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Re-Assembling: CTR 199–200

PERFORMANCE MATTERS

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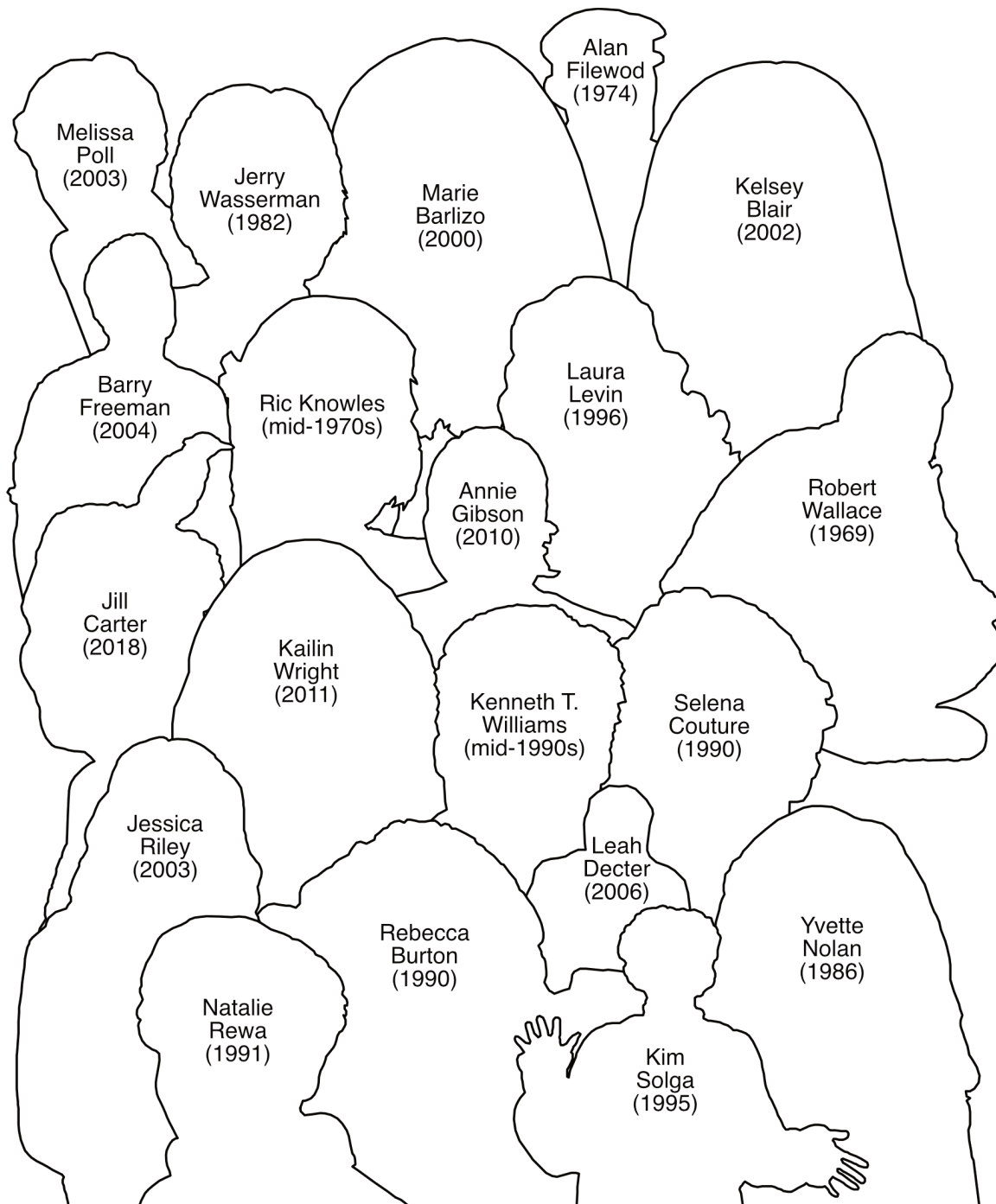
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Guide to This Issue's Cover

Whenever possible, photos are from the approximate era during which each author recalls first encountering *Canadian Theatre Review*.



Vol. 12, No. 1

Re-Assembling: CTR 199–200

Issue Editors: Selena Couture and Melissa Poll

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How, Why, and What: *Canadian Theatre Review in Performance Matters*

Selena Couture and Melissa Poll

In her article in this issue, “Here We Are, In the Middle,” Algonquin/Irish theatre artist and scholar Yvette Nolan asks readers to celebrate conversations across divisions and, consequently, to grow: “The back and forth of discussion is what moves us forward. . . . Hearing each other, hearing ourselves, being willing to say things out loud—or on the page—and then be challenged on them by others—editors, scholars, gentle readers—and be asked to re-examine them. Staying open to the possibility of change, of growth, of learning” (149). This message comes at a particularly fraught moment for freedom of speech on university campuses across settler colonial borders. In March 2026, the University of Alberta’s Board of Governors removed equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives from its hiring policy seven months after an Alberta government report argued that institutional commitments to EDI created questions about freedom of expression and recommended that all post-secondary institutions adhere to a “policy of institutional neutrality . . . to uphold and protect freedom of expression and intellectual diversity” (CCLA; Mintz et al. 56–58, 80). In a number of US states, gender, women, and sexuality studies and American ethnic studies departments are being cut due to federal pressure while political agitators are free to use harmful racial epithets on campus under the First Amendment. Here, we see freedom of speech being deployed to protect some while other voices are silenced. In this climate, Nolan’s thoughts offer a way forward. Her words sum up the impetus for this issue—through its publication, we are asking readers to preserve and reflect upon a critical moment in our field, one that raises pressing questions about freedom of speech, solidarity, and ethical discourse. This issue also holds broader meaning within ongoing discussions about the infrastructure of publishing in Canadian theatre and performance—and regarding whose

voices and stories are supported, silenced, or contested within our institutions. This moment will undoubtedly give rise to productive disagreements and conflict. As editors, we are impelled to trust that it is the community surrounding a conflict that is responsible for offering “alternatives of understanding and complexity” (Schulman 20). We want to start a broader conversation here, and to do so, we detail the events that led to *Performance Matters* 12.1.

In the fall of 2024, to both celebrate and critically reflect on the fiftieth year of publishing *Canadian Theatre Review*, issue 199–200, “Core Samples and Cross Sections: *CTR* at 50” was published. The issue was edited by Heather Davis–Fisch (who was the editor-in-chief at the time), Jenn Stephenson (*CTR* editor-in-chief, 2016–2023), and dance artist and scholar Seika Boye. It contained twenty-one articles, written by thirty-seven people. Shortly after the publication, they received a complaint about one of the articles that deployed an intersectional feminist critique. The editors and author worked to respond respectfully; the complainant remained dissatisfied and threatened a lawsuit. After many months of negotiations and against the editors’ wishes, the publisher eventually decided to remove the article to avoid this. In response to this censorship and in support of the scholar whose work had been removed from the publication, nineteen authors rescinded their permission for the press to publish nine other articles in the issue. *CTR* 199–200 was disassembled and republished without what the editors termed the “omitted” articles in September 2025. The articles were listed at the end of the editorial introduction without comment on the circumstances of their removal.

As you might imagine, this has been a difficult time in our field. Despite this, we are determined to reassemble and disseminate this work. Legal advisors at four universities concluded that the article is protected under the fair comment defence. The editors of *Performance Matters*, Coleman Nye and Lily Mengesha, using Simon Fraser University Library’s Open Journal Systems/Public Knowledge Project, agreed to host the republication of these ten articles as a matter of being open about dissent and freedom of expression. One of the first issues we faced was that *Performance Matters* is a peer-reviewed journal and *CTR* publishes works commissioned by guest editors which then go through an editorial process overseen by the editor-in-chief. We wanted to honour *CTR*’s process and the many hours of

thoughtful labour that the authors and editors went through to get to publication in 2024. Opening them up to the peer review process made no sense; yet we also saw an opportunity to demonstrate the strength and diversity of our field. To this end, we've invited scholars and artists to write short responses to the original articles that are published as companions to each one.

We would be remiss in not addressing the context in which our thinking on this issue of *Performance Matters* developed. Upon first hearing of the situation, Selena's reaction embodied what Sara Ahmed celebrates as the "willful feminist" (xi); she was willing to announce her disagreement and put herself behind it. For Selena, the decision to take action felt obvious—like there was no other option. Ahmed notes, "Willfulness can be a spark. We can be lit up by it" (65). For Melissa, it happened in a snap. Ahmed describes snap as "the moment of not taking it," a moment built on "a longer history of being affected by what you come up against" (189). From her position as a Canadian in the United States, Melissa was watching as women's reproductive rights were rapidly disappearing as were university initiatives and departments dedicated to DEI, gender, sexuality, and race. Melissa experienced snap as a group of women scholars, situated across differences and settler colonial borders, gathered on Zoom to discuss the removal of the article from *CTR*. The silencing of the scholar's voice in the journal's pages was the source of palpable anger and frustration—a hallmark of transformational feminism (Butler 80; Hemmings 157; hooks 63–64). And though snap is a break, it is also a starting point (Ahmed 187).

From this beginning, the work became about assembly and growth. Together, we sought out participants willing to contribute to a publication that, in its existence alone, refused the censorship of the article while also endeavouring to expand the vital work offered by the original editors and authors behind *CTR* 199–200. Like those who rescinded their articles from *CTR*, the new contributors who welcomed the invitation to participate in *Performance Matters* 12.1—Nazli Akhtari, Susan Bennett, Kelsey Blair, Leah Decter, Ric Knowles, Laura Levin, Yvette Nolan, Natalie Rewa, Nikki Shaffeeullah, Jenn Stephenson, Jerry Wasserman, Robert Wallace and Kenneth T. Williams—were bringing themselves to an online assembly that, in a Butlerian sense, calls out injustice and delivers a demand for change (Butler 11). By assembling in the pages of *Performance Matters*, this group has offered an act of affective

solidarity—one that is self-reflexive and undefined by sameness (Hemmings 150). Their solidarity emerges through individual engagements and subsequent action in relation to the author's experience. Moreover, their activation demonstrates that, although continually expanding political and social crises have challenged the ecology of performance scholarship, it remains resilient.

Article respondents accepted the invitation to write 1,000 words (approximately) or develop creative work beyond the language of academic prose with which readers could engage. We asked that they respond to and extend the concepts/ideas discussed in their assigned article and welcomed gestures to further discussions that could build on the original piece and their own work. With this responsive form, we aim to create a space for the best kind of lively and thought-provoking academic engagement.

The original *CTR* issue was organized in four sections: "Looking Back," "Cross Sections," "Core Samples" and "Futures." This *Performance Matters* issue features articles from each of these sections in the order they were originally published (as detailed below). In our overview of the content of this issue, we have quoted the original editorial descriptions of the articles as listed in the table of contents and the editorial introduction (these words are italicized but not cited because they are no longer publicly available). We also explain the reasoning behind inviting specific people to share their responses. Recognizing the limitations of our perspectives as white settler women scholar co-editors, and as part of our mutual ongoing commitments to continue to expand who is invited to be "in the room," to redress exclusions that limit our field, we made a conscious effort to invite scholars and artists from diverse backgrounds. We understand that at this stage, this is a gesture of "inclusion" that does not in and of itself dismantle the power structures that continue to disproportionately feature white settler perspectives. We also hope that this can be the kind of action that Métis political scientist Adam Gaudry and dis/ability education scholar Danielle Lorenz identify as "inclusions" that can be "vectors to achieve more transformative ends" (221). We hope this collection of authors and respondents can be a step toward the creation of better infrastructures that will serve us all.

Section 1: "Looking Back"

In *"(Un)Making History? Canadian Theatre History and the Canadian Theatre Review," Kailin Wright* provides an overview of the relationship between the development of the journal and of Canadian theatre history and studies as a field. The response to Wright's article is by Selena Couture, titled: "On Unmaking and Making in the Compost Heap of Canadian Theatre History." Like Wright, Couture is a theatre historian; her work questions historiographical methods to expand what we can understand as history while also aiming to deconstruct settler colonial understandings of white possession. In this article, she takes us to the metaphorical compost heap, examining not only how Canadian theatre history is unmade but also the possibilities of what beauty might bloom from its constitutive heap.

Next, **Jessica Riley** takes a deep dive into CTR 1, noting in her article *"Chauvinism and Its Discontents: Canadian Theatre Review 1 Revisited"* how the journal's argument for the importance of Canadian theatre history is situated within largely unexamined frames of whiteness and masculinity.¹ The response to Riley's article, "Feminism and Its Discontents: Reviewing CTR's Inaugural Issues," is by Susan Bennett, a distinguished professor emerita whose field-defining work on Canadian theatre and feminism makes her an ideal respondent to Riley's article. Her article expands on CTR1's limited gender representation and chronicles the dearth of women's voices in the first twelve issues, reminding us of a number of women working in Canadian theatre at the time. These erasures had an impact, arriving at a moment when institutional knowledge formation was coming about.

In the next contribution, [f]ormer CTR editor **Alan Filewod** reflects on his ambivalent relationship to the journal's history in *"The Wrong Side of History, or How We Got It Wrong,"* noting that by remaining locked into nation-building assumptions, the journal edified settler national culture. Jerry Wasserman's response to Filewod, "Maybe We Got Some of It Right: A

¹ Heather Davis-Fisch reflects on the process of editing the issue and Riley's article in particular in the issue's introduction: *I think my favourite moment about putting together the issue was at the CATR conference in 2023. You [Jenn Stephenson] gave Jess Riley a copy of issue 1, and it was Alan Filewod's copy, with his name and marginalia in it, and it was the day Alan was receiving a lifetime award at the conference. It felt like the embodied history of the field, and the relationship between CTR, and this issue, and the evolution of our discipline all intersecting in that moment.*

Response to Alan Filewod,” reflects on his own time as an academic and actor in Canadian theatre, and disputes Filewod’s rhetorical binary of a “right” and “wrong” side. As a contemporary of Filewod, who also worked in theatre and the academy but was never part of the *CTR* editorial team, Wasserman provides a knowledgeable and critically distanced perspective.

*In “Imprint: Reflections on Canadian Theatre Review Play Publication,” Rebecca Burton and Annie Gibson bring together playwrights, publishers, and academics to discuss the relationship between the journal and the play publication landscape in Canada.² Cree playwright Kenneth T. Williams’s response “It’s Not You, but It’s Not Me Either,” responds by sharing some stories of his experiences as a playwright and theatre maker from Saskatchewan to illustrate what he terms his “complicated relationship status” with *CTR*. As a creative writer, Williams took up our invitation to write beyond the language of academic prose and deployed his considerable skill as both a humorist and a political commentator (most often displayed these days on the podcast *Media Indigena*) in his piece.*

Section 2: Cross Sections

*Taking up the issue’s theme of core samples and cross sections, Katrina Dunn explores how space and site emerge across the fifty years of the journal in “Unruly Sites, Bewildering Buildings, Angry Cities: A Wayward Walk.” Nazli Akhtari’s response, “Despite Landscape,” extends Dunn’s attention to debates about space published in *CTR* to consider what it means to think about landscape when it is mediated through “white possession,” pulling examples from student encampments protesting Palestinian genocide and the complex entanglements of landscape painting and theatre in Canadian history. She concludes by noting the multiplicity of creative practices that*

² The editors also discussed this article further in their introduction: Heather Davis-Fisch: In “Imprint: Reflections on *CTR* Play Publication,” Jill Carter describes really beautifully how when she was a young actor, she’d buy *CTR* to read the scripts and what artists said about their work. She describes *CTR*’s coverage of Indigenous theatre, and the 1991 issue edited by Monique Mojica. I do think that *CTR* is one of the only places where we consistently see artists in conversation and writing about and explicating their work. . . . The other thing that was interesting to hear about in this issue was the curatorial process and the role of the script. Alan [Filewod] [in Rebecca Burton and Annie Gibson’s curated panel] talks about how seeing a play and wanting to publish the script often drove the issue theme. It was not “choose the theme and then find a play that fits.” He talks about it with Newhouse, the Richard Rose Necessary Angel piece. One of the things that emerged is how early *CTRs* were in large part about publishing scripts, and that lasted for quite a long time.

endure despite this. We invited Akhtari to respond to Dunn's work because of her perspectives on critical historiography and the global Iranian diaspora, which query both the "politics of departure" and the "ethics of arrival" on Indigenous territories. Akhtari's work was recently featured in this journal with her article "Diaspora Walks: Small Lessons in Unlearning," which was part of the 2021 special issue "Performing (in) Place: Moving on/with the Land," co-edited by Jenn Cole and Melissa Poll.

Section 3: Core Samples

In "There is no such thing as a gay play': Canadian Theatre Review and Gay Politics in the 1970s" J. Paul Halferty analyzes CTR 12, positioning the issue as marking the first time the journal engaged with identity politics outside of the nation and as capturing a moment when understandings of queer performance were undergoing significant change.³ In her response to Halferty, Nikki Shaffeeullah's "Affinity or Extraction? The Institutionalization of Queer Arts Spaces" nods to the progress in diversity and inclusion Canadian theatre has made since the 1970s but amplifies the changes that remain stubbornly hard-won. Shaffeeullah identifies how Canadian theatre may be invested in an optics of diversity and ally-ship but our arts institutions continue to balk at the prospect of work invested in making lasting social change. We wanted to celebrate Paul's article with a response from Shaffeeullah, given her perspective as a queer Indo-Caribbean artist and advocate and her commitment to equity-driven, community-engaged work. She has also been an important contributor to *CTR*; her piece "Safety and Justice in Our Artistic Spaces" asks vital questions about how people and arts organizations can position themselves to minimize harm and hold themselves accountable when harm is done, focusing on transformative justice and new frameworks for praxis.

In her article, **Kim Solga** reads all of 1988's issues, asking how the preoccupations of 1988 resemble those of today and finding that the questions explored and the contradictions they trouble lay crucial

³ In the introduction, Heather Davis-Fisch comments further on Halferty's article: *When people are critical, I think it is still with that spirit that they are also historically contextualizing those writing or editorial choices. We see this in Paul [Halferty]'s article, when he argues that despite the problematic aspects of the Homosexuality and the Theatre issue [CTR 12], it also emerged at a moment when the culture was shifting around understandings of what gay culture in Canada was. I think there's a generosity in the critique.*

groundwork for today, in "A Year in the Life: Canadian Theatre Review, 1988." Kelsey Blair's response, "A Year in the Life: Publishing *is* and *as* Recording," takes inspiration from Solga's method of weaving performance, publishing and the personal to examine the ambient atmosphere surrounding the publication of the 1988 issues. Blair's piece includes recollections she solicited from the editors of the 1988 *CTR* issues, which she uses to return lost personal textures to the publications. We invited Blair to respond to Solga's work because of her multifaceted profile as a scholar of communication, musical theatre, sport, and performance studies, as well as her previous collaboration with Solga on her blog *The Activist Classroom*.

The final "Core Samples" article, "*Hourglasses and Hammers: A Reflection on Forty Years of Interculturalism in Canadian Theatre Review*," is **Barry Freeman's** critical analysis and personal reflection on how the theme and practice of interculturalism, and particularly its ethical engagements, have shifted during the life of the journal. Theatre artist and academic Yvette Nolan's response, "Here We Are, In the Middle," appreciates Freeman's reflection on his growth in understanding of intercultural theatre over the years. She builds on this further by discussing her experience as the artistic director of Native Earth Performing Arts, creating theatrical adaptations, and the continuous learning that comes from a commitment to tussling with differences that divide us. Our invitation to Nolan was inspired by our deep appreciation of her generous artistic leadership, scholarly and theatrical writings, as well as her articulation of the concept of "Eighth Fire productions" in *Medicine Shows* as a "time for Indigenous people and settler communities to work together to achieve justice, to live together in a good way" (117).

Section 4: *Futures*

This final section features two articles. *The prompt of sharing her office with nearly 200 issues of CTR inspired Selena Couture's "An Account of Durational and Distributed Encounters with Corpus CTR," which posits CTR as a living archive of theatre and performance practice in Canada.* Jewish Canadian white settler scholar and inter-media/performance artist Leah Decter's response to Couture, "Matters of the Everyday In-Between: Making the Relationality Ac/count," is a "visit" with the idea of the "care-full encounter" described in Couture's description of co-habiting. Decter links this to the unhurried, reciprocal artistic collaborations she has undertaken

that honour the everyday spaces of the in-between. We invited Decter to respond to Couture's article because of her multiple installation and performance projects that creatively respond to and deconstruct settler colonial archives, one of which, *becoming/un/becoming*, she installed at the Ottawa Art Gallery while writing this article.

The second article in the Futures section, "CTR Editors in Conversation," might seem to be a strange fit with the topic as it is a roundtable convened in March 2026 with former CTR editors Robert Wallace, Natalie Rewa, Ric Knowles, Laura Levin, and Jenn Stephenson. While the editors do discuss their experiences from over forty years of publishing the journal, their conversation also reveals a throughline of mentorship, collaboration, and invitation that sustained the journal over many years and points toward the practices that can help us all navigate the crises we face in our field today.

Concluding Thoughts

One thing I've learned through the back-and-forths over the years is that you can take rights away, but you can't so easily take ideas away, including people's belief in their own rights and the rights of people they care about. You can cut down the flowers, but you can't stop the spring. There is no going back, though how we go forward is the work—or conflict—at hand.

—Rebecca Solnit, *The Beginning Comes After the End*

While this issue springs from the effort to reflect on and celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of *Canadian Theatre Review*, it also reveals the fragmentary nature of commemoration and historicizing. The year 2024 was indeed the fiftieth year since CTR1 had been published—that is one way of counting time. But what if the history started with the publication of the *York Theatre Journal* in 1971? Or with Robert Wallace's assumption of the editorial role in 1982 when, as is revealed in the CTR Editors Roundtable in this issue, his ethic of invitation and gathering changed the trajectory of the journal significantly? This turn then allowed the journal to develop into what so many of the authors included in this issue appreciate—a gathering place for artists, scholars, and activists to share and reflect on their own and each other's work, at times a place of invitation. A place that serves to imperfectly document and reflect on performative practices in these lands. Or should we

mark another beginning of *CTR* in 2025, when a number of theatre scholars came to a clearer understanding of what the journal has been, what the current conditions of its publication actually are, and how we are faced with decisions about what academic publishing in our field will be from now on?

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(Un)Making History?

Canadian Theatre History and the *Canadian Theatre Review*

Kailin Wright

Canadian Theatre Review (CTR) at once describes history and makes it. Playhouses are often historicized as the single most important factor in determining the development of theatre in Canada (Canada 193; Frye 224; Rubin, "Creeping" 11), but CTR did for Canadian theatre history what playhouses did for performance.¹ Journals like CTR (founded in 1974) and *Theatre Research in Canada* (which began as *Theatre History in Canada*, in 1980) as well as the Canadian Association of Theatre Research (established in 1976 as the Association for Canadian Theatre History) offered structural support and a home for scholars, artists, and students working on the field of Canadian theatre history. It is no accident that the so-called renaissance in Canadian theatre and Canadian theatre history in the 1970s coincided with the start of CTR in 1974. Any scholar, teacher, or artist interested in the history of Canadian theatre or a particular performance in Canada turns to CTR. But that's not all: CTR's issue themes, organizing principles, methodologies, case studies, and advertisements speak to historical periods in Canadian theatre. History is always already present when writing about theatre and performance because the very act of documenting a live performance piece is an act of historicizing. It is in this important vein that CTR continues to make history.

¹ Canada's Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (1951), headed by Vincent Massey and also known as 'the Massey Commission,' emphasizes the need for infra-structure in developing the theatre arts in Canada. The Massey Report begins by sharing four points of "fairly general agreement throughout the country," which stress the need for "facilities for advanced training in the arts of the theatre" and "playhouses" (Canada 193). In "Conclusion to a *Literary History of Canada*" (1965), Northrop Frye suggests that drama "depends on a theatre and consequently on a highly urbanized life" (224). Don Rubin's "Creeping toward a Culture" (1974) cites many passages from the Massey Report and notes that "the Centennial too also helped the Canadian theatre in a number of concrete ways, most particularly in the national funding of a great number of new theatre buildings across the country" (11).

Yet, considering *CTR* through the lens of Canadian theatre historiography invokes current controversies. Canadian literary nationalism—driven by the same nationalist impulse that initiated and serves as a central organizing principle of *CTR*—has recently been likened to a “raging dumpster fire” for its controversies, colonial history, patriarchal politics, and exclusionary canon (Lee; Elliott).² So, how did *CTR* shift from asserting a national theatre and documenting performance history to challenging the very taxonomies of the field of Canadian theatre history, including the colonialization of the land known as Canada and textually oriented theatre history? While *CTR* in the 1970s focuses on nation building through theatre arts and its documented history, the 1980s were pivotal in questioning text-based histories of performance, diverse identities, and theatre innovations. *CTR*, I argue, reveals that the development of the field of Canadian theatre history can be traced through its battle with the three mutually constitutive parameters of history, nationhood, and theatre. In placing the three terms—‘Canadian,’ ‘theatre,’ and ‘history’—in contestation from the outset, *CTR* simultaneously makes and un-makes a Canadian theatre history.

