

**WRITING CANADIANS**  
**THE LITERARY CONSTRUCTION OF**  
**ETHNIC IDENTITIES**

Edited by

Martin Kuester  
and  
Wolfram R. Keller

Marburg

2002

Schriften der Universitätsbibliothek Marburg 114

Marburger Kanada-Studien 1

### **Editorial Board**

Martin Kuester, Marburg

Elke Nowak, Berlin

Alfred Pletsch, Marburg

Theo Schiller, Marburg

Wilfried von Bredow, Marburg

Andrea Wolff-Wölk, Marburg

Alle Rechte vorbehalten

Printed in Germany

Druck: Universitätsbibliothek Marburg

Umschlaggestaltung: Alexander Sperl

Gedruckt mit Unterstützung der kanadischen Botschaft in Berlin,  
des European Network for Canadian Studies und der Gesellschaft  
für Kanada-Studien

auf säurefreiem und alterungsbeständigem Papier



ISSN 0931-7163

ISBN 3-8185-0369-9

## CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	7
0. Beyond <i>Fleur de Lis</i> and <i>Maple Leaf</i> : Ethnicity in Contemporary Canadian Literature <i>Martin Kuester &amp; Wolfram R. Keller</i>	9
<b>Part One: Surveying Ethnicity in Canadian Literature</b>	
1. La question de l'identitaire dans le roman québécois contemporain <i>Hans-Jürgen Greif</i>	31
2. Diversity in Recent Drama and Theatre in Canada <i>Katalin Kürtösi</i>	51
<b>Part Two: Teaching Ethnicity in Canadian Literature</b>	
3. Singing Snakes and Artistic Hens: Ethnic Diversity in Canadian Children's Books of the 1980s and 90s <i>Mirosława Ziąja-Buchholtz</i>	67
4. The Representation of Ethnic Minorities in Literary Texts for Use in Schools <i>Don Sparling</i>	83
<b>Part Three: Reading Ethnicity in Anglophone Canadian Literature</b>	
5. Mixing Memory and Desire: M.J. Vassanji and the South Asian Novel in Canada <i>Nancy Burke</i>	97
6. Humor and Jewish Canadian Writing: Mordecai Richler's <i>Barney's Version</i> as Ethnic Humour <i>Fabienne Quennet</i>	107

## DIVERSITY IN RECENT DRAMA AND THEATRE IN CANADA

---

Katalin Kürtösi

"I am a hyphenated person but I am not falling apart, I am putting together."<sup>1</sup>

This essay is an attempt at outlining what new dimensions Canadian drama and theatre have reached during the past fifteen years and how the new kinds of plays and theatrical expressions are reflected in the canon and in recent criticism. My starting point, namely that the last quarter of the twentieth century was a peak period in the history of Canadian drama and theatre, may at first seem to be a daring statement, but even theatre makers of the highest reputation such as Ken Gass share it, saying that

with the proliferation of theatres devoted to new writing across Canada in the past three decades and the adoption of many writers into the regional theatre mainstream, playwrights have finally secured a prominent place in the Canadian theatre landscape. Today, the range of writing remains diverse and stylistically varied, and has grown well beyond the nationalistic fervour of the early 1970s.<sup>2</sup>

By the late 1980s, the modern English-Canadian dramatic canon had been established with three different anthologies, *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre*, and a historical survey.<sup>3</sup> Still, looking back on the scene of the 1980s in 1991, Richard Paul Knowles mentions some areas which are markedly absent from the dramatic canon.

---

<sup>1</sup> Guillermo Verdecchia, *Fronteras Americanas (American Borders)* (Toronto: Coach House P, 1993) 77.

