

that eminent historian of Canadian theatre, the late Patrick B. O'Neill, but she too brings sophisticated Performance Studies and Indigenous Studies frames and methods into play in ways that infinitely enrich both her work and our understanding. And Jenn Stephenson's book is firmly grounded in the analysis of dramatic literature, but is also deeply informed by literary, theatrical, and cultural theory, and draws productively on her applied understanding of plays in performance.

The fact that the association was able to honour *three* excellent books in 2013 is in itself a Good Thing (in the early years that might have exceeded the total number of books published). The fact that each of these books integrates the subjects and methods of our earliest and most recent histories as a field in such sophisticated ways is even better.

## Theatre Studies in Quebec at the Crossroads

YVES JUBINVILLE

It's time to take stock of over forty years of research and scholarship on theatre in Quebec. This task seems both ambitious and necessary when we consider that the field is experiencing a period of profound rethinking, which points toward an imminent and fundamental reworking of its epistemological program. What is theatre research, one could ask? What, precisely, is designated by the label "theatre studies"? Are there certain types of inquiries, or methods of analysis, which form a unique foundation for the discipline? For several years now, these questions have become current if not recurrent on the international scene. Authors have taken up these questions, not in order to take a position in favour of one theoretical or methodological model to the detriment of others, but rather, with the conscious and explicit goal of mapping the discipline in order to identify the stakes and zones of tension that constitute it. In short, these authors have drafted a careful history of the conditions that have rendered the disciplinary field possible in the first place, and which, supposing the conditions are no longer favourable, could explain the discipline's eventual reconfiguration, not to say dislocation.

We should consider the hypothesis that if circumstances had been different, theatre studies in Quebec might not exist; or, at least, the range of knowledge that the field currently spans would have been quite different. One might expect that, beyond certain commitments that clearly position Quebecois scholars within a supranational community, it is the original trajectory of these people that interests us, a trajectory considered in its singular manifestations as much as in the project that has established the collective corpus of theatre research in Quebec.

We need to offer a caveat in order to delimit the specific horizon of this reflection. To reconstitute the global trajectory of theatre studies in Quebec is certainly not immediately foreseeable. For the time being, we seek to establish the parameters of an investigation in process, which offers a portrait of the situation, as well as to point out the challenges to come

in the discipline. Our project, submitted to SSHRC in 2011, has a prospective dimension in that it seeks to delineate a territory of investigation, and thereby to pose the problem of the constitution of an area of knowledge, all the while taking into consideration the host of factors, actors, and stakes (ideological, esthetic, cultural, and institutional) that have shaped its development.

Three main questions structure our project. The first can be thought of in terms of an “archaeology” (Foucault), and seeks to retrace the genesis of the discursive field of theatre studies in Quebec while looking to uncover, in the whole of scholarly production in the past forty years, the set of forces (endogenous/exogenous) and the influences that organize it, as well as those contradictory or concurrent visions shaping the general discourse on theatre. The second vector of our investigation opens onto the cultural or anthropological dimension of scholarly activity in adopting the perspective of the “sites of learning” (*lieux du savoir*) developed by the French historian Christian Jacob. Our goal, here, remains modest in that the analysis will be centred less on academic production than on the scholarly community itself, its areas of diffusion and legitimation, its rituals and codes, in brief, what Jacob, drawing on Anselm Strauss’s concept of “social worlds” as well as on the interactionist thinking of the Chicago School (Goffman; Hall) calls “scholarly sociability.” Finally, the third area of analysis could be described as seeking to understand a dialectic between theoretical-historical discourse and theatre practice itself, as well as the relation between scholarly production and other type of public discourse on theatre in Quebec. In this brief overview, we will focus mainly on the first two areas of the project.

## Archaeology of Theatre Studies in Quebec

The archaeological approach, contrary to the traditional approach in the history of ideas, postulates the impossibility of returning to an origin, with the understanding that all phenomena disclose themselves through the multiplicity of durations or temporalities. Through an archaeological perspective, it does not seem useful or pertinent to seek out an originating text or an event that crystallized the nature of the scholarly enterprise having to do with theatre. It must be acknowledged that this question of origins, if we were to ask it, would bring us back to an “other” (mainly European) history of the discipline, to which Quebecois research on theatre remains inextricably linked.

That being said, we can agree on the necessity of setting the stage by giving a few chronological reference points, while identifying certain milestones in the development of the discipline. Recent research on dramatic criticism in French Canada has shown that in the first half of the twentieth century the general discursive space allotted no place for scholarly discourse centred on theatre. Several historical studies subsequently marked the period that corresponded with the second phase of the modernization of theatrical activity (1950–65). But even then, the sort of research produced appears today to be that of a tradition of enlightened amateurs whose work espoused the spirit and style of “*la critique mondaine*,” or even that of the columnists (“*chroniqueurs*”) and the compilers of the previous era (Allard 165).