‘History’?

‘History’ is a loaded word in Canadian theatre that carries with it a substantiated anxiety over Canada’s past. Fifty years ago, in the first issues of *CTR*, Don Rubin and the other contributors express concerns over the loss of a Canadian theatre history as well as the lack of theatre history in a relatively nascent nation. *CTR*’s mission is clear in these early issues: to record theatre productions and the earlier history of theatre in Canada. Rubin’s opening essay in the second volume of *CTR*, “Aside: Creating the Impossible,” clarifies the national goals of building a Canadian drama and with it a Canadian culture:

It’s precisely because we do want our theatre to participate internationally that it seems of such importance at this moment to insure the growth of this indigenous drama in the years ahead. The least we can do as theatre artists is to help our own culture

² Jen Sookfong Lee’s and Alicia Elliott’s discussions of CanLit as a raging dumpster fire emerged out of a specific time in Canadian literature: it was the time of the University of British Columbia’s Accountable controversy and just after the Appropriation Prize scandal. For an extended and essential reading on the CanLit controversies and calls to change the field, see McGregor, Rak, and Wunker.

develop. Of course, if we in the theatre fail to recognize the ultimate cultural importance, the ultimate human importance, of what we are doing, if we ourselves forget that it is only by having a strong voice of our own that we can ever really be part of that wider theatrical community, then we'll never be anything but imitators and we'll never develop anything even faintly resembling a true and lasting culture. (6)

With this impassioned plea, Rubin strives to distinguish Canadian culture as its own entity (and not that of a British colony). In this way, *CTR* was consciously involved in a high-stakes project of history making and/as nation making. As Rubin warns, “[m]any of our own century’s theatrical luminaries too often are disappearing from the scene with their experiences unrecorded” (“Looking” 4). Although this line echoes Earle Birney’s (in)famous poem “Can. Lit” (1964) and its (now-problematized) assertion that “it’s only by our lack of ghosts / we’re haunted,” Rubin distinguishes himself from Birney to point out the limits of a Canadian theatre history that sees Canada as a colony.

In a 1975 *CTR* article on Canadian theatre history, Rubin wonders, “How many of us are flawed by a hubris that lets us believe that Canadian theatrical history began when we arrived on the theatrical scene? Unfortunately, there are far too many of us too ready to put down a past we know far too little about” (“Looking” 4). Rubin was arguing for a unique Canadian culture (or Canada as postcolony); these words take on a distinct resonance today in the context of decolonial (and postcolonial) historiography that is working to transform the content, perspectives, and methodologies of history. In Ric Knowles’s analysis of *CTR*’s production of performance studies, he gestures toward the history of *CTR* as a “postcolonial Canadian nationalist” journal, founded by “American draft resister Don Rubin, with the encouragement of *TDR* [*The Drama Review*] editor Richard Schechner” (87). *CTR* then initially grapples with Canada as an independent nation with its own unique identity and then moves on to struggle with Canada as a colonialist nation with its own histories of genocide and interculturalism. I argue that *CTR* constitutes the field of Canadian theatre history: from the very first issue, *CTR* conceives of Canadian theatre history as a self-reflexive process that questions the traditionally imposed limits of medium (text-based) and subject (colonial) in relation to its present zeitgeist. The past fifty years of *CTR*, and its 200

issues, archive past performances, artists, and scholars as well as the development of the field of Canadian theatre history itself.

In 2024, the subject of 'Canadian theatre history' conjures the perspective of a colonialist nation and the risks of a text-based master narrative. In a group discussion before her online keynote at the 2023 Canadian Association of Theatre Research conference, Mique'l Dangeli (Tsimshian Nation of Metlakatla, Alaska) asked a colleague about the discipline of Canadian theatre history: "Whose history are you studying?" This rich question speaks to the complexities of our time and invokes other inquiries: How can one attend to Canadian theatre history without re-inscribing a master narrative of progress or colonialism? How can Canadian theatre history acknowledge the cultural genocide of Indigenous peoples and the history of slavery? What and who does Canadian theatre history leave out? Even the subject pronoun ('we') of much Canadian theatre history warrants complications and has rightly come under scrutiny by, for instance, intersectional feminist and Indigenous scholars—though it is starting to enter back into critical discussions as an inclusive pronoun, which is how I use it here. The 200th issue of *CTR* offers us a time to look at how *CTR* imagined and produced the field of Canadian theatre history.

'Canadian'?

The history of *CTR* aligns with development of Canadian theatre history as a discipline. Susan Bennett's compelling piece on the history of *Theatre Research in Canada* suggests that a theatre journal "through its own history represents a scholarly archive" and genealogy "implicated in the production and dissemination of" Canadian theatre history (221). A lot has changed since the first issue of *CTR* in the winter of 1974, so let's turn to that inaugural issue for a snapshot of Canadian theatre history—an issue that appeared in the wake of the creation of the Canada Council for the Arts in 1957, the 1967 Centennial celebrations of Canada, and the government's increases to funding in the arts. The veritable explosion of Canadian theatre in the mid-twentieth century was due in large part to the Massey Commission's 1951 report on the arts as a vital component of nation building and citizenship, which was a subject in two articles in *CTR*'s third issue (Rubin, "Changing Times"; Hendry) and was the theme of its first themed volume (*CTR* 5,

Canadian Theatre Before the 60's). In the first ten years of *CTR*, the *Federal Government Policy on Arts and Culture* reports that performing arts audiences “nearly doubled from about 5 million in 1972 to more than 9 million in 1983”; the government, not surprisingly, credits this to the fact that “federal government spending on culture increased from \$400 million in 1972 to \$1.8 billion in 1987” (Dewing 3). In 1974, Rubin’s opening article immediately establishes a conscious correlation among nationhood, citizenship, and theatre in “English Canada since 1945” (“Creeping” 6). Rubin simultaneously historicizes the development of Anglo-Canadian theatre from 1945 to 1974 and offers a historical artifact in itself for readers today: it references theatre houses (Stratford Festival, Neptune Theatre, Passe Muraille, Factory Theatre Lab, Citadel Theatre), playwrights (George Ryga, James Reaney, David French, and Ken Gass), and theatre critics (Nathan Cohen and Herbert Whittaker); it includes images from the Stratford Festival; and it beseeches a “will” to create Canadian art that is not reliant on the United States (“Creeping” 6). More specifically, Rubin highlights the Massey Commission’s call to action to create playhouses for Canadian drama (“Creeping” 8)—which re-inscribes the historical narrative that playhouses were key to the development of Canadian theatre and that text-based archives were key to creating a Canadian theatre history.

The first issue also announces the shift in terms from ‘theatre in Canada’ to ‘Canadian theatre’ that occurred around 1967, thanks to the Centennial Exposition (Rubin, “Creeping” 10–11). If Canadian literature experienced a renaissance of canonical Canadian (primarily settler) writers in the 1960s and 1970s, then Canadian theatre also produced its own canon and established the field of Canadian theatre history at this time. There is, however, a simultaneous unmaking and questioning of the field that “we know far too little about” at the same time as it is being developed (Rubin, “Looking” 4). In 2024, there is a notable change from 1974 in the use of the term ‘Canadian theatre,’ which now often accompanies or is replaced by the term ‘theatre in Canada’ (among others) to recognize the many performances by people who do not identify as Canadian. The field of Canadian theatre history, in this way, has developed from ‘theatre history in Canada’ (including performances by artists from elsewhere, such as the United States and Britain) to ‘Canadian theatre history’ (emphasizing performances by Canadian artists) and back to ‘theatre history in Canada’ but with a different connotation that acknowledges the politics of a colonial nation.

From the beginning, *CTR* complicates what it means to be Canadian in terms of regionalism. This regionalism continues to inform and even structure the way Canadian theatre is historicized and studied fifty years later: the first Carte Blanche section (now Views and Reviews) included pieces entitled "Vancouver," "Calgary," "Edmonton," "Montreal," "Toronto," and "Abroad" (*CTR* 1, 112–33). This regionalism and desire to map the Canadian theatre terrain takes hold in the 1980s with special issues titled *Toronto Theatre Today* (*CTR* 38, Fall 1983), *British Columbia Theatre Today* (*CTR* 39, Spring 1984), *Theatre on the Prairies* (*CTR* 42, Spring 1985), *Atlantic Alternatives* (*CTR* 48, Fall 1986), and, finally, *Nation and Theatre* (*CTR* 62, Spring 1990). *CTR*, and Canadian theatre history, maintains this regional approach (among many others) to theatre in Canada; research projects across Canada today are based in specific landscapes and regions, from *Performance in the Pacific Northwest* (Kovacs and Davis–Fisch) to *Futures of Prairie Based Theatre* (Brubaker, Afolabi, and Nolan) to *Performing [Atlantic] Shores* (Barker, Wright, and Davis–Fisch). The regional *CTR* issue topics from the 1980s also reveal a focus on performances 'today' rather than a history of theatre. The relatively quick departure from re-viewing a 'history' of Canadian theatre in the mid-1970s to a review of Canadian theatre 'today' in the early 1980s marked a shift from documenting the past to documenting the present that would become historical, a shift from working to define a Canadian theatre identity to challenging the singularity of a national theatre; in fact, it wasn't so much a shift in focus as a doubleness in focus from the start.

If we need more evidence that *CTR* not only serves as an archive of Canadian theatre history but actively shaped the discipline of Canadian theatre history, then we can turn to issues in the 1980s. In addition to showing how identity issues take over theatre, performance, and literary studies (among other fields), many of the organizing topics of the 1980s issues speak to distinct burgeoning fields, including politics and social action (*CTR* 22, Spring 1970; *CTR* 27, Summer 1980), Indigenous performance (*CTR* 29, Winter 1981), feminist performance (*CTR* 43, Summer 1985), sexuality (*CTR* 59, Summer 1989), and adaptation studies (*CTR* 54, Spring 1988). Of course, the terms and theoretical frameworks in these issues also speak to and from the time: a themed issue like *Garrison Theatre* (*CTR* 46, Spring 1986) cites Northrop Frye's notion of the Canadian garrison mentality outlined in "Conclusion to a *Literary History of Canada*" (227–28).

What's notable about the first decade of *CTR* (from the mid-1970s to the early 1980s) is not only how much it tells us about this historical moment in Canadian theatre and the field of Canadian theatre history but also how long *CTR*'s historical narratives grabbed hold of our imaginations, scholarship, and classrooms. From a macro perspective of the field, *CTR* was participating in the construction of the Canadian theatre history canon and syllabus. But, typical of writings on the Canadian literary and cultural imaginary of the 1960s and 1970s, there is a collective invocation of a Canadian theatre that *will* arrive. Even the cover art for the first issue—a checkerboard of graphic road-like patterns that create dead ends—suggests that with the right rejigging and effort, a path forward and a clear narrative of Canadian theatre history will reveal itself. It is this consistent underlying anxiety, promise, or what Rubin calls “will” that takes a strong hold on the Canadian theatre and literary imaginary in the 1970s: Canada is a theatre history always in the making (always in process rather than a stable entity).

We see this same sentiment of willing a Canadian theatre history into being—that is, I write Canadian theatre history; therefore, it exists—in the 1990 issue of *CTR* titled *Nation and Theatre* (and its cover art that shows an anxious, young Canada), but this time with an extended self-reflection on the significance of ‘Canadian’ (*CTR* 62). In fact, Alan Filewod asserts that *CTR* 62 was when the journal “began to question what nation actually means” (*Performing* x). Ann Wilson’s editorial reflects on the meaning of the journal’s title and questions how “the political construct ‘nation’” impacts the construction of theatre and, I would add, theatre history. Wilson cites evidence of a Canadian theatre—and imagines a response: “Of course there is a Canadian theatre. Why else would there be journals like *CTR*, *Canadian Drama*, a reference book like *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre* and the anthologies of Canadian drama which have appeared in recent years”—only to destabilize it by suggesting that “these periodicals and books are not evidence of the existence of Canadian theatre but rather the desire for Canadian theatre, for a theatre which defines [us] as a nation thereby giving us a sense of identity” (3). Scholars in *CTR* paint a portrait of Canadian theatre history with one hand while effacing it with the other hand.

'Theatre'?

Much like the terms 'history' and 'Canadian,' *CTR* has questioned the titular organizing term of 'theatre' over the past fifty years. From the early issues on, the editors of and contributors to *CTR* complicate the organizing principles of text-based works or theatre houses and instead call for a consideration of early performance-based examples of Canadian theatre history. *CTR*, then, takes what we would now call a performance studies approach to Canadian theatre history. Knowles (2012) as well as Laura Levin and Marlis Schweitzer (2017) convincingly establish *CTR*'s performance studies approach from its origins in 1974. Citing Knowles's work, Levin and Schweitzer explain that *CTR* did not include 'drama' in its title in an effort to focus on 'theatre' as performance rather than theatre as text-based drama (16), thereby "paralleling performance studies' initial rejection of drama as literary text" and, in the 1980s, "publishing on topics that performance studies now regularly addresses, including performance art, spoken word, dance and movement-based theatre, paratheater in popular culture, historical re-enactment, raves and parties, to name only a few" (16). What is important here, in the context of fifty years of *CTR*, is the relationship between the development of the fields of performance studies in Canada and Canadian theatre history; the fact that these two fields were emerging at the same time and in the same journal may help explain why Canadian theatre history wrestles with the medium of the archive itself and exposes a tension between text-based Canadian 'drama' and performance-driven Canadian 'theatre.'

We see the impact of the intertwining of a text-based and a performance-driven methodology in Alan Filewod's *Performing Canada: The Nation Enacted in the Imagined Theatre* (2002), which complicates the historicization of Marc Lescarbot's *Le Theatre de Neptune en la Nouvelle France* (1606) as the first documented performance in what we now call Canada by examining it as a performance of nationhood and an act that claimed the land through performance. In *Performing Canada*, Filewod references his work as an editor at *CTR* as part of a "radical rethinking" of the field of Canadian theatre history (x). Filewod—calling on his experience at *CTR*—notes that "'Canadian theatre' has always been a difficult and problematic term, less a definition of a thing than a site of debate and contestation. It summons two historically unstable terms to create a third site of crisis" (x). For Filewod, here, the third site of

crisis is the nation, but, of course, he is also participating in the field of Canadian theatre history and defining the discipline as a crisis that is always under contestation. *CTR* helps unpack Canadian theatre history as a discipline that scrutinizes performances of nationalism over time. If, as Filewod surmises in a 2014 article, "Disciplinarity and Dissolution," "we may never see another academic posting in 'Canadian Theatre'" (226), then this may be because the field of Canadian theatre history has been successful in the project of its own unmaking. The fifty years of *CTR* show how the discipline of Canadian theatre history and the shifting meanings of its three constitutive terms have always been called into question.

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On Unmaking and Making in the Compost Heap of Canadian Theatre History

Selena Couture

It's spring time as I write this and the air is filled with the smells of rotting things—not the unpleasant sewage-like odour of improperly tended too wet compost—but the rich oxygenated earthy smell that comes from a balanced well-aired heap (City of Edmonton 7). I think of it as the smell of things growing, the smell of a place where things will bloom again after a period of stasis. This smell, though, depends on matter being unmade, losing its shape, dying off and disintegrating, so that it can be remade.¹ Compost teaches us about how the mutability of matter is intricately connected to life and growth, and this is why I'm thinking about compost after reading Kailin Wright's article "(Un)Making History? Canadian Theatre History and the *Canadian Theatre Review*" (this issue). In it, Wright traces what she calls the (un)making of Canadian theatre history in the pages of *Canadian Theatre Review* (*CTR*) and concludes (hopefully I think) by saying that her fifty-year overview of the discipline of Canadian theatre history demonstrates that the concept and each of its three constitutive terms—"Canadian," "Theatre," and History"—"have always been called into question" (19).

¹ In addition to the spring air, I am also inspired by my former post-doctoral fellow Zoë Heyn-Jones's project "Composting Research-Creation: Organic Waste Management and/as Art for the Climate Emergency." In it she considered composting as a research method in visual art and design contexts which can also contribute to addressing the urgent problem of food waste and methane gas emissions that significantly exacerbate the damage caused by carbon in the atmosphere. Information about one of her ongoing arts/ecology collective composting projects, "descomponer/regenerar" can be found on her website: zoeheynjones.com/descomponer-regenerar.



Figure 1. Simone (Simi) Castro aerating the compost pile at Edmonton Compost School during an event organized by Zoë Heyn-Jones as part of her U of Alberta post-doctoral fellowship project "Composting Research-Creation: Organic Waste Management and/as Art for the Climate Emergency" (19 Oct. 2024). Permission and photo credit: Zoë Heyn-Jones.

As with a degenerating compost pile, it's difficult to know what the original forms of some things were (except eggshells and avocado skins—they seem to keep their shape for years). Wright picks up on this confusion when she

asks, “[H]ow did CTR shift from asserting a national theatre and documenting performance to challenging the very taxonomies of the field of Canadian theatre history, including the colonization of the land known as Canada and textually oriented theatre history?” (12). After reviewing the early efforts to desire a Canadian theatre into being in the first few years, she examines the category of “Canadian” through listing issues from the 1980s that had a regional focus, noting the change from reviewing a history of Canadian theatre to documenting “the present that would become historical, a shift from working to define a Canadian theatre identity to challenging the singularity of a national theatre” (16). She then traces how this singularity was further dismantled by numerous issues in the 1980s that politically interrogated theatre from multiple perspectives (16–17). Wright marks a significant turn in the journal with the 1990 issue, edited by Ann Wilson, that took a critical view of nationalism (17). In my article (included later in this issue), I also noticed that shift and attributed it to an editorial team taking over the journal and the inclusion of proliferating perspectives (152–164). As I’ve now learned, through editing this *Performance Matters* issue and listening in to the roundtable conversation that included former *CTR* editors Robert Wallace, Natalie Rewa, Ric Knowles, Laura Levin, and Jenn Stephenson (also published in this issue), some of the mushy items we see when looking at the publications from the 1980s are actually the result of purposeful editorial decisions to seek out multiple perspectives from artists, scholars, and cultural workers in order to add oxygen to the *CTR* composting container. This is the sort of careful editorial tending that allowed *CTR* to demonstrate, as Wright says, that “a theatre history [is] always in the making (always in process rather than a stable entity)” (17).

Wright also refers briefly to the discussion of the Massey Commission report in the early issues of *CTR* (14–15) and explains the significance of the report’s statement regarding the need for theatrical infrastructure further in a footnote (11 n1). While Wright doesn’t interrogate the report itself much more, it is somewhat like those avocado skins or eggshells in the compost; it just lasts and lasts and lasts despite how often Canadian theatre historians develop historiographic methods and theoretical frames to expand conceptions of “Canadian,” “theatre” and “history.” That said, Wright’s brief references to the Massey Commission in her article about (un)making theatre history make me think of Sarah Garton Stanley’s 2023 doctoral dissertation, *Massey and Me: Conversations at the End of Theatre*. Stanley’s

research-creation sonic-visual experience uses the constraints of the Massey Lecture series (4) to interrogate what she calls the “Canada Show” or “installation” (20, 28) that has been running since the 1951 publication of the report. In layered (and at times multi-lingual and multi-channel) audio pieces, she explores the creation of the report in post-World War II Canada and shares a genealogy of the irreverent Harold Awards in Toronto as a “fantastic site of resistance to the Massey Commission’s yearning for a professional theatre” (36).² Other “chapters” respond to Andrea Shin Ling’s “Calculus of an Infinite Rot Part 1” installation of tree stumps inoculated with fungi and bacteria decomposing at Buddies in Bad Times theatre (Lam, “Rhubarb Festival”) and reflect on the “Cycles” she co-led at the National Arts Centre from 2014 to 2020 as part of “changing the shape of Canadian theatre” (Stanley 12–14). The work ends with a video recording of a gleaming white cake decaying in a pile of pine cones in the woods, a cake she had conceived as a guiding methodology to explore systemic thinking (75–76) in the hope that it might “shift the conversation towards a more conscious understanding of the ways in which templates for living might be re-inscribed” (83). Stanley’s enormously generative “lecture type things” (16, 24, 50, 61) add in the necessary oxygen to help with a healthy decomposition of the influence of the Massey Report on contemporary artists. In responding to Wright’s work, I want to link Stanley’s approach to the history writing Wright identifies as (un)making.

² As Stanley explains in her dissertation, “The Harold Awards is an annual event celebrating Toronto’s theatre community. Established in 1995, it’s named in honour of the late Harold Kandel, who was known for his inappropriate sounds, his incredible cackle, and his love of the heckle. The awards seek to recognize and celebrate the achievements of theatre folks who have made something good happen for the community, for the stage, for their friends. The Award places value in community. The Harold Award winners are chosen each year, by the previous recipients, building a sense of community and connection. The event has become a beloved tradition and a highlight of the theatre calendar in Toronto” (36). See also Leung.



Figure 2: Screenshot of Vincent Massey overlay on a disintegrating cake surrounded by pine cones. Sarah Garton Stanley, "The Woods: Conversations at the End of Theatre" video-lecture-type-thing-chapter, 8:53. Included with permission from Sarah Garton Stanley.

And, finally, in the circular making-unmaking-making way that becomes noticeable when one pays attention to history the way that Wright has, it is striking that her article on (un)making was included in the Looking Back section of the original 2024 publication of *CTR* 199–200. She was definitely looking back, and perhaps without realizing, also looking forward to the winter of 2025, when that issue was unmade, through the disintegration of some core shared values of fair critical academic discourse. It has, however, been remade here with a mixture of new matter that will hopefully lead to strong fresh growth that will itself one day become part of the compost heap of future scholarly histories.

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Chauvinism and its Discontents: *Canadian Theatre Review* Issue 1 Revisited

Jessica Riley

"Through their own words...."

—Sinéad O'Connor, "The Emperor's New Clothes"

In the opening article of the 1974 inaugural issue of *Canadian Theatre Review* (CTR1), and again in the closing pages, Don Rubin (co-founder of the journal and author of both entries) deploys a curious choice of word to describe the cultural moment in which he was writing: "[C]hauvinism," Rubin asserts, is the spirit that "characterized Canadian life in the 1970s" ("Creeping" 11); and the heroes of Canadian theatre in this historical moment are the leaders of the alternate theatre movement, whose passionate advocacy for homegrown dramatic content Rubin celebrates as a manifestation of "chauvinistic discontent" ("Abroad" 128).

Reading CTR1 in 2024 (upon the fiftieth anniversary of the journal), these apparently benign invocations of chauvinism give me pause. Instead of the meaning with which I immediately associate it (i.e. as a shorthand for *male* chauvinism), Rubin's usage draws on the term's broader definition: excessive or prejudiced advocacy for one's own cause or group. At its origin, the word derives from the Napoleonic soldier Nicolas Chauvin, known for his fierce militarism and patriotism, and is thus particularly denotative of zealous and aggressive nationalist pride. Other authors in CTR1 invoke chauvinism in this derogatory sense—as synonymous with jingoism.¹ Rubin, however, strips the term of its negative connotations.

¹ Peter Hay identifies the pejorative invocation of chauvinism in critiques of the alternate theatre movement as a "'smokescreen' for defenders of the status quo" (114). Anton Wagner applies the term to the British loyalist hegemony of Charles Mair's *Tecumseh* and John Hunter-Duvar's *De Roberval* (26).

While rhetorically unusual, Rubin's celebration of nationalistic chauvinism can be understood as an expression of his orientation to the historical moment at which he was writing. In his article "Creeping Towards a Culture," first published in *CTR1*, Rubin lays out the now-familiar—and since-contested²—maturation myth of Canadian theatre history, which figures the early 1970s as a moment of cultural self-actualization, epitomized by the leaders of the alternate theatre movement, whose adoption of nationalist mandates and advocacy for Canadian content disrupted the dominance of American and British imports on Canadian stages (and in theatre leadership). This narrative was compelling at a moment when many were frustrated with the funneling of federal arts funding toward regional theatres and—especially—the Stratford Festival, and with how these funding practices persistently restricted opportunities for Canadian artists. In the pages of *CTR1*, this frustration finds expression in a range of responses to the recent appointment of British theatre-maker Robin Phillips as incoming artistic director at Stratford. The journal opens, in the editorial, with a call for Stratford to rescind Phillips's appointment; and multiple articles and interviews in *CTR1* address the controversial hire, with the predominant view that the appointment of a non-Canadian (and, more specifically, an Englishman) to the top job at Stratford represented an extension of colonial subservience that must be vigorously resisted. It is in the context of this controversy, and of the wider nationalist preoccupations among theatre practitioners and scholars in the period, that Rubin identifies *chauvinism* as the defining—and, for him, encouraging—spirit of the times.