<sup>2</sup> Ken Gass, "Shifting Geographies in Contemporary Canadian Drama," *Zeitschrift für Kanada-Studien* 20.2/38 (2000): 40.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Perkyns, ed., *Major Plays of the Canadian Theatre, 1934-1984* (Toronto: Irwin, 1984); Richard Plant, ed., *The Penguin Book of Modern Canadian Drama* (Markham, Ont.: Penguin, 1984); Jerry Wasserman, ed., *Modern Canadian Plays* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1985; new ed. in 2 vols. 1993-94); Eugene Benson and L.W. Conolly, eds., *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre* (Toronto: OUP, 1989).

Plays by Canada's native peoples are completely missing from the canon, in spite of the fact noted by Benson and Conolly that 'before the discovery and colonization of North America by Europeans, an indigenous drama of great richness and complexity flourished' in what is now Canada. Native theatrical activity has not [...] died out, although [...] the early native drama 'had little influence on subsequent theatrical developments in Canada, which originated in Europe.' Difficult to classify in European terms, theatrical rather than literary in orientation, the theatre of Canada's native peoples, past and present, has disappeared from the face of the canon.<sup>4</sup>

In this essay we will first compare the present situation of native drama in Canada to that of ten years ago. My second topic, an area which has received only limited critical and theoretical attention so far, is ethnic drama,<sup>5</sup> while the third concerns a special form of theatrical performance, namely Robert Lepage's intercultural theatre.

This approach to recent Canadian drama is an example of the process that Knowles describes as the "continual process of rethinking, restructuring, and indeed deconstructing the tradition that keeps art alive and allows it to contribute to the ongoing critical project of rethinking, restructuring, and deconstructing our ways of seeing and ordering the world."<sup>6</sup> Half a decade later, still analysing what is problematic with the Canadian drama canon, Chris Johnson remarks that "I would also question the synecdochal adequacy of a study of Canadian drama confined to the 'canonical list', and agree that exclusive attention to the anthologized plays could lead to some harmful assumptions."<sup>7</sup> By that time further anthologies of Canadian plays had been published, offering selections on a regional or gender basis. Johnson, however, proposes that theatre programmes and university and college courses serve as semi-anthologies, creating an alternative canon –

---

<sup>4</sup> Richard Paul Knowles, "Voices (off): Deconstructing the Modern English-Canadian Dramatic Canon," *Canadian Canons: Essays on Literary Value*, ed. Robert Lecker (Toronto: UTP, 1991) 101-02.

<sup>5</sup> Knowles 106.

<sup>6</sup> Knowles 106.

<sup>7</sup> Chris Johnson, "'Wisdom Under a Ragged Coate': Canonicity and Canadian Drama," *Contemporary Issues in Canadian Drama*, ed. Per Brask (Winnipeg, Man.: Blizzard Publishing, 1995) 32.

"anthologies in which the ex-centric and subversive are strongly represented and in which the influence of the conventions and values of realism is much reduced."<sup>8</sup> These "semi-anthologies" reach a large and diverse audience, and therefore they "could be taken as a counter or 'competing' canon, one which relocates the Canadian centre for its audience and which destabilizes the printed canon."<sup>9</sup> When researching and teaching drama and theatre, this dynamism has to be taken into consideration.<sup>10</sup> Alternative theatre productions, collective creations, pieces from the "margins" play such an important role that "an anti-canonical canon seems to take shape [...]. [T]he 'canon' of Canadian drama changes so quickly that I would question whether it can thus qualify as a canon at all," says Chris Johnson<sup>11</sup> – agreeing with August J. Frye whom he quotes as saying that "No young and vibrant literature should be burdened with the hidden requirement that it establish its own orthodoxy [...]. *Canon* may describe a dead literature, it can only cripple a living one."<sup>12</sup>

The following arguments try to elucidate why plays by ethnic or native playwrights and intercultural performances have been – at least for a brief period – omitted from canon-forming anthologies. To start with, let us cast a quick look at the process which led to what Winfried Siemerling calls an "ethnic revival or re-'ethnicization' in Canada"<sup>13</sup> and "the renewed theoretical interest in ethnicity."<sup>14</sup> On October 8, 1971, Pierre Elliott Trudeau announced the policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework that later re-shaped not only English-French relations in Canada, but also offered new possibilities for the twenty percent of foreign-born Canadians – not only symbolically but in their everyday lives as well. In literature, the new policy encouraged ethnic writing, i.e., "works composed – entirely or predominantly – in one of the official languages, but offering nonetheless specific qualities relevant in terms of ethnicity."<sup>15</sup> On the level of na-

<sup>8</sup> Johnson 36.