In comparison with the European situation, where, as early as the nineteenth century, the field of theatre history constituted itself, firstly around institutions devoted to the preservation of national heritage (libraries, archives, and museums), and then around laboratories and research chairs instituted after the war, the reflection on theatre in Quebec remained

embryonic, and certainly devoid of scientific ambition, until the 1970s. The parallel with theatrical training is interesting here. It was not until the 1960s that the first theatre schools were founded, evidence of the state's desire to structure a cultural milieu (and market), while ensuring the transmission and the perpetuation of a certain know-how. The first manifestations of scholarly reflection on the theatre fulfilled the same need. This required reinterpretation of archival material and an updating of knowledge; in other words, it meant establishing a program that offered a common framework for individuals stemming from diverse fields and opening onto different areas (rural areas, major centres, universities, colleges). This framework would be guaranteed by the university institution, even if the latter did not monopolize all of the research activity at the time, and still does not today.

Theatre entered the academy at a time when universities were going through a period of rapid expansion marked by, amongst other things, the creation of a network called l'Université du Québec, with branches set up in five regions of Québec. This particular context gave new impetus to the work recently taken up by the more established institutions (Laval, Université de Montréal), where vast fields were developing to classify and legitimate a type of cultural production, which had been invisible up until this point, namely Québécois literature. This designation (which embraces all genres, including theatre) was not fortuitous, and indicated an important change in critical paradigms, which now directed attention away from a corpus of canonical works towards a "literature in the making" ("Une littérature qui se fait") (Marcotte). This entailed a certain blurring and revaluation of the categories and values which, up until that point, were foundational to the academic approach to literature and culture.

This cursory chronology allows us to partially deconstruct the heavily entrenched myth, which holds that theatre studies emerged in Québec as part of a movement of emancipation vis à vis literary studies. The truth is that these two perspectives—literary studies and theatre studies—developed alongside one another and coexisted for a long time in productive tension. On the one hand, work in the realm of literary studies, and directed by Maurice Lemire at l'Université Laval, and, on the other, the pioneering work of Jean-Cléo Godin and Laurent Mailhot at l'Université de Montréal, retrospectively constituted the principal streams through which theatre studies in Québec took shape over the next ten years. Between the sociological approach that resulted in the production of the *Dictionnaire des œuvres littéraires* (1971), which led to *La vie littéraire au Québec* (1989), and the approach centered on the texts and authors dealt with in both volumes of *Théâtre québécois* (1970; 1980), a space opened up for the analysis of theatre in its more global nature, and as a symbolic expression of a society in the act of *performing* its history and its identity. Beyond their more specific aims, the pioneering works of this period subscribed to the idea that criticism must be a "defence and illustration" of the national identity (Beauchemin).

## Networks, Exchanges, and Scholarly Friendships

The 1980s saw the intensification and diversification of scholarly production related to the study and analysis of theatre. Authors worked within an environment that was better structured and better integrated into the system of subsidized scientific research. The main Québec universities followed suit by recruiting specialists in theatre trained in different theoretical approaches, which confirmed the place that theatre would henceforth occupy in

the field of academic knowledge. This legitimacy was otherwise acquired through the networks of exchange and expertise that specialists developed with colleagues abroad; with the difference that these networks are no longer the same as they had been ten or fifteen years earlier.

The case of France seems significant in this respect. As the 1980s neared, it was no longer theatre historians who set the tone, but rather sociologists, semioticians, anthropologists, and experts in dramaturgy who, in a context in which theatre studies was promoted within French universities, animated the network of exchanges with Quebec. Several Quebecois students in this era crossed the Atlantic to undertake doctoral work in Paris, especially at l'Institut d'études théâtrales de Censier (IET). Upon their return to Quebec, PhDs in hand, these researchers inspired a renovation of the discipline similar to that prompted by their French professors twenty years earlier. This new context translated into two realities that had diverse fallouts for theatre studies. The diligent presence of the scholars from l'Hexagone at conferences seminars in Quebec, not to mention the numerous collaborations of French specialists in publications on theatre, influenced the renovation of the discipline in Quebec. Taking a few steps back from national theatre or simply a more critical approach in its analysis and evaluation, many scholars in the 1980s and 1990s chose to broaden their methodological perspectives in a conscious effort to make a significant contribution to theory, and to open up the field to the diversity of practices to which they are more and more exposed.