Reading *CTR1* at a fifty-year historical remove, however, I find Rubin's choice of word betrays something more in its denotation of excessive or prejudiced advocacy *for one's own cause or group*. In 2024, it is difficult not to notice that, like the overwhelmingly white and male leaders of the celebrated alternate theatre movement, the group documenting the state of theatre in *CTR1* is distinctly homogenous. The list of authors in this inaugural issue is composed entirely of white men. The list of editorial staff includes just one woman (also white) in a leadership position (Ann Saddlemyer, one of thirteen members of the Editorial Advisory Board), while the support staff are all women. This is, of course, representative of the world of the 1970s; *CTR1* is an

² See, for example, Alan Filewod's "Named in Passing: Deregimenting Canadian Theatre History" and Scott Duchesne's "A Golf Club for the Golden Age: English Canadian Theatre Historiography and the Strange Case of Roy Mitchell."

extension of the realities of its historical moment. Looking back, the issue's invocation of chauvinism, intended as rhetorically compelling but socially benign, reflects this context; it also serves as a symptomatic point that exposes what (and whom) is occluded by the prevailing focus, in the 1970s, on the frustrated career aspirations of a group of predominantly white men who perceived themselves as disempowered and marginalized by a theatre culture that would import a British artistic director. Beyond the promotion of a narrow subset of the population as the triumphant representatives of the nation's "chauvinistic discontent," *CTR*1 includes many instances of recurring and inadvertently revealing language choices that serve as entry points to analyze how whiteness and masculinity functioned as the largely unexamined frames through which Canadian theatre was envisioned in the 1970s.

In what follows, I offer a deconstructive reading of revealing rhetoric in the inaugural issue of *CTR*. As Terry Eagleton explains, "the tactic of deconstructive criticism...is to show how texts come to embarrass their own ruling systems of 'logic.'" Deconstruction achieves this by "fastening on the 'symptomatic' points, the *aporia* or impasses of meaning, where texts get into trouble, come unstuck, offer to contradict themselves" (133–134). In my reading, language choices in *CTR*1 serve as symptomatic points that expose the underlying cultural values embedded in this first issue. These values, I argue, establish disciplinary legacies that continue to inform the way we make, think, and write about theatre in the lands known as Canada today.

Where's the Thrust? Chauvinist Rhetoric, Patriarchal Values

*CTR*1 concludes with a particularly striking expression of chauvinist discontent: in the journal's first-ever letter to the editor, Vancouver-based director John Juliani responds to the hiring controversy at Stratford by challenging Phillips "to a duel in order to avenge the honour of our emerging theatrical heritage" (145). You read that right: A *duel*! That quintessentially colonial manifestation of indignant, masculine angst. Elsewhere in *CTR*1, in an interview with Phillips, an unidentified interviewer observes that "For all it's [*sic*] obvious humour, at the root of that challenge is something fairly serious.... John has clearly found your appointment to be an insult to him as a Canadian artist" (in Phillips 64). An "obvious" jest, then, but also a potent—and revealing—gesture. Behind the playful, performative conceit, Juliani's framing of his demand for chauvinistic satisfaction in the language of

European-derived, masculine violence can be read as symptomatic of how theatre practitioners sought, in the pages of *CTR* and beyond, to assert their power in Canadian theatre in this period.



Figure 1: The author (Jessica Riley), pictured with a statue of John Hirsch, self-described “ballsy pioneer” of Canadian theatre. Photo by John Reed.

Such linguistic linkages of masculinity, chivalry, nationalist pride, and violence pervade *CTR*¹. Consider, for example, the rhetoric of John Hirsch’s contribution, in which he celebrates the key players of the alternate theatre movement as imbued with a “*ballsy*, pioneering spirit” (51; emphasis added) he aligns with his own, earlier efforts to support the growth of Canadian theatre, particularly in his role as co-founder of the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre; like him, the men leading the alternate theatre must “fight many dragons” in pursuit of their noble cause (51). Consider, too, Mark Schoenberg’s pronouncement that for the edification of English Canadian theatre-goers “we must... strike the audience hard and we must strike them often”; this depends, in an alarming turn of phrase, on “an intensity of concept from the director and a burning desire on his [*sic*] part to have the emotional force of a good play *thrust itself deeply* into the consciousness of the audience” (122; emphasis added). It strikes me (so to speak) that the

language used by these authors is deliberately rhetorically heightened (whether playfully or in earnest) and deployed strategically for a political purpose that at the time felt urgent: the advancement of Canadian theatre culture. Nonetheless, that this heightened rhetoric recurrently manifests in ways that inflect the nationalist cultural project with violent masculinity is undeniable, and this rhetorical linkage had implications for the Canadian theatre culture that was being actually and discursively constructed.

The rhetoric of masculinity, nation, and violence becomes linked to actual theatre production in Rubin's recounting of a performance at a Polish theatre festival: "People are shoved from their seats. A fight breaks out. A girl's clothes are ripped off. The lights go on. The naked girl—a member of the audience, not an actress—stares at the audience and begins to cry" (132). In my reading, it is of considerable significance that Rubin shares this anecdote not to express concern for the assaulted woman, but rather to express enthusiasm for the novelty of his experience; this is work, he argues, that Canadian theatre makers should find "well worth examining dramatically." He goes on to quote Artaud: "in the beginning a little real blood is necessary" (132). However, it is not Rubin's blood anyone is letting; it is not Rubin that was publicly stripped naked and made to cry. Herein lies a gap between intention and impact that recurs across this analysis of *CTR1*. Rubin's intent, in describing this performance, is to encourage theatrical innovation in Canadian theatre culture. But we can imagine that a woman in 1974, picking up *CTR* out of an interest in carving out a place for herself in Canadian theatre, could receive the implicit message that her experience, agency, and safety were of little significance in the emerging theatre culture. Encountering this text today, through my own gendered subjectivity, I am positioned to see what Rubin apparently overlooked—and to say what women readers in 1974 were not positioned to express.

The exclusively male authorship of *CTR1*—and the masculine editorial eyes that commissioned, vetted, and shaped its content—produces a restricted frame through which theatrical (and social and political) values are expressed in this inaugural issue. The choice of script for inclusion in *CTR1* is likewise reflective of the gendered lens that shaped the journal's content: Michael Cook's *The Head, Guts and Sound Bone Dance*, in which only the male characters are granted names; and in which the WOMAN (alternately identified in the script as WIFE) is called a "useless bitch" (91) and told to

“mind [her] place” (90). This is not to say that the script condones the misogyny of its dialogue; only that it does not leave much room for women’s perspectives. Nor does *CTR1* leave much room for the methods of play creation that characterized the artistic production of women in Canadian theatre in the coming decades. Cook, weighing in as the expert playwright in the pages of *CTR1*, confidently asserts the superiority of single-authored scripts over the collective creation model that was emerging in the period and which anticipated feminist work in subsequent decades. For him, nothing of “permanent artistic value” can come out of “the trend toward communal artistic effort”; he dismisses such work as akin to “group sex,” which, he pronounces with presumptuous (and revealing) authority, is bound to be disappointing (75). As with Juliani’s duel, then, it is ultimately all about *his* satisfaction.

My mind turns, as I read *CTR1*, to the ways that women would respond, in subsequent decades, to the Canadian theatre culture being constructed in the 1970s. Top of mind, thanks to Schoenberg’s “thrusting” rhetoric, is Kathleen Flaherty’s 1989 article in *Theatrum*, the short-lived rival to *CTR*, titled “Where’s the Thrust?: Putting Your Finger on the Conceptual Framework,” in which she suggests that the inherited (and implicitly masculine) dramaturgical wisdom, grounded in rising action toward a single climax, that prevailed in Canadian play development in the 1980s, might not be ideally suited to the work of women playwrights. Margaret Hollingsworth makes a similar complaint in the pages of *CTR* in 1991; examining the diminishing effect of existing dramaturgical models as experienced by women playwrights in Canadian theatre, Hollingsworth asks, “Could it be that the rigorous principles of playwriting as applied by men serve to make many women’s scripts bland and unpalatable?” (15).

Recalling her own experience, as an undergraduate student at a 1974 conference that convened the key players in the alternate theatre, Amanda Hale links patriotism and sexism as markers of the moment out of which *CTR1* emerged: “Sparks of nationalist passion flew in all directions. The boys were frustrated... The male voices were loud” (43). Writing in 1987, she articulates the restricted impact of this nationalist passion and frustration: “the great male revolution of the sixties and seventies did not improve the status of women in theatre” (44). The authoritative, dominant voices in the period, of which *CTR1* serves as just one example, viewed the world through a

restrictive lens; and this had lasting consequences not only for the white women I have cited thus far but, quite crucially, for many racialized communities whose absence is powerfully signalled in the revealing rhetoric of *CTR1*.

Carte Blanche: Chauvinist Appropriations

Like the rhetoric of thrusting chauvinism, there is other language in *CTR1* that registers, fifty years later, as inadvertently revealing of values circulating in the 1970s, including those that presage barriers of access in the decades to follow. A predominant theme of *CTR1* is the advancement of 'native' or 'indigenous' drama, terms which at the time signified homegrown plays written by and primarily for settlers. Thus, Mavor Moore reverently quotes Roy Mitchell's "plea for nationalism" in Canadian theatre, delivered at Hart House in 1938 to a presumably white audience: "to build with native stone, to carve in native woods" (70). The word "native" is employed in this sense, by multiple contributors, a total of fifteen times in *CTR1*, and lowercase "indigenous" crops up four times.³ Both words, of course, were commonly used in this way in the period; my interest lies in the fact that, read retroactively, the use of these terms takes on new meaning, registering what was omitted or overlooked in the discursive construction of "Canadian Theatre" in the 1970s. It is striking that among the many plays cited it this issue as illustrative of the great flourishing of 'native' drama in the period, some of the most celebrated are white settler-authored dramas centered on Indigenous subject matter: George Ryga's *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*, a centennial commission that issued a powerful critique of the systemic, anti-Indigenous racism of Canada's legal and social welfare institutions; Sharon Pollock's *Walsh*, a history play based on Sitting Bull's exile in Canada after the massacre at Little Bighorn in 1876 ; and Herschel Hardin's *Esker Mike and His Wife, Agiluk*, a "social satire" centred on the effects of religious and governmental structures and figures on the lives of its Inuit characters. The authors of *CTR1* are demonstrably conscious of Indigenous peoples inhabiting the land known as Canada; they are even (perhaps especially) interested in their stories. However, their advocacy for an 'indigenous' drama has little to do with promoting capital "I" Indigenous voices, either onstage or

³ The word "native" is employed in this sense on pages 10, 12 (three instances), 14, 23 (two instances), 51, 69 (two instances), 115, 118, and 120. Lowercase "indigenous" crops up on pages 29, 32, 59, and 60.

in the pages of *CTR1*; in both arenas, capital “I” Indigeneity is represented through the perspective of white authors. Read retroactively, this occlusion—and its impacts—speaks more loudly than the original intent. Again, one might speculate about how the normalized exclusion of Indigenous voices in the 1970s (and *CTR1* provides just one textual record of this exclusion, which was widespread), might be received by Indigenous readers past and present.

Moreover, “indigeneity” is rhetorically co-opted, in the chauvinist narrative advanced in *CTR1*, with the white leaders of the alternate theatre figured as resisters of (British) colonial oppression. The nation imagined in this 1970s context—a theatrical “Canada” come of age and ready to fight for self-governance—is constructed in *CTR1* as more significant, more valued, more worthy of championing, than other nations, including those who were here first. As Alan Filewod argues, the 1970s was a period during which “theatre developed in Settler Canada as a means to ...instill fictive indigeneity.” Wrestling with his own “formation” in this formative period, Filewod observes that “the oppositional theatre of my youth was really a generational reset of settler cultural appropriation. The alternate theatre movement of the 1960s and 70s was a repudiation of the British cultural tradition, perceived as residual colonialism by Settlers who were ourselves colonizers” (51). In presenting themselves as the heroic champions of “native” drama, the authors of *CTR1*, along with their contemporaries in the alternate theatre movement, not only claim for themselves a fictive identity as indigenous to this land but also, revealingly, frame themselves (and themselves virtually alone) as righteous resisters of colonial oppression. The Stratford controversy is repeatedly deployed in the service of this construction.⁴ For Hirsch—who would himself, in later years, become Artistic Director at

⁴ Not every contributor to *CTR 1* takes the stance of “petty and adolescent nationalism” (Strike 45) on the Stratford hiring. An interview with Stratford actor, Powys Thomas, himself a British expat, includes Thomas’s view on the controversy, which he argues ought not to be so “narrow”: “What you need is someone who can do the job whether he’s Chinese, South African, Canadian, or English” (in Thomas and Chadwick 38). The gesture toward not only national but racial diversity in Thomas’s comment carries a distinctly disingenuous quality. I wonder just who Thomas is picturing when he posits his hypothetical South African candidate; or what barriers might have been encountered, given the realities of Stratford and its modes of operation, for the imagined candidate from China? Given all we have come to understand about the racist institutional culture at Stratford in the intervening decades, I once again find myself struck by the bigger issues with Stratford—and with Canadian theatre at large—that are left out of the conversation in *CTR 1*, and by the ways that the recurring preoccupation, the hyper-fixation, on the Stratford hire allows for a deflection of these issues, centring the exclusion of white settler men from Canadian theatre as the issue of urgency in this historical moment.

Stratford—this festival devoted to Shakespeare is “a colonial institution that was somehow covered in a nationalistic Canadian blanket” (53), and for many contributors, Phillips’s appointment represents an extension of obsequious deference to Britain, a national inferiority complex Ken Gass describes as the “Canadian colonial mentality” (56). It is to this tendency to look abroad for excellence that the chauvinist heroes of the period are presented as both victims and valiant resisters. This idea of Canada as being colonized, rather than functioning as a colonial power, was very much a mainstream perception in 1974.⁵ In retrospect, however, what is striking is how it allows for the elision of settler-artists’ own imbrication in the ongoing oppression of the original inhabitants of this land; that is the “Canadian colonial mentality” that goes unexamined in this first issue of *CTR*1. Hirsch’s above-quoted description of Stratford—as “a colonial institution that was somehow covered in a nationalistic Canadian blanket” (53)—would hang just as comfortably on *CTR* itself, in this earliest incarnation.

I read the many complaints levelled against Stratford in the pages of *CTR*1, and I think of the more urgent grievances against this institution that would come to light in succeeding decades: I think of Andrew Moodie’s 2003 essay “Alas, I’m not Hamlet,” in which he writes from his experiences as a Black actor at Stratford in the mid-nineties, told of an “unspoken policy never to hire a member of a visible minority in a starring role on the main stage”; I think, too, of the experiences of IBPOC actors and theatre artists who had worked at Stratford, shared in 2020 via the hashtag #inthedressingroom and in the subsequent social media forum, Black Like Me. In hindsight, the complaints against Stratford levelled in *CTR*1—perceived slights that warrant a duel, that demand satisfaction—seem petty. Even Ryga’s contribution, which is by far the most globally conscious and politically engaged article in *CTR*1, incorporating a ringing indictment of racial genocide perpetrated in the Amazon by the Canadian-based corporation Brascan, couches his critique of Stratford within the urgent project of fighting the “cultural subservience and feeling of inadequacy that to this day bedevils the dedicated cultural worker in this country” (28). He terms this colonial legacy a “colossal ‘snow job’”—in yet another turn of phrase that, in its glaring whiteness, inadvertently conjures what is deflected or obscured by the author’s preoccupation with

⁵ The idea of settler Canada as the subject of British colonial oppression, as well as the idea of settler Canadians as indigenous to the territory, is one that is theorized by Daniel Coleman in *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada* and Margery Fee in *Literary Land Claims*.

the effects of colonization specifically on white settlers. That Ryga is aware of and invested in the effects of colonization on the first peoples of this land is evinced by his above-mentioned play, *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*; but this awareness is displaced via a narrative in which the white leaders of the alternate theatre movement are figured as the “victims” of this “snow job”—or the only ones explicitly mentioned.

If the phrase ‘snow job’ registers as inadvertently revealing, so does the original title of what is now known as *CTR*’s Views and Reviews section, then titled *Carte Blanche*. Upon reflection, the phrase “carte blanche” sums up much of what is exposed about the unexamined values underlying *CTR*1. Not only in its overwhelming whiteness but also in its invocation of this land, and its theatre, as a blank slate, available for the filling—or the taking. In this sense it resonates with yet another rhetorical recurrence in *CTR*1: the figuring of the heroes of the alternate theatre as “pioneers.” The word is invoked repeatedly, both as a noun and a verb across multiple contributions⁶; recall, for example, Hirsch’s above-quoted celebration of his own and others’ “balls-y, *pioneering* spirit,” which links the gendered language that first caught my eye with the strategic deployment of nationalist sentiment as a rhetorical land claim. The recurring invocation of the pioneer, like the phrase *carte blanche* (i.e. the right to do as you please) suggests an unexamined, extractivist entitlement. This is legible to me through the work of Indigenous scholars like Dylan Robinson (in *Hungry Listening*) and Jill Carter (in her *CTR* essay “My! What Big Teeth You Have!: On the Art of Being Seen and Not Eaten”), who have traced the far-reaching implications, in theatre and performance practice in the land known as Canada, of a settler mentality that “emerges out of a state of consumption” (Robinson 47). This is the mentality that underwrites the paradoxical rhetoric of *CTR*1, the heroes of which claim for themselves a dual identity as both ‘native’ and ‘pioneer.’ Again, this is expressed in the choice of script to be included in *CTR*1: *Head Guts and Sound Bone Dance* is centred on the devastating effects of resource extraction as experienced by two white men (Newfoundland fishermen) who lament their lost way of life, constructing it as “the way things always was” (Cook 92).

⁶ See pp. 49 (four instances), 51, 54, 59, and 113.

Despite the overwhelming *blanche*-ness of *CTR1*, the issue is haunted by those left out of the “cause or group” to which the chauvinist advocacy of the 1970s was devoted. Beyond the revealing upsurges of the repressed I find haunting the rhetoric, there is also a striking visual counterpoint in the Carte Blanche section: a production photo of actor August Schellenberg (Mohawk) in the role of Sitting Bull in *Walsh* looms over James Portman’s contribution, which champions the notion that “theatre must aim to be a valid part of the community as a whole, not merely of its cultural life” (118). Reading this, with Schellenberg staring out from the opposite page, I am called to reflect, with profound discontent, on the exclusionary community that *CTR1* constructs.

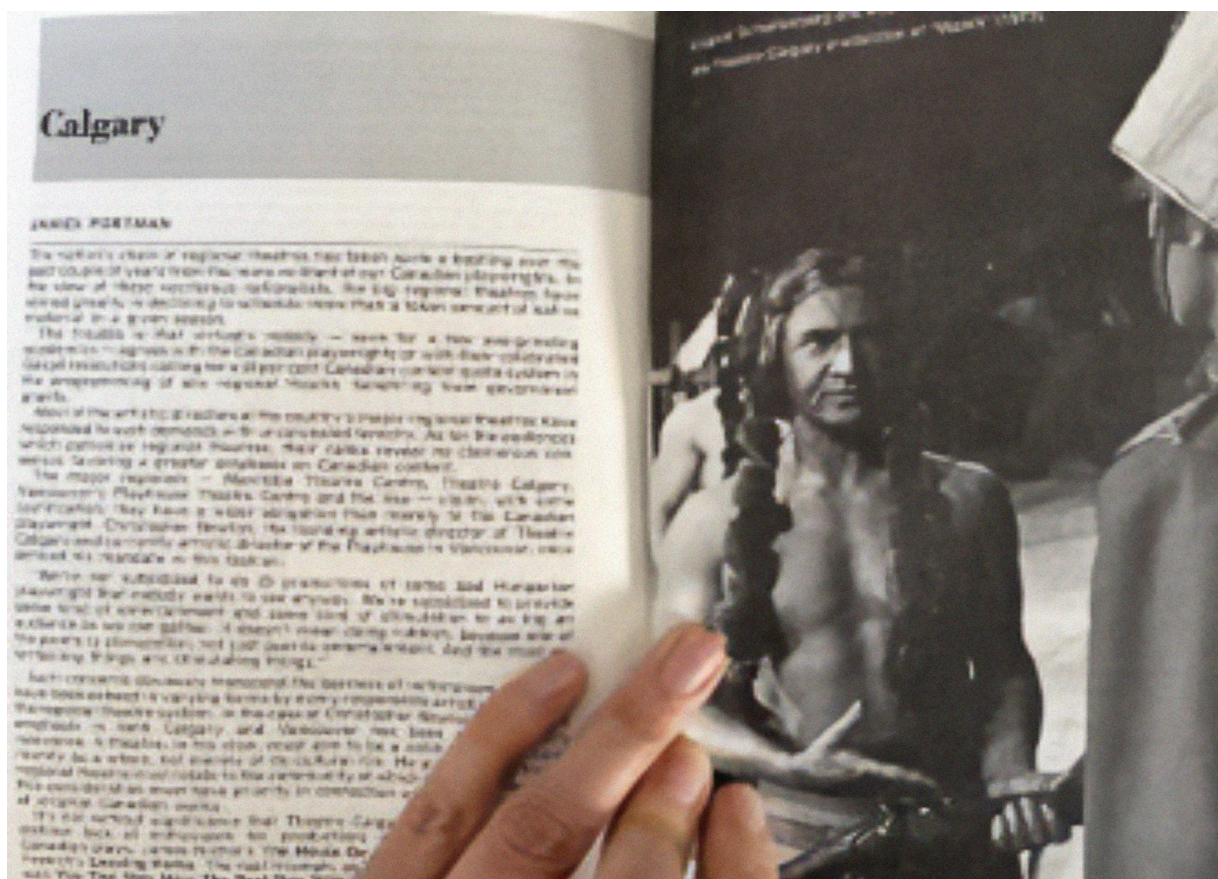


Figure 2: August Schellenberg (Mohawk), in the role of Sitting Bull in Sharon Pollock’s *Walsh*, stares out from the page opposite James Portman’s *Carte Blanche* contribution. Photo by Jessica Riley.

That key figures in the 1970s saw themselves as marginalized and excluded from the Canadian theatrical mainstream—as exemplified in the controversy around Phillips’s appointment at Stratford—seems, paradoxically, to have

caused them *not* to see, or to be primarily invested in, the ongoing (and, I would argue, more urgent) marginalization of other groups. In highlighting the occlusions of this period, my intent has not been to vilify specific individuals who, themselves shaped by the historical context of the 1970s, pursued a restricted chauvinism in their advocacy for “Canadian” drama, “Canadian” theatre workers, and the emergence of a discipline of “Canadian” theatre scholarship. Rather, my aim has been to deconstruct and expose, through the symptomatic points found in just one record of the period (*CTR1*), the exclusionary implications, for the study and practice of theatre, of discipline formation in the context of the nationalist chauvinism of the 1970s, the lasting impacts of which are traceable to the present.

Still thrusting—and thirsting: The Legacies of Chauvinism

Among the white women consigned to supporting roles on the staff list printed in *CTR1*, one name stands out to me as a reader today: Lynn Slotkin, listed as responsible for Circulation. Slotkin, known for reviews of Toronto-area theatre she has posted for years on her blog, *The Slotkin Letter*, has been on my mind since her publication, in November 2023, of a post titled “A Rant: Our World and Our Theatre is Going to Hell in a Handbasket.” Read alongside *CTR1*, Slotkin’s rant registers to me as a deeply troubling expression of chauvinistic discontent. Railing against the “cult of sensitivity” in contemporary Canadian theatre, Slotkin presents “*our*” theatre—by which she means the theatre of the privileged dominant culture, the theatre of the status quo—as under attack by a new generation that is, in her mind, too preoccupied with social justice: these innovators are described as overly sensitive, lacking “moral fiber,” requiring “handholding.” In her eagerness to shore up the supremacy of her own values, the language Slotkin deploys is cruelly, and revealingly, paternalist; as Yolanda Bonnell puts it, in her brilliantly-written counter-rant, Slotkin sounds like an “abusive stepfather.” With this rant, Slotkin also betrays a self-promoting instinct; she is thirsty for a scandal. Slotkin extracts web traffic from the pain she inflicts in this diatribe. She does so under the apparent delusion that she is a righteous defender of Canadian Theatre. This is Slotkin fighting dragons; this is Slotkin throwing down the gauntlet.

The revealing rhetoric of *CTR1* that I have explored here helps to contextualize the circumstances in which Slotkin internalized these values—

values that, in her case, seem to have hardened over the intervening decades. Slotkin waxes nostalgic for her undergraduate days in the 1970s at York University, where *CTR* was founded and where Rubin taught. Perhaps the most pressing issue in the present moment is how to untangle ourselves from the retrograde values the persistence of which Slotkin makes plain; how to get out from under and dismantle these legacies. It is worth observing that both Filewod and Slotkin received similar educations, at roughly the same time, and as Filewod's above-quoted article attests, such dismantling is possible. Indeed, it is Filewod's copy of *CTR* I have been reading, his name scrawled inside the cover.



Figure 3: Alan Filewod's handwritten name, scrawled in the inside cover of a deteriorating copy of *CTR* 1. Photo by Jessica Riley.

This dogeared copy has been falling apart as I have worked on this piece, which seems fitting, hopeful even. Thankfully, Slotkin's rant does not represent the whole picture of theatre in the land known as Canada today. *CTR* in the present is not a platform for these values, but as Slotkin's rant

attests, they remain in circulation. It is tempting to fall back on the language of oppositional dragon slaying, but I will resist the temptation to frame this work as a battle. This is not going to be a problem that gets worked out through a binary us-versus-them logic. That, too, is a colonial inheritance worth letting go.

