

« verbeux » du théâtre québécois, caractérisé par une tradition de « déclamation » que n'apprécient pas les tenants d'un théâtre naturaliste. En même temps, Ladouceur note une progressive atténuation de la traduction « ethnographique ». « Aucun gallicisme exotique dans les traductions des pièces de Chaurette et de Marchessault, dont la langue de départ est plutôt littéraire, ni dans celles des textes de Bouchard et de Dalpé, qui font appel à des niveaux de langue familiers et populaires. Dans tous les cas, on préfère angliciser ou évacuer une référence socioculturelle qui pourrait dépayser le public dans un discours résolument moderne qui cesse de donner prise au regard ethnographique » (220).

En traduisant vers le français, les problématiques sont toutes autres. Sauf exception (*Charbonneau et le Chef* de McDonough, par exemple) le théâtre anglo-canadien a peu d'impact dans le contexte québécois avant les années 1990 au moment où « le répertoire anglo-canadien connaît une popularité grandissante sur les scènes francophones non seulement en termes de nombre mais aussi pour la valeur proprement théâtrale d'une nouvelle dramaturgie dont on admire les audaces textuelles » (225). Il s'agit cependant d'un répertoire qui ne s'affiche plus comme canadien mais comme nord-américain – loin de révéler une spécificité qu'on voudrait typiquement canadienne.

Quelle lumière l'analyse des deux corpus permet-elle? Dans la mesure où les institutions théâtrales sont réellement indépendantes l'une de l'autre et qu'il y a peu d'influence réciproque, on peut effectivement se demander si le paradigme comparatiste qui est à la base de ce livre serait le plus efficace. Peut-être avons-nous plutôt ici affaire à deux livres en puissance? Si on peut conclure que le potentiel d'analyse de ce vaste panorama est loin d'avoir été épuisé, c'est qu'il faut saluer un travail essentiel qui ouvre de nouvelles perspectives de lecture et d'analyse de notre dramaturgie.



**GLEN NICHOLS, ed.**

*Angels & Anger: Five Acadian Plays*

Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2003. 255 pp. Paper.

GEORGE BELLIVEAU

*Angels & Anger: Five Acadian Plays*, selected, edited and translated by Glen Nichols, marks an important contribution to an area of Canadian drama where resources are much needed. To date, the only

Acadian plays to have been published in translation (from French to English) are those of Antonine Maillet; therefore, accessibility to Acadian drama for non-French speaking/reading individuals is very limited. This anthology includes a selection of five contemporary Acadian plays translated, and adapted, and ready for productions in English. The collection of plays also contains an Introduction by David Lonergan which contextualizes Acadian drama and the five selected plays; moreover, Nichols has included succinct and informative critical introductions for each of the plays and playwrights. This anthology of translated Acadian plays should prove useful for practitioners who may wish to produce Acadian scripts in translation, as well as to academics who may want to include the works in their courses and/or research.

When attempting to select five plays to represent a much larger body of work there will of course be limitations; nonetheless, the selected texts represent various geographical regions within Acadia, encompass tragedy and comedy, examine both present and past history, and target both youth and adult audiences. In an effort to narrow the selection of Acadian plays for the anthology, Nichols opted to focus on contemporary pieces that have had professional productions; as a result, the production or publication dates of the selected plays range from 1987 to 1997. *My Husband's an Angel* (1987) by Gracia Couturier is a one-person play that follows Tarzan Mazerolle's pregnancy. To enable his wife to continue her opera career, the newly married Tarzan, a university psychology professor, decides to carry their child. This light drama probes important questions regarding women's rights, the pros and cons of reproductive technology, the challenges of pregnancy, and parenthood. *Twelve Strands of Wool* (1989), by Ivan Vanhecke is based on the famous Acadian children's story "Le tapis de Grand-Pré" by R. Aucoin and J.-C. Tremblay. The play traces the journey of two adolescents who travel through time (the past) to recover some missing strands of wool in hopes of completing the famous Grand-Pré carpet. The script weaves history and myth, and, although aimed at a children's audience, the play speaks to the young and old interested in Acadian heritage.

