in Canada

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In her introduction to *Queer Theatre in Canada*, Roz Kerr notes the dearth of historical work in the field: “It is really only in the mid-nineties that articles dealing with queer theatre pertaining to English Canadian scholars and theatre practitioners/spectators begin to appear” (viii). The extant scholarship on queer Canadian theatre and performance in English, which Kerr brings together admirably in her anthology, coincides with the rise of queer politics and theory as social and political formations, and, importantly, as a scholarly approach in the early 1990s. The essays in her anthology are a testament to this academic trend. Of the twenty-one articles only two were published before 1994, and among these at least eleven are “queer” in their methodology, theoretical framework, or focus—including my own contribution. Kerr suggests that her “volume has a heavy concentration on the last fifteen years in recognition that queer theatre really only begins during the 1990s” (viii). This point is important. Kerr differentiates “queer” theatre from earlier gay and lesbian theatre, noting: “By the early 1990s the term queer replaced gay and lesbian in recognition of the need to move beyond the identity politics they implied” (viii). While queer did not exactly *replace* gay and lesbian, the need for the term and the political and theoretical positionality it denoted was brought about by a set of historical forces: in the late-1980s and early 1990s, inspired by post-structuralist theories of identity, debates about the limits of identity politics, and in the wake