Having no desire to play the “ballsy pioneer,” or to take violent arms against imagined dragons, I can still find wisdom in the words of Hirsch, my fellow Winnipegger, as expressed in *CTR*1. Reflecting specifically on Stratford’s inherently colonial structure, Hirsch offers the following, hopefully prescient, thoughts on the urgency of both personal and institutional change: “I believe that the enemy to humanity is stagnation. And the most valuable human experience is growth.... Change. Human beings who do not get into the rhythm of it die before their time. And so do institutions.” (54) My hope for *CTR*, and for all theatre institutions we inherit, is that we continue to change, in the present and in the future, even, indeed especially, when that change is not easy; and that we experience growth that flourishes in all directions.

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Feminism and Its Discontents: Reviewing *CTR*'s Inaugural Issues

Susan Bennett

Jessica Riley's engagement with the first issue of *Canadian Theatre Review* (*CTR*) in her article "Chauvinism and Its Discontents: Canadian Theatre Review 1 Revisited" (this issue) underscores the always-important task of revisiting our critical pasts. This is precisely the labour that Shannon Jackson proposed through a focus on the "'institutional genealogies' of knowledge formation" (5)—a commitment to examining what "kinds of judgements are made and what kinds of enabling illuminations and disabling blindspots they produce" (4). As the ur-production of a journal that the University of Toronto Press now describes as "[t]he major magazine of record for Canadian theatre," *CTR*1 provides us with fundamental evidence of how, in 1974, knowledge formation came about.

Riley, looking at the issue some fifty years later, rightly observes a closed, white, masculinist world seemingly untroubled by a rapidly shifting cultural landscape. Yet the health and vitality of theatre and performance studies broadly and *CTR* specifically depends, and has depended, on what Alan Filewod, in 2009, usefully described as moves made "generationally through (often stressful, more often exciting) debates over questions of research methods, theoretical models, institutionalization, and academic power" (vii). When we examine those moves—unveiling, then, our institutional genealogies—we inevitably confront, as Jackson suggests we must, both the "enabling illuminations and disabling blindspots" in Canadian theatre history.

The exclusively male purview of *CTR*'s inaugural issue exposes, as Riley correctly identifies, "whiteness and masculinity" (29) as organizing principles through which Canadian theatre would be archived, understood, and

endorsed. Editorial selection of writing by men about men implies an absence of women involved in Canadian theatre of the 1970s, even though there was already a generation of women playwrights whose work had been staged across the country (among them, Carol Bolt, Margaret Hollingsworth, Sharon Pollock, Aviva Ravel, and Beverly Simons) and new feminist theatres in major cities (Winnipeg's Nellie McClung Theatre in 1968, Montreal's Théâtre des Cuisines in 1973, and Toronto's Redlight Theatre in 1974).¹ *CTR* comes into being, then, with a striking and "disenabling blindspot."

Indeed, *CTR* proves slow to include women's voices at all. Volume 2 (Spring 1974) has Mary Kerr's contribution, "A Designer's Portfolio," and a report from New York by Jennifer Merin in the Carte Blanche section (an issue regular that aggregates book and performance reviews along with short, occasional pieces on theatre topics). The inaugural issue's six reports on the theatre scene from Canadian cities are all authored by men. Volume 3 (Summer 1974) has only a report from Berlin by Merin and in volume 4 (Winter 1974), there are two reports (Merin again from New York and Ann Henry from Winnipeg). Volume 5 (Winter 1975) is dedicated to Canadian theatre before the 1960s and introduces the first writing about a woman playwright, Anton Wagner's "Gwen Pharis Ringwood Rediscovered," and the first script by a woman, Ringwood's 1939 play *Dark Harvest: A Tragedy of the Canadian Prairie*. This issue also boasts three women writers in Carte Blanche: Merin from Iran, Geraldine Anthony on the Neptune Theatre and Catherine Itzin (a co-founder and co-editor of the UK's *Theatre Quarterly*) on national theatre and nation. A "casebook" on Beverly Simons (volume 9, Winter 1976) is the first to focus on a woman, although Simons's work is illuminated by five male authors. Her script *Leela Means to Play* is supplemented with an author interview conducted by director John Parker. The scope and tone of *CTR*'s attention to Simons creates a sense of singular exceptionalism achieved by a female playwright, effectively affirming the standard: theatre (studies) populated by men.

Through *CTR*'s first three years of publication (twelve issues), of approximately sixty-six feature pieces with an author byline, 11 per cent were written by women; of approximately 200 contributions with an author byline

¹ In the online Canadian Theatre Encyclopedia, Gaetan Charlebois provides a thumbnail history of feminist theatre.

(essays, reviews, Carte Blanche), 16 per cent were written by women. Jennifer Merin was by far the most published woman author, regularly posting reports of theatre activity internationally in Carte Blanche.² Thus, *CTR*, as these data show, performed as a mirror to gender inequities across Canadian theatre rather than as the stage for generational debates concerned with the full range of contemporary Canadian work. It took the federal government's commission on The Status of Women in Canadian Theatre to address such issues and Rina Fraticelli's unpublished 1982 report, a survey of 104 Canadian theatres between 1978 and 1981, produced results for women that closely resemble the data above: playwrights, 10 per cent; artistic directors, 11 per cent; and directors, 13 per cent.

In his introduction to *CTR* 43 (Summer 1985), editor Robert Wallace wrote: "The genesis of this issue was my discovery last year that Rina Fraticelli's invaluable report ... had never been published. When I proposed to her that *CTR* published parts of this report, she suggested that, at this late date, it would be more constructive to address the current status of women in Canadian theatre" (4).³ "Feminism & Canadian Theatre" collects seventeen women-authored contributions along with Bañuta Rubess's script of The Anna Project's collective creation, *This Is for You, Anna: A Spectacle of Revenge*. If this issue was an occasion to illuminate and celebrate women's voices, it did nothing to address a tenacious neglect of matters of race. It is only in the next decade of *CTR* that issue topics begin to redress historical omissions and absences: Theatre and Ethnicity (volume 56, Fall 1988), Native Theatre (volume 68, Fall 1991), Arctic Theatre Makers (volume 73, Winter 1992), and Black Theatre in Canada/African Canadian Theatre (volume 83, Summer 1995).

In the last paragraph of her essay, Jessica Riley writes: "My hope for *CTR*, and for all theatre institutions we inherit, is that we continue to change, in the present and in the future, even, indeed especially, when that change it is not easy; and that we experience growth that flourishes in all directions" (40).

² It was fitting to discover that Merin was a founder in 2006 of the Alliance of Women Film Journalists, whose "purpose is to amplify the voices of women critics, provide a platform for the expression of women's perspectives on film and support work by and about women—both in front of and behind the cameras." She is the Alliance's current president.

³ I discuss Fraticelli's report and Wallace's issue in my introduction to *Feminist Theatre and Performance* (see esp. viii–ix).

This is a project that insists on relentless examination of the processes of knowledge formation. It requires from us a generosity of spirit in our commitment to work toward more expansive and inclusive futures as well as to provide a more thorough audit of the *CTR* archive undertaken with a willingness to recognize the imperative of change.

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The Wrong Side of History, or How We Got It Wrong

Alan Filewod

It is now more than twenty years since I was an editor of *Canadian Theatre Review* (*CTR*), and fifty since I started on the journal as a student editorial assistant in its first years. One way or another, *CTR* was part of my life for five decades. For that reason, I find it hard to write about it. *CTR* wove many threads through my life, so that recalling my editorial experience becomes a kind of autotherapy. I have an ambivalent relationship to that history. In my retirement downsizing, I ditched all my issues of the journal, and I never kept a list of the issues I edited. I'm not even sure how many issues I produced. I have no archive to draw on as I write this.

When I think of my first years as an editor, I recall the stress of the assistant professor grind toward tenure, of evenings lost to writing and weekends lost to *CTR* manuscript sessions (in the pre-digital age, when articles were typed, cut, and pasted). And as a theatre professor, I was often involved in rehearsals at night. I have stress-embodied memories of moments when a *CTR* issue deadline, a production tech week, and end-of-term marking (ninety theatre history essays and no teaching assistant) converged. I survived it, but my then marriage didn't.

The editors of this issue have asked for articles that offer critical perspectives on *CTR*'s history and significance. I can only do that implicitly, by writing about how I came to *CTR*, why it became so important in my life, and why I walked away from it.

It is only later in a life that we can start to unpick the threads that have formed it and name particular moments and people who were formative. When I do that, I go back to Don Rubin, who probably, albeit unknowingly, had the most profound influence on the future I look back on. If I am to reflect on

my period as an editor, I have to start with Don and the path that he opened up for me. Or paths, rather. Because Don spun me in two directions that later converged when I went to grad school, and that became the pediments of my research and teaching.

I met Don in 1971, in my first week of university in the theatre program at York. I had been accepted into the drama studies stream (as opposed to performance) because when my audition notice came, I was living in Ottawa and had no way of getting to Toronto. I was accepted into the theatre theory stream by default. I was the first person in my family to go to university and was so naïve that I didn't understand that tuition had to be paid. My entire experience of theatre had been high school musicals and theatre arts classes.

When I received my course list, I saw that I had only one theatre class, About Acting, a course for rejected actor wannabees who sat in a lecture hall to hear about acting from an American professor who clutched his groin and told us that acting comes from the balls. But I saw that there was a second-year course on Drama and Social Thought, admission by permission. The professor was Don Rubin, and the secretary told me, Go ask him. I did, and he said yes on the spot and opened a part of my brain that I didn't know existed. In my first midterm, I scored a perfect 100 per cent. (Yes, I did know who threw a flaming lamp across a room.) And suddenly, drama studies seemed very, very cool. (It still does. Another part of my brain opened the next year when I took Mavor Moore's course on Canadian theatre history.)

Memory falters, but it must have been the next year that I took Don's criticism workshop. That was the year he, Joe Green, and Ross Stuart founded *CTR*. In that course, I met dazzling minds, all drawn to the mystique of the critic in the aisle seat, racing out to meet a deadline. (Ten years later, I would be doing just that as a reviewer for CBC Radio—dashing home to write a review, grab four hours of sleep, and broadcast live from the studio at 6 a.m.)

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Don taught us that criticism was both a craft and a writerly discipline. We read the (male) greats: Lessing, Shaw, Bentley, Clurman, and, for me the most

influential, Brustein. (Don is an American immigrant, and his cultural formation was very much New York and New England.) He taught us to write with economy and voice and to think succinctly. Every week, there would be a play to attend and a review to read in class. And that was a heady year in Toronto theatre. Toronto Workshop Productions' masterful *Ten Lost Years* and NDWT's stunning production of *Sticks and Stones* stand out. Don also brought in speakers: Richard Schechner, Joe Chaiken, Michael Kirby. We had a direct line to the (male) New York avant-garde.

This was the mix that spawned *CTR*. A number of factors were in play: Don's zeal for his adopted country, the career ambitions of junior professors reaching for tenure, and the dismal state of drama criticism in Canadian journalism. There was a cultural revolution under way, and the critical press was missing it, with two exceptions: Urjo Kareda in the *Toronto Star*, and Jamie Portman at Canadian Press. Don envisioned a Canadian version of *TDR* (*The Drama Review*) that would put Canadian theatre and drama on the world stage.

In *CTR*'s second year, I was one of a small team of editorial assistants. This was a practicum course, and we were willing dogs-bodies. We collated and proofread, hung around the office, and spoke of weighty matters. Three of us were charged with gathering and editing the first volume of what turned into the *Canada on Stage* series, attempting to document every professional production in Canada in 1974. And in that sentence is the worm that to my mind compounded a fundamental error over time to the point when I came to realize that we had it all wrong.

That is my segue to the second path that Don opened for me, which would later converge with the first to bring me back to *CTR*. In my third year, I won a summer scholarship that would allow me to travel on a theatre-related adventure. (The downside: it meant that I didn't have a summer job to earn tuition and living costs for the next year.) That was the summer of Opportunities for Youth, a federal program that allowed you to apply for project funding in the arts or community service and would fund it at minimum wage plus 10 per cent for overhead. Theatre groups mushroomed across the country, and I was asked to join a group of dance friends as stage manager for a folk ballet troupe to tour Newfoundland. One of the group told me there was a tradition of folk theatre there, and I decided that I would

investigate that. When I mentioned this to Don, he said he had just been to St. John's and met a guy named Chris Brookes, and I should look him up.

Sometimes, a sentence changes a life. One day in St. John's, I attended a meeting of arts groups that would be touring that summer, and there I met Chris. We chatted amiably—he was an extremely charismatic and empathic person who couldn't handle the number of people who fell for him—and after I dropped the Brecht bomb, he told me he was heading for the mining town of Buchans in the centre of the island to create a show, and would I like to come along? I went along, I became a Mummer, and I spent the next year there learning about and making community-based activist theatre.

When I returned to academia, I had a mission to bring this work—this vast tradition of non-canonical, non-professional work (or as my friend Robin Whittaker taught me, *non-professionalized* work)—into critical discourse. I came to realize, after meeting George Luscombe, that professionalism is just an economic concept and that all theatre, even mumming, entails work and disciplinarity. Out of that came my PhD and my first book. I became less interested in literary drama and more in the performances that people create together. During my PhD, I had been reviewing theatre for the CBC, becoming increasingly aware of the growing divergence (to my mind) between the literary drama and the theatrical languages of popular theatre. I was getting tired of brilliant dramatic stylists (of whom there were many) who had nothing to say beyond their own life stories or who (in words said to me by one eminent playwright) endeavoured to “psychoanalyze society.”

Over the years, I contributed to *CTR* occasionally, but it was in the back of my mind for a decade or so, until one day I had a call from Robert Wallace, who had succeeded Don Rubin as editor, inviting me to guest-edit an issue (I can't remember if this was before or after I became book review editor, but it was shortly after I started my new job at the University of Guelph).

Under Wallace, the focus of the journal had begun to shift focus from drama and dramaturgy to theatrical practice, paying more attention to who was making theatre, why, and for whom. Wallace moved it to an engagement with critical discourse and cultural diversity and by doing so ensured that *CTR* had relevance and purpose beyond the narrow world of 'Canadian theatre' as it had been understood in 1974. (In my time, we continued to expand the

boundaries of discipline and culture, and more and more we published academic critics. I think we were coming to understand that our main readership was in the classroom rather than the theatre.)

Four issues a year was a tough slog, so having a guest editor could alleviate the burden. I was excited and, to be frank, honoured by Wallace's invitation. At that time, I was very involved with a network we called the Canadian Popular Theatre Alliance, a loose affinity of collective, semi-professional, and community-based activists. The bootstrap practices of political intervention theatre became the subject of my premiere issue.

That issue seemed to work, and when Wallace decided to let *CTR* go, he invited me to take it on. At least, that's how I remember it. He had transformed the journal and in doing so ensured its continuity. He reformatted it to its present size and negotiated its acquisition by University of Toronto Press (UTP), which added *CTR* to its stable of journals and gave it financial stability. Funding from the Canada Council seemed to be secure, because federal bicultural policy necessitated that there be an anglophone journal and a Québécois(e) journal in every field. In the *realpolitik* of Canadian cultural funding, *CTR* had to exist so that *JEU: Cahiers de Théâtre* could exist. For a period, I edited on my own, then jointly with Natalie Rewa. At some point, I wanted to step back, and in time, Natalie did as well, at which point we brought *CTR* back to Guelph under an editorial team structure.

Editing *CTR* was a thrill, but the excitement for me was more in the work of production than in the dissemination of content. My memory is that when I was editor, I was always on the phone and writing letters, reading submissions, and copy-editing in three-month cycles. The most rewarding times were the layout sessions in the days before digital publication. I would drive to Toronto to spend a day, sometimes two, at UTP with the gifted layout artist Beth Earl Rose (that was when publishers employed layout artists). The work of shaping the pages, placing images, sizing text, and producing galleys, of physically producing the journal page by page, was a joy.

So, where were we wrong?

Despite our embrace of new theatrical practices and new generations of theatremakers, *CTR* remained locked into the nation-building assumption

that theatre matters because it produces playwrights, and playwrights matter because they create nation-proving drama, or because they have a particular talent for exposing human relations. In the logic of *CTR* in its early days, theatre matters because it produces a national singularity, 'the Canadian playwright,' which had been *CTR*'s questing beast from the start.

After a lifetime of working with oral histories, I am very aware that memory is fallible. I first learned this when Chris Brooks wrote *A Public Nuisance*, his memoir of the Mummers Troupe, in which he included an anecdote about me. I had, in his telling, taken a shift on a St. John's garbage truck as research for a play. I told him after I read it that he was mistaken, that I had done no such thing. He was adamant; he had a vivid memory of me bringing that story to a rehearsal. We were both alert, intelligent, and sentient, but one of us was wrong. To this day, I don't know which. I say this to frame the moment that I felt things start to slip, while I was an associate editor. It was sometime in the mid 1980s, and we were having an editorial meeting to plan the next cycle of thematic issues. There were, I think, three or four people around the table. I proposed an issue on 'Native' theatre (that was the vocabulary of the days of the Meech Lake Accord). There was a pause, and the decision was rendered: too soon.

Too soon? We eventually did an issue on Native theatre a few years later, guest-edited by Monique Mojica, to whom we gave an iron-clad guarantee that we would publish whatever she gave us without editorial interference (which led to a phone call from a furious Tomson Highway, who threatened to picket my office unless I pulled an article that critiqued one of his plays from an Indigenous woman's perspective. I said in response that I wasn't going to be the white man who censored an Indigenous woman.). But by that time, it was too late.

Too soon? This was *CTR*'s major failing: we edified settler national culture while children were dying in residential schools and disappearing into unmarked graves. *CTR* had begun as a response to the 'colonization' of theatre in Canada by British and American influences (and for Rubin, that so-called colonialism was manifest in his *bête noire*, the Stratford Festival). The rhetoric of colonialism was everywhere in the 1970s and 1980s, but for the

most part, it reiterated the trope that colonialism was fundamentally a cultural issue that could be rectified by imposing content quotas or (as was the case of GCTC in its early years) citizenship employment restrictions.

We had no clue what colonialism really was, and how deeply immersed in it we were, as its agents. In my time—I think it may be different now—*CTR* was on the wrong side of history, trying to shore up a master narrative of settler nationalism by expanding its boundaries of inclusivity, when we should have been tearing down that narrative. Our mission to document Canadian theatre, I tell my younger self fifty years later, should start with eliminating the very concept. I have written elsewhere that the phrase ‘Canadian theatre’ conjoins two historically unstable terms. By dismantling them, we expose the cultural facade of an ongoing and violent colonial project. When we do that, we start to question the journal’s commitment to ‘professional theatre’ and to canonicity. Every editor of the journal since its inception has curated important playscripts, and it is possible that was what kept *CTR* going when it faltered.

The fundamental error that I began to apprehend in 1974, as I co-edited the first volume of what would morph into the *Canada on Stage* series, was thinking that we could quantify the unquantifiable. We could do that only by a process of reduction that redefined ‘theatre’ as what we could identify and capture. The object of the project was to document every theatrical production in a given year, but in the end, it could only document those productions it could trace, invariably ‘professional’ and only in English or French. I came to realize that these amounted to a very small sample of the actual theatre culture, and the project’s priorities were embedded in the nation-building myth of professionalism and canonicity. From its beginnings, *CTR* was an instrument of quantification. We were, unknowingly, the cultural accountants of colonial genocide

That may seem extreme, but it has taken me a lifetime to understand the violence of settler colonialism and the role theatre and criticism have played in it. I wish I had seen that more clearly when I was editing *CTR*.

Maybe We Got Some of It Right: A Response to Alan Filewod

Jerry Wasserman

I am very pleased to have been asked to respond to Alan Filewod's poignant reminiscence entitled "The Wrong Side of History, or How We Got It Wrong" (this issue), his contribution to the controversial fiftieth anniversary issue of *Canadian Theatre Review*. Alan was an important figure in the relatively small community of Canadian theatre scholars during my decades in academia. I have great respect for his writing and its forceful, passionate expression of his cultural politics. His enthusiasm about his time with *CTR* is bracing, but his regrets about the work he did there sad.

Alan and I were peers in what I would call the second generation of Canadian theatre scholarship. We travelled somewhat similar professional paths, both working in theatre outside academia while teaching. We both spent time as editors and reviewed theatre for CBC radio. Yet I can't agree that his later awakening to the realities of Canadian colonialism meant that he and his colleagues at *CTR* "had it *all* wrong" (48; my italics) back then.

Whose views may be right or wrong depends a lot on perspective. In his article "History's Sides," social anthropologist Nicholas Lackenby calls the tendency to situate oneself on the right or wrong side of history, as Alan does, "sideism" (3). Lackenby contrasts that perspective with the notion of "plural, local, individual histories" (5). To the sideist, history is a totalizing concept, a rhetorical binary that leaves little room for the local and individual.¹

Without denying the importance of critiquing colonial history, I argue that one can do so while still allowing the virtues of those local histories that live within its shadow. Babies and bathwater.

¹ Thanks to Selena Couture for drawing my attention to Lackenby's article.

Growing up American shaped my perspective on Canada, Canadian theatre, and their histories. I arrived in Vancouver to teach English at the University of British Columbia in 1972. Having acted in college, I almost immediately threw myself into the burgeoning Vancouver theatre scene. The 1970s were a heady time to be a young actor in western Canada. No one wanted to know where you had trained (I hadn't) or to see your resume (mine was slim). Federal programs encouraged the creation of new work, new companies, and cultural spaces. Canadian nationalism was at its peak in the shadow of the Vietnam War and I was totally onside with it. Why wouldn't a country—and its theatre—with a long history of cultural domination by the US want its own plays, playwrights, and theatre artists telling its own stories?

By the time I turned my academic focus to Canadian drama and theatre history in the early 1980s, I had seen a lot of new Canadian plays and been in quite a few. I was immersed in the Canadian theatrical renaissance, sharing the stage with talented Canadian actors and learning about my new country from people who had grown up here and whose stories I was helping tell. It was exhilarating. Canadian theatre was suddenly a thing and I wanted to help spread the word.



Figure 1: *Doukhobors* by Paul Thompson & Theatre Passe Muraille, dir. Ray Michal & Jane Heyman, City Stage, 1977; l-r back row: Glen Thompson, me, Pierre Tetrault, Jane Kalmacoff, Guy Bannerman; front Joe Sala, Annabel Kershaw, and Susan Shillingford. Played at City Stage on Thurlow St. Vancouver premiere. Photo credit Glen E. Erickson.



Figure 2: *On the Job* by David Fennario, dir. Bill Millerd, Arts Club Theatre, 1976; l-r: Bruce Greenwood, me, Robert Mark Weber, Bob Carey. Played at the Seymour St. Arts Club. Vancouver premiere. Photo credit Glen E. Erickson.

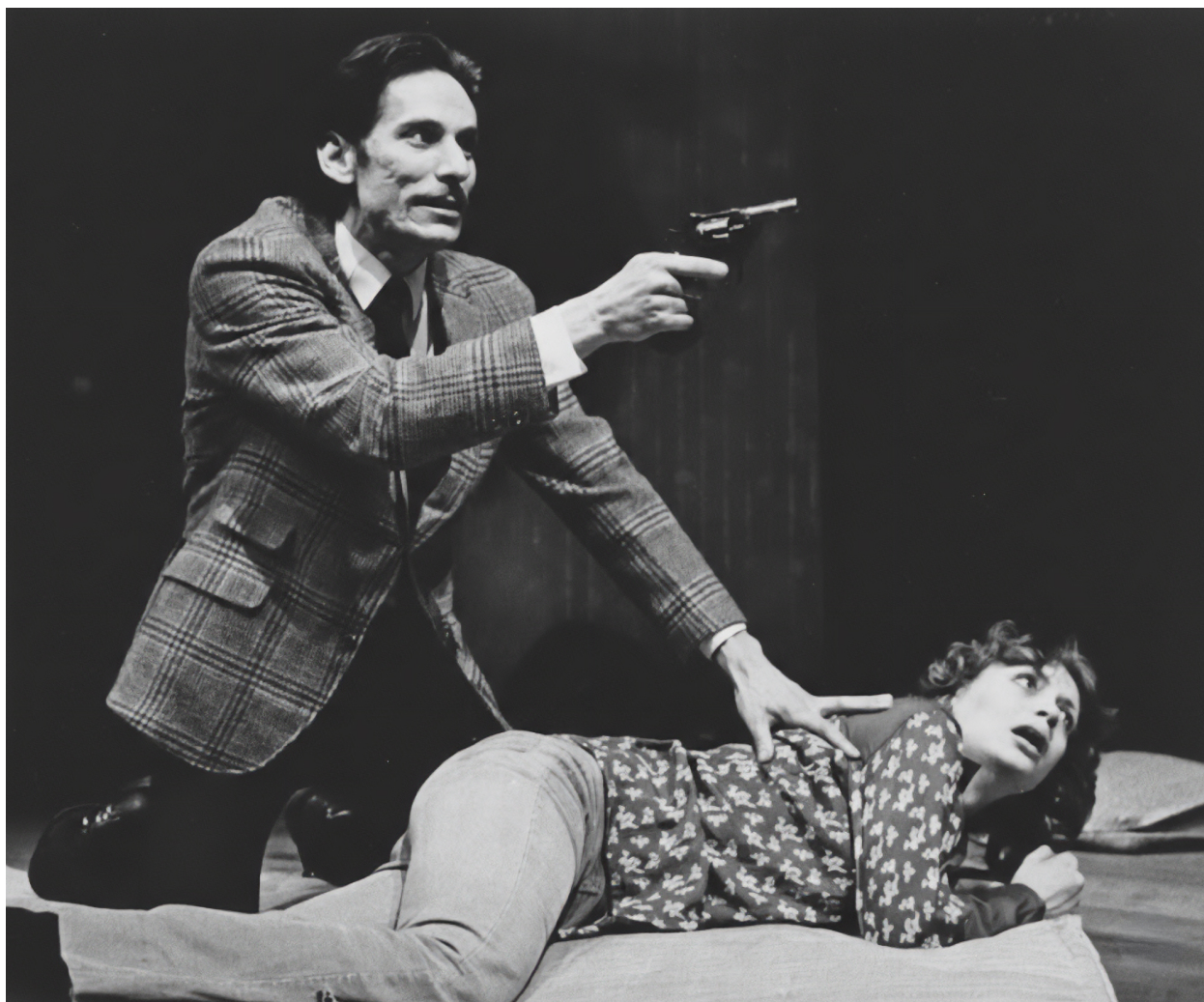


Figure 3: *The Workingman* by Tom Walmsley, dir. Pamela Hawthorn, New Play Centre, 1975. The actress is Kayla Armstrong. Played at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre. Premiere production. Photo credit Glen E. Erickson.