The other concrete manifestation of the network that forms between scholars in Quebec and France was rooted in the latter's interest in Quebecois theatre itself. A few amongst them dedicated a significant portion of their research to the subject (Jean-Marc Larrue), or became interested in it after settling in Quebec for their careers (Josette Féral, Bernard Andrès, Dominique Lafon). Others (Jean-Pierre Ryngaert) became keen followers of the Quebecois scene while remaining distant from its immediate realities.

But interest in Quebecois theatre was also apparent in English Canada and in the United States where other networks were established that would influence the way research was conducted in all communities. At a time when the *Nouveau Théâtre Québécois* was taking off with Tremblay and collective creations, parallel with cultural effervescence and political affirmation of the province, researchers from all over were echoing this movement through their research and publications. This work provided the opportunity for free-flowing dialogue with many Quebec scholars. Manifestations were individual, collective, and even institutional. For example, at the beginning of the 1980s, Jane Moss and Jonathan Weiss, both of Colby College (Maine), published diverse works addressed mainly to an American readership. Their work developed certain themes, which became recurrent in Quebecois scholarly production. In English Canada, Louise Forsyth from the University of Saskatchewan became interested in women's dramatic writing, thus echoing scholarly activity in Quebec itself. Lucie Robert initiated the analysis of this foreign critical corpus in an essay that appeared in *L'Annuaire théâtral* in 2000.<sup>2</sup> In this piece, she confirms the establishment of a common space for research on Quebecois theatre by a relatively abundant production from outside of Quebec, but which subscribes nevertheless to the values and norms established by the Quebecois scholarly community. From Robert's analysis, one could easily conclude that the field of theatre research in Quebec successfully established itself in approximately thirty years. Nevertheless, this success, when compared with other disciplinary fields (literature,

dance, music), must not obscure the difficulties that also impeded its development and which derived from the initial conditions of its emergence.

To make this point, we must mention the foundation of la Société d'histoire du théâtre du Québec in 1976. In line with the model of its sister association in English Canada, the Canadian Association of Theatre History, to which certain Quebec scholars also belonged, the SHTQ aimed to unite all scholars in the field of theatre and thereby to insure the task of orienting and validating their research. Amongst the group of founders, the majority of them were academics teaching in establishments (colleges and universities) in Quebec and Ontario (Ottawa and Toronto). However, if we look at the rather extensive networks of these founding members, we can see that the Société d'histoire du théâtre du Québec also recruited from within the journalistic profession and into the ranks of amateur historians. The amateur historians in particular came from the theatrical profession (Guy Beaulne) or from the Church community (Jean Laflamme), which had been involved in archival work or popular history studies at least since the nineteenth century. The latter privileged traditional, one could say even outmoded, research methods that eventually collided with the modern and scientific approach used in academic circles. The first years of the SHTQ were strongly marked by these oppositions in research methods as well as by disparities in the various postures adopted by scholars. These differences appeared clearly in the publications sponsored by the Société (*Les Cahiers de la SHTQ*, *Bulletin de liaison*, *L'Annuaire théâtral*), in which the writing style and the choice of objects of analysis vividly reflected the diverse intellectual genealogies and commitments of their contributors.

In other words, the publication of the first issue of *L'Annuaire théâtral*, in 1985, sparked a movement towards the homogenization of the codes and norms of the scholarly community in Quebec. Inflected by an academic environment that strongly privileges specialization, research gradually distanced itself from what had for a long time anchored and oriented its mission: historiography. This transformation took about fifteen years (from 1976 to 1992) to be completed, as the Société historique eventually disappeared only to be reborn under the name of Société québécoise d'études théâtrales (SQET). Although this change provoked many heated debates, and although many members expressed concern about the future of historical research in this new context, it also validated a major trend that would be soon confirmed by the work of a new and more diverse generation of scholars. It should come as no surprise that the phenomenon only intensified in the years following 1992, with the increased circulation of individuals, the enthusiasm for interdisciplinary studies, and the spontaneous alignment of research with contemporary theatre.

## Blind Spots and Challenges in the Scholarship

After forty years of theatre research and studies in Quebec, many thought a report on past developments and an anticipation of the challenges that await the discipline was necessary. By 1987, certain members of the SHTQ, reunited during their annual conference, decided it was time for a first evaluation and to measure the distance accomplished in more or less a decade of activity. Their report was a sombre one if we can trust the accounts delivered on this occasion by academics. Many academics worried that they would not be able to bank on a new generation of researchers who were as competent and dedicated to carrying out the work of the pioneers of the discipline.

That is a familiar tune in Quebec. Without pretending to offer a comprehensive examination of the research activity in theatre, it would seem as though either a younger generations heard the pleas expressed in 1987 or the catastrophic scenarios were unfounded in the first place. That being said, it would be unwise to deny an undisputable fact: the nature of theatre research itself has changed profoundly over the past twenty years. Researchers and research projects are now defined, evaluated, and promoted following guidelines and values that are considerably different from what they were at the beginning. This perception of change is one of the main issues that sparked our investigation. More than taking an inventory of the works that supported the construction of the discipline, our task deals with the changing conditions of theatre research, with the diverse representations of the profession circulating from both within and without the field, and finally with the fleeting trends and persistent blind spots that have marked its evolution.

