

“Indigenous ethics are implied in life itself and exercised through the teachings” (25). During my interview with Cree performer, director, and writer Floyd Favel, who worked with Rena Mirecka, a key founding member of Grotowski’s Laboratory Theatre, we discussed Western cultural constructions of the Indian Warrior, which Favel contrasted with the Native American warrior ethic as a commitment to taking care of others within a communal society.

Substituting the actions of searching, gathering, harvesting, creating, transforming, and sharing for the notions of fieldwork, informants, data collection, and the dissemination of research outcomes simultaneously foregrounds the embodied dimension of the research process and the researcher’s responsibility for practicing her craft and developing her expertise ethically. From this perspective, the researcher is cast in the role of the ethical warrior/care-giver, which is inevitably more demanding than playing the stock character of the academic. Since the call of Indigenous scholars to change research from within the academy can be perceived as an impossible task, it is helpful to be reminded by Bagele Chilisa that it is precisely because “all research is appropriation” that the way in which it is conducted always has consequences. She points out that when “benefits accrue to both the communities researched and the researcher,” conducting research can be reconfigured as a two-way transformative process that she identifies as “reciprocal appropriation” (22). More productive collaborations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers might thus be on the horizon if we can learn from each other how to respectfully engage in reciprocal appropriation. Absolon stresses that “[t]he academy is being pressured to create space for Indigenous forms of knowledge production, and change is occurring,” which leads her to contend: “Without a doubt we continue to establish channels to have an impact on making Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing a solid methodological choice within the academy” (166–67). Creating space for such epistemological and methodological possibilities will entail resisting dominant theoretical frameworks that pre-determine research outcomes, and acknowledging that each step of the research process is part of a larger collective journey. How we come to know might then perhaps no longer be experienced as a competition for knowledge between individuals striving for academic recognition, but as a relational process dependent on mutual trust, collaboration, and healing.

“Theatre Research in Canada”

ANNIE GIBSON

As the publisher at Playwrights Canada Press, I find that there is great variety in the kinds of writing that crosses my desk every day. We mainly publish Canadian-authored plays but also scholarly works about Canadian theatre. One of the limitations of publishing about live theatre is that it is impossible to recreate the entire experience of seeing a play in the book. We do our best, sometimes including photographs and even CDs with recorded music, but in an instance where the staging or casting choices or even lighting has been particularly unique, reading the script simply doesn’t have the same impact. The insight that an introduction or companion essay can offer is therefore invaluable when it comes to furthering a reader’s understanding of the script before them.

In the late 1990s Playwrights Canada Press made its first forays into academic writing with regional collections like *Voices from the Landwash: 11 Newfoundland Playwrights* (edited by Denyse Lynde) and *Staging the North: Twelve Canadian Plays* (edited by Sherrill Grace, Eve D'Aeth, and Lisa Chalykoff). These were weighty collections designed to give readers an idea of the breadth and range of work coming out of often-overlooked areas of the country and included introductions that varied in focus, from surveying the development of a regional style to offering a critical analysis of the plays included in the volume. Over the years the Press has published many more of these anthologies; in addition to ones with a regional focus, we've published books on ethnic and cultural groups as well as topics in Canadian theatre. In *Staging Coyote's Dream: An Anthology of First Nations Drama in English, Vol. I* (2003), Monique Mojica and Ric Knowles's general introduction explains how they selected the content for the anthology; they also feature individual essays to introduce each play, which include a biography of the playwright, information about each play's production history, and notes on the impact of the play itself. In *Testifyin': Contemporary African Canadian Drama, Vol. I* (2000), Djanet Sears's general introduction gives readers an overview of the history of African Canadian drama; a contributing scholar introduces each play, placing it in a historical context. Past publishers such as Angela Rebeiro saw these collections as important works that supported PCP's efforts to create a Canadian theatre canon, and I continue to hold this perspective.