Among my first efforts were articles in *Canadian Theatre Review*. I saw the value of *CTR* as a potential link between the academy and the world outside, between Canadian theatre studies, Canadian theatre itself and its audiences. Because it deals primarily with contemporary theatre, includes photos, and is not refereed, it can be less academically technical and formal than other theatre journals. In *CTR* 35 (Summer 1982) I wrote excitedly about a single day when seven of eight Vancouver theatres were staging well-attended plays written, produced, and performed by Canadians (Wasserman).² I saw

² The plays and companies were the Vancouver Repertory Theatre's production of James Reaney's *Handcuffs* (part two of the Donnelly trilogy); a Capilano College student production of *Ten Lost Years* by Jack Winter and

this as a sign that people in my adopted city were embracing their own culture. My article resembled what Alan laments *CTR* was from its beginnings: “an instrument of quantification.” Of the eight articles I’ve published in *CTR* my two most substantial, maybe predictably, document Canadian theatrical attitudes towards Americans (Wasserman, “Where Were You” and “Monstrous Clowns”). I maintain a border-dweller’s perspective on Canada which, for all its sins, remains to my eye the better alternative.

In 1985 I published *Modern Canadian Plays*, an anthology of twelve scripts from the new Canadian theatre with a historical introduction and bibliographies. It became a popular classroom text that would eventually appear in five editions and expand to thirty-one plays. I thought this was a good thing, helpful for cash-strapped students and an asset to the Canadian theatre project itself. Was I naïve?

The anthology and I were attacked from many sides for various heresies, from canonization to “intellectual control” (Wasserman, “Confessions”). My enthusiasms for Canadian theatre did not entirely blind me to the sins of Canadian colonialism, although, like Alan, I was seeing through a 1980s lens. But did those of us, inside *CTR* or outside, who documented and advocated for Canadian theatre have it *all* wrong? Did the embrace of cultural nationalism, canonicity, and theatrical professionalism make one an accessory to “colonial genocide”? Should “the very concept of ‘Canadian theatre’” have been eliminated? The work of shoring up Canadian theatre in the 1970s and 1980s made it possible for the Indigenous work, the African Canadian work, the Asian Canadian work missing in those first years of *CTR* to claim their place on our stages. I don’t see how critical nihilism helps to undo colonialism or make room for Canada’s diverse theatrical storytellers. I remain unrepentant about the value of Canadian theatre, minus the scare quotes.

Cedric Smith at North Vancouver’s Presentation House; the Prairie Theatre Exchange’s production of George Ryga’s *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre; the Arts Club’s presentations of Allan Stratton’s *Rexy!* (a satire about Mackenzie King) and Sherman Snukal’s *Talking Dirty* (a sex comedy set in Kitsilano) at its two theatres; a Tamahnous Theatre production of *Last Call!* by Morris Panych and Ken Macdonald (a post-nuclear musical cabaret) at City Stage; and Touchstone Theatre Company’s production of Judith Thompson’s *The Crackwalker* at the Firehall Theatre.

I've always appreciated *CTR*'s promise of connecting with readers beyond the campus and classroom. Yet I have never seen copies of the journal circulate in green rooms or theatre lobbies. As Alan himself acknowledges, "our main readership was in the classroom rather than the theatre." Having spent over four decades in both the university and professional theatre, I doubt that what we do in theatrical academia has much impact on the world beyond. Alan expresses regrets about his tenure with *CTR*, saying it put him "on the wrong side of history." Lackenby argues that "evoking the 'sides of history' allows people who might be marginal to feel meaningfully at the very heart of things ... rooting themselves conscientiously within a historical narrative." People making such statements "become virtuous agents in processes beyond their control" (5). The irony is that broadening, strengthening, and diversifying Canadian theatre is a process within our control, and Alan has been instrumental in that work.

I admire Alan for the strength and consistency of his politics *and* for his groundbreaking role in helping to make Canadian theatre studies a rigorous, attractive academic discipline. In this dark Trumpian age I believe more strongly than ever that the world needs more Canada and more Canadian theatre.

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Imprint: Reflections on *Canadian Theatre Review* Play Publication

An Abridged Transcript of a Discussion Held on Zoom, 29 January 2024

With Taiwo Afolabi, Marie Barlizo, Leah-Simone Bowen, Jill Carter, Annie Gibson, Alan Filewod, and Kevin Williams, moderated by Rebecca Burton.
Edited by Rebecca Burton and Annie Gibson.

Rebecca Burton (RB): We're going to talk about *CTR*—*Canadian Theatre Review*—specifically in relation to its role in and relationship to play publication in Canada.¹ I'll start by introducing myself. My name is Rebecca Burton, and I am the Contracts and Membership Manager at the Playwrights Guild of Canada [PGC]. I was asked to moderate this panel because of my connection to playwrights through PGC, and by extension to Playwrights Canada Press. I edited the *Equity in Theatre* issue of *CTR*. I've published a few articles as well, and I just love *CTR*. It's my favourite theatre journal in the world, and I use it all the time.

Leah-Simone Bowen (LB): My name is Leah-Simone Bowen, and I'm a playwright. I was introduced to *CTR* because I used to work down the hallway from Theatre Museum Canada. They had every back issue of the magazine, so I've read a lot of them. And I've been published in it; I feel lucky to be published in it.

Annie Gibson (AG): My name is Annie Gibson, and I'm the Publisher at Playwrights Canada Press. My introduction to *CTR* was the President of our board of directors quizzing me, asking how many issues of *CTR* are released each year, and I didn't know! I've never been published in *CTR*, so this will be a first, but I certainly read it constantly.

¹The full transcript of the conversation is also available on the *Performance Matters* website.

Alan Filewod (AF): I'm Alan Filewod. I'm a retired theatre professor. I started at *CTR* in 1974 as an editorial assistant when I was a student, back when Don Rubin started the journal. I have an article in the 200th-anniversary issue coming up, and I edited the 100th issue, *Emerging Voices*.

Taiwo Afolabi (TA): I'm Taiwo Afolabi, an associate professor at the University of Regina. My relationship with *CTR* is very new. I published an article in the *Time Capsule* issue [Alvarez et al.], and I co-edited (with Yasmine Kandil) the *Ethics and Socially Engaged Theatre* issue, where we published Thembelihle Moyo's play *The Prophetic Place*. I'm currently working on another issue, titled *Future, Uncertainty, and the Theatre Sector*, alongside Christine Brubaker and Yvette Nolan, and I have an article in the 200th issue. I am an associate editor for *CTR*.

Kevin Williams (KW): I'm Kevin Williams. I'm the Publisher at Talonbooks. My relationship with *CTR* is that of a reader, and since publishing plays is a regular part of our business, the whole milieu of Canadian theatre is important to us because we're at the end of the process. We rely on this whole ecosystem to sustain Canadian playwrights and Canadian theatre, and while we're part of that ecosystem, we rely on the rest of the ecosystem to get writers to where their plays are ready for publication.

Jill Carter (JC): My name is Jill Carter. I work at the University of Toronto. I'm the Associate Director (Graduate) of the Centre for Theatre, Drama and Performance Studies. I also work at the Transitional Year Programme at U of T. I'm cross-appointed there and shared (from time to time) with the Indigenous Studies Department. My relationship with *CTR* began when I was a young actor, purchasing issues of *CTR* from Theatrebooks in Toronto because I wanted to read everything. I wanted the play scripts; I wanted the interviews with the artists and actors; I wanted the reviews. I thought it was just an incredible publication. And, of course, over time, I'm still a reader of *CTR*. I use it educationally, and I've used it in my research. And I've had the privilege of having a relationship as a writer with *CTR*, having published a few things, so that's been a blessing.

Marie Barlizo (MB): My name is Marie Barlizo. I'm a playwright, dramaturge, instructor, and playwriting mentor at the National Theatre School. I'm also a playwriting mentor at Black Theatre Workshop for their Artist Mentorship

Program. I'm an artist-in-residence this year at four different theatre companies, including Boca del Lupo, the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre, and Native Earth Performing Arts. I'm also going to the Philippines for Perflab. I have a very long relationship with *CTR*. I had to do research in university, and *CTR* was where I got most of my info. It gave me a great understanding of theatre, who the major players are, and their practices. I had the pleasure of having an article published in 2009 called "Cultural Diversity in Play," where I interviewed three playwrights of colour: Marjorie Chan, Anita Majumdar, and Lisa Codrington. I was also interviewed last year for Mariló Núñez's article, "Writers and Race: Why Playwrights of Colour Should Write Themselves into Their Plays." And an excerpt of my play *Lucky* was published in 2023. *CTR* has had a huge impact on me.

RB: Thank you for the introductions. I am going to ask Alan to start us off due to his long relationship with *CTR*, and I'm going to ask that you please comment on why *CTR* started publishing plays.

AF: In one sense, *CTR* was founded on a fallacy, in a moment of settler-colonial nationalism which perceived theatre to only exist in a small space that intersected the nation (as construed) and the theatre profession (as construed). Part of the job of *CTR* was to establish a canon of Canadian drama that could be used for national and international circulation, teaching, and all that. And it did succeed in doing that, in a very narrow way. It was decades before any writer of colour was featured in the journal.

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In 1974 or 1975, there were very few options for play publication. Playwrights Co-op was grinding out those typescripts, not a huge circulation, but a fast turnover. And Talonbooks.

There were three people who founded *CTR*, but Don Rubin became the editor. The journal was trying to create relationships between playwrights. Don travelled to find playwrights, and that's partially because he was new to the country himself, an immigrant from the United States. That may have coloured his sense of what a nation is. His first essay in *CTR* was "Creeping toward a Culture." He had that myth from the late nineteenth century/mid-twentieth century that Canada was an immature culture that was seeking cultural maturity, that it had been colonized. We were not able to think at that time that we were the colonizers. The old nineteenth-century thesis was that if a nation exists, it exists in its literature. Don Rubin set out to develop that literature. He met playwrights, like Michael Cook [the first playwright published in *CTR*], who would never have been published, and started publishing them. And I think that was the main job of the journal at that time.

Then, as the journal moved on through people like Bob Wallace, myself, and Natalie Rewa, we started to understand the job as curating the emergent state of theatre culture. However, we still had this notion that we would choose produced plays, and I think that was a limitation. It narrowed what the theatrical field is. The journal got better over the years as it expanded its critical voices, its sense of dramaturgy, to become what it is today, which is not something that somebody could have envisioned fifty years ago.

RB: I had no idea that the original purpose of the journal was play publication. In my mind, that was an afterthought.

AF: It wasn't an afterthought. It might not have been Don Rubin's initial objective. I think what he wanted it to be was the Canadian version of *TDR* [*The Drama Review*], but once *CTR* started publishing scripts, I think that's what sold the journal. That's what people wanted to see.

It was Bob Wallace who introduced the themed issues. Rubin had done some, but Wallace made it a consistent feature. When I came on as an associate editor, the first thing we did when planning was figure out the theme and the play of the issue. The theme would often come out of a play that we saw. When I saw Necessary Angel's *Newhouse* [Rose and Kugler] performed in a hockey arena, I was just stunned by it. Sometimes, there were plays that we couldn't get because playwrights had agents who would tell them to save the work for book publication.

RB: Thank you for that history. The next question is for the educators. What has *CTR* play publication meant to you personally as an academic or professionally as an educator in the classroom?

JC: My relationship with *CTR* began when I was very young. I was very, very poor. And I grew up being told, "This [theatre] is not for you." I went without groceries to buy *CTR* when it came out because it connected me. I may not have been able to get a theatre ticket, but I could read the play and imagine it and see the pictures. It was so wonderful to read what the artists said about their own work if they were interviewed.

When I entered my doctoral studies, as an Indigenous woman in theatre, I found it was a lonely place to be. And I don't mean lonely, the way you are as an Indigenous woman in a white, Western school. There was that, but it was lonely because I was trying to theorize for a doctoral dissertation where there was no Indigenous voice. There were Indigenous primary texts, and there were Indigenous interviews, but the published performance studies theorists were non-Indigenous.

In 1991, *CTR* published this incredible Indigenous issue [ed. Mojica]. It was so important to read what Monique Mojica, Tomson Highway, and Billy Merasty had to say, to read all of these wonderful scripts: *Winnetou's Snake Oil Show from Wigwam City* [Colorado and Wild-Eyed Sam], *Almighty Voice and His Wife* [Moses], excerpts of *Diva Ojibway* [Mason]. It was (and remains) a treasure. It was so important to my work. They might not have been recognized as theorists, but those culture workers were laying out theory.

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More recently, I've been able to use *CTR* in different classes. I have added *Map of the Land, Map of the Stars* [Clarke et al.] to my syllabi: for both the play script and the artistic theory; for the artists taking us through their process and their own brand of storyweaving; and for the work they did on the land. These are foundational texts for the work that's happening now, and what's beautiful is it's very accessible to my students because the university pays a licensing fee giving our students access.

TA: When I arrived in Canada in 2015, into a new system, I wanted to know what the theatre ecosystem was like. I found it refreshing that *CTR* had published a special issue on almost every aspect of theatre. The length and the breadth of the topics ranged from scenography to digital theatre, archiving, and equity. This is critical, particularly for international students or immigrant academics who want to better understand the ecosystem.

CTR offers practitioners the opportunity to write about their work rather than having someone else write about it or for them. There's an opportunity for students to read about what practitioners are doing and write about that work. I refer my students to plays published in *CTR* because they have access to *CTR* issues through the university. The language in which *CTR* is conveyed is accessible. There's a way that the theory is broken down. This is important for a lot of students for whom English is not their first language.

Also, the diversity of the people who are writing for *CTR* is better. When I was proposing a special issue, I didn't hesitate. I approached *CTR* wanting to do something on ethics and socially engaged theatre. I'd seen the diversity of contributors in *CTR*. It's important to let my students know that, and that's why I would always recommend *CTR*. Thinking about the diversity of those voices, *CTR* becomes the go-to in the classroom.

RB: I'm going to turn it over to the playwrights. What does *CTR* mean to you? You've both had plays published in *CTR*. Has that had an impact on your playwriting career?

LB: The funny thing is, my play that was published in *CTR* [*The Flood: And Other Misadventures of the Female Prisoners of the St. Lawrence Market*] will be produced soon. It was published very soon after I wrote it, in 2017, and the

show that's going up now will be its first production [in February 2024]. I love those theatre timelines of how long it takes things to get produced!

Getting published in *CTR* was a real career boost because I had not been published much. I had been published in Alberta (I'm originally from Alberta) but not in Ontario. It felt like it enhanced my credibility and reputation *to me*. And it felt like it was moving me closer to something tangible because I then had this publishing record. It was especially great because the play didn't have a production. At that time, that was the stipulation for everything: "Have you been produced?" and I hadn't in Toronto, so that felt like the line between a hugely successful playwright and the worst playwright of all time. To be finally published even though the play didn't have a production felt like *CTR* was pushing me forward and saying, "Keep going." It was something that gave me a lot of encouragement as a young playwright, so I'm thankful for that.

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MB: *CTR* has had a huge impact on my career. I was the first visible minority to graduate from the National Theatre School's Playwriting Program in 2002. When I graduated, there were not very many Filipinos or Asians in Canadian theatre. In fact, I remember the 2002 issue was the *Chinese Canadian Theatre* [ed. Chan] issue. It was inspiring to see Asian faces on the cover of *CTR*.

Although I felt supported at the National Theatre School, I didn't have the support system I needed after graduation. When Nina Lee Aquino and Nadine Villasin's play *Miss Orient(ed)* was published in *CTR* in 2006, I felt seen, that I was part of a community, and that a career was possible in the theatre. I was at a very low point during that time, so that encouraged me to continue pursuing my dreams. I'm a late bloomer. Although I was born in the Philippines, I am based in Montreal and was raised here. In terms of what gets produced here, it's not very much if you're a person of colour and

anglophone. I still have to fight to get produced. I self-produce. The fact that *CTR* asked to publish my play *Lucky* was a boost for somebody my age. I'm a mid-career playwright who is finally gaining momentum at fifty-one. I find it really funny! But I think it's great, and I'm so thankful for that. And it's given me hope for that second act in my life.

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RB: That is very encouraging. Let's flip this over to the publishers now. Can you comment on the role that *CTR* has played in relation to play publication? Pros? Cons? Outcomes? It was a surprise to me to find out that if a play has been published in *CTR*, it cannot then be published by Playwrights Canada Press or Talonbooks.

AG: It often has to do with grants or awards. Our book must be the first publication of a work for it to be eligible. But also, because *CTR* is so wonderfully accessible, it's damaging to a book's market if every student can go to their university library and pull up an issue of *CTR*. We do have to think about book sales!

Yet Playwrights Canada Press has a symbiotic relationship with *CTR*. I'm reading *CTR* to find out what's being talked about, who the playwrights are that I may not know. And because they publish issues on special themes, I get an overview of that theme. *CTR* has its finger on the pulse a bit more than the play publishers. I love the idea that *CTR* is there to raise playwrights' voices. And while I'm following things to figure out what's being studied, what people are talking about, it's also my responsibility to provide primary source material to read from. When I publish a play, hopefully it's going to be read by hundreds of students.

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KW: I'm not totally sure that I couldn't publish the play, but it would dampen the enthusiasm quite a bit. You've got competing circulation. That being said, you've got only three or four of us regularly publishing plays in Canada; perhaps forty or forty-five plays are being published a year. That does leave a lot of room for other plays to be circulated. We can't publish them all. We need the whole field. *CTR* provides a space for everybody to work in and raises the level. In the case of Talonbooks' and Playwrights [Canada Press's] lists, probably half come from playwrights we've previously published. We try to keep up with their careers, so people know where to go to find an author's work. And people can see the plays within the curated context of the publisher. The theory and everything else that *Canadian Theatre Review* publishes is absolutely essential.

AG: When we put books out of print, we pulp any print books and withdraw the e-books from sale. But *CTR* doesn't do that. With the digitization of their archives, you can go in and see all of that material. That is so very important. We get calls from people looking for older scripts, and we can't send them the book. But *CTR* can. If a book isn't selling after ten years, it's time to put it out of print.

KW: Sometimes, you just recognize that the time has passed for a play. Some material is more topical than others. People might have been innovative at the time, then that innovation is sucked up into the mainstream. Not everything is timed for sure. And theatre does rely a lot on topicality.

RB: I wondered if there was competition between *CTR* and the publishers. Obviously, there is some ...

KW: Book publishers want there to be other book publishers. Not only are we talking to one another, we frequently work together. Even though you could

argue that we're competitors, we share marketing opportunities. We need those other publishers to provide a different kind of take.

AG: There's more work that could or should be published every year than we can ever dream of doing. And the Canadian context is wholly different from the American one where, if you have written a play, your choices are either Theatre Communication Group, which publishes ten to fifteen books a year, mainly Pulitzer Prize winners or Broadway shows, or publishers like Samuel French or Dramatists Play Service that sell acting editions. In comparison, the Canadian landscape is quite strong.

RB: In terms of *CTR* and play publication, how do you feel it's doing right now? Would you like to see things being done differently? It seems like a lot of collective creations are being chosen now. Maybe shows that wouldn't necessarily get published in a traditional format are being published in *CTR* now?

AG: I like that there's space for collective creation and things that might not fit into a stand-alone book. One of our stumbling blocks to publishing some things is that we consider ourselves a literary publisher. The play really has to work on the page. If it's more of a performance-heavy piece where you might need more context, where half the work is stage directions, it makes it difficult to publish it as a book.

AF: I think about the excitement of curating an issue, and often a play would excite us because it was doing something we'd never seen before on a stage; so, not so much concerned with the literary value as [with] its theatrical importance. In 1992, we did short plays from Tunooniq Theatre, the first time any-one had ever published Inuit theatre. These plays were popular theatre, community-building theatre. They weren't written to be read particularly, but we wanted the world to see what was happening there.

"I think about the excitement of curating an issue, and often a play would excite us because it was doing something we'd never seen before on a stage; so, not so much concerned with the literary value as [with] its theatrical importance."

TA: The ongoing pursuit of a more equitable landscape means we need to start rethinking our framework and existing protocol. Many of our programs are tilting toward devised theatre, collective creation, and performance creation. People want to work together as a community

Perhaps the idea of producing before publishing may need to be revisited. Especially now that we know a lot of artists, playwrights, and creatives coming into the country need space to showcase their work. The existing system does not necessarily give them enough opportunity to do that. If somebody's written and produced a play elsewhere (outside Canada), or has yet to produce it, that is a barrier to publication. This is one of the things we need to start rethinking.

AF: In the late 1980s, I had recently come on board as the editor of *CTR*, and I was asked to give a talk about play selection in a canon. I said there's no such thing as a good play. There are only different kinds of plays, and in those kinds, there may be scales of value, and there may not be. The room just exploded! The generation that taught me found that enraging. But I've maintained that ever since.

RB: I agree that there's no such thing as a good play. There are plays, they are subjective. It depends on so many factors.

AG: As a publisher who has to make those decisions, I think about this all the time. I wrote an email to somebody yesterday saying, "It's not that the play isn't good enough." It comes down to dollars or the fact that there is another play that I want to highlight, and we can only publish so many books. It actually has very little to do with your work sometimes, which can be frustrating, I understand. But they're all good plays.

RB: Let's talk more about our favourite issues.

TA: The issue on *Equity in Theatre* [eds. Burton and Newman]. I find that issue quite interesting, based on the work that I'm doing.

AG: I wanted to talk about *Theatre and Sports* [ed. Kuling], the first time my baseball hero was on the cover of a theatre magazine. I now have ammunition

to say that baseball is not only literary, it's also theatrical. And smart people like sports, which is not a thing I grew up thinking.

MB: I would like to have more artistic process in the journal because I feel that helps with professional development, not only for students, but for artists who want to expand their practice. It's really refreshing to hear an artist talk about their work, and it gives me ideas and helps me think about my own practice.

JC: I cannot ever commit myself to a favourite issue. There have been so many wonderful scripts, so many wonderful interviews, so much I've learned over the years of being a reader of *CTR*.

AF: I would like to see another anthology of plays originally published in *CTR*.

RB: A lot of the plays that were published decades ago in *CTR* might now be considered canonical works. It's interesting to see the newer work being published, and especially the collective creations. In ten or twenty years, are they going to be canonical works (if such a concept exists still)? What will their imprint be?

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Figure 1: Discussion participants (from left to right, top to bottom): Taiwo Afolabi, Marie Barlizo, Jill Carter and Leah-Simone Bowen.

Photos by (from left to right, top to bottom): University of Regina Communications and Marketing (for Taiwo Afolabi), Sabrina Reeves (for Marie Barlizo), courtesy of Jill Carter, and May Truong (for Leah-Simon Bowen).



Figure 2: Discussion participants (from left to right, top to bottom): Annie Gibson, Alan Filewod, Kevin Williams, and Rebecca Burton.

Photos by (from left to right, top to bottom): courtesy of Annie Gibson, courtesy of Alan Filewod, Spencer Williams (for Kevin Williams), and Dahlia Katz (for Rebecca Burton).

Plays Published by CTR from 1973–2023

Listing compiled by Maegen Sargent; edited by Rebecca Burton, Alan Filewod, and Annie Gibson.