Regarding challenges to come, the list of gaps and unfinished projects in theatre studies in Quebec is considerable, beginning with the absence of a comprehensive historical study that would synthesize the knowledge produced over the past forty years. This issue has been raised numerous times recently and the lament has been sufficiently expressed so as not to be in need of repeating, nor to recall that scholars must count on multiple resources in order to accomplish this task. The production of a general history of theatre should take the form of a socio-aesthetic analysis of the works, discourses, practices, and life of theatre in Quebec. By "life of theatre," we mean a study of the collectives, the spaces, the organizations, and the individuals, which pertain to its ecology and economy. That brings us to the next challenge. If there is another field that has been abandoned for several years by scholars, it is certainly that of institutional analysis that would, for instance, provide a basis for understanding the complex and profound changes that are transforming theatre practices in Quebec today. Undoubtedly, with the benefit of historical distance, this type of approach will gradually find favour within scholarly discourse. However, this will require a diverse, interdisciplinary knowledge base (e.g. sociology, economy, organizational analysis), which are not part of the current theatre studies curriculum.

These considerations lead us to anticipate the evolving character of the field. This is true for all disciplines but here we contend that the situation of theatre studies, over forty years, offers the glimpse of a profession in continuous transformation. If the conversion of the critic into a subsidized researcher, which occurred in a global way in the 1980s and 1990s, has been well documented, there is still much to be said about the conditions that presided over the entrance of practitioners into the university and about their role in research. More specifically, it seems necessary to follow the trajectory of scholar-practitioners, to appreciate the dilemmas they may have faced and the strategies they may have developed, and finally to identify the diverse forms that their vital contributions to our understanding of theatre have taken.

In conclusion, questions remain regarding the frontiers and limitations of scholarly research in theatre. It is paradoxical that, in Quebec, work specialized in theatre studies progressively distanced itself from its initial historical mission while the professional milieu, which for a long time suffered voluntary amnesia, is currently busying itself with the conservation and the promotion of its heritage. A conjuncture favouring the transmission of an artistic heritage that developed over forty, thirty, or even twenty years, as well as new tech-

niques made available, explains in part this change in attitude on the part of artists. But it also serves as an indication that what was considered until recently the domain of scholars, the knowledge and discourse of history, is now finding new forms of expression, including artistic ones. How are we to think about these transformations? How are we to understand the current and future effects in the economy of discourses on theatre in Quebec? These are only a few of the questions shaping our investigation.

## In Praise of a Passion for Theatre Forever Seeking Links Yet Unseen: Research, Teaching, Criticism, Exchange in Canadian Theatre and Drama

LOUISE FORSYTH

*Theatre Research in Canada/Recherches théâtrales au Canada* has been doing its vital work for members of theatre and drama communities for thirty-four years. From the outset, the journal, along with the Association for Canadian Theatre Research/l'Association de la recherche théâtrale au Canada, has been a valuable and sure indication that Canadian theatre and drama, as scholarly and educational discipline, is a reality, despite the views of a number of naysayers then and now. It quickly became the medium by which knowledge and research were shared and horizons expanded. Since those early days *TRIC/RTAC* has retained its original passion, vitality and flexibility in welcoming the study of theatre, drama, and performance and in applying theories and methodologies that have taken scholars, practitioners, and students in previously unexplored directions. The dynamic evolution of artistic and conceptual perspectives offered by the journal has never ceased.

Since 1980 I have welcomed each new issue; each time learning something new and feeling a renewed sense of community with colleagues across the country and beyond. The amazing thing that I discover as we continue on together in our shared artistic, scholarly, and pedagogical pursuits is that the more doors we succeed in opening on Canadian theatre and drama, the more there still remains to be discovered, appreciated and studied—all that is still missing in our already complex and rich conceptual field, missing by reason of geography, language, politics, class, ideology, history, and other tenacious socio-cultural norms or traditions. Because of the gaps caused by that which is missing, the symbiotic potential for innovative cross-fertilization and comparison still remains largely unexplored. The weighty presence of British, French, and American heritages and influences continues to be determining. Silos remain. How can we strengthen our knowledge about and recognition of all that is still missing in Canadian and Quebec theatre and drama?

The journal has already displayed dynamic flexibility and encouraged bold dialogue, exchange, and collaboration among us. Yet too many impermeable boundaries remain, boundaries that forestall the development of potentially exhilarating collaborations. We