In 2005 we published the first three volumes of the series *Critical Perspectives on Canadian Theatre in English* with Ric Knowles serving as general editor. Over 21 volumes and seven years the series covered everything from *Aboriginal Drama and Theatre* to *Space and the Geographies of Theatre* and many other subjects in between. While some volumes incorporated new material, this series set out to make available the best scholarly work on any given topic, so included essays and articles that had previously been published but that were scattered across a wide range of sources. These volumes provide an overview of each topic and arrange the content chronologically so readers can follow the progression of analysis and identify moments when discussions about a particular idea started to take hold.

For those of us in the business of publishing plays, it was especially interesting to see the explosion of scholarship on Canadian theatre in the 1980s. It was around this time that our publishing program really began to take flight (Playwrights Canada Press was established as an imprint of the Playwrights Union of Canada in 1984; prior to this we published as the Playwrights Co-op), and publishers like Talonbooks and Coach House Books emerged with strong drama lists as well. I think it's telling that as more Canadian plays were published—and therefore made more widely available than localized productions—more and more writing about Canadian theatre appeared.

In 2011, Playwrights Canada Press launched a new series called *New Essays on Canadian Theatre* (NECT) with Ric Knowles as general editor. This series commissions new material on a given topic and aims to “contribute to the further development of [Canadian theatre criticism] by opening up new areas of study, introducing fresh new voices, and making innovative work readily available” (Knowles iv). Each volume is paired with an anthology of plays on that topic to create a complete package for both students and scholars.

The NECT series has the opportunity to open up new fields of scholarship. It has been effective, in particular, in showcasing new writers and emerging scholars whom readers might

not have otherwise encountered (e.g. June Park, Jessica Riley, Jimena Ortuzar, and Catherine Cyr), and uncovering new fields of study not widely considered. The series has spurred our interest in expanding our publishing program to include more non-fictional analysis about Canadian theatre that would be accessible to general readers. And in a wonderful twist, the companion play anthologies have introduced me both to new playwrights and to new styles of playwriting that I realize need to be taken into account when planning our publishing program. For instance, in the past, we rarely published performance-based scripts because it is so hard to capture the play in its totality on the printed page.⁹ However, in *New Canadian Realisms: Eight Plays* we published an improv piece for the first time: The National Theatre of the World's *Depression Shaped Like a Hill*. This trend towards more performance-based theatre is one that I've noticed is gaining increasing attention from academic writers. There's more of this style of theatre being created by companies such as Theatre Replacement, Convergence Theatre, and 2b theatre company—and it's certainly being brought to my attention with greater frequency than ever before with an eye to making it available to a wider audience.

Playwrights Canada Press publishes with an academic market in mind. We want to work with plays that are literary first and foremost, but will also spur further research and discussion, whether that's an examination of the subject matter or the playwright's style. And we feel that these examinations of our plays are opening doors for them among more general readers of fiction and non-fiction, and especially readers who may not have previously thought of reading plays.

Much of the work we do is devoted to encouraging readers to recognize playwriting as part of the Canadian literary canon. Although the works of Shakespeare are among the most studied in the English language, there's a sense in the literary community and among members of the general public that plays—especially Canadian plays—do not comprise one (or any) literary genre. I would argue that the vibrant community of theatre researchers who actively seek out Canadian work dispels this notion. Because performances can be so localized, the script is often the only source material researchers have to work with, and I would liken many of the articles and essays I read on theatre to literary, or dramatic, criticism, not only in their ability to deepen my understanding of Canadian theatre but also in helping to define the genre as one worthy of being studied and explored. Having a body of critical work on Canadian theatre goes a long way in raising its value in the eyes of non-theatre-goers—or non-theatre-readers for that matter.

From where I sit, theatre research in Canada is thriving. There are a growing number of new scholars writing on an ever-expanding variety of topics including the intersection of performance and sport, applied theatre, and the theatre of affect. The range of works submitted to Playwrights Canada Press for potential publication is astounding—perhaps most exciting for me are the topics that bring Canadian theatre onto the world stage. I'm looking forward to breaking new ground with the NECT series, now with Roberta Barker as general editor, both in the individual volumes, but also reflected in the pieces of writing included. But what I'm most looking forward to is making a broader spectrum of Canadian plays available, both to scholars and to general readers. Playwrights Canada Press exists to support playwriting in all its forms and with greater demand has come a greater range of plays and styles to consider. I can't wait to read what comes next.