Play/Script Title	Author	Volume/Issue	Notes
<i>Lucky (An Excerpt)</i>	Marie Leofeli Romero Barlizo	193, Winter 2023	Excerpt
<i>The Antigone Play</i>	Tabia Lau	193, Winter 2023	
<i>The Prophetic Place</i>	Thembelihle Moyo	192, Fall 2022	
<i>The Darkness (La Noirceur)</i>	Marie Brassard	191, Summer 2022	
<i>The Cost of Entry is a Heartbeat</i>	Ana Amorós and Salima Punjani	190, Spring 2022	Film
<i>How Many Performance Artists Does it Take to Chance a Light Bulb (for Martha Wilson)</i>	Emelie Chhangur and Jess Dobkin	189, Winter 2022	
<i>The Itinerary: Playtest</i>	Sébastien Heins	188, Fall 2021	Playtest
<i>Vista20</i>	Alex McLean, Stewart Legere, Andrew Burke	188, Fall 2021	
<i>SensoryBox</i>	Eric Rose and Christopher Duthie	188, Fall 2021	Excerpts
<i>Artistic Fraud's The Other Side of This</i>	Michael Crummey and Patrick Foran	188, Fall 2021	Excerpt
<i>White Man's Indian</i>	Darla Contois	187, Summer 2021	
<i>Wonderland: A Bouffon Play, Happening in This Space, with This Audience</i>	Adam Lazarus and Melissa D'Agostino	187, Summer 2021	
<i>The Red Devil (Djalli I Kuq)</i>	Indrit Kasapi	187, Summer 2021	
<i>Access Me</i>	Boys in Chairs Collective	187, Summer 2021	
<i>All of Him</i>	Tanya Pillay	187, Summer 2021	
<i>St Peon of Parkdale</i>	Caroline Azar	187, Summer 2021	
<i>Even Darkness Is Made of Light</i>	Edwige Jean-Pierre	187, Summer 2021	
<i>I Slept With Tony Trouble</i>	Bruce Bell	187, Summer 2021	
<i>Medicine Boy</i>	Waawaate Fobister	187, Summer 2021	

<i>Unveiled</i>	Fay Nass, Daniel Simmons, Sevil Baghban Karimi, Anita Zanganeh, Sara Sagaii, Shirin Mehrgan, Jonathan Kim, and Sadaf Amini	187, Summer 2021	
<i>LET US GUIDE YOU: A Series of 2S/Trans/Non-binary Monologues</i>	Bilal Baig	186, Spring 2021	
<i>The Princess Show</i>	Aaron Collier, Richie Wilcox, Deonie Hudson	185, Winter 2021	
<i>Larynx Series, Voice of Echo, and Formants: Three Sound-Based Performance Works</i>	Erin Gee	184, Fall 2020	
<i>Public Private Thoughts: Short Acts by Pearle Harbour</i>	Justin Miller	183, Summer 2020	
<i>The Pipeline Project</i>	Kevin Loring, Quelema Sparrow, and Sebastien Archibald	182, Spring 2020	
<i>Return to the Nile: Tales of Migration</i>	Yasmine Kandil, Michael Metz, Hannah te Bokkel, Alex Baginski, Yasmeen Concepcion, Gabby Derham, Jessica Lopez, Elizabeth Colantoni, Madison Andrews, Katie Cole, and the immigrant and refugee participants from the Niagara Folk Art Multicultural Centre	181, Winter 2020	
<i>Asking For It</i>	Ellie Moon	180, Fall 2019	
<i>SINK</i>	Keith Hennessy	179, Summer 2019	
<i>Foxconn Frequency (no.3)</i>	Remy Siu (蕭逸南)	178, Spring 2019	
<i>In Sundry Languages</i>	Toronto Laboratory Theatre	177, Winter 2019	
<i>MAD WOMAN'S ESL POETRY</i>	Minah Lee	177, Winter 2019	
<i>Foreign Radical</i>	Tim Carlson, Jeremy Waller, David Mesiha, Kathleen Flaherty, Milton Lim, Aryo Khakpour, Florence Barrett, and Cande Andrade	175, Summer 2018	

<i>Map of the Land, Map of the Stars</i>	Christine Clarke, Geneviève Doyon, Patti Flather, Andrameda Hunter, Leonard Linklater, Yvette Nolan, Michelle Olson, and Aimée Dawn Robinson	174, Spring 2018	
<i>Collective Script</i>	Kimber Sider, Ker Wells, Natalie Doonan, P. Megan Andrews, Peter Balkwill, Christine Brubaker, Martin Julien	172, Fall 2017	
<i>The Preposterous Posthumous Predicament of Paulie Peel</i>	Kevin Wong (music/lyrics) and Julie Tepperman (book)	171, Summer 2017	
<i>The Flood: And Other Misadventures of the Female Prisoners of the St. Lawrence Market</i>	Leah-Simone Bowen	170, Spring 2017	
<i>RiderGirl</i>	Colleen Sutton	169, Winter 2017	
<i>I Really, Really Mean Something: Ten Micro-Plays about Theatre</i>	Rosamund Small	168, Fall 2016	
<i>The Money Tree</i>	Robert Watson	167, Summer 2016	
<i>The Public Servant</i>	Jennifer Brewin, Haley McGee, Sarah McVie, and Amy Rutherford	166, Spring 2016	
<i>Keys</i>	Falen Johnson	165, Winter 2016	
<i>Un-settling</i>	Nisha Ahuja	165, Winter 2016	
<i>Ms. Canadian Reality</i>	Leah-Simone Bowen	165, Winter 2016	
<i>Fix: A Play Provocation and Workshop for Young Audiences</i>	Alex Bulmer	164, Fall 2015	
<i>Concord Floral and This is my room. Look.</i>	Jordan Tannahil and Erin Brubacher	163, Summer 2015	Photo Exhibit
<i>The Last Walk of Adolfo Ich</i>	Marion de Vries	161, Winter 2015	
<i>on the virtues of tailoring</i>	david yee	160, Fall 2014	
<i>How iRan: Three Plays for iPod (Part 1: Green)</i>	Ken Cameron	159, Summer 2014	
<i>LANDLINE: Halifax to Vancouver</i>	Dustin Harvey and Adrienne Wong	159, Summer 2014	

<i>Neon Nightz</i>	Alexandra Tigchelaar	158, Spring 2014	
<i>Recounting Our Riches</i>	Maureen Martineau (text), Michel Cormier (director)	157, Winter 2014	
<i>Adaptation Project: A Performance Recipe</i>	Michael Trent, Dancemakers	155, Summer 2013	
<i>Transmission</i>	Tanya Marquardt	155, Summer 2013	
<i>Ham and the Ram</i>	Yvette Nolan	154, Spring 2013	
<i>Gramma</i>	Maki Yi	154, Spring 2013	
<i>Corpus</i>	Darrah Teitel	153, Winter 2013	
<i>Ana's Shadow</i>	Tara Goldstein	151, Summer 2012	
<i>NIGHT: April 2011 version. Human Cargo, Toronto</i>	Christopher Morris	148, Fall 2011	
<i>Accountable and Theatrical Acts of Witness: Queen's University DRAM 476 Testimonial Project Pieces 2010</i>	Marissa Nascimben, Katherine MacNeill, Isabel Winson, Jacqueline Andrade, Lauren Jackson, Stephanie Russell, Sean Ogle, Ruth Goodwin, Austin Schaeffer, Jon Hallis, Katie Muzyka, Mark Rochford, Anja Zeljkovic, Brett Payette, Emily Herczeg, Catriona Graveson, Alyssa Bignell, Jennie Appleby, Kathleen Jerome, Blythe Hubbard, and Alain Richer	147, Summer 2011	
<i>After the Crash: A Play About Brain Injury</i>	Julia Gray, The Ensemble	146, Spring 2011	
<i>Swimmer (68): A performance text-in-progress</i>	Ker Wells and Bruce Barton	145, Winter 2011	
<i>The Eco Show</i>	Daniel Brooks	144, Fall 2010	
<i>PAPIER</i>	Le Collectif Moncton-Sable	143, Summer 2010	
<i>Clark and I Somewhere in Connecticut</i>	James Long	142, Spring 2010	

<i>Totem Figures</i>	TJ Dawe	141, January 2010	
<i>Professionally Ethnic</i>	Bobby Del Rio	139, Summer 2009	
<i>dust</i>	Jason Maghanoy	138, Spring 2009	
<i>The Corner</i>	Jason Maghanoy	138, Spring 2009	
<i>Target Marketing</i>	Shawna Dempsey, Lorri Millan	137, Winter 2009	
<i>Unruly</i>	Shawna Dempsey, Lorri Millan	137, Winter 2009	
<i>17 Dog</i>	Ron Chambers	136, Fall 2008	
<i>Assembly: a Surreal Self-improvement Seminar</i>	Emilia Symington Fedy, Andreas Kahre, Andrew Laurensen, Katy Harris-McLeod, Billy Marchenski, and Paul Ternes	134, Spring 2008	
<i>Crack</i>	Sky Gilbert	134, Spring 2008	
<i>You Fancy Yourself</i>	Maja Ardel	133, Spring 2008	
<i>S.O.S.: Skeena of the Skeena</i>	Skeena Reece	130, Spring 2007	
<i>No Knowledge College</i>	Naila Keleta Mae	130, Spring 2007	
<i>Tiger of Malaya</i>	Hiro Kanagawa	129, Winter 2007	(Not listed as script in digital contents)
<i>Trudeau -- Long March /Shining Path</i>	George Elliott Clarke	128, Fall 2006	
<i>The Fly Fisher's Companion</i>	Michael Melski	128, Fall 2006	
<i>As performed at Ye Olde Carlton Arms Hotel, October-November 2005</i>	BLUEMOUTH INC.	127, Summer 2006	
<i>BOX a show in a diner</i>	Radix Theatre collective	126, Spring 2006	(Not listed as script in digital contents)
<i>Miss Orient(ed)</i>	Nina Lee Aquino and Nadine Villasin	125, Winter 2006	(Not listed as script in digital contents)

<i>Liberators, Occupiers and Population (Plan Yellow, Two Minutes, and Friction)</i>	Hans-Werner Kroesinger, Don Duyns, and Blake Brooker, Michael Green, Andy Curtis, Richard McDowell, Bard Payne & David van Belle	124, Fall 2005	3 plays, see pg. 62; (Not listed as script in digital contents)
<i>Cast Iron</i>	Lisa Codrington	123, Summer 2005	(Not listed as script in digital contents)
<i>Mercy Killing or Murder: The Tracy Latimer Story</i>	Stage Left Productions	122, Spring 2005	
<i>Lieutenant Nun</i>	Elaine Avila	121, Winter 2005	
<i>The Matka King</i>	Anosh Irani	120, Fall 2004	
<i>Spektator</i>	Lee Su-Feh, and David McIntosh	119, Summer 2004	
<i>After All: A Play in One Act</i>	Carol Anderson	118, Spring 2004	
<i>TRAPS</i>	Yvette Nolan	117, Winter 2004	
<i>La ultima puesta del sol / The Last Setting of the Sun</i>	Freddy Garcia, and Cynthia Grant	117, Winter 2004	
<i>Asylum of the Universe (A Fool's Ode to History)</i>	Camyar Chai	116, Fall 2003	(Not listed as script in digital contents)
<i>Eternal Hydra</i>	Anton Piatigorsky	115, Summer 2003	
<i>High-Gravel-Blind</i>	Paul Dunn	115, Summer 2003	
<i>SHADOWS A ONE-ACT PLAY</i>	Timothy Findley	114, Spring 2003	
<i>The Good Life</i>	Daniel Brooks	113, Winter 2003	
<i>Québécois: A libretto in Three Cantos (First Draft)</i>	George Elliott Clarke	112, Fall 2002	
<i>Big Mama! -- The Willie Mae Thornton Story</i>	Audrei-Kairen	112, Fall 2002	
<i>Issues of the Night Time</i>	David King	112, Fall 2002	
<i>The Meeting</i>	Marty Chan	110, Spring 2002	
<i>Half-Chinx Taking Over the World</i>	Bobby Del Rio	110, Spring 2002	

<i>I</i>	John Ng	110, Spring 2002	
<i>I Chink</i>	Yung Luu	110, Spring 2002	
<i>MindLands</i>	W.A. Hamilton	109, Winter 2002	
<i>Smudge</i>	Alex Bulmer	108, Fall 2001	
<i>RADIO :30</i>	Chris Earle	108, Fall 2001	
<i>The Vic</i>	Leanna Brodie	107, Summer 2001	
<i>Uncertain Sacrifice</i>	Darwin Burns, Jessica Ehrenworth, Cameron Green, Rebecca Harper, Zoe Hopkins, Marnie Langevin, Shaune Legris, Eric Neufeld, Justin Pagani, Claire Tansey, Simon Wilcox, Eleanor Crowder	106, Spring 2001	
<i>Boom</i>	Julie Salverson, Pattie Fraser, music and lyrics by Julie Salverson	106, Spring 2001	
<i>Five Episodes from The Dead Dog Café Comedy Hour</i>	Thomas King	105, Winter 2001	
<i>A Modo Suo (A Fable)</i>	Antonino Mazza, trans. Tony Nardi	104, Fall 2000	
<i>I Just Wanna Jewify: The Yiddish Revenge on Wagner</i>	Michael Wex	103, Summer 2000	
<i>The Squeegee Report</i>	David Diamond	103, Summer 2000	
<i>Down Dangerous Passes Road (Le Chemin des passes-dangereuses)</i>	Michel Marc Bouchard, Linda Gaboriau	102, Spring 2000	
<i>The Unnatural and Accidental Women</i>	Marie Clements	101, Winter 2000	
<i>Running</i>	Jane Heather	99, Summer 1999	
<i>Rag, Tag and Bobtail</i>	Don Bouzek	99, Summer 1999	
<i>Charismatic Death Scenes</i>	Robert Chafe	98, Spring 1999	
<i>The Wines of Tuscany</i>	Conrad Alexandrowicz	97, Winter 1998	
<i>Kicked</i>	Michael Healey	97, Winter 1998	
<i>Tinka's New Dress</i>	Ronnie Burkett	95, Summer 1998	
<i>Five or Six Characters in Search of Toronto</i>	Rana Bose	94, Spring 1998	

<i>NONE IS TOO MANY</i>	Jaso Sherman, Irving Abella, and Harold Troper	93, Winter 1997	
<i>The Terrible But Incomplete Journals of John D.</i>	Guillermo Verdecchia	92, Fall 1997	
<i>big face</i>	Marion de Vries	92, Fall 1997	
<i>one word</i>	Ken Garnhum	91, Summer 1997	
<i>New Art Book</i>	Ken Garnhum	91, Summer 1997	
<i>A Setting for FRIDA K.</i>	Ken Garnhum	91, Summer 1997	
<i>KA'MA'MO'PI CIK/THE GATHERING</i>	Rachael Van Fossen, and Darrel Wildcat	90, Spring 1997	
<i>Tornado</i>	Judith Thompson	89, Winter 1996	
<i>Off the 401</i>	Judith Thompson	89, Winter 1996	
<i>Far Away Home</i>	Richard Fowler, Donald Kitt, Tannis Kowalchuck, Stephen Lawson, Karen Randoja, and Ker Wells	88, Fall 1996	
<i>The District of Centuries: A Modern Fable</i>	Sean Dixon	87, Summer 1996	
<i>Out for Blood in context</i>	The Clichettes	86, Spring 1996	
<i>A Cry from the City of Virgins</i>	Cody Poulton, Kara Juro	85, Winter 1996	
<i>In the Ring</i>	Dalpe Dickson	84, Fall 1995	
<i>United Sistahs</i>	Dirk McLean	83, Summer 1995	Interview
<i>Sistahs</i>	sharon lewis, and maxine bailey	83, Summer 1995	
<i>Cyber: womb A Contemporary Domestic Science-Fiction Drama in Two Acts</i>	Vivienne Laxdal	82, Spring 1995	
<i>Sanity Clause</i>	Louis Del Grande, Neil Ross	81, Winter 1994	
<i>The Oil Show</i>	Janet Amos, Anne Anglin, Howard Cooper, Diane D'Aquila, Dian English, Ted Johns, Eric Peterson, Miles Potter, Booth Savage, Terry Tweed, and Ted Johns	79-80, Summer/Fall 1994	

<i>Public Lies</i>	Robert Fothergill	79–80, Summer/Fall 1994	
<i>Ghost, of a Voice</i>	Nigel Spencer, and Marie–Claire Biais	79–80, Summer/Fall 1994	
<i>LA BRUTA INTERFERENCE</i>	Alberto Kurapel, le Guanaco gaucho	79–80, Summer/Fall 1994	
<i>Penelope</i>	Guppy Graphics	78, Spring 1994	
<i>Shocker's Delight!</i>	Stewart Lemoine	77, Winter 1993	
<i>The Interview</i>	Tamara C. Bick, and Michael Healey	77, Winter 1993	
<i>Mary Medusa</i>	Shawna Dempsey, and Lorri Millan	76, Fall 1993	
<i>Pochsy's Lips</i>	Karen Hines, and Sandra Balcovske	75, Summer 1993	
<i>Arabian Nights -- Part 2</i>	Steve Petch	75, Summer 1993	
<i>Last Rites</i>	Leslie Hamson	75, Summer 1993	
<i>Tokyo Two</i>	Open City production: Virginia Baxter, and Keith Gallasch	74, Spring 1993	
<i>Changes</i>	Tunooniq Theatre	73, Winter 1992	
<i>In Search of a Friend: A Script Online</i>	Tunooniq Theatre	73, Winter 1992	
<i>Hornby</i>	Bruce Valpy, and John Rafferty	73, Winter 1992	
<i>Fireweeds: The Diary of a Dream</i>	Elise Dewsberry	72, Fall 1992	
<i>Whale Riding Weather</i>	Bryden MacDonald	71, Summer 1992	
<i>LAURIER: The History of the Village of the Small Huts Part V</i>	Michael Hollingsworth	70, Spring 1992	
<i>A Woman's Comedy</i>	Beth Herst	69, Winter 1991	
<i>Winnetou's Snake Oil Show From Wigwam City</i>	Hortensia Colorado, and Wild-Eyed Sam	68, Fall 1991	
<i>Almighty Voice and His Wife: A play in Two Acts</i>	Daniel David Moses	68, Fall 1991	
<i>Excerpts: Diva Ojibway</i>	Tina Mason	68, Fall 1991	
<i>Quest for Fire: How Trickster Brought Fire to the People</i>	Lenore Keeshig–Tobias	68, Fall 1991	
<i>L'Affaire Tartuffe, or, The Garrison Officers Rehearse Molière</i>	Marianne Ackerman	67, Summer 1991	
<i>Selkirk Ave</i>	Bruce McManus	66, Spring 1991	

<i>Dora: A Case of Hysteria</i>	Kim Morrissey	65, Winter 1990	(Not listed as script in digital contents)
<i>Polygraphe</i>	Marie Brassard, Robert Lepage, and Gyllian Raby	64, Fall 1990	
<i>Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spots</i>	Monique Mojica	64, Fall 1990	
<i>Serpent in the Night Sky</i>	Dianne Warren	63, Summer 1990	
<i>Battle Fatigue</i>	Jenny Munday	62, Spring 1990	
<i>Newhouse</i>	Richard Rose, and D. D. Kugler	61, Winter 1989	
<i>Zeke and the Indoor Plants</i>	Ruth Smillie, and Jan Randall	60, Fall 1989	
<i>Kristal Dreams</i>	David Pody	60, Fall 1989	
<i>Lola Starr Builds Her Dream Home: A Travesty</i>	Sky Gilbert	59, Summer 1989	
<i>Boom, Baby, Boom!</i>	Banuta Rubess, and Nic Gotham	58, Spring 1989	
<i>Warm Wind in China</i>	Kent Stetson	57, Winter 1988	
<i>Shine Boy</i>	George Elroy Boyd	56, Fall 1988	
<i>The Rich Man</i>	Henry Kreisel, Joanne Osborne, and Gerry Potter	55, Summer 1988	
<i>Detaining Mr Trotsky</i>	Robert Fothergill	54, Spring 1988	
<i>Zero Hour</i>	Arthur Milner	53, Winter 1987	
<i>Another Morning</i>	Steve Petch	52, Fall 1987	
<i>The Last Bus</i>	Raymond Storey	51, Summer 1987	
<i>Being at Home with Claude</i>	René-Daniel Dubois, and Linda Gaboriau	50, Spring 1987	
<i>Sex Tips for Modern Girls</i>	Edward Astley, Susan Astley, Kim Seary, John Sereda, Hilary Strang, Christine Willes, and Peter Eliot Weiss	49, Winter 1986	
<i>A Woman from the Sea</i>	Cindy Cowan	48, Fall 1986	
<i>Miranda</i>	Erika Ritter	47, Summer 1986	
<i>Umiak: The Collective Boat</i>	François Camirand, Yves Lauvaux, Monique Rioux, Michel O. Noël, and John Van Burek	46, Spring 1986	

<i>Garrison's Garage</i>	Ted Johns	45, Winter 1985	List of characters
<i>Garrison's Garage, Director's Notes</i>	Katherine Kaszas	45, Winter 1985	Director's notes
<i>Garrison's Garage</i>	Ted Johns	45, Winter 1985	
<i>Love is Strange</i>	Paul Ledoux, and David Young	44, Fall 1985	List of cast
<i>Love is Strange, A note on the play</i>	Paul Ledoux, Brian Richmond, and David Young	44, Fall 1985	List of players, set, songs
<i>Love is Strange</i>	Paul Ledoux, and David Young	44, Fall 1985	
<i>This is for you, Anna: A spectacle of revenge</i>	Anna Project	43, Summer 1985	
<i>The Fighting Days, Introduction</i>	Kim McCaw	42, Spring 1985	
<i>Goodnight Disgrace</i>	Michael Mercer	41, Winter 1984	
<i>Jennie's Story</i>	Betty Lambert	40, Fall 1984	
<i>Come Out, Come Out, Whatever You Are</i>	Richard Ouzounian	39, Spring 1984	
<i>Ten Lost Years</i>	Barry Broadfoot, Cedric Smith, Jack Winter, and George Luscombe	38, Fall 1983	
<i>Trummi Kaput</i>	Volker Ludwig, and Dennis Foon	37, Spring 1983	
<i>Burlap Bags</i>	Leonard Peterson	36, Fall 1982	
<i>The Terrible Journey of Frederick Dunglass</i>	Michael Cook	36, Fall 1982	
<i>Rock and Roll: A Musical Play in Two Acts</i>	John Gray	35, Summer 1982	
<i>Straight Ahead and Blind Dancers</i>	Charles Tidler	34, Spring 1982	
<i>Theatre of the Film Noir</i>	George F. Walker	34, Spring 1982	
<i>A Letter To My Son</i>	George Ryga	33, Winter 1982	
<i>The Games they Play (At Siesta Time): Juegos a la hora de siesta</i>	Roma Mahieu	32, Fall 1981	
<i>Looking For An Audience</i>	Stan Reid	31, Summer 1981	
<i>Nathan Cohen a Review</i>	Rick Salutin	30, Spring 1981	
<i>Blood Relations</i>	Sharon Pollock	29, Winter 1981	
<i>Quebec, Spring 1918</i>	Jean Provencher, and Gilles LaChance	28, Fall 1980	
<i>I'll be Back Before Midnight</i>	Peter Colley	27, Summer 1980	
<i>The Black Bonspiel of Wullie MacCrimmon</i>	W.O. Mitchell	26, Spring 1980	

<i>Rumours of Our Death</i>	George F. Walker	25, Winter 1980	
<i>Think Again: A Comedy in Three Acts</i>	Patricia Joudry	23, Summer 1979	
<i>The Sand: A Play</i>	Marion Andre Czerniecki	22, Spring 1979	
<i>The Shipbuilder: A Play</i>	Ken Mitchell	21, Winter 1979	
<i>My Beatles: A play</i>	Satō Makoto	20, Fall 1978	
<i>Passion and Sin: A full-length feature</i>	Hrant Alianak	19, Summer 1978	
<i>Lord Alfred's Lover</i>	Eric Bentley	18, Spring 1978	
<i>Paper Wheat</i>	25th Street House Theatre	17, Winter 1978	
<i>Kantor's The Dead Class</i>	Tadeusz Kantor	16, Fall 1977	Introduction
<i>The Theatre of Death</i>	Tadeusz Kantor	16, Fall 1977	Manifesto
<i>The Dead Class: Scene By Scene</i>	Tadeusz Kantor, trans. by Jan Klossowicz	16, Fall 1977	Scene by scene breakdown
<i>Characters in The Dead Class</i>	Tadeusz Kantor	16, Fall 1977	Characters
<i>Gravediggers Of 1942</i>	Tom Hendry	15, Summer 1977	
<i>Henrik Ibsen On The Necessity Of Producing Norwegian Drama</i>	John Palmer	14, Spring 1977	
<i>The Gayden Chronicles</i>	Michael Cook	13, Winter 1977	
<i>The Boy Bishop</i>	Ken Gass	12, Fall 1976	
<i>SOLANGE and GOGLU</i>	Jean Barbeau, John Van Burek	11, Summer 1976	
<i>Under The Arch</i>	Paddy Campbell, William Skolnik	10, Spring 1976	
<i>Leela Means To Play</i>	Beverley Simons	9, Winter 1976	
<i>The Citizen of Calais</i>	Eric Nicol	7, Summer 1975	
<i>1837: The Farmers' Revolt</i>	Rick Salutin, Theatre Passe Muraille	6, Spring 1975	
<i>Dark Harvest: A Tragedy of the Canadian Prairie</i>	Gwen Pharis Ringwood	5, Winter 1975	
<i>Paracelsus</i>	George Ryga	4, Fall 1974	
<i>Omphale and the Hero</i>	John Herbert	3, Summer 1974	
<i>Sticks and Stones: The Donnelly's, Part One</i>	James Reaney	2, Spring 1974	
<i>Head, Guts and Sound Bone Dance: A New Play</i>	Michael Cook	1, Winter 1974	

It's Not You, but It's Not Me Either

Kenneth T. Williams

I haven't had a Facebook profile since the first phlegmy coughs of the COVID-19 pandemic, but if I still did, my relationship status with *CTR* would read "It's Complicated." I hadn't really thought about it for many years. There are some things in it with my name on it, but I honestly can't tell you which things and when.¹ It's been a while. I know. It's my fault because I haven't bothered to call or pick up an issue in quite some time. However, after reading the roundtable piece reflecting on *CTR*'s history of publishing play scripts, I feel compelled to share some of my thoughts on it.