<sup>9</sup> Johnson 37.

<sup>10</sup> It might be worth noting that in the early 1990s "the Canadian canon is a much stronger presence in campus theatre than it is in the Canadian professional theatre. [...] [R]oughly a third of the university/college productions of Canadian plays [were] 'canonical', two-thirds [were] not" (Johnson 41).

<sup>11</sup> Johnson 46.

<sup>12</sup> Qtd. in Johnson 47.

<sup>13</sup> Winfried Siemerling, "Writing Ethnicity: Introduction," *Writing Ethnicity: Cross-Cultural Consciousness in Canadian and Québécois Literature* (Toronto: ECW Press, 1996) 3.

<sup>14</sup> Siemerling 1.

<sup>15</sup> Siemerling 7.

tional literary discourse, however, ethnic writing could appear only after the discussion of the question of nationhood had basically taken place. In English Canadian literary criticism it appeared in the late seventies and the eighties, then receded during the "canon debates" of the early nineties to arrive at another peak in our day.

Among the genres, drama has a special situation. In the case of ethnic plays, the general requirements for drama to function (e.g., a company with actors who speak more than one language, or audiences who can understand more than one language) resulted in some delay in comparison with poetry and fiction. Credits for breaking the silence go to Marco Micone: his *Gens du silence* (first version 1979) drew attention to the significant number of immigrants in Canadian society who could not voice their problems. As Joseph Pivato sums up in the Italian-Canadian special issue of the *Canadian Theatre Review*,

Marco Micone has tried to explore and explain the experiences of Italian immigrants in Montreal. His four plays [...] deal with many questions: ethnic duality and identity in French Canada; the function of different languages in nationalistic Québec; and the political, social and educational problems of immigrants in the French province.[...] The plays of Micone are involved in a complicated, multilayered system of translation.<sup>16</sup>

(Let us not consider here why this milestone play had to be written in French in Montréal by an Italian immigrant writer.) Micone's play makes people realise that there are also conflicts other than French-English in Canadian society which can be given dramatic representation.<sup>17</sup> In the following years, cosmopolitan Montréal could view additional plays by Marco Micone, by Greek-born Pan Bouyoucas and by the ethnically mixed company Pigeons International, directed by Paula de Vasconcelos, to name only the best-known examples of ethnic drama and theatre – all of them showing their special trilingual world in Montréal and the dynamic

<sup>16</sup> Joseph Pivato, "Five-Fold Translation in the Theatre of Marco Micone," *Canadian Theatre Review* 104 (2000): 11.

<sup>17</sup> As Mordecai Richler ironically puts it in another context in his essay "The Main" in *The Street* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977) 7: "[A]s long as the English and French were going at each other they left us alone."

debate about the nature of society, language and culture in Québec and Canada. This process can also be seen as the theatrical equivalent of the polyphony emerging in the other genres in the last two decades of the twentieth century: as Janice Kulyk-Keefer puts it, "fine writers [...] have emerged from ethnocultural and racial groups which [...] had previously been either silenced or dismissively 'spoken for' by writers of the dominant cultures."<sup>18</sup> In her terminology, this is transculturalism, "a discourse which comprehends texts that might also be categorized as 'ethnic', or 'immigrant', 'native' or 'visible minority literature.'"<sup>19</sup> The dichotomy of silence and voice is used by Robert Kroetsch, too: speaking of "the ethnic experience," he suggests that silence can be broken by the retelling of old stories. Through the assertion of the narrative of ethnic experience, silence can find "a way to transform itself into voice."<sup>20</sup>

