Playwright, director, educator, mentor: Brian Way's role in Canadian children's theatre

Joyce Wilkinson

Résumé *Dans cet article, Joyce Wilkinson relate les visites au Canada du dramaturge britannique Brian Way, l'une des figures les plus influentes du théâtre pour la jeunesse au Canada. Grâce à Way et à son influence sur plusieurs troupes, dont le Théâtre Globe de Regina, le théâtre de participation en milieu scolaire a connu un développement remarquable de 1958 à ce jour.*

"Participatory children's theatre" and "developmental drama," synonymous with Brian Way throughout the world, represent Way's seminal innovations in the evolution of children's theatre and child drama. "A man's reach should exceed his grasp else what's a heaven for?" aptly characterizes Way's creed. His influence during almost the entire history of children's theatre in Canada has been incalculable. In a July 1989 interview, Brian Way acknowledged: "*Now when I think about what I have seen develop in various visits over those thirty years, my breath is taken away. It is really absolutely phenomenal.*" Three taped interviews, anecdotes of shared experiences and written documents by and about Brian Way underlie this article, as I reflect on some of the threads woven by Way in the Canadian children's theatre/child drama tapestry over the past three decades and present his views of some hobbling issues which threaten the entrance of this flourishing into the 21st century.

In the spring of 1958, when I had recently mounted my second widely acclaimed Christmas concert in a one-room rural school in western Manitoba, Brian Way made his initial visit to Canada. Says Way, "*My first visit here was nothing to do with an invitation to me. An invitation came from Canada to my colleague Peter Slade with whom I was working very closely in England and who, unable to leave, asked if I would come here to represent him, his views and the Educational Drama Association concerned with child drama. (I had a few years previously spent a long time editing Peter Slade's famous book* Child drama)."

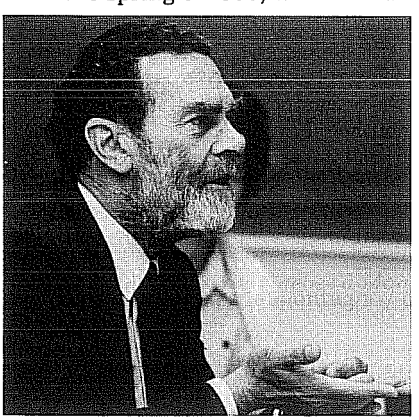

Photo: Ed Ellis

Brian Way

"*I never inquired how this trip came into being. It was partly financed by*

the newly formed Canada Council but the main inspirers were the Dominion Drama Festival (DDF) because my first visit in 1958 and my second visit in 1959 coincided with the finals week of the DDF. The 1958 festival took place in Halifax, Nova Scotia, with Michel St-Denis as adjudicator; the second, in Toronto with adjudicator Philip Hope Orliss of the Manchester Guardian. *Although there were places where I was involved with children's theatre, mainly I was introducing some thoughts about child drama in education. (At that time child drama was known in Canada as creative drama and in the States as creative dramatics. We still haven't yet found the absolutely secure vocabulary for what it's all about).*"[1]

In recognition of the significance of his own work, Way was invited to return in 1959. Both visits lasted for about three and a half months with the week at the beginning in both cases consisting of Way's work during the DDF festival. Since day-time hours during Festival week were devoted to workshops and lectures, Way's primary DDF function on both trips was to give workshops mainly for teachers while festival performances reigned in the evenings. For a few weeks following each festival Way made a coast to coast whistle-stop tour, consisting of one day visits, two day visits, sometimes three day visits and in one case (Edmonton), a three week visit. Over the two years, Way not only became one of the most widely travelled Canadian visitors but also left behind a wealth of his own treasures through lectures and workshops, sponsored in many cases by local universities, in Halifax, Fredericton, Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto, Fort William, Winnipeg, Regina, Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer, Peace River, Vancouver and Victoria. After such a revolutionary and expansive injection of new thought about the process of education, the nation could never be the same.

Way's major commitments at this time, that is seven and one-half to eight weeks of the three and one-half months, consisted of teaching at universities: in 1958, the Summer School at Dalhousie University in Halifax and in 1959, on the opposite coast, at the University of British Columbia Summer School in Vancouver. He ended each tour with a ten day visit to the summer school at Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia. Of that experience, Way recalls: "*At Tatamagouche I was amazed to suddenly discover that out of 30 students the majority of them were taking the course because they had run out of other courses for increasing increments, adding to one's kudos, adding to one's resumé as to things one had done. In other words I was a little shattered at Tatamagouche and it followed in UBC as well at the number of people who really couldn't give a damn about child drama or anything else to do with the arts but just wanted to do another workshop and had run out of others on their list and felt that maybe this might be a soft touch.*"

Way was shocked to be told that it was traditional for people to be passed simply because they were prepared to give up their time at such a workshop (I recall a similar situation at a 1988 summer session in the North West Terri-

tories), to set written examinations and mark them. He successfully fought the inconsiderate waste of time inherent in teaching only two hours each afternoon over six weeks. As a result his trademark became the hundreds of workshops he taught in a week or week and a half or two weeks of really concentrated effort without any other distraction. But even at that early date, for Brian Way, the antecedents of university attitude to this kind of creative work were evident.

