

Monica Prendergast & Juliana Saxton, Editors. *Applied Theatre: International Case Studies and Challenges for Practice 2nd Edition*. Bristol, UK and Chicago US: Intellect, 2016. pp. XIII + 273. \$43 Paper.

— Erin Kaplan, *University of Colorado Boulder*

Editors Monica Prendergast and Juliana Saxton have, in their second edition of *Applied Theatre: International Case Studies and Challenges for Practice*, created an invaluable repository of examples of various types of Applied Theatre from all over the world. Prendergast and Saxton purposefully offer readers the opportunity to pull back the curtain and learn from the successes, mistakes, and sometime failures of seasoned Applied Theatre practitioners.

The book packs almost too much information into its only 250 pages. Each case study is an abridged version of a longer published article, and often what is presented in the book is less than fifty percent of the original piece. In many ways this compilation offers a convenient tasting of case studies, stories, and ideas and leaves it to the reader to go out into the world and do the work of learning more.

In their first chapter Prendergast and Saxton offer their readers an historical and genealogical overview of the field of Applied Theatre. They define terms, classify “types” of Applied Theatre and highlight foundational thinkers, practitioners, and theorists in the field. The editors define “Applied Theatre” as an umbrella terms for varying types of performance practices that “fall outside mainstream theatre performance” (6).

In their second chapter the authors offer strategies for creating and utilizing Applied Theatre; they suggest the elements they consider necessary, and, importantly, problematize the dichotomy of performer/ spectator. They are careful to also clarify the role of the facilitator: as “a multi-disciplinarian who must know about theatre and how it works, as well as have an understanding of teaching and learning” and who should be “familiar with the social structure and community contexts within which he or she may be working” (17). Having outlined this key role, they then illustrate the four models of Applied Theatre as being those based in: Community, Curriculum, Transfer, and Interview. Each model is clearly outlined and defined for readers who may be new to this area of practice.

Chapter Three offers various inspirations for creating Applied Theatre through the vehicle of story-telling, and asks the very pertinent question in this field: who gets to tell whose story? This chapter outlines how “my” story can become “our” story through community-building and strong facilitation, and investigates the role of didactic versus narrative story-telling.

Chapters Four through Thirteen engage with different types of Applied Theatre, and each chapter provides three to four specific examples of Applied Theatre projects within that specific field. These include: Popular Theatre, Documentary Theatre, Theatre in Education (TIE), Theatre of the Oppressed (TO), Theatre in Health Education, (THE) Theatre for Development (TfD), Prison Theatre, Community-Based Theatre, Museum Theatre, and Reminiscence Theatre. Each chapter begins with a clear summary of the elements of the performance tradition (structural, aesthetic, pedagogical) and then presents the case studies as exemplars of those traditions.

In their final chapter Prendergast and Saxton use the case studies to help further expound upon their four core motifs of participation, aesthetics, ethics, and assessment; they also offer practical strategies for readers to use when faced with these challenges in real-life encounters. Each chapter concludes with thought-provoking questions for reflection and discussion, and suggested activities for both seasoned and emerging practitioners.

As a whole, *Applied Theatre: International Case Studies and Challenges for Practice 2nd Edition* offers tremendous insight regarding the potential for theatre’s contribution to social justice; because of the abridged nature of the case studies, however, it left this reader feeling somewhat unfulfilled and wanting to know more about each of the examples included in the book.

The succinct and concise method Prendergast and Saxton use to define terms, methodologies, models, and motifs would be of significant use to the new practitioner looking to learn more about, and starting to facilitate Applied Theatre. For the more seasoned practitioner it acts as a refresher in the core concepts in our field, and an inspiration regarding the work our colleagues around world are doing, using theatre to make their communities and the world more compassionate, just, and critically-engaged.