Let us take leave of the province of Québec and try to investigate the typical features of ethnic plays with the help of *Fronteras Americanas/American Borders* by Guillermo Verdecchia. The base language of the play is English, although the bilingual title has the Spanish version first and then its English equivalent. It was first performed to English-language audiences in Tarragon Theatre, Toronto. The play was conceived at the time of the five hundredth anniversary of the "discovery" of the Americas, but instead of celebrating the historical jubilee, it points to the paradoxes and contradictions of "Americanness," using the standpoint of the white ethnic writer. As the playwright puts it in the preface to the play, "*Fronteras Americanas* makes no claim to be the definitive explanation of the Latin experience in North America, or the immigrant experience, or anything of that nature."<sup>21</sup> Urjo Kareta, however, points out in his foreword that "*Fronteras Americanas* is a vivid and arresting theatre piece drawn from its creator's own singular migration. But Guillermo Verdecchia both deconstructs and re-constructs the model in his personal meditation on displacement, and indeed, in his celebration of it."<sup>22</sup> His personal involvement and autobiographical references not only authenticate his message, but also "entitle" him to give us an ironic view about "Latinos," creating

---

<sup>18</sup> Janice Kulyk-Keefer, "From Dialogue to Polylogue: Canadian Transcultural Writing During the Deluge," *Difference and Community: Canadian and European Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Peter Easingwood, Konrad Gross and Lynette Hunter, *Cross/Cultures* 25 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996) 60.

<sup>19</sup> Kulyk-Keefer, "Dialogue" 59.

<sup>20</sup> Qtd. in Kulyk-Keefer, "Dialogue" 66.

<sup>21</sup> Verdecchia, *Fronteras* 13.

<sup>22</sup> Urjo Kareta, Foreword to *Fronteras Americanas*, by Guillermo Verdecchia 9.



and rejecting stereotypes at the same time. These ambivalences furnish the play with a special dynamism, which works very well both on stage and on the printed page.

As the title suggests, *borders* are the central metaphor of the play, referring to the border between Europe and America, the border between North and South America, linguistic borders, the border within a split personality, together with the very special border in the theatre between performer and audience, the border between traditional theatrical expression and new media (e.g., projected pictures), between talking and singing, between his own text and the intertextual citations of stanzas by Carlos Fuentes, García Lorca and Octavio Paz or of statistical, demographical data, etc. The structure of the play transgresses traditional genre borders: within the two acts there are Brechtian "chapters" (e.g., "Welcome," "History," "Roll Call," "Going Home," "Latin Lover," "Travel Sickness," "El Teatro," "Border Crossings," "The Other America," "Latin Invasion," etc.). His personal experiences of belonging to two cultures offer him a special freedom and insecurity and, at the same time, give us a very interesting example of the contradictions of Canadian multicultural policy which Mayte Gómez explains as a "liberal discourse of 'integration' of and respect for all cultures underneath which lies a reality of acculturation into a mainstream."<sup>23</sup> The play simultaneously reproduces and subverts the ideology of multiculturalism: very often Verdecchia seems to be dancing on razor's edge, which is most obvious in his employment of stereotypes – he rejects them (e.g., those of the Latino lover or dancer), but uses them abundantly to outline the cultural differences between Latin and English-Canadian majority culture; as Robert Schwartzwald remarks in another context, we are faced with "an ongoing attempt to undermine the exoticizing, homogenizing pressures of multiculturalism."<sup>24</sup> In Verdecchia's own words,

Reflecting cultural diversity [...] meant not thinking of cultures as isolated entities that could be 'represented' objectively or scientifically, but rather looking at the fluidity of culture. [...] We could [...] look at the points of intersection, of overlap, of fusion. [...]

<sup>23</sup> Mayte Gómez, "Healing the Border Wound: *Fronteras Americanas* and the Future of Canadian Multiculturalism," *Theatre Research in Canada/Recherches théâtrales au Canada* 16.1-2 (1995): 27.

<sup>24</sup> Robert Schwartzwald, Introduction, *Identities and Marginalities/Identités et marginalités*, *International Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue internationale d'études canadiennes* 10 (1994): 13.

Multiculturalism ... is misunderstood to be a policy that aims to 'freeze immigrants in their way of doing things' (Neil Bissoondath), ... misunderstood as the promotion and celebration of folkloric, frozen in time, cultures of origin, ... becomes a convenient little ghetto. [...] Too often the label multicultural, instead of meaning inclusion and diversity means exclusion: alien and incomprehensible otherness.<sup>25</sup>

Language plays a very important role in Verdecchia's strategy of subversion: while Pierre Trudeau announced the policy of Multiculturalism within a bilingual (i.e., English and French) framework, Verdecchia's bilingualism in the play involves English (either standard or with a strong "Latino accent") – as the base language – and Spanish (either on the level of everyday words, referring mainly to clichés, or in lines of poetry by Lorca or Octavio Paz). As Gómez explains, "The use of Spanish in the title [...] suggests [...] a possible subversion of the widely-spread identification of the word 'America' with English-speaking or Anglo-Saxon culture," while "[t]he use of the English language was a necessary strategy for a performance which aspired to criticize the way 'Saxons' have constructed Latinos."<sup>26</sup>

It was not only the use of language(s) that turned out to be subversive. The choice of Toronto's Tarragon Theatre as the venue for the performance also conveyed extra layers of meaning, for since the early 1970s, Tarragon has had a steady reputation of encouraging English Canadian drama and playing it on a high professional level. The premiere of *Fronteras* at Tarragon implied that Verdecchia refused the classification of his work as amateur ethnic community theatre-making. He did not want to be "ghettoized." He directed his play towards a mixed audience, not towards an exclusively Hispanic layer of society<sup>27</sup> – using his own experiences about

---

<sup>25</sup> Guillermo Verdecchia, "7 Things About and 4 Readings From Cahoots Theatre Projects," keynote lecture for the annual conference of the Association for Canadian Theatre Research, 2001 Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities, Laval University, Québec, May 24, 2001, ms. 3-4, 5.

<sup>26</sup> Gómez 35.

<sup>27</sup> Janice Kulyk-Keefer would therefore call it a "transcultural text" for it is "not written exclusively for or read exclusively by the members of a given minority community in Canada" (Kulyk-Keefer, "Who's Afraid of Josef Skvorecky? The 'Reactionary' Immigrant Writer in a Multicultural Canada," *Ethnic Literature and Culture in the U.S.A., Canada, and Australia*, ed. Igor Maver [Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1996] 254).

external and internal borders as a universal metaphor, thus going one step beyond formal multiculturalism, "a notion which seems to imply static, unchanging cultures, living side by side without touching one another. Instead, it might be called *interculturalism*, as it is grounded on the interaction among living, practised cultures."<sup>28</sup> In his keynote address to the annual congress of the Association for Canadian Theatre Research, Verdecchia – at present artistic director of Cahoots Theatre Projects in Toronto – said, he was "shocked by the unofficial theatrical apartheid" in Toronto. In his view, cultural diversity is a

reality that many of us experience daily. [...] In Toronto, one of, if not, the most ethnoculturally diverse cities in the world, in Canada, one of, if not, the most multi-cultural countries in the world, it made absolute sense that the theatre would reflect that reality.<sup>29</sup>

Plays by ethnic writers – who make the Canadian mosaic so colourful – paved the road for indigenous artists to enter mainstream Canadian theatre. As Beverly Rasporich and Tamara P. Seiler put it, the "complex, transforming impact of Native artists and writers on Canadian culture today [...] in many ways parallels the transformations energized by non-English and non-French immigrants and their descendants."<sup>30</sup> By the late 1980s Tomson Highway and his younger brother, René, had become well-known and highly reputed members of the theatre community in Toronto: they were among the very first not only to stop the process of "[a]ppropriation of Native materials through literature by non-Native writers"<sup>31</sup> (for example by George Ryga), but also to prove that "[d]rama lends itself better to the portrayal of Aboriginal mythology than any other genre."<sup>32</sup>

After some years of community theatre activities at the Native Canadian Centre in Toronto – the peak of their activities was marked by Tomson Highway's English/Cree poetic drama *The Sage, The Dancer and the Fool* in the mid-1980s – playwright Tomson Highway broke out of the shell of the native community institution, and decided to challenge mainstream

<sup>28</sup> Gómez 36.

<sup>29</sup> Verdecchia, "7 Things" 1, 2-3.

<sup>30</sup> Beverly Rasporich and Tamara P. Seiler, "Multiculturalism and the Arts," *A Passion for Identity: An Introduction to Canadian Studies*, ed. David Taras and Beverly Rasporich, 3rd ed. (Toronto: ITP Nelson, 1997) 251.

<sup>31</sup> Agnes Grant, "Native Drama: A Celebration of Native Culture," Brask 105.

<sup>32</sup> Grant 112.

English-Canadian theatre with its established aesthetic standards and conventions. He realised that

we must use English if our voice is to be heard by the large enough audience: English and not Cree. The Cree language is so completely different and the world view that that language engenders and expresses is so completely different [...] that [...] we are very conscious of the fact that we are working with a language that we must reshape to our own particular purpose.<sup>33</sup>

*The Rez Sisters* (1988) and *Dry Lips...* (1989), shown at Theatre Passe Muraille, Toronto, brought several awards to the writer. Both plays are "difficult to characterize and categorize. The terms naturalistic, realistic, fantastic, surreal, tragic, and comic are often applied."<sup>34</sup> Highway seamlessly connects the spiritual world with prosaic details of everyday life on the reservation, raises bingo and hockey to a mythic level, thus establishing a theatrical universe of his own in which a genderless, androgynous Nanabush becomes a Puck-like dramaturge playing tricks on the characters or using them like marionettes.

Highway transcends categorisation and freely borrows from ancient conventions, reaching back to the magical-mythical roots of the art. He only had to remember the basic elements of traditional Native story-telling, which is a performance in its own right, using pantomime and particularly rich body-language.<sup>35</sup> The native characters in plays like *Dry Lips* are not stereotypes any longer: only the native playwright can credibly surpass the stereotypes and also the frequently patronising approach of white writers. His genuine humour gives a new context to the stereotype of the "funny" Indian. Highway takes his mission seriously: "Until we have a generation of Indian people out there who have been inundated with Nanabush stories and incredible literature written by our own people, in

---

<sup>33</sup> Tomson Highway, "On Native Mythology," *Canadian Theatre History: Selected Readings*, ed. Don Rubin (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1996) 421.

<sup>34</sup> Rasporich/Seiler 250.

<sup>35</sup> Grant 103.

their own language, we won't really have our words as a people, as a distinct culture."<sup>36</sup>

As we all know, the analysis of drama and theatre requires special tools and special approaches. Seeing a play performed in its full dimensions provides the critic with otherwise hardly noticeable aspects.<sup>37</sup> This is especially true for Robert Lepage, who has been among the most important and innovative representatives of theatre in Canada. He is counted among the world's leading directors in the 1990s and has been compared to (and worked together with) theatre "gurus" such as Peter Brook, Ariane Mnouchkine, Robert Wilson and Eugenio Barba.

Robert Lepage started his career with various alternative theatre groups in Québec and Montréal, then was director of the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. Although his mother tongue is Québec French (not joual!), he always uses English passages in his performances: standard English as well as English with, for example, a Chinese accent. In his performances, we can see a constant obsession with the contact of cultures – the cultures of Europe and North America, as in *Vinci* (1986), *Needles and Opium* (1993), partly in *Tectonic Plates* (1988), or the cultures of East and West, as in *The Seven Streams of the River Ota* and *The Dragon Trilogy* (1985).<sup>38</sup> Focussing on the contact and exchange of cultures makes it possible for Lepage to "challenge stereotypes of ethnicity, exploring the clash and interpretation of cultures and use questions of cultural identity in innovative ways. Lepage's productions are part of an evolving tradition of interculturalism in theatre and performance. [...] Lepage and his theatre group ask the right questions."<sup>39</sup>

Lepage, however, not only asks questions: he provides us with an artistic answer of his own. Instead of using a single acting code, he integrates several traditions into one play.

---

<sup>36</sup> Bryan Loucks, "Another Glimpse: Excerpts from a Conversation with Tomson Highway," *Canadian Theatre Review* 68 (1991): 9.

<sup>37</sup> About *Fronteras Americanas/American Borders* and *Needles and Opium (L'aguille et opium)* see my review "From Euripides to Carbone 14. Notes on Montréal Theatre, 1993," *Matrix: Writing Worth Reading* 41 (1993): 37-45.

<sup>38</sup> About the two latter performances, see Sherry Simon, "Robert Lepage and Intercultural Theatre," *Canadian Culture and Literature and a Taiwan Perspective*, ed. Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek and Yiu-nam Leun (Edmonton: Research Institute for Comparative Literature, University of Alberta, 1998) 125-43.

<sup>39</sup> Simon 125.

Not only is he internationally celebrated, but transnationalism is the very theme of his work. He has invented and exploited the kinds of theatre productions which, though constructed out of materials gathered from local contexts, are put together into performances which transcend these origins.<sup>40</sup>

This strategy perfectly coincides with the expectations toward interculturalism in the theatre, i.e., "hybrid forms drawing upon a more or less conscious and voluntary mixing of performance traditions traceable to distinct cultural areas. The hybridization is very often such that the original forms can no longer be distinguished."<sup>41</sup> The co-existence of various cultural and acting traditions within the same performance offers a unique experience for the spectators who have to make an active contribution to the full scale of meaning of these shows – at least intellectually.

As a conclusion, we can state that by the beginning of the new Millennium, drama and theatre in Canada manifest a richness and vitality that was unimaginable four decades ago. The pessimistic vision of theatre critic Nathan Cohen in 1959 proved to be false:

Theatre as a mirror and critic of the moods, tones, idioms, paradoxes, virtues, and inadequacies of life on a thinly-populated, four-thousand-mile sub-Arctic strip; as a concentrated artistic statement with a persevering dynamic; as a body of imaginative work with themes and standards – in short, theatre as something of value to a discerning public has never counted in the life of English-language Canada. Nor is it likely to in the reasonably foreseeable future.<sup>42</sup>

By the end of the 20th century Canadian drama and theatre have definitely come of age and Canada can significantly contribute to the process of shaping world theatre today.

---

<sup>40</sup> Simon 126.

<sup>41</sup> Patrice Pavis, Introduction, *The Intercultural Performance Reader*, ed. Patrice Pavis (London: Routledge, 1996) 1.

<sup>42</sup> Nathan Cohen, "Theatre Today: English Canada," Rubin 228.