In those early days of children's drama in Canada, people, as now, were of vital importance to Way. He notes: "*When you come as a stranger from England to a country like Canada, there's an enormous dependence on this kind of friendship and encouragement. I was quite shattered by the amount of it that I met and the helpfulness that I had. It was interesting also domestically: on these very short visits that I had for a day or two in places I would be housed in beautiful hotels and looked after grandly. On the long summer schools I was housed largely in student university accommodation which had its own bewilderment, its own excitement, its own differences and its own new experiences for me but again there were always such helpful people all around.*"

First and foremost among those who left an indelible impression on Way was Donald Wetmore of the Nova Scotia Adult Education Department, a key figure in the Dominion Drama Festival, who organized Way's visits. Immensely kind, thoughtful and interesting, Wetmore helped "*this stranger from England trying to understand an entirely new culture in this beautiful country called Canada and was wonderful at opening doors and windows of opportunities for me whilst I was here.*" Most people were concerned with the work Way was doing. In Vancouver, he worked with Dorothy Somerset at the University of British Columbia, Joy Coghill at Holiday Theatre, (although not working in the same theatrical style, very similar in parallel struggles and determinations as Way at Theatre Centre in London), and Myra Benson. In Edmonton, he worked with Bette Anderson at the Parks and Recreation Department and Esther Nelson. "*Others,*" Way remembers, "*were so genial as hosts, so pleasant as companions, so encouraging about the communities and work I was trying to do. In particular from Toronto Justice Karl Stewart and his wife Eleanor and family who were very helpful and so kind during those early visits.*"

On both visits at least two thirds of Way's work was concerned with lectures and workshops about child drama, and about the place of drama in the educational system generally. In the majority of areas he visited, there was interest but very little being done or apparently wanting to be done. The other third of his work concerned children's theatre. He gave a talk in Winnipeg to the Children's Theatre Council. With Bette Anderson in Edmonton he directed his own play *Pinocchio* at the Playgrounds Department. Tom Peacocke, later Chair of the University of Alberta Drama Department, Edmonton, was a high school student who played Mr. Gepetto in Way's production

of "Pinocchio." Interesting attempts with children's theatre were also going on at UBC where Dorothy Somerset was linked with Joy Coghill and her Holiday Theatre; and Don Wetmore was evolving related activities in Halifax at the same time.

Way reflects on the state of Canadian children's theatre and child drama as he found it in the late 1950s: "*Whether it was children's theatre or child drama I could not possibly say that all that much was going on, but then I could not say that all that much was going on in England either at that time – very much in the growing processes of thought following World War II. The overall impression I had was one of the enormous potential for things to happen – enthusiasm, dedication, fascination, interest, eagerness, all these things all there. My major impression was of innocent enthusiasm, a kind of naïve dedication. There were not too many committees or too many over-ambitious individuals who were feathering nests for themselves. But once anything new starts, then we reveal the ambitious and we create a proliferation of committees that will hold back the very work the committees were started to do, not only in Canada but everywhere.*

But I have no doubt that at that time children's theatre in Canada, as in England, was the bottom of the totem pole, was the least respected kind of theatre. In the same way the idea of drama in education was the least important factor. There are all kinds of reasons for that where education is concerned – just the practicality of what you do and how you do it – but still the feeling persisted that it really was a frill, that it was quite trivial against the rest of education. At the same time also the impression was that if the obstacles were not yet obvious, they were hidden under the ground as potential, and the potential weeds for strangling the true flowers were also there, and one could smell them just as one was in fact experiencing their growth in England." He discovered then what still exists today: the enormous number of obstacles that stand in the way of people who want to introduce the arts into the educational system.

Many Canadians, including John Michael Cooper Meiklejohn[2], Theatre Arts Consultant for the Division of Physical Fitness of the Department of National Health and Welfare from 1948 to 1955, have suggested that Way's two sea to sea tours in 1958 and 1959 made a significant contribution to the 1962 founding of the Canadian Child and Youth Drama Association (CCYDA). With Don Wetmore as its first president, CCYDA was the parent organization that shepherded early children's theatre in Canada prior to the formation of ASSITEJ-Canada in 1972, as well as the formation of strong provincial associations such as the Saskatchewan Child and Youth Drama Association in 1968. CCYDA, in large measure the direct result of Way's influence, served as the pioneering vehicle to which much of the current flourishing of drama in education and children's theatre in Canada owes its roots[3].

