

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

would do well by our graduate students in encouraging them to cast longer looks beyond known frontiers, to learn about and to develop informed critical opinions on what is happening outside the areas with which we are most familiar.

An important element from the start of *TRIC/RTAC* has been the Forum section, already envisioned by Plant and Saddlemeyer in their first “Editorial”: “we hope [. . .] to provide a forum for the exchange of thoughtful and studied opinion, thereby encouraging the formation of an informed critical perspective within which to view Canadian theatre” (3). The Forum section has been used in thoughtful and challenging ways through the years. I am asking here whether we can build on what the Forum has already achieved in order to expand and invigorate “the exchange of thoughtful and studied opinion” past the closure of the single issue. Could we create a process whereby responses to challenging issues raised by Forum authors are further developed and explored in subsequent issues? Critical, constructive, and creative symbioses bringing together research, teaching, and practical areas that cross linguistic, ethnic, sexual, ability, class, spatial, theoretical or technological divides hold great potential for fruitful discoveries that could be seen by ourselves and others as exciting and dynamic components at work in the unique Canadian theatre context.

Saddlemeyer and Plant and several audacious others offer us challenging models for the approaches we might take to encourage processes of dialogue, exchange, and critical comparison in research and teaching, thereby affirming the reality of that which still remains invisible and unacknowledged. They had to address vexing foundational questions back in the 1970s: is it possible to capture the stories, traits, practices, interests, targets, and truths of drama and theatre in a country as young, vast, and diverse as Canada? Do Canadian theatre and drama even exist in the same sense that British, French, or American theatre exists? Has there been reason to believe that Canadian theatre ever could be “as good as” those national theatres? Do historians and scholars of Canadian theatre have anything non-derivative to say? Saddlemeyer and Plant were bold and confident enough to answer a resounding *Yes!* And so they took the actions and formed the alliances necessary to found the Association and to create *THIC/HTC*. The community of passionate and engaged scholars, students, critics, practitioners, and spectators that exists today provides convincing evidence of the founders’ foresight and wisdom.

The strong belief in the virtual existence of a cultural reality that would call itself Canadian theatre and its history did not lead Association founders to emulate norms and practices in other national theatre research communities. They recognized from the start the inherent diversity of theatre and drama in Canada, along with the need for structural openness and operational flexibility. The introduction of special issues in the regular production of the journal is a reflection of such recognition of diversity. A large number of strong special issues has appeared bringing to light many facets of Canada’s unique cultural richness and an expanding range of languages and methodologies to study it. While these special issues have introduced fresh perspectives and opened new doors on Canadian theatre, they have not, paradoxically, led to stimulating dialogues and exchanges in the pages of the journal. Indeed, I find that they highlight the many solitudes that exist in the road allowances at the edge of Canada’s intercultural, patriarchal and eurocentric theatrical landscapes. This is a shame, for the material offered in the articles of the special issues is teeming—across distances and differences—with challenging ideas for an exchange of ideas within these solitudes that might produce a breach in the fences of received knowledge.

The first special issue of the journal, a collaboration between the Association and the Société d'histoire du théâtre au Québec, was devoted to francophone theatre (7.2 Fall/automne 1986). The second special issue, "Les Femmes dans le Théâtre du Québec et du Canada/Women in the Theatre of Quebec and Canada" (8.1 Spring/printemps 1987, 3-7) contains Saddlemyer's Forum piece on the still unresolved issue of the place of women on Canadian stages and in critical appreciation of their work. In "On the Necessity of Criticising Criticism" she addressed critically the "selective process at work in historical criticism." She asked "What is missing from the picture?" (136). In her scathing and insightful overview of what is missing she notes:

Again and again acknowledgement is made of the relative powerlessness of women in Canadian theatre despite their proven skills as actors, critics, directors, playwrights, designers, producers, stage managers and (though rarely) artistic directors. What has become increasingly clear to me is that we have neither language nor methodology with which to probe or even describe adequately the quality of that contribution, much less to answer the simple question, why this striking invisibility? (137)

How many others are still missing from our conceptual field by reason of their language, ethnicity, sexuality, class, disability, or location? And for how many others have we not yet developed appropriate and fruitful scholarly languages and methodologies? We can address these questions effectively only through sustained discussion.