Nichols includes two plays by Herménégilde Chiasson in the collection: *Cape Enrage* (1992) and *Alienor* (1997). Chiasson, by many accounts, is Acadia's bard and his work in theatre, poetry, film, and visual art is celebrated and cherished well beyond Atlantic Canada. *Cape Enrage* examines the trial of Patrick Léger who is accused of murdering a fellow teenager. Filled with rage and confusion, the young Patrick eventually overcomes some of his fear and anger towards his father and society. Near the end of the play, and with the help of the

detective (Victor) and his girlfriend (Veronica), he is acquitted. His trial experience, although tense and soul-searching, becomes a positive one because it enables him to move forward with his life. The poetic *Alienor* is arguably Chiasson's strongest play, and within the dramatic script Acadian identity and history are skillfully played out on multiple levels, creating a richly layered text. Again, a trial structures the drama, with the central figure Etienne (falsely) accused of raping his own daughter Alienor. With the help of the defense lawyer (Robert) and the psychiatrist (Laurence), Alienor and Etienne manage to convince the judge that they were wrongly indicted, and in the end the antagonists (4 hunters) are found guilty (although not punished properly) for the atrocious crime. The rape can be seen symbolically as a cultural, geographical, and spiritual rape by the English upon the Acadians.

The final play in the anthology and perhaps the most complex piece is Laval Goupil's *Dark Owl, or The Renegade Angel*. Originally produced in 1975 but reworked in 1997, the play focuses on a dysfunctional family trying to come to terms with themselves as well as with their role in (yet again) a rape incident. Four siblings argue over who is guilty or innocent of past crimes, and replay the past. In their so called *re-playing* they nearly repeat history by setting up a newcomer in town with the invalid girl (the victim of the first rape) who lives next door.

The five plays represent some of the most poignant and powerful theatrical work created in Acadia, and the voices of the playwrights offer insight that is both specific to the region yet also relevant beyond. Nichols has done much more than translate them for an English readership. It is evident that by workshopping each script with actors and collaborating with the playwrights (in most cases), the plays are ready to be performed for an English audience. Nichols's understanding of Acadian drama and culture enable him to bring out the richness of the respective texts in the translation/adaptation. Undoubtedly, some of the playfulness of the Acadian language and the poetic beauty is not fully translated; nonetheless, the spirit and soul of the plays are very much alive in the translations. A suggestion for the anthology would be to have a slightly longer introduction to the respective plays. What currently appears is relevant and informative, particularly with the Chiasson plays; however, more details on the production history of the plays would provide the reader with a greater sense of the various productions, tours, and interpretations. *Cape Enrage*, for instance, initially opened in Moncton, New Brunswick in 1992, but it was then remounted with some changes to the script in 1998 when it toured again. The tour included productions in Vancouver and other cities in British Columbia. This type of information would provide the reader

with a greater sense of the production histories and the exposure the plays have had to date in French.

This anthology of translated plays points out the productivity of Acadian drama, and I hope this collection marks the beginning of exposure of other Acadian plays and playwrights to the non-French speaking/reading world. We are much indebted to Richard Wilbur for his wonderful English translations of Molière, to Linda Gaboriau for her numerous English translations of Québécois playwrights, and, now, to Glen Nichols for bringing Acadian dramas to English readers through this anthology of translated plays.



**MICHEL VAÏS, *L'accompagnateur. Parcours d'un critique de théâtre.***

Montréal, Varia, 2006, 384 pp.

HERVÉ GUAY

*L'Accompagnatrice* est le titre d'un roman bref et cruel de Nina Berberova. La romancière russe, exilée à Paris puis aux États-Unis, y dépeint une pianiste à la sensibilité exacerbée que la vie a forcé à vivre dans l'ombre d'une diva. À son tour, le critique de théâtre montréalais, Michel Vaïs, reprend le terme—au masculin, cette fois—et le colore d'un sens positif pour rendre compte d'une pratique de la critique théâtrale qui s'est échelonnée sur une trentaine d'années. Ne serait-ce qu'en raison de la longévité professionnelle de celui qui l'a écrit, *L'accompagnateur*, paru en 2006 aux Éditions Varia, revêt un caractère exceptionnel. Il n'est pas fréquent, en effet, qu'un journaliste qui a longtemps gagné sa vie en travaillant à la radio publique comme spécialiste de théâtre revienne sur son parcours.

C'est d'ailleurs « [l]a disparition, en mai 2001, de la dernière émission où [il a] collaboré régulièrement, *Un dimanche à la radio*, et, peu après, l'abolition de toute la Chaîne culturelle » (359) de Radio-Canada qui ont conduit Michel Vaïs à composer l'ouvrage de près de 400 pages. Il appelle même un « deuil de micros » (17) le passage à vide qui l'a mené, non à se lancer dans un tout nouveau projet d'écriture, mais à tenter de faire du neuf avec du vieux. Le critique a ainsi fabriqué ses « mémoires »—la directrice du Théâtre du Nouveau Monde, Lorraine Pintal, emploie elle-même le mot dans la préface de l'ouvrage—en recyclant, à divers degrés, une centaine d'articles qu'il a publiés au fil des ans, pour l'essentiel