## WORKS CONSULTED

- Benson, Eugene and L.W. Conolly, eds. *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre*. Toronto: OUP, 1989.
- Brask, Per, ed. *Contemporary Issues in Canadian Drama*. Winnipeg, Man.: Blizzard Publishing, 1995.
- Cohen, Nathan. "Theatre Today: English Canada." Rubin 228-37.
- Gass, Ken. "Shifting Geographies in Contemporary Canadian Drama." *Zeitschrift für Kanada-Studien* 20.2/38 (2000): 35-41.
- Gómez, Mayte. "Healing the Border Wound: *Fronteras Americanas* and the Future of Canadian Multiculturalism." *Theatre Research in Canada/Recherches théâtrales au Canada* 16.1-2 (1995): 26-39.
- Grant, Agnes. "Native Drama: A Celebration of Native Culture." Brask 103-15.
- Highway, Tomson. "On Native Mythology." Rubin 420-23.
- Johnson, Chris. "'Wisdom Under a Ragged Coate': Canonicity and Canadian Drama." Brask 27-49.
- Kareda, Urjo. Foreword. *Fronteras Americanas (American Borders)*. By Guillermo Verdecchia. Toronto: Coach House, 1993. 9-12.
- Knowles, Richard Paul. "Voices (off): Deconstructing the Modern English-Canadian Dramatic Canon." *Canadian Canons: Essays on Literary Value*. Ed. Robert Lecker. Toronto: UTP, 1991. 91-111.
- Kürtösi, Katalin. "From Euripides to Carbone 14: Notes on Montréal Theatre." Rev. of *Fronteras Americanas (American Borders)*, by Guillermo Verdecchia and *Needles and Opium (L'aguille et opium)*, by Robert Lepage. *Matrix* 41 (1993): 37-45.
- Kulyk-Keefer, Janice. "From Dialogue to Polylogue: Canadian Transcultural Writing During the Deluge." *Difference and Community: Canadian and European Cultural Perspectives*. Ed. Peter Easingwood, Konrad Gross and Lynette Hunter. Cross/Cultures 25. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996. 59-70.
- . "Who's Afraid of Josef Skvorecky? The 'Reactionary' Immigrant Writer in a Multicultural Canada." *Ethnic Literature and Culture in the U.S.A., Canada, and Australia*. Ed. Igor Maver. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1996. 249-61.

- Loucks, Bryan. "Another Glimpse: Excerpts from a Conversation with Tomson Highway." *Canadian Theatre Review* 68 (1991): 9-11.
- Pavis, Patrice. Introduction. *The Intercultural Performance Reader*. Ed. Patrice Pavis. London: Routledge, 1996. 1-26.
- Perkyns, Richard, ed. *Major Plays of the Canadian Theatre, 1934-1984*. Toronto: Irwin, 1984.
- Pivato, Joseph. "Five-Fold Translation in the Theatre of Marco Micone." *Canadian Theatre Review* 104 (2000): 11-15.
- Plant, Richard, ed. *The Penguin Book of Modern Canadian Drama*. Markham, Ont.: Penguin, 1984.
- Rasporich, Beverly and Tamara P. Seiler. "Multiculturalism and the Arts." *A Passion for Identity: An Introduction to Canadian Studies*. Ed. David Taras and Beverly Rasporich. 3rd ed. Toronto: ITP Nelson, 1997. 243-64.
- Richler, Mordecai. "The Main." *The Street*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977. 6-11.
- Rubin, Don, ed. *Canadian Theatre History: Selected Readings*. Toronto: Copp Clark, 1996.
- Schwartzwald, Robert, ed. and intro. *Identities and Marginalities/Identités et marginalités*. Spec. issue of *International Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue internationale d'études canadiennes* 10 (1994): 5-14.
- Siemerling, Winfried. "Writing Ethnicity: Introduction." *Writing Ethnicity: Cross-Cultural Consciousness in Canadian and Québécois Literature*. Toronto: ECW Press, 1996. 1-32.
- Simon, Sherry. "Robert Lepage and Intercultural Theatre." *Canadian Culture and Literature and a Taiwan Perspective*. Ed. Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek and Yiu-nam Leung. Edmonton: Research Institute for Comparative Literature, University of Alberta, 1998. 125-43.
- Verdecchia, Guillermo. "7 Things About and 4 Readings From Cahoots Theatre Projects." Address. Conference of the Association for Canadian Theatre Research. Laval University, Québec, 24 May 2001.
- . *Fronteras Americanas (American Borders)*. Toronto: Coach House P, 1993.
- Wasserman, Jerry, ed. *Modern Canadian Plays*. 2 vols. Vancouver, B.C.: Talonbooks, 1993-94.