Way had made his first visit to Canada half-way through his ten year term

of teaching improvisation (but never children's theatre) at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (1953-63). Simultaneously, his Theatre Centre began to develop and thrive as many students who left LAMDA went to work with Way at Theatre Centre. One of those students in the early 1960s was Kenneth Kramer, a Canadian from Vancouver. Former students of Way's at different academies, Kenneth and the late Sue Kramer had their first professional theatre jobs with Theatre Centre. Way was delighted to have them in the company for a lengthy period.

As first-generation Way protegées of both developmental drama and participatory children's theatre, Kenneth and Sue Kramer arrived in Regina in September 1966 to start their bold experiment of the Globe Theatre as a touring company to schools throughout Saskatchewan. They modelled their work on Way's Theatre Centre, touring schools with different programs for Divisions I and II and III and IV, with companies varying from four to six actors travelling to different places everyday.

Days after the Globe's arrival in Regina, I also assumed my position as Supervisor of Drama for Saskatchewan, a role newly created after the retirement, from the Department of Fitness and Recreation, of Mary Ellen Burgess, the "Mrs. Drama" of Canada. In this role, heralding the impact of the Globe on creative drama follow-up requests in the schools, I secured $5000 from the Department of Education to enable School Boards to hire the Globe. At the time the Globe had only nine bookings through to the end of March and faced almost certain collapse. Although subsequent trials were not eliminated, this initial grant allowed survival over that first season. (These were also the only funds the Department budgeted for drama programs, leaving the supervisor to develop all other initiatives single-handedly.)

Other problems that the Globe faced, such as travel distances, were equally enormous. In England, the longest possible journey for a children's theatre company equals the journey from Regina to Saskatoon; the average journey is more like Regina to Moose Jaw. Other colossal problems quite different from Way's such as different ethnic groups also confronted the Globe. And, as in Canada today, people joined the company or applied to join the company for the professional credits, rather than out of any particularly deep interest in children's theatre. But the Kramers' sensitive familiarity with the style of approach and playing, so brilliantly inspired by their mentor, saw them through their challenging beginning.

By 1967, publication of Way's major practical book *Development through drama* (currently in its thirteenth printing) began to revolutionize the teaching of drama here and abroad for decades to come. A virtual bible as I travelled the length and breadth of Saskatchewan in my role as provincial Supervisor of Drama doing drama workshops and consultations with hundreds of teachers K – 12, this practical guide to teaching drama that emanated from Way's practice allowed teachers, in the absence of any available training, to walk into

classrooms, teach drama well and know why they were successful at this extremely complex task. Way had removed the mystique that had previously shrouded this domain. Developmental drama, although not a term used nor advocated by Way, became the buzz word of the day, defining practice that had as its sole aim the development of the individual through the use of drama in education. In practice, *developmental drama* fostered self-actualization of the whole person through spontaneous drama experiences in which participants *be* and *do* as opposed to *pretend* and *perform*.[4]

> Its foremost objective is the development of the integrated person through a variety of experiences pursued in a spirit of exploration and discovery. The process promotes recognition and acceptance of one's self while leading to understanding and tolerance of others – in all, a "know thyself" concept and a practising of the "art of life." Because it advocates this awareness of human consciousness and growth, such drama is referred to as "developmental."[5]

As Way claimed, this development of human potential through drama embraced every child of every ability – not just a talented few. By 1975 *developmental drama* had become the primary philosophic approach to drama in education in Canadian schools[6] and remains so in many areas of the country to this day.

One of Way's major tenets was his careful delineation in theory and practice of the distinctions between his *process* approach and the traditional *product* connotations of the word *drama*. He clarified his belief that within the educational context, developing human potential was the single most important purpose for doing drama whereas in traditional theatre the visible end result – a polished play – was the expected outcome. His premise was founded on the idea that "*theatre* is largely concerned with *communication* between actors and audience; *drama* is largely concerned with *experience* by the participants, irrespective of any function of communication to an audience."[7] Misinterpreted, this distinction led to a dichotomy in Canadian drama education practice from which it is only now slowly beginning to recover. That Way himself did not intend such a division is evident in his innovative participational plays for children that combined both the *process* of development through drama and the *product* – the play itself.

Participatory theatre as an art form for children had originated as a result of Way's research and experimentation from 1941-43 while he was still a member of the Old Vic Theatre Company in London. As Assistant Stage Manager he had frequent opportunities to observe student matinee audiences. His observations led him to conclude that children were actually involved in the story at times when their seemingly unruly and worrisome outbursts or restlessness occurred. According to Wood,[8] Way's analysis of his repeated observations led to the theoretical foundation of his children's theatre work. When watching proscenium theatre performances, children were restricted to ex-

periencing only *projected play* through their identification with the stage actors. As a result, they automatically expressed their need to balance such long periods of projected absorption by creating their own *personal play*[9] opportunities through their own spontaneous interventions.

Based on his participant-observations and evolutionary experimental development of audience participation plays for children, Way views participatory theatre as the most relevant theatrical form for children: "Audience participation in children's theatre – particularly with younger children (i.e., up to nine-ten years of age) – is a phenomenon that exists within the children themselves."[10] Most significant, Way's participatory theatre arose from his countless holistic observations of child audiences' viewing professional theatre and his subsequent repeated and refined artistic experimentations with his own professional children's theatre companies in the United Kingdom. Just as Slade[11] before him had used repeated and lengthy participant-observation, content analysis and interpretation to define the construct of child drama as an art form in its own right, so Way as theatre artist, playwright and director used naturalistic inquiry as the research methodology that resulted in his defining participatory theatre as a distinctive theatrical art form derived from children's needs and traits.

Playwright of more than 65 plays (see appended list) mainly performed by professional children's theatre companies, Way has identified three kinds of participation, based on his own canon of children's theatre works:

1. *Spontaneous participation* or "cliché" involvement that serves merely to "let off steam" but may occasionally be sincere.[12]
2. *Directed participation* in which actors ask children to be involved, i.e., "All of you, please be wind and waves."[13]
3. *Stimulated participation* or a response to "direct contact between actor and audience" in which actors prompt or invite participation that the audience is free to accept or reject.[14]

It was their grounding in this emerging theory and practice of such participational theatre and developmental drama that ensured the success of the Kramers' bold venture begun in Saskatchewan in the mid 1960s.

Although Way had been invited to return to Canada in 1960, he had already agreed to go to South Africa. Nevertheless, throughout that decade, he made three additional visits to our soil. All of these visits were concerned in part with children's theatre and also continuing work in drama in education or child drama. In view of the significant contribution Way had made to the founding of the CCYDA, he was invited by this fledgling organization to do workshops at their week's conference in Toronto (1968). There, as Saskatchewan's CCYDA board member, I finally caught my first glimpse of the by now legendary Way. Another visit took Way to Edmonton, Regina and Mon-

treal to do yet another series of workshops. In May 1969 he returned again as keynote workshop leader for the Calgary CCYDA conference where, finally, our paths intersected.

My Saskatchewan Youth Theatre company of 20 high school youngsters, the first and only provincial youth theatre in Canada at that time, had scraped together enough money to finance the trip to Calgary so they could "meet Brian Way." During conference workshop sessions, they became so enamoured with the skills of this master drama teacher that they begged him to do a workshop with them. Way complied but offered midnight to one o'clock on Saturday evening as his only uncommitted time. All twenty youngsters appeared well in advance of the appointed hour.

During the workshop, as this talented group chosen by audition from over 200 candidates moved in concert through Way's question and answer movement sequence accompanied by spontaneous cymbal rolls, Brian motioned me to join him. "Watch them, Joyce," he whispered. "They're anticipating my next sound even before I begin. I wish my professional companies could see them work." Amazed at being directed to observe, formerly forbidden by Way, as silent onlooker, I, too, became engulfed in a rare, intuitive moment when master teacher Way, twenty talented adolescents and their leader merged in *ensemble*. We had been paid the supreme compliment by the international leader of the day and experienced living proof of an opening statement of his best-seller,[15] "*[drama] . . . leads the enquirer to moments of direct experience, transcending mere knowledge, enriching the imagination, possibly touching the heart and soul as well as the mind.*"[16] We knew that we knew the "precise function of drama" as Way defined it. Little wonder that we and many others like us became disciples of the Way approach to "development through drama."[17]

Many members of the SYT company remain involved in various aspects of theatre today. Notable among them is Kim McKaw, the volunteer who secured Way's consent to the 1969 workshop with SYT at Calgary. After working with Centaur Theatre in Montreal, Kim returned to the Globe Theatre in Regina and currently is Artistic Director of Prairie Theatre Exchange in Winnipeg where a steady diet of participatory theatre for children forms a part of his annual production season. Way's reach had through SYT encompassed its third generation of Canadian devotees.

Following the Calgary conference, when Way met up with Kenneth and Sue Kramer, along with Florence James, Mary Ellen Burgess, myself and the Saskatchewan Youth Theatre in Regina, the Globe had already won its berth as Canada's foremost children's theatre company. Subsequently, they were joined for a long period by James Brewer, another of Way's colleagues from Theatre Centre who continued the work and started writing new plays for the company. Later, writer-in-residence Rex Deverell began writing new plays for the company in a style similar to that developed by Way in London. Little

wonder that, like a bee returning to honey, Way was to return again and again to the Globe Theatre over the next two decades.

Way recalls the 1960s as, "*exciting visits, being breathless with wonder at the growth of things that were happening, so many fine Canadians doing such exciting work: Dorothy Somerset in British Columbia; Joyce Doolittle in Alberta; Mary Ellen Burgess, Florence James, Sue and Kenneth Kramer and Joyce Wilkinson in Saskatchewan; Donald Wetmore in Nova Scotia. They were being joined now by people from England as well: Richard Courtney, David Kemp, and Margaret Faulkes Jendyk who had co-founded Theatre Centre with me in England and worked in all those incredibly exciting foundation years. So I found much prolific growth and tremendous interest with whole departments beginning to be interested in drama in education, beginning to help children's theatre. One could only feel excited at being even a tiny part of the beginnings of some of all this.*

There was a period in the 1960s when there was an enormous amount of enthusiasm, energy and even money spent on children's theatre and education but of course as soon as money became severely restricted again and cuts came in, the first cuts always are in education and the first cuts in education are the frills and the frills are the arts. The plastic arts like music survive because they fit more easily with established curriculum needs and timetablings and are much less difficult to begin in the early stages. Drama becomes the major frill to which cuts can be directed just as children's theatre is cut rather than theatre for adults."

The extraordinary continuation of growth became even more obvious in the 1970's when Way made four visits to Canada. In 1976 Kenneth Kramer, who had now thoroughly established the Globe Theatre in Regina, invited Way to direct a professional production of *Hamlet*. These two theatrical mavericks had always been excited by the idea of doing the whole of *Hamlet* in-the-round with Kramer anxious to play Hamlet, and Way anxious to direct. Way today considers that particular production in Regina as one of the highlights of his theatre experience.

Way also directed children's theatre in Canada in the '70's. In 1964, Manitoban Wayne Fines had founded Fantasy Theatre for Children, a professional company (of which I was a member) that toured Western Manitoba and Saskatchewan. By 1967, Fines had moved to Montreal where he encountered exceptional difficulty getting the English-speaking school boards to accept his children's theatre shows into schools in school hours. He prevailed upon me as Saskatchewan Supervisor of School Drama, to use experiences with the Globe as well as earlier professional work with him, to persuade Montreal authorities of the value of children's theatre. Ensuing contacts with Yvon Dufour, then Assistant Deputy Minister of Cultural Affairs for Quebec, and a fellow Board Member of CCYDA, and with Supervisors in the Montreal Board of Education led to Youtheatre's acceptance and its becoming the first Eng-

lish-speaking theatre for children and young people to perform regularly in Montreal schools. It was to this Youtheatre that Brain Way, by now a mentor for Fines as well, was invited in 1977 to direct two of his own plays *The mirrorman* and *The decision*, for their tenth anniversary – the same two plays that Youtheatre had done in their opening season.

Also in 1977, Way was keynote speaker and workshop leader at the CODE (Council of Ontario Drama Educators) conference at Queen's University in Kingston, and in 1979 keynote speaker at the University of Alberta Summer School. Both of these occasions concerned a mixture of children's theatre, drama and the arts generally in education.

In 1979, at the invitation of Kenneth Kramer, Way returned to direct a mainstage professional production of "The seagull" at the new Globe Theatre in Regina. During that production, discussions and eventually plans emerged for Way's future residency as Associate Artistic Director of the Globe Theatre. The stage was set for Way's fourth decade of involvement in Canadian children's theatre.

In 1980 Way conducted drama education workshops for in-service teachers for me in the new Creative Arts Minor program at Brandon University and later, in the mid-1980s, for drama specialist teachers at intensive summer sessions at the University of Lethbridge. He also performed his one-man program of extracts from Shakespeare in conjunction with the Lismer opening and strawberry champagne reception of the Southern Alberta Art Gallery. Way had premiered this show in Edmonton where he had given thirty school performances in 1982.

In 1984 Way joined the Globe as Associate Director. By June 1989, he had directed 15 plays for their school tours throughout Saskatchewan and 17 main stage productions, 13 of which also appealed to school audiences. The Globe Theatre had from the outset also developed a tradition of presenting a family play each Christmas. Way had written a number of these in England and wrote some more while in Regina to provide Christmas entertainment for the entire family. Not being confined to the kind of age groups necessary for plays performed in the schools but still including audience participation, Way aimed, as playwright and director for these Christmas shows, to embrace "*the joy and delight, the transcending experience of theatre*."

For Way, working with the Globe's schools company from 1984 to 1989 was really like returning to Theatre Centre since much of the style was similar. Now, having completed his Globe contract, he happily returns to free-lance work and the freedom of choosing his own drum-beat. In anticipation of what the future holds as he starts several writing projects, including his book on integrating the arts, Way writes, "*I am fascinated by this business of sitting on the edge of an unknown future.*"[18] Brian Way, ever the pioneer, holds us in suspense and waiting in the wings for his innovation of the next decade.

Way sees obstacles to children's theatre, not only here in Canada but

possibly all over the world: *"the prison house of committees, of rules and regulations, demands of syllabus, demands of examinations, the incredible proliferation of books for people to study, of camp-followers. A sequence of people quite unbeknown to themselves turned into kinds of gurus: Winnifred Ward, Geraldine Brain Siks, Margaret Faulkes, Peter Slade, Brian Way, Richard Courtney, Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton. This militated in a sense against the work. For example, where Peter Slade and I obviously had so much in common in the 1960s, my own work veered into one direction while Peter's veered into another. We both admired each other's work and the differences that we had, so what was the point of people suddenly putting us in opposition to each other? You either supported Slade or you supported Way and I could exemplify this with all the other names that I have mentioned. My own work continued – as it does today – around one particular word – a word that one can go to a whole week's conference and never hear actually mentioned – and that is the world "child." If I am doing children's theatre or if I am doing drama and the arts in education, I am not interested in convincing any great professors or any great minds or anyone about this, that or the other. I certainly am not interested in suggesting that only the best are in the foreground. I have one interest only: What is there that I can do for children and young people in this changing world?*

If I move my sights from the arts in education, drama in education to children's theatre, I am distressed by some of the directions that children's theatre has gone in. I understand the reasons and the motives for it. A lot of them are to do with money or the fact that committees are prepared to say "Oh, yes, we will give you some money to run your children's theatre providing that what you are doing touches the forelock and bows the knee to what we say is necessary in education. We have listened to some of the things that you say are necessary in education as well but please try to toe the line." This has resulted in a lot of children's theatre trying to connect itself with the school syllabus to illustrate what is being studied in other subjects.

That's one side. The other side is the enormous army of very young, often extremely ambitious, very often highly gifted people who see children's theatre as a social, political vehicle that can open doors and windows to children's experience. A lot of what they do is incredibly laudable but a lot of what they do, as they are only there for a brief while, is much more the business of the drama teacher in the classroom working over a long period of time. I am saddened that if a children's theatre does it on a transitory – perhaps one off visit – that they are in a sense relieving teachers of the responsibility of working in depth on social, political problems as they think "Oh, this was dealt with by the company that visited us last year, last month, last week." Those responsible for such work in companies must look very carefully at what their follow-up avenues of work are so that they are able to be supportive to teachers who become interested in it and perhaps supportive of the children who become excited by it.

Again I am saddened by the fact that some of what for me is the raison d'être *of theatre begins to fade more and more and more. The* raison d'être *for me is that theatre enables us to transcend the life that we are living day by day. I am not interested in going to the theatre to see my own grubby little life represented to me in some dramatic form. I go to feel something that is larger and richer and fuller than that personal life. I believe that children's theatre can open the doors and windows to the human spirit and the heart and the emotions and not just wrestle intellectually with problems that are so deep and so persistent that they are things that people like parents and teachers and drama teachers should be dealing with in depth over a considerable period of time.*

Some of my greatest sadnesses have to do with life in the universities. I have been privileged and very grateful for the opportunities to work in many and am filled with admiration for the enormous expansion that has happened during these last 30 years. But I was very alarmed at my first summer school at Tatamagouche and similarly alarmed at my second summer school at UBC and equally alarmed in the mid 1980s with another summer school [University of Lethbridge] *– alarmed by how officialdom could wring out the neck and the guts of what the work was about. The following year I gave up this summer school to which I had been several times, simply because I could not and would not go for the dishonesty of grading forty students who because of the very nature of the work we did, I did not necessarily get to know personally, from whom I asked nothing in the way of written confirmation of their brilliance or anything of that kind. I asked simply that I be permitted to do a perfectly straightforward pass-fail kind of mark and was told this was quite impossible. I think that in my arrogance I hoped that my stand might bring about a change in university thinking. Of course, it hasn't done and they haven't a problem in finding somebody to take my place. For me it remains tragic that the entrenched thinking of universities cannot begin to perceive that if you are working with creativity then you must try to rethink some of the adamant stands that have developed through academia over the years.*

I am also worried by what I can only call the pettinesses that result first of all from fragmentation and specialization which builds departments that have rivalries, jealousies, political differences, spitefulness and personality cults that are absolutely nothing to do with what should be the background of teaching somebody who is going to teach somebody else. It's difficult to know what the answer to that is but I think it is something that we should begin to address.

It is sad to go for a year as a specialist in a theatre department at a university and because one's life has been equally involved in education, be anxious to be involved with the education department and discover that one is not welcome. Nobody is interested. Reverse that: being invited to be part of an education department and not even being able to set foot in the theatre department except as an audience to plays. Perhaps it's even worse when you are in an education department because you are doing Drama 180 and discover that you

really have no access to people who are doing other things in the education department. Equally, to be in the theatre department doing improvisation and finding that you have no access to people who are doing movement or costume, props, or theatre history. Maybe I should have driven myself into these places but one always met – even when one tried – some kind of brick wall. "We are we and you are you and never the twain shall meet." I do hope and pray that this fragmentation that comes out of specialization will somehow or other be modified or perhaps eliminated altogether."

In response to "Do you think much has happened in Canada since your first visit here. Aren't we rather behind and rather backward compared with other countries such as the United Kingdom?" Way comments: *"I remind myself that it is only three decades ago that I was first privileged to come here. The comparison of the mid-1980's with the mid-1950's defies description. Here is a country that 30 years ago had so little happening but now has so much: the Canada Council, so many provincial arts boards, city arts boards, so many children's theatre companies, so many different courses in universities in drama in education. It is quite bewildering growth for a matter of three decades and one can only stand back and be filled with admiration."*

Brian Way's reach has indeed exceeded his grasp. Not even he at the outset of his first journey to this land in 1958 could have predicted the state of children's theatre and child drama in Canada today, in large measure due to the professional development and raising of consciousness that resulted from his three decades with us. Standing on the threshold of the last decade of the 20th century more that 20 years after Way's revolutionary definition and implementation of drama as education, the educational system is beginning to adopt the *transformational curriculum*[19] as the best means of meeting the needs of every child. Way's *Development through drama* is receiving renewed attention as the underlying premise of the educational model of the creative arts therapies. The significance of his naturalistic research that evolved into his audience participation children's theatre will perhaps only be fully realized well into the 21st century. Precipitated by the multicultural matrix prevalent in Canadian classrooms, holism[20] has finally gained respectability and attention in our school systems. Without pioneers such as Way, such enlightenment would undoubtedly have been even longer in materializing.

Always the master teacher-leader-mentor who seizes the opportunity to lead others on from where they are now in their life-journeys, Way entices both present and future Canadians with the following profound contemplations: *"I hope people will find Peter Slade's first book* Child drama *in libraries (as I understand it is no longer in print) and will from time to time re-read it. While it seems imperative for us all to rush on to new leaders and new mentors, there are fundamental truths in it (if we will take the trouble to uncover them) that will remain with us for a very long time in any important thoughts on education.*

During World War II, a cry came in the voice of Winston Churchill to Roosevelt saying "Give us the tools and we'll finish the job." I can find a slight parallel in the fact that in the 1950's there were voices turning to the powers that be, calling "Give us the means to do the job." When I look around thirty years later here in Canada, I feel one way or another the means have either been given or have been obtained. I think it is fascinating simply to ask the question: "How are we doing with the job since we got the means?"

NOTES

1 Brian Way. *Taped Interviews* (Regina, 1989). All quotations attributed to Way are from a series of three taped interviews conducted in July 1989.
2 J.M.C. Meiklejohn. *Theatre education in Canada after World War II: a memoir*, ed., Denis W. Johnston. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1989) 52.
3 Joyce Wilkinson. *History of the Canadian Child and Youth Drama Association.* (Lethbridge: University of Lethbridge, 1986). 1-30.
4 G.D. Doherty and J.A. Bleakley. *Moving into drama, teacher's book two.* (Huddersfield: Schofield and Sims, 1972). 5.
5 Joyce Wilkinson. "Developmental drama in education." *Canadian Children's Literature* 8/9 (1977): 39-45.
6 Richard Courtney. "Drama and human development." *Creative Drama*, (Birmingham: Educational Drama Association) 4 (1) (1970): 5-7.
K.B. Thurston, *The theoretical foundations of educational drama in Canada*, (University of Calgary: Masters thesis, 1975).
7 Brian Way. *Development through drama.* (London: Longmans, 1967) 2-3.
8 Ronald D. Wood. *The evolution of Brian Way's participational theatre.* (Tallahassee: The Florida State University: Doctoral dissertation, 1977) 22.
9 Peter Slade. *Child drama.* (London: University of London Press, 1954).
10 Brian Way. *Audience participation: theatre for the young people.* (Boston: Walter H. Baker Co., 1981) 1.
11 Peter Slade. *Child drama.*
12 Way. *Audience*, 30.
13 Way. *Audience*, 33.
14 Way. *Audience*, 30.
15 Way. *Development.*
16 Way. *Development*, 1.
17 Thurston. *Theoretical.*
18 Personal correspondence from Brian Way to the writer, July 1989.
19 Jack Miller. *The holistic curriculum.* (Toronto: OISE Press, 1988) 6.
20 Richard Courtney. *The quest: research and inquiry in arts education.* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987) 8.

Children's theatre plays written by Brian Way

"Toad of Toad Hall" (adaptation of Kenneth Grahame), 1946; "The Christmas Carol" (adaptation of Charles Dickens), 1946; "The Otterbury incident" (adaptation of C.Day Lewis), 1947; "Dr. Doolittle's circus" (adaptation of Hugh Lofting), 1947; "Columbus sails" (adaptation of Puffin novel), 1948; "Dr. Doolittle's

adventures" (adaptation of Hugh Lofting), 1949; *Trial scene*, 1949; *"Pinocchio" (adaptation of Carlo Collodi – commissioned by John England for the Arena Theatre; also three-part adaptation for ITV), 1951; "Between the acts" (adaptation of Virginia Woolf for LAMDA students), 1953; "The martyrs of Compiègne" (for LAMDA students), 1954; "The magic if" (for LAMDA students), 1955; *"The storytellers" (includes adaptations of Grimm and Andersen), 1956; *"Grinling Gibbons and the plague of London" (adaptation of Austin Clare), 1956; *"Oliver Twist" (adaptation of Charles Dickens), 1956; "Moon magic", 1957; "Silas Marner" (adaptation of John Buchan), 1957; "The stranger", 1958; "Midwinter" (adaptation of John Buchan), 1958; "Leapday shadows", 1959; "The angel of the prisons" (based on the life of Elizabeth Fry), 1959; "Meet the police" (a documentary about the police force), 1960; *"The crossroads", 1960; *"The signpost", 1960; *"The wheel", 1961; *"The ladder" (also three-part adaptation for "Box of birds," ITV), 1961; "The changing face of theatre", 1961; *"The bell" (also trans. and published in Danish), 1962; *"The lantern", 1962; "The dog and the stone", 1963; *"On trial" (also trans. and published in Danish), 1963; *"The struggle", 1963; *"The mirrorman" (also trans. and published in Danish), 1964; *"The rescue", 1964; *"Speak the speech I pray you. . . .", 1964; *"The sleeping beauty" (commissioned by Peter Cheeseman for the Victoria Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent), 1964; *"The hat" (also trans. and published in Danish), 1965; *"The decision", 1965; "The opportunity" (Margaret Faulkes, co-author), 1965; *"The three musketeers" (adaptation from Alexandre Dumas – commissioned by Frank Hauser for the Oxford Playhouse; trans. into Danish and Polish), 1965; *"Puss in boots" (commissioned by Peter Cheeseman for the Victoria Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent), 1965; *"The clown and Mr. Gump", 1966; *"Valley of echoes", 1966; *"The clown", 1966; *"The discoverers", 1966; *"Treasure Island" (adaptation of R.L. Stevenson – commissioned by Frank Hauser for Oxford Playhouse), 1966; *"The rainbow box", 1967; *"The opposite machine", 1967; *"The key", 1967; "The survivors", 1967; *"The island", 1968; *"Balloon faces", 1969; *"Magical faces", 1969; *"Adventure faces", 1969; "Stream of shadows", 1970; "The world of play" (Stanley Evernden, co-author), 1972; *"Discovery and survival" (adaptation of "The discoverers" and "The survivors"), 1975; "SOS. . ." (commissioned by Cheshire Road Safety Committee for ages 5-8), 1976; "The waiting hour. . ." (commissioned by Cheshire Road Safety Committee for ages 13-18), 1976; The following plays were all written between 1985-1987. "A Christmas fantasy" (commissioned by Globe Theatre, Regina); "Sharing Shakespeare" (commissioned by Globe Theatre, Regina); "Aladdin and the genie of the lamp" (commissioned by Globe Theatre, Regina); "Echoes of the season" (commissioned by Theatre 49, Edmonton); "The avalanche" (commissioned by Cheshire Road Safety Committee), "Tale of two cities" (eight hour adaptation of Dickens).

*32 plays published by Baker's Plays, Boston and Samuel French Ltd., England.

Joyce A. Wilkinson *is a Graduate Arts Education Professor with the Forum for Arts and Media Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto. Internationally recognized as a drama education leader in Canada since 1956, Dr. Wilkinson has also extensive background experience and publication in interdisciplinary arts education, children's literature, creative arts therapies and literacy.*