The "Focus and Scope" statement of *TRIC/RTAC* highlights the enduring priority placed on exchange that is likely to produce the enhanced parameters we need to develop:

Theatre Research in Canada/Recherches théâtrales au Canada is also committed to broadening of the parameters of theatre scholarship in Canada, through engagement with multi- and interdisciplinary research, studies of cultural specificity and multicultural exchange, investigations of new and emergent technologies in Canadian design and performance, and explorations of theatricality and performativity beyond the traditional contexts of theatre and drama. The journal is also committed to exploring the intersection among history, theory, and practice through increased exchange.

Are we, as individuals and collectively, taking these commitments as seriously as we might? Or are we a little too comfortable in the knowledge and aesthetic values we already hold?

Among many fine Forum pieces which have appeared in the journal, all of which would lend themselves to substantial, sustained, and critical exchange, I mention "This Discipline Which Is Not One" (16. 1-2 Spring & Fall/printemps et automne 1995) where organizer Knowles expressed his personal opinion and invited ten colleagues from a range of theatre areas to provide responses on the issue of practical theatre in an academic setting. Knowles's approach provides a model for collaborative discussion across differences. I wonder how much further it could have gone had there been an open door inviting others to wade in on the matter in subsequent issues.

I am not suggesting here that *TRIC/RTAC* replace the *Newsletter/Bulletin* of CATR/ACRT, which could also be a site for active exchange (although that potential has not yet

been realized, despite efforts of, for example, editor Roberta Barker). Ideas and responses in the journal must retain the rigour of scholarly pieces. Yet they could well reflect ideas and research in progress in the same manner as the seminars and round tables of recent Congresses have so effectively done. I would like to see *TRIC/RTAC* explore ways for the new insight and interrogations brought through Forum pieces and special issues to sustain on an ongoing basis the integration of knowledge across diverse theatrical traditions and practices. This could help dissolve creatively solitudes and impermeable boundaries still found in knowledge about what we call Canadian and Quebec theatre and drama.

Chart of Subsidized French-Language Theatre Research in Quebec Since 1990

HERVÉ GUAY

It is impossible to provide a credible overview of French-language theatre research in Quebec during the last few years. However, this did not prevent my colleague Patrick Leroux and me from organizing a session on the subject at the conference of the Canadian Association for Theatre Research in Victoria in June 2013 and bringing together researchers to profile current Quebec research in the stage arts. Although there are researchers who work in English and in French, those who write or publish in both languages are few and far between. Our initiative was an attempt to overcome this language barrier. Our first objective was to provide information on the Quebec research network and the areas of research driven by francophone researchers since 1990; the second was to improve the existing—and inadequate—exchanges between francophone and anglophone universities. As president of the Quebec Society of Theatre Studies, the francophone equivalent of the Canadian Association for Theatre Research, I felt it my duty to reach out and inform you of what's being done in Quebec, a sign, moreover, of our interest in learning about similar activity elsewhere in Canada.³

The following paragraphs discuss the main fields of research subsidized since 1990. The focus is on research in French only, as this is generally less accessible to those with no knowledge of the language. Clearly, excellent research is being done in English and other languages in Quebec; such work, however, is not covered in this brief survey, which also omits to mention unsubsidized work and research conducted outside the university context. Likewise, student dissertations and theses are not discussed for reasons of space. That will be for another time.

This text is followed by a chart of the major French-language research subsidized since 1990 by the *Fonds de la recherche du Québec sur la société et la culture (FQRSC)* (Quebec Fund for Research on Society and Culture) and by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).⁴ The chart is not exhaustive and focuses on work mainly relating to theatre. Owing to space constraints, I did not always record the official titles of the projects, but summarized them at times for the purposes of this inquiry. I apologize in advance for any oversights and errors I may have made in listing and outlining the projects. In light of these data, I will attempt to briefly describe today's main research trends.