True story. This was around 2009 or so. I was in a bar in Saskatoon called Lydia's. It's not there anymore, but it was a great place for live music. The crowd was usually really chill and there to have fun. I was in the washroom and some other patron had taken offence at my T-shirt. "How would you like it if I wore my white power theatre T-shirt?" he barked at me. I'd had a few drinks at this point and couldn't come up with anything wittier than "you mean, like, Shakespeare?" I know, sad, really sad. Not my best, but again, I was in a bar, in the washroom, and I was being accosted for daring to wear my Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company T-shirt, which was racist according to the white dude washing his hands.

This incident wasn't totally out of the blue. The idea of the Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company (SNTC) was born during the making of the movie *Big Bear* in the late 1990s. During the production, Gordon Tootoosis, Tantoo Cardinal, Kenneth Charlette, and Donna Heimbecker saw a need for an Indigenous-centred theatre company that could provide theatre training in

¹ Editors note: Williams was one of the playwrights featured in the roundtable "Playwriting in the New Saskatchewan: A Round-table Discussion That Didn't Really Happen," which appeared in *CTR* 154 (Spring 2013) focusing on "The New Saskatchewan."

Saskatchewan for Indigenous youth. In 1999, SNTC became a reality and moved into an old department store on 22nd Street. Its creation wasn't universally celebrated. Many a caller to radio talk shows expressed dismay that such a theatre was needed. We already have a theatre, the Persephone, what's wrong with that? The funniest comment for me was, "Do we need a theatre for every group? When are we opening a Norwegian theatre?"

I am not making this up!

Diorama, an image frozen in time reflecting a culture that has disappeared. It's nice to be noticed then catalogued. We were here once and we often told stories. Thank you for recognizing that it could be considered theatre. Yes, I know I don't look anything like the diorama, especially the clothes, but I am wearing a T-shirt. I am trying to be helpful because who has time to tan a buffalo hide anymore? It's all the more difficult since you turned my peoples' hunting grounds into national parks. Sorry, I don't mean "you" personally, but the people who looked like you. Like, a lot like you. I try to feel your pain. If I don't look, act, or try to represent the mannequins in the diorama, how are you able to know what Indigenous theatre looks like, how it acts, or what it represents? Thanks for stopping by. As a reviewer, I know you didn't pay for your ticket but I'll always cherish your comments on how you keep feeling guilty watching Indigenous theatre and wished you didn't have to.

Right. So what connects this to anything?

As per Alan Filewod's fallacy of "settler colonial nationalism," white men with the noblest of intentions, stoutness of hearts, and clarity of thought set out to map the uncharted territory that was Canadian theatre. They knew it existed because their journal was already titled *Canadian Theatre Review*. So they set out to find Canadian theatre to review in order to fill their nascent periodical with content and complete their application forms for grant money. It would have shimmering patinas of scholarship and first-person authenticity.

Similar to Jill Carter's experience, I found it nice to read when I was in university (1980s) and didn't have much of a clue what professional theatre existed in Canada. It was glossy, and because it was glossy, it was sexy. It made Canadian theatre shiny and appealing. The *Canadian Theatre Review*

was to Canadian theatre artists what the *Watchtower* is to Jehovah's Witnesses: an argument for our relevance combined as a voice for our salvation. I became a convert. A young acolyte on a mission. I was going to be a playwright! *CTR* was my guide. It was both the map and the mission.

It didn't last long. Once I entered the professional sphere, and the people I read about became friends, *CTR* ceased to be my go-to source for much of anything. The biggest reason was I didn't live in Toronto. After I moved to Toronto, I just had to make a few phone calls, send out some emails, or hang out in a pub to know what was going on.

Anything bordering on critical analysis tended to be spotlights on what non-white people were doing in our theatre spaces. Just like dioramas in museums.

What was going on in reality didn't jive with what I was reading in *CTR*. Like, never once did I see an article about why *A Christmas Carol* is our national play. What made our audience police other people's behaviour in theatre? Are we really a nation of shushers and hissers?

There are rules in warfare. Many of them deal with the rights of prisoners of war and how they're supposed to be treated after capture. If I forced an enemy combatant to sit absolutely still and prevent them from making a noise for ninety minutes, it would be a war crime. If I charged him thirty dollars and started doing a one-man show for him, it would be Canadian theatre. But would it make it into *CTR*?

If it did, who'd read it? If anyone needed to read *CTR* it was the white dude in the washroom and the various callers to radio talk shows who had no idea about anything about theatre. I'm going to make a wild but probably accurate assumption that they don't and never would, just as I seriously doubt that a theatre that was openly "white power" would make T-shirts.

Unruly Sites, Bewildering Buildings, Angry Cities: A Wayward Walk

Katrina Dunn

This issue's title, ["Cross Sections and Core Samples: CTR at 50"] with its geological encouragements, seems to speak directly to a consideration of space and site through a specific history, and to brilliantly lock time and space together in perfect revelatory images. Kendra Fanconi says in *Canadian Theatre Review* (CTR) 145 that in "a natural site, the memory is geographic. It remembers the beginning, when the Earth folded rock and the sea drowned valleys" (97). Such is the way of the earth but perhaps not the way of fields of theatre and performance studies. As I prepared this article, my core samples resisted verticality and sometimes did not remember the beginning. My cross-sections were often anomalies. Strata moved; crust became core; layers became soup. I abandoned collecting samples and instead engaged the most cited thinker in writing about space and site in the fifty-year span of CTR, Michel de Certeau. In CTR 170, Heather Davis-Fisch, glossing Certeau, observes that "spaces" are locations where human practice inscribes and activates stable "places" (89). Andy Houston in CTR 121 finds Certeau's favoured human practice of walking "akin to the act of enunciating one's relationship to surroundings, to place" ("Deep-Mapping" 33), and Alana Gerecke and Laura Levin in CTR 176 assert that this critical perambulatory practice "allows new physical and spatial possibilities to emerge" (6). Space and site came alive for me in CTR as a walk without a definite route, with significant detours, adjusting, reversing, sometimes looping back on itself, and occasionally sprinting toward an unknown goal. Along the path, a complex spatial narrative emerges, and many new subfields are born. Walk this way.

In the 1970s, scholars and artists used CTR as a place to grapple with the implications of the massive amount of built environment, in the form of

theatres, being constructed for, and sometimes foisted on, the creative community as part of the centennial building boom. Brian Arnott, editor of *CTR* 6, *Space* doesn't shy away from the difficulty.

Acknowledging that built theatres are "constructed tomorrow for yesterday's drama" (8), he asks how "venues of performance come into existence; who owns, maintains and operates them; whether they are accessible to the community at large; and whether their use reflects the needs of the community as a whole. These are, befitting a public art, social questions" (12). What is palpable in the writing and research in this issue is the suspicion and disappointment engendered in the nation's young professional theatre community by the forceful arrival of architecture. Articles are titled "The Building Burden" (Jolliffe) and "Notes to the Building Committee" (Wilcox). Michael Cook's "Trapped in Space" bemoans the lived reality of Newfoundland's new Arts and Culture Centre in St. John's, where the promise of local theatre created in the centre for the community "was stillborn" (117), and management's mercantile methods of operation are likened to the exploitation of trawler fishermen by fish companies (118).

A year after the *Space* issue, Joseph Papp's "A House Is Not a Home," in *CTR* 10, takes aim a familiar feature of the building-boom era. He elaborates on his famous 'diss' of the new \$46.4 million National Arts Centre building, as part of a 1976 address to 250 arts managers in Ottawa (the ensuing controversy was nicknamed 'the Papp smear'). Papp is particularly critical of the "Arts conglomerate" (multiple buildings for theatre, dance, and music grouped together in one complex), calling them "costly mausoleums of heartless space" that, despite their democratic aspirations, "still retain an air of elitism" (106). As well, he spurns the misguided combination of architects and boards of directors that alienate artists from the design and planning process. In the resulting spaces, he predicts, "the observer and the observed will always be strangers and not know the reason why" (102).

Striding confidently away from all the steel and concrete of the new venues was John Juliani, who famously labelled the excess and mainstream aspirations of the building craze an "edifice complex" (qtd. in Rubin 152) and led the way in site-specific experimentation. His article "Savage Space" chronicles the "temporal-spatial experiments" of his company, Savage God, staging modern classics in found sites: an airport Pirandello, Beckett's *Happy*

Days in Stanley Park, and an impromptu performance of Strindberg's *The Stranger* in a Swiss pastry shop. In the early 1980s, the desire to produce outside of traditional theatre space gathered momentum as John Krizanc's *Tamara*, set in an elaborate mansion where audience members follow characters of their choosing, became an unprecedented success. Interviewed by Jon Kaplan in *CTR* 44, Krizanc asserts that "the best way to write a critique about fascism was to give the audience more freedom than it ever had" (136). Mary Vingoe charts the emergence of Parrsboro's Ships Company Theatre in *CTR* 48, where original "Environmental Marine Theatre" animates the deck of the *Kipawo*, and the "vessel serves as a kind of collective seat of memory for the communities of the Minas Basin" (117). The most discussed site-based work of the 1980s, by a long shot, is composer R. Murray Schafer's *The Princess of the Stars*, a polyglottal sung performance in canoes performed at dawn on several Canadian lakes, covered in *CTR* 47 and *CTR* 55. All of this work seeks to renegotiate and reinvigorate the performer-audience relationship and seems to comment directly on the damage done by, and power dynamics inherent in, the heartless spaces of the newly constructed theatres.

For companies and artists simultaneously trekking the building-based path, the journey in the 1970s and 1980s was gruellingly uphill. The spatial focus in *CTR* turns to renovations, with Sandra Souchotte chronicling, in deep financial detail, "Toronto's Baby Building Boom" (*CTR* 21). The article outlines the costly upgrades of the old warehouses, firehalls, and churches that the alternative companies once coveted for their affordability, and the subsequent pressure to program commercially and garner lucrative rentals. Gina Mallet documents the rebuilding of the St. Lawrence Centre, a mere thirteen years after it opened, to correct design flaws that "thwarted any attempt of effective theatre" (28), and in the same article, the Elgin/Wintergarden renovations are shown chasing the cachet of a theatre district in a city desperate for world-class status. Near the end of the 1980s, Bill Peel summarizes *No Vacancy*, a report by the Toronto Arts Council that "points to a crisis of major proportions in housing artists and the arts in the city" (81), as the overheated real estate market finds developers brandishing condo towers pushing out theatre production and support organizations, making the city unaffordable for artists. In 1989.

Let's sit down for a while. I'm disoriented—what year is it? Could the real estate squeeze that is so characteristic of the 2010s and 2020s also have been affecting theatre artists in 1989? The 1990s are very quiet on space and site in *CTR*, but suddenly, in the early 2000s, we're up and running, as site explodes as a topic in *CTR*. The journal becomes an expansive surface on which to craft a theoretical foundation for site-specific practice and to articulate a multitude of different approaches. Over a series of articles, Andy Houston experiments with framing mechanisms to explain site-engaged performance in the new millennium, with its heightened focus on examining the politics of space and on exploring and revealing the histories of sites. In *CTR*121, influenced by Mike Pearson's work, he uses *The Weyburn Project* to deep-map through the Saskatchewan Mental Hospital, with its "moral architecture" designed to subdue ("Deep-Mapping" 34). Here, he helpfully distinguishes between the found (site) and the fabricated (brought to and animating the site) (35), with the performance experience layered with stratigraphic images from both. Here, the geological metaphor is apt: the performative cross-section that the audience encounters shows the fabricated material powerfully connected by sediments of meaning to the found site.

Houston also explores de Certeau's ideas of understanding space through motion in *CTR*103, with a chronicle of *Nights in This City*, a text by Tim Etchells (of Forced Entertainment) "about the struggle to fully inhabit a space" ("*Nights*" 38). In this vehicular performance that Houston transplanted to the prairie city of Lloydminster, a tour bus offers "the city's reality as a found object as it indeterminately appears to each spectator through the bus's window" (39), experienced in friction with an unruly text that narrates an alternate and subjective reading of what is viewed. In their introduction to *CTR*126, an entire volume on site-specific performance, Houston and Laura Nanni create another frame by positing purpose-built theatres as "utopias" disconnected from reality, and site-specific work as "heterotopic" in its radical re-contextualizing of place.

The dramaturge's role in this re-contextualizing, as defined by Heidi Taylor, clarifies found space's heterotopic essence: "The site-specific approach alters the theatrical magic required. Instead of conjuring, there is an unveiling" (18). Darren O'Donnell builds on this assertion by urging performers to dispense with theatre's "dusty technologies" of plot, character, and

conflict (104) and, in their spatial engagements, be either themselves or nobody (106). Through these years, a crowd of practitioners define new routes and pathways into site, both in profiles by scholars and through their own writing. According to Houston, "As the theatre becomes less an event ruled by what is seen in the archival 'houses' ... the potential for new understanding of theatre practice and the world it navigates exists" ("Deep-Mapping" 40).

That new understanding comes in the form of field-changing books published in the mid- to late 2000s, arriving in *CTR* in the form of reviews and greatly expanding the avenues for research into space and site since then. Marvin Carlson's review of Ric Knowles's *Reading the Material Theatre* in *CTR* 132 highlights Knowles's "new materialist semiotics," revealing a "politics of location" (Knowles, *Reading* 179) that connects theatre works "to the material, historical and cultural contexts from which they emerge and to which they speak" (*Reading* 202). Chris Eaket's review of Michael McKinnie's *City Stages: Theatre and Urban Space in a Global City* in *CTR* 134 introduces McKinnie's interdisciplinary methodologies for exploring space informed by "geography, political economy, spatial theory, and urban development" and for considering venues in a "co-defining relationship between cities and theatres" (73). Part of McKinnie's book brings us back to the old problem of the St. Lawrence Centre, this time "to examine the role of civic theatres in urban planning" (Eaket 73). After a long loop around many sites, we are back at the edifice but this time with stronger tools. Helen Paris's review of Kim Solga, D. J. Hopkins, and Shelley Orr's *Performance and the City: Performing and Writing Urban Space* in *CTR* 146 continues the interdisciplinary expansion, connecting vectors of analysis between performance theory, urban studies, and architecture, in a form that "allows for the poetic and the politic, and connects the philosophical with the personal" (102). As Solga herself says, in another context, the collection looks for alternative events "that might excavate the tensions, struggles and unattractive lived circumstances" of the city (119). The powerful composite theoretical turn produced by these books embraces the entire city as a performative object for analysis, relationally imbricated in each structure, artwork, and strolling urban dweller.

In the 2010s, this city view offers readers a host of entry points into some of the most pressing of urban issues. Ryan K. James's "Urban Redevelopment

and Displacement from Regent Park to El Cartucho" (*CTR*161) tackles arts-centred gentrification and redevelopment-scheme disruptions that leave residents "feeling unwelcome in a place where one has always lived" (19). Peter Dickinson is likewise invested in the links between real estate and the performing arts, scrutinizing Vancouver's Community Amenities program (*CTR*167), in which cultural spaces emerge by way of "artistic currency translated through the overriding logic of financialization into economic profitability" (42). In *CTR*164, *Vancouver after 2010*, Dickinson collaborates with Kirsty Johnston and Keren Zaiontz to map the transformation of host cities of mega-events, looking at Cultural Olympiad products as "part of larger globalizing processes" (5) that encourage displacement and homelessness and can also harm arts organizations. Traipsing protectively through the overwhelming maze of the city, we inevitably arrive at—or stumble on—a protest. Alana Gerecke and Laura Levin, in their issue titled *Choreographies of Assembly* (*CTR*176), analyze the spatial politics of large-scale public dissent and ask how "mass gatherings in public space, both in theatrical and para-theatrical contexts, give form to geopolitical relations" (10). Like the works explored in 2018's issue *Immersive Theatre*, edited by Natalie Alvarez and Aaron Willis, there is a shared interest here in upending static notions of time and space and allowing us agency as spatial actants, in order to counter enraging geopolitical forces that work to curb both our movement and our choice. These desires come alive in Carla Melo's reflection on Farrah Miranda and Graciela Flores Méndez's *Mass Arrival* (*CTR*161), a guerrilla performance in which 200 white-identified participants stood in a replica of a ship carrying Tamil refugees who were labelled terrorists when they arrived on Canada's shores in 2010. Blocking Queen Street traffic for twenty minutes, this "important decolonial gesture" exposed "a long history of discriminatory practices" in Canada (36).

The inherently political nature of space is highlighted in Natalia Essling's review of *Theory for Theatre Studies: Space*, by Kim Solga (*CTR*183), along with Solga's identification of the need to reconceive space from an Indigenous point of view: "space and place are not mere concepts, and for Indigenous nations across the globe, stolen land for resource extraction amounts to territorial and cultural violence that persists in the structures of settler colonialism" (77). Most of us settler scholars have lots of work to do in this direction, but Indigenous artists and scholars have a long history of land-based practices that have been deeply articulated in *CTR* through many

voices and issues. Debajehmujig's *The Global Savages*, a slide show in *CTR* 157 by Barry Freeman and Ron Berti, recorded some of the journeys of the 18,000-year-old travelling storytellers that embed their traditional stories in both urban and rural land across Canada and Europe, often employing walking as one of their methodologies.

In a poignant example of Vanessa Watts's "place-thought" (from Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe cosmologies) (21), Lilian Mengesha also engages this concept in her profile of Rebecca Belmore's *Fountain* (*CTR* 174), the first Indigenous artwork to represent Canada at the Venice Biennale. Belmore's video installation (in which she announces her arrival by pouring water from her home into the waters of Venice) points to the idea that land and water are "alive and thinking and that humans and non-humans derive agency through the extensions of these thoughts" (Mengesha 11).

Place-thought challenges the structures of cultural genocide in Canada as Jackson 2bears and Janet Rogers show, engaging similar Kanien'kehá:ka and Haudenosaunee practices in "For This Land" to address the colonial histories that "occupy Turtle Island like a hauntology of ghosts." Rogers and 2bears add their own truths and memories to those already held by the land as "instances of creative resistance as cultural renewal" (27).

Andy Moro of ARTICLE 11 directly addresses the harms of colonial space with *DECLARATION*: "a call to witness Indigenous artists animating an environment that examines the role that multiple artistic disciplines have played in forming our contemporary lives in this colonized nation" (79). *DECLARATION* is "a durational installation and performance framework ... contextually curated to venue ... and the land on which it is being hosted" (79), and with this piece, ARTICLE 11 has critically engaged places like Fort York and the Royal Ontario Museum.

Using land-based practices to disturb settler-colonial spatial paradigms is paramount in this work. It is also paramount in settler scholar Kimberly Skye Richards's profile of the Tiny House Warriors, a group of Secwepemc women land and water defenders who have been building tiny houses along the TMX pipeline route to prevent the twinning of the pipeline and assert Secwepemc law and jurisdiction. This work is designed to "resist contemporary acts of

colonialism, petro-capitalism, and imperialism and manifest land back" (38) in an activist performance that "interrupts the fantasy of Canada" (39).

Indigenous land-based practices that highlight and redress cultural violence are some of the most powerful and complex of the journal's spatial engagements, made all the more consequential by their goals of tangible cultural, geographical, legal, and political change.

While the main avenues of exploration in fifty years of *CTR*'s spatial discourse tackled land and decolonization of spaces, physical theatre buildings and their economic constraints, and site-specific performance (and how these areas intersect), many times in my reading I was led down side streets and into hidden corners where I enjoyed surprising encounters. *CTR* 134 offered a smorgasbord of theatre in bars and restaurants, including Susan Bennett's intriguing consideration of dinner theatre and Paul Halferty's thoughts on the performative nature of gay bars. Ric (Richard Paul) Knowles's analysis of the legacy of Stratford's famous Festival Stage offers a rare discussion of blocking as spatial practice ("Shakespeare"; *CTR* 54). Jessica Watkin considers the spatial implications of inclusivity (*CTR* 170), while Belarie Zatzman has an embodied encounter with the architecture of Canada's National Holocaust Museum (*CTR* 181). Mary Blackstone and Moira Day explore space and place in the "New Saskatchewan" (*CTR* 154), and over a twenty-year period, a fulsome chronicle of the country's outdoor Shakespeare activity can be pieced together. As Sean Dixon says in *CTR* 126, "Shakespeare wasn't an indoor player" (65). There is a lot more, and I apologize to those I appreciated along the way but did not have space to name. Hopefully, we wind up this ramble by arriving home. That is, as long as home and house are a possibility for us. *Performance and Housing* (*CTR* 191), edited by Laura Levin and Sunita Nigam, looks at housing as "a temporal, embodied, affective, and theatrical *practice*" (5) and takes on housing *in* performance and housing *as* performance (7). The issue also profiles the "tools that theatre artists have used to redress housing injustice" (11), a growing threat to the viability of theatre and performance in cities. According to Bill Peel's summary of *No Vacancy* in *CTR* 60, this threat has been present and growing for forty of the fifty years of this journal's existence and shows no signs of subsiding. In a medium that requires spatial presence, how can we pay the brutally prohibitive cost of remaining? In 2023, in *CTR* 194, Colleen Snell explores this question by wondering at the recent exiling of performing

arts companies from their homes and the failure of venues and creative hubs to serve artists of modest means. Her solution to this seemingly perennial, but increasingly pressing, problem is relational and posits an alternative to all of the unruly sites, bewildering buildings, and angry cities: "People are the place. They are the stage. We sustain one another" (36).

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Despite of Landscape

Nazli Akhtari

In “Unruly Sites, Bewildering Buildings, Angry Cities: A Wayward Walk” (this issue), Katrina Dunn takes her readers on a stroll through five decades of spatial thinking in *Canadian Theatre Review*, a journal established in 1974, just seven years after Canada removed racial barriers to immigration in 1967 to maintain its population and labour force (Li, sec. 3). Along the way, Dunn offers a densely signposted narrative about past debates on space pulled together from this archive of Canadian theatre.

The bibliographical labour performed by Dunn in limning a narrative of space-thinking in the issues of *CTR* results in a list of more than forty contributors who reflected on debates about space, site, and place in the journal’s pages. Excepting the very few contributors writing about placemaking and Indigenous land-based practices, the voices represented are of white scholars and artists. Just as with any archive, past issues of *CTR* could only provide an incomplete record of these decades. Yet Dunn’s walk offers an empirical glimpse into a certain attachment to space and theatrical landscape.

In engaging with the space of theatre and performance, I seek to actively account for what the representation of space *does*. Thinking about space within such romantic fictions as “Canada” always already risks occluding racialized codes in a “recursive” production of space and the legalization of theft as property (Nichols 9). The differentiated terrains of struggle for/against space/landscape are realized in the extended materiality of this recursivity, and its “juridical forms” (Bhandar 12) in property. So, appreciative of this invitation to read, learn from, and think with Dunn’s essay, I have had to ask myself what it means to think about space, especially for those of us whose relationships to this space/landscape are mediated through “white possession” (Moreton-Robinson xiii). The past few years have made irrefutable the historical disposability of racialized bodies and labour,

especially given the international, violent clampdown on assembly and speech (things of performance and performativity) and the pervasive indifference to, and indeed the permissibility of, a genocide in full view of the world. That genocide resurfacing in a colonial frontier elsewhere, in Palestine, is at once a reminder of its *hereness*.

How do we engage in and teach the vital art of assembly at the time of its criminalization?



Figure 1: Gaza House: the Liberated Zone, June 2024, located on Haldimand Tract and on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishnaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples, situated on land colonially claimed by the University of Waterloo. On 25 October 1784, this land, which includes 10 kilometres on each side of the Grand River, was promised to the Six Nations.

As Dunn's journey through the journal's past illuminates, the first decade of engagements with space in *CTR* reflected concerns with the construction boom of theatre venues as incongruous with the nation's young practitioners'

artistic needs. These issues are imbricated with related questions about ownership and access. In relation to this “forceful arrival of architecture,” Dunn observes a “suspicion and disappointment” among theatre practitioners (91). This suspicion extends to the establishment of such conglomerate art spaces as the National Art Centre and the elitism that model spearheads.

Consequently, the 1980s invoked a momentum for site-specific performance, as artists moved away from purpose-built venues. In *CTR* issues of subsequent decades, authors engaged with the appropriation of such spaces as warehouses, churches, and fire halls and their transformation into performance venues for alternative theatre groups. Stumbling at the year 1989, with concerns over housing costs in the 2010s and 2020s echoing similar worries from the 1990s, Dunn confides a temporal disorientation (93). The conceptual norms established in *CTR* about site-specific and immersive work continue into the new millennium.

The walk then nears more recent decades, when concerns over gentrification and redevelopment have found purchase in contemporary debates about artist-run and non-profit art and cultural institutions and the neoliberal financialization of ownership, debt, and access to space. Dunn’s pause at the year 1989 in fact invokes how theatre’s boundedness to space means that the medium inevitably must grapple with broader conditions related to the financialization of corporate and residential real estate in a settler colonial economy predicated on land theft and resource extraction.

More recent issues of *CTR* begin to aptly turn their attention to housing injustice, the spatial choreographies of assembly, and the politics of mass gathering. As part of a larger conversation in Canadian scholarship on space and theatre, Dunn stresses that “[m]ost of us settler scholars have lots of work to do in this direction, but Indigenous artists and scholars have a long history of land-based practices that have been deeply articulated in *CTR* through many voices and issues” (95). In its final fold, the essay pointedly asks, “In a medium that requires spatial presence, how can we pay the brutally prohibitive cost of remaining?” (97).

Writing on the “neoliberalization of institutionality,” Jodi Melamed invites a (re)consideration of “financialization and debt today as always already

configured and disposed by racial capitalism and imperial conquest.” She proposes, for instance, that “rather than seeing the brutality of today’s financialized modes of accumulation by dispossession as novel, we might ask, what are the key differences between indigenous lands seized yesterday by way of tax debt and sold to white settlers, and lands seized today by indebted governments and sold to foreign investors?” Through a feminist-queer-of-color critical lens, this proposition is an invitation. Rather than presuming a settler collectivity to probe the costly price of working as a theatre artist in the present (post)pandemic moment when “austerity” is increasingly used as “a revamped civilizing discourse” (Melamed) that among other things exasperates housing injustice and the shrinking of cultural spaces while radically changing the public’s social habits, I want to ask what similar patterns of prohibition have *historically* determined who affords to do and to audience theatre in this country.

In researching Carroll Aikins’s 1922 red face play *The God of Gods: A Canadian Play*, Deanna Bowen considers the anti-Black migration petitions signed by the members of the Group of Seven along with the legacies of the Group’s unpeopled landscapes and the *longue durée* of white ethnonationalism of the Massey Commission (Bowen). Her work invites an inquiry into an entangled history of early painting and theatre in Canada. Similarly, considering how early twentieth-century artists “anchored white settler identity in the landscape,” Iyko Day shows how “Asian labor personifies the abstract circuits of capitalism,” while “settler colonial constructions of landscape express the opposite” (76). Day observes that, for instance, in the works of the Group, the “romantic anticapitalism flourished during the height of anti-Asian immigration restriction to project a settler identification with a personified, Indigenous landscape” (77).

Artists presently working across institutions of contemporary art in their hyperfinancialized and racialized settler forms may not commune across disciplines in the ways they had at the outset of the twentieth century. Yet given these early entanglements, what happens if we consider historical conceptual norms of understanding space in Canadian theatre along with early landscape, especially given that “national identity in Canada and the United States has often been defined as a product of the landscape” (Day 78)? For instance, one may expect a performance history that, building on Bowen’s research on the links between landscape and the invented Indian

in Aikins's play, would consider the personification of "Indigenous identity theft" (most often by white women) (Simpson, "Indigenous Identity Theft") as a contemporary expression of "autochthonophilia" or the "intense desire to 'go native'" (Day 79), as exemplified by Emily Carr, the infamous honorary member of the Group. How does the art-historical recognition of landscape "as a medium rather than strictly a genre of art" (Day 75), as a settler colonial fetish, or even "a biopolitical expression of white supremacy and a personification of white male dominion," (Day 79) change the perception of this attachment to space historically expressed through the medium of theatre? What may considerations of histories of space in theatre along with landscape as similarly coded manifestations (of the enactment of settler imperial conquest through regimes of elimination and exclusion) convey about material histories of race?

The question I stay with about the established norms of theatrical space is not only about exclusions or absences of Indigenous and racialized voices in *CTR* as an archive. While salient, my concerns are less about the inclusion of place-based practices, historical barriers to access or to maintaining space or funding, or even counter-modes of creative expression by Black, Asian, and racialized theatre practitioners. Instead, learning from Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson's essay "On Ethnographic Refusal" as well as Indigenous modalities that Dene scholar Glen Coulthard calls "grounded normativity" (13) demands that I first and foremost take seriously deracination and extractivism as logics of the reconciliatory national frame of reference in "Canadian" theatre and performance as well as projects of its documentation. Racialized communities have their own methods of recording and memory keeping that may cast doubt on academic publishing. Despite ongoing exclusions in theatre's institutionalized archives, multiplicities of creative practice continue to endure the landscape across this country. More so, I want to encourage us to persist with transdisciplinary methods of inquiry into the ways in which race *historically* has and continues to remain encoded within the existing norms established through Canadian theatrical practices and in the writings that engage Canadian theatre's habits of space.

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credit to the student encampment at the University of Waterloo whose artwork is enclosed. Their continuous rehearsal for a kind of urgent and artful living and deep study has shaped this response yet prove it futile. The ongoing repressive violence that calls their relational worldmaking, conviviality, and deep study “property damage” instructs me regarding space and assembly in Canada more than anything I could read or write. The policing and securitization as they assembled in support of sanctity of life with their vibrantly blue tents to do the life-affirming work of conjuring a world of material abundance, their methods of provisioning incommensurate with the lethal terms of institutionality that continue governing their lives, liquidating them callously as “enrollment,” bears a historical weight that ethically and collectively remains to be reckoned with.

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"There is no such thing as a gay play": *Canadian Theatre Review* and Gay Politics in the 1970s

J. Paul Halferty

When presented with the opportunity to write for this auspicious issue, I planned to briefly address how queer genders and sexualities have been represented by *Canadian Theatre Review* (*CTR*) over the course of its history. However, as I began to do this work, I quickly realized that even summarizing the six issues dedicated to these topics is a task that exceeds the scope (and word limit) of this essay. Instead, I have decided to examine the first *CTR* volume to address sexuality and, significantly, not gender: *CTR* 12, titled *Homosexuality and the Theatre*, edited by David Watmough and published in 1976. In doing so, I want to position this issue as an important flex point in the journal's history—what is, arguably, the first time the journal addressed an identity politics other than Canadian or Quebec nationalisms.¹ Examining the issue and its reception in the gay press, we see the politics of theatre and performance at a moment of stress, at a time when a liberal humanist understanding of art based firmly in playwriting and a canon of 'great' plays—central tenets of *CTR*'s early mission—is both asserted and questioned. In this moment, received assumptions about theatre and performance were beginning to be challenged by new theoretical questions about representation, politics, power, and the purposes of a journal like *CTR*. *CTR* 12 represents an early sign of a still-ongoing process at the journal, which unfolded very slowly over the next few decades: a process that questioned the politics of representation, most often led by marginalized 'others' who took greater control over their own representation and participation within art, culture, and politics, and within the pages of *CTR*, a process whereby the journal would more overtly theorize its own

¹ Although *CTR* 11 looks at theatre in Quebec, the issue has two articles on the topic and two plays by Jean Barbeau, translated by John Van Burek. Most of the issue is composed of the journal's *Carte Blanche* section, under which various articles on a diversity of subjects were published.

conceptions of theatre and performance and its position *vis-à-vis* the construction of 'Canadian theatre.'

Homosexuality and the Theatre

Born in England in 1926, Watmough was a successful novelist, playwright, and actor who lived in Vancouver until his death in 2017. At the time *Homosexuality and the Theatre* was published, he served on *CTR*'s editorial board but would later resign due to the fallout from the issue. The idea of publishing a volume of *CTR* that interrogated 'homosexuality and the theatre' was suggested to the journal's editor, Don Rubin, by the British-American theatre scholar and playwright Eric Bentley. Bentley had recently come out of the closet and, in Rubin's words, "suggested a special issue of *CTR* dealing with what was then his favorite topic—the politics of 'Homosexuality and the Theatre.'" It is not insignificant that the first *CTR* issue to deal with a marginalized community was proposed by a highly successful theatre scholar and artist who had recently come out. Generally speaking, and especially in this period, by virtue of their sex and broader social positioning, gay men like Bentley and Watmough could enjoy significant professional privilege and access, especially if they were not public or political about their sexuality. The broader liberalization that was taking place regarding homosexuality in Canada and elsewhere meant that by the mid-1970s, the possibility of a gay man coming out publicly was no longer completely unimaginable, socially or professionally. This said, Rubin notes that Bentley's decision to come out coincided with his decision to leave the academy. As Rubin suggests:

It was at the height of student protests and the new demands for sexual freedoms in 1968 and 1969 that Bentley chose to leave the safe confines of a tenured position at Columbia. Actively supporting the students, Bentley—twice married and the father of two—decided at this time to also come out as gay, a decision he felt his Columbia colleagues would not have tolerated.

I do not wish to diminish in any way the bravery of men like Bentley or Watmough or belittle the experiences of homophobia and marginalization—indeed, in the case of Watmough, arrest and incarceration—to which they were no doubt subject. However, in the context of this discussion of *CTR*, it should be noted that they possessed levels of professional authority and

social status that enabled them to propose and to publish the issue ahead of other marginalized groups, people who were, arguably, further from the levers of power.

With only 34 of its 145 pages directly addressing the topic of homosexuality, the issue is thematically a bit thin. The articles that directly take up the theme are as follows: an introduction to the issue written by Watmough called "Setting the Stage"; a transcript of a conversation between members of Toronto's theatre community, namely director John Palmer (marking the first time Palmer spoke publicly as a gay man), actors Peter Jobin and Elva Mai Hoover, and the review editor from *The Body Politic*, Ed Jackson, interviewed by *CTR*'s managing editor, Forester Freed, titled "A Local View"; an essay by Bentley that posits homosexuality as anathema to a culture based on fertility and purpose, not non-procreative pleasures, titled "The Homosexual Question"; a short piece by Vancouver playwright and satirist Eric Nicol, who tries to find humour in his negative experiences in the theatre with "a bunch of goddamn fairies" (24) but comes off as laughably homophobic; a thoughtful meditation addressing what it means to be a 'gay' playwright by Robert Wallace, titled "Image and Label: Notes for a Sense of Self"; and, finally, a short review of homosexuality in literature by Graham Jackson called "Theatre of Implication." As is customary for *CTR*, this issue also includes a play, though this play is not by a gay author, nor does it have any gay content. Ken Gass's *The Boy Bishop* is a historical play about eighteenth-century Quebec that, according to the author, was an allegory for English-Canadian history (Gass123). The issue does not address lesbians in its treatment of "homosexuality and the theatre," nor does it speak to the impacts and implications of gender and patriarchy on the experiences of queer women. Watmough notes that he may not have achieved all he had hoped for in the issue, citing the lack of lesbian input in particular. He suggests that this omission, as well as the "difficulty in obtaining more broadly based representation" of gay men and lesbians in the issue, is "the result of a harsh but simple reality: still in 1976 the personal declaration of homosexuality in our Canadian theatre can easily lead to unemployment" ("Setting" 6).

Watmough seems caught between the conflicting gender and sexual politics of the early 1970s, on the one hand, and the implications these new ideas signalled about theatre, performance, and the representations of minoritized

communities, on the other. At the same time, he was also working in a theatre culture that was riven by paradox, in which it was difficult to come out, and in which gay men, in particular, were thought to clandestinely wield too much power. In his introduction to the issue, he cites this homophobia by quoting John Colicos, who earlier that year said he “dislik[es] the theatre, partly ‘because the faggots have taken over. It’s to [sic] hard to work in a bitchy, carping biting milieu. The theatre needs a revolution. At the moment it’s too precious’” (“Setting” 7). While Watmough was an open and visible gay man, working in a theatre in which his presence was seen, by the likes of Colicos, as a problem in need of revolutionary solutions, his editorial decisions privileged a conception of ‘great art’ that did more to support than challenge the status quo. At a time when people feared the ramifications of coming out and making their sexuality a political issue, he contends that to privilege the contribution that “homosexuals” have made to the theatre, or to make this *CTR* issue an overt affirmation of gay politics, would be of questionable artistic integrity:

It is possible that some of our gay readers, particularly the militant young, will see in this issue a less than trenchant affirmation of the homosexual contribution to the dramatic arts. And while I am somewhat inclined to agree with them, I did not construe this particular issue to be a propagandistic weapon for gay rights, anymore than I wished it to merely sit on the fence. (Watmough, “Setting” 7)

Watmough’s logic is difficult to follow here because it seems to contradict itself. By his own acknowledgement, the issue is not an approbation of “the homosexual contribution” to theatre because that would be “propagandistic.” And yet, he wants the issue to have an unambiguous and, one would assume, positive political position, and to not “merely sit on the fence.” But how is such an equivocal position possible?

In his editorial decisions, Watmough’s own gay politics seem to come into conflict with his presumably long-held liberal humanist views about the nature and function of art and the artist. The thorny problem of the politicization of homosexuality for artists like Watmough is represented most clearly in the issue’s rather conspicuous failure to publish a gay play, which he refused to do:

It is my ardent belief that there is no such thing as a gay play: no more than there is such a thing as a straight play. There are good plays and bad plays, and they are written by either homosexuals or heterosexuals. To have included a play by a homosexual simply because of the writer's sexuality would have played into the kind of hands that tend to reduce art to propaganda. (Watmough, "Setting" 7)

Watmough would not concede to pressure in his decisions about what plays deserve critical recognition and publication as doing so would be tantamount to participating in "propaganda" —art that privileged its appeal to a particular community rather than express some kind of "universal truth." At the same time, he seems unable to see the politics at work in his understanding of 'good' plays and 'bad' plays. As he suggests of one of his own works, *Scar Tissue*, which recounts his experience of incarceration for gross indecency as a young man, "You want to find the universal elements in the experience—the things we share with straights. If it doesn't escape the gay ghetto experience, I feel it has failed" (Watmough, "An Interview" 24).

Watmough's decision to not publish a gay play is particularly significant because among the plays he rejected was *No Deposit, No Return*, written by future *CTR* editor Robert Wallace. According to *The Body Politic* journalist and University of Toronto English professor Michael Lynch, who interviewed Wallace as part of his scathing critique of *CTR*¹², when Wallace submitted his play for publication, he was asked by Watmough if he would write a piece about what it meant to him to be called a "gay playwright." Watmough published Wallace's essay but rejected his script and "ruled against publishing any script in this issue, on the grounds that he did not want to be responsible for any gay play being labelled as 'gay'" (Lynch).

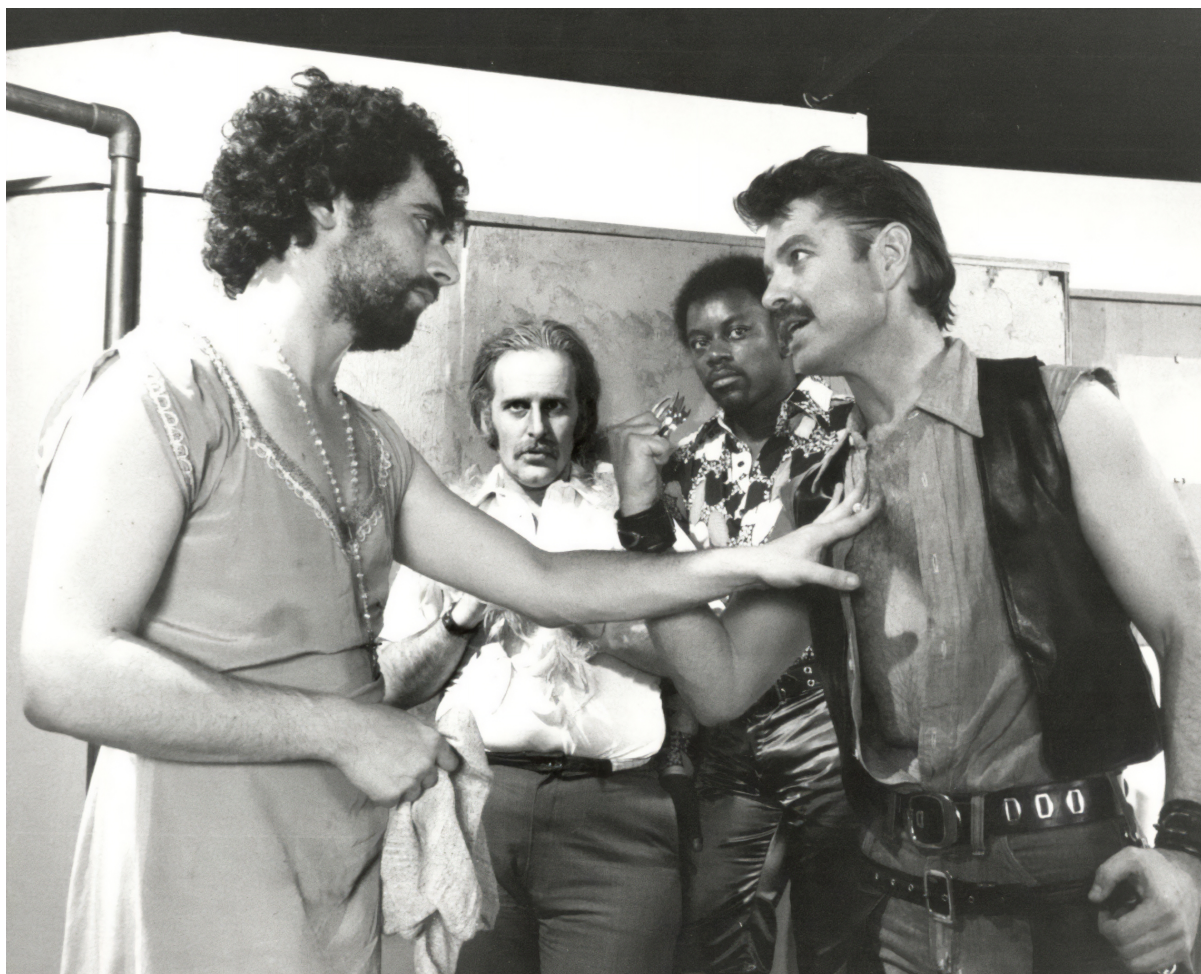


Figure 1: From Robert Wallace's *No Deposit, No Return* (1975), staged at the WSDG Gay Theatre, New York. Photographer: Les Carr, courtesy of Robert Wallace. Left to right: Saul Rubinek as Sara Lee, Anthony Baksa as Meredith, Robert Colston as Flick, and Jim Taylor.



Figure 2: From Robert Wallace's *No Deposit, No Return* (1975), staged at the WSDG Gay Theatre, New York. Photographer: Les Carr, courtesy of Robert Wallace. Left to right: David Reed-Radner as Cooper, Anthony Baksa as Meredith, Saul Rubinek as Sara Lee, Jim Taylor.

In his review of *CTR12*, Lynch uses the politics of gay liberation as his critical framework. Lynch contends that the issue falls short by neglecting analyses of three crucial areas: “homosexuals or homosexual ‘themes’ in plays; plays by homosexuals (and possibly for homosexuals) dealing with the gay experience; and gays in the theatre industry” (Lynch). Lynch’s call to examine these topics rejects the ‘universalizing’ tenets of liberal humanism, which undergirded Watmough’s philosophy of art and his editorial decisions. Instead, Lynch’s stance epitomizes the concerns of gay liberation, which were informed by a combination of the feminist, Marxist, and revolutionary politics of the late 1960s and early 1970s. His critique reflects the feminist notion that the “personal is political,” particularly emphasizing the need to

scrutinize how homosexuals are portrayed in theatre and how these representations intersect with the 'real-life' experiences of queers themselves. It underscores the significance of nurturing a sense of community among gays through the creation of works that explore their lived realities and that are possibly aimed primarily—even exclusively—at them. Finally, it adopts a Marxist viewpoint regarding the tangible significance of the conditions of production, specifically concerning the circumstances faced by gays employed in the theatre industry.

Watmough was obviously cognizant of homophobia's effects on the political complexities of theatrical performance and the material circumstances under which it is produced or not produced, as these were his lived experiences. As he states in his rebuttal to Lynch's review:

[I] ha[ve] publicly and trenchantly affirmed gay rights ever since I stood in court and received a prison sentence for homosexuality at the age of seventeen—thirty years ago. In 1954, I was responsible for the first B.B.C. radio broadcast ever on the subject of homosexuality, while through four published books of fiction and plays, innumerable on C.B.C. radio and television, in magazine and newspaper interviews, and as my interviewers from [*The Body Politic*] can attest, in my performances which number over a thousand, I have stood fair and square for gay rights and gay pride.... All in all, I think my record stands. (Watmough, "Letters")

It may be that Watmough just didn't like Wallace's play, or did not want to publish a 'gay play' as he felt he would be doing a disservice to the playwright by assigning this label. From my perspective, Watmough seems unable to reconcile the aesthetics and politics of an emergent form, politicized gay theatre rooted in an emerging community consciousness, with his liberal humanist understanding of art, its value, and its function. Unlike Lynch, whose approach to culture was informed by gay liberation politics, Watmough seems to think that art should 'rise above' these concerns. And while Watmough acknowledges that the decision to come out in the theatre at this time could have negative material effects, by not publishing Wallace's play, or any other gay play for whatever reasons, however unwittingly, he did not fight the theatre establishment's homophobia. He conceded to it.

The next issue to focus on sexuality or gender was Feminism and Canadian Theatre, *CTR* 43 (1985), edited by then-editor Robert Wallace and published nearly a decade after Homosexuality and the Theatre. In his short introduction to the issue, Wallace notes, "The genesis of this issue was my discovery last year that Rina Fraticelli's invaluable report The Status of Women in the Canadian Theatre, which she prepared for the Status of Women Canada in 1982, had never been published" (4). Wallace proposed publishing parts of the report in *CTR*, but Fraticelli suggested that "it would be more constructive to address the current status of women in Canadian theatre and to explore the ways in which feminism connects with or influences their work" (4). The issue includes ten articles that address feminism and theatre written by women from across the country; the playscript of *This Is for You, Anna: A Spectacle of Revenge*, by the Anna Collective; and its regular Carte Blanche section, which comprises three pieces that all address feminism and/or women working in theatre.

As the 1980s wore on, theoretical and political issues about inclusion, canonization, and gender, sexual, ethnic and racial diversity, among other concerns, would become increasingly central to the journal's mission, though the process was definitely a slow one. In "Undermining the Centre: The Canon according to *CTR*," an article written for *Theatre Research in Canada* in 1990, Alan Filewod notes the lack of formal, gender, and racial diversity in plays published by *CTR*.² He writes:

The legitimization of Canadian drama [through the practice of publishing plays in issues of *CTR*] has engendered a canonizing process that erases difference, and it is only now, with the transforming challenge to our notions of theatre emanating from

² This is the list of plays and Filewod's preamble: "From the beginning *CTR* championed the cause of the Canadian playwright and proposed the notion of a dramatic literature as the first condition of an autonomous national theatre. For that reason, *CTR* has published a play text in almost every issue. Let me offer some quick figures about those plays. Of a total of 67 texts, up to *CTR* 64 [Summer 1990] the list breaks down into revealing categories: 48 were written by men; 16 were written by women; three were gender-mixed collaborations. Of these, three were written for radio; all but one (Beverly Simon's *Leela Means To Play*) were produced professionally; four were by non-Canadian authors (one American, one Argentinean, one Japanese, one German); five were written for Theatre for Young Audiences; three were expressly gay in subject; four were translated from French; one was written by a Black writer."

cultural and ethnic minorities, that we can see in retrospect why that erasure was historically necessary—*but not, I think, unavoidable*. (emphasis added)

The production and reception of *CTR*12 reveals one instance of how, even in a theme issue dedicated to “homosexuality and the theatre,” the complexities of identity, politics, and aesthetics were such that erasure did occur, and it was definitely not unavoidable—with the decision not to publish Wallace’s play as the most salient example. *CTR*12 thus brings into view for the first time questions that became central to *CTR*’s mission, questions that would be rearticulated with contextual specificity in regard to other marginalized and minoritized subjects and communities. They are theoretical and material questions about constructing and deconstructing canons, authority, ‘quality,’ and access; they are formal questions about what constitutes plays, theatre, and performance; they are political questions about what ‘Canadian’ theatre is, and who makes it. They are questions about the journal’s power and its limitations in its efforts to understand, represent, and be variously engaged with the making of theatre and performance on the land now known as Canada.

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Affinity or Extraction? The Institutionalization of Queer Arts Spaces

Nikki Shaffeeullah

J. Paul Halferty's article, "'There is no such thing as a gay play': *Canadian Theatre Review* and Gay Politics in the 1970s" (this issue), chronicling *CTR*'s first volume to address sexuality is a useful and fascinating examination of how mainstream Canadian theatre in the mid-1970s engaged with queerness: not a lot; with some contempt; and, predictably, only paying attention to the white cisgender gay male experience. Writing here from my desk in 2026, the optical difference is stark: