Panych was born in Alberta, highlights of his career took place in BC, and he currently lives in Toronto. Brad Fraser and Ronnie Burkett are still claimed as Albertans even though neither has lived there for years. Raymond Storey, Greg Nelson, Frank Moher, Joan McLeod, Margaret Hollingsworth (all playwrights whose work is addressed in these volumes) have lived in several places but at some point practiced their art in Alberta or BC. Both Alberta and BC seem like stopping off points for many theatre artists, which may be another of the provinces' similarities.

It is also interesting to note how particular theatrical performance styles have evolved in the two provinces. Does one champion of a form breed others? Alberta claims the reigning monarch of puppetry in Canada, Ronnie Burkett, as one of its own, as well as the more recent and wildly creative Old Trout Puppet Workshop. In BC there is an explosion of physical/image based companies, represented in this collection by Reid Gilbert and his exploration of the work of Wendy Gorling and Morris Panych which culminated in the national non-verbal hit, *The Overcoat*.

And to finish, the thing that moves me about these volumes is Knowles's commitment that these volumes will "honour the work of some of the scholar/pioneers of a field that is still, excitingly, young" (*Alberta*, iv) Our theatre is still young and it is a delight and a privilege to revisit the thinking of scholars who have ploughed the fields of theatrical criticism before it even was a field and enlightened us even as we were only beginning to understand what we might have wrought in our theatres in these two provinces on the edge of Canada.

BRUCE BARTON, ed.
Collective Creation, Collaboration and Devising.
Critical Perspectives on Canadian Theatre in English. Vol. 12. Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2008. xliii + 269pp.

RIC KNOWLES and INGRID MÜNDEL, eds.
"Ethnic," Multicultural, and Intercultural Theatre.
Critical Perspectives on Canadian Theatre in English. Vol. 14. Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2009. xxvi + 206pp.

RACHAEL VAN FOSSEN

The range and diversity of artists, works, performance practices, and critical analyses in these two volumes hold in common

oft-recurring themes and specific examples of purposefulness, agency and control, hybridity, the limits of representation, and the material circumstances of production. Both also exhibit attentiveness to creation processes and audience as integral to efficacy. Through these valuable collections readers will encounter multiplicities of forms, approaches, and scholarship that inherently, and often explicitly, challenge dominant, institutionalized modes of theatre production. Interestingly, a number of contributions in each collection could easily also have been considered for inclusion in the other. It is heartening to note the relative prominence of cultural diversity in theatre and performance practices, but also, increasingly, among voices and perspectives of those analyzing and theorizing.

Bruce Barton's introduction to Volume 12, *Collective Creation, Collaboration and Devising*, proposes a compelling framework for analysis, clarifying much-conflated terminologies without reducing practices to fixed 'categories.' An overarching "Dramaturgy of Agency"—aiming for "not merely affect but effect" (vii)—will thus be constructed differently in different circumstances, in "perpetual negotiation between and navigation of [...] distinct yet related terms" (ix). Barton emphasizes intersubjectivity and multiple perspectives over common assumptions of consensus in collective and collaborative work. He segues into the essays with an appropriately open-ended assertion that "the proximate positioning of concepts can be as illuminating as that of living bodies in performance" (xxii).

A significant number of authors in Volume 12 provide meticulous details of creative processes, demonstrating various techniques that allow meaning(s) and aesthetic choices to emerge through the making of the work. Yet what distinguishes this volume from much existent writing in the field is that a majority of contributors go beyond the mechanics of process and the aesthetics of public presentation, to engage with the questions, preoccupations, and intentions that spur the creative acts. As a result, the voices and concerns of primary creators are more readily placed "in conversation with" voices of academics (though of course there are several instances of authors who inhabit both those worlds.)

The importance of 1970s collective creation to the development of theatre in Canada has been well documented and theorized; it is nonetheless fascinating to consider earlier analyses of these canonical works in relationship to more recent practices and critical frames of reference. In both earlier and later essays, important considerations of context, of relationship to audience, and of reception are often central. Conversely, and as noted by Wasserman

(244; 250), the cultural nationalism of the 1970s and 1980s gave way to multivalence in politics and ideology among the more current practices examined.

In *"Ethnic," Multicultural, and Intercultural Theatre*, various contributors throughout expose the normative and exclusionary aspects of Canadian and Québécois nationalisms. Later essays point to a movement among "a younger generation of culturally diverse and alternative theatre artists [...] less eager to fight for a place within a nationalist space and normative categories" (x). Co-editors Ric Knowles and Ingrid Mündel point out, in addition, that: "[A]s the generations of theatrical work issuing from minoritized communities roll on, there seems to be less and less concern about dominant culture audiences or assumptions (they are, perhaps, no longer relevant), and less and less uniformity about the kinds of issues addressed" (x). The Introduction does not put forward detailed discussion of competing positions regarding the nature(s) of interculturalism, with the effect that essays in this volume, also, can speak to diversity through diversity. The chronological order common to all volumes of the Critical Perspectives series, here serves especially well to historicize more recent practices and scholarship dealing with specific circumstances, strategies and theorizing of intercultural performance projects. Considered collectively, their specificities speak to intercultural practices as fluid cultures in themselves, and therefore to the idea that culture itself is "an ongoing process of becoming" (xi).

The co-editors' contention that Canada's official policy of Multiculturalism has attempted to "manage" diversity (viii) is borne out repeatedly in multiple critiques from the 1980s and 1990s, and notably, moving into the 2000s. As Guillermo Verdecchia writes, "Multiculturalism, or the official policy of promoting polyethnicity, remains, after thirty years, misunderstood as the promotion and celebration of folkloric, frozen-in-time, cultures of origin" (108). Essays in the latter half of Volume 14 demonstrate that disruptions to an essentializing, exoticizing reception of minoritized bodies onstage remain necessary, and that status quo barriers to equitable distribution of resources and opportunities persist.

Minor gaps I perceive in these volumes can be attributed to a dearth of pertinent critical writing. Given the prominence accorded to the on-the-ground effects of cultural policy in Volume 14, Quebec's 'distinct' (read: assimilationist) conception of 'interculturalism' and its effect on the funding of non-Eurocentric performance cries out for critical attention. Absent also are initiatives such as the Canada Council's Advisory Committee for Racial

Equality (REAC) and its Equity Office. In Volume 12, while two of the essays do deal with practices "categorizable" as Canadian community-engaged performance (Salverson and Little), this field remains under-examined with respect to the nature(s) and extent of presumed-to-be "collaborative" practices.

I do, wholeheartedly, recommend both of these collections, to scholars and artists, and to teachers and students. Each provides unfailingly thoughtful and often provocative critical analysis of performance practices largely unconfined by institutionalized modes of production. Discussions of creative process and aesthetic communication are, for the most part, inseparable from particularities of context, artistic intention, audience relationship, and assessment of efficacy. This is purposeful scholarship, examining purposeful creative work. Introductions to both volumes are organized thematically, with individual authors' names appearing several times.

In Volume 14, Maureen Moynagh writes that Walter Borden's Tightrope Time "argues for re-imagining community" (155). Judging from the contents of Volumes 12 and 14 in the Critical Perspectives series, Canadian artists and scholars are getting on with the work of re-imagining theatre, relationship with audience, dominant structures, and sites of diverse, hybrid, and mutable Canadian-ness.

NINA LEE AQUINO, ed.
Love + Relasianships: A Collection of Contemporary Asian-Canadian Drama.
Volumes I and II. Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2009. Vol. I xi + 307pp; Vol. II xi + 279pp.

NINA LEE AQUINO and RIC KNOWLES, eds.
Asian Canadian Theatre: New Essays on Canadian Theatre.
Volume I. Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2011. xvi + 276pp.

JOSEPHINE LEE

The twelve plays collected in the two-volume set of *Love + Relasianships*, the first comprehensive collection of Asian Canadian drama, vary widely in terms of their stories, aesthetics, and production histories. Many of them are what editor Nina Aquino describes as theatrical "milestones" (ix): for example, M.J. Kang's haunting *Noran Bang: The Yellow Room* was the first play written in North America depicting contemporary Korean diasporic experience. *Miss Orient(ed)*, a biting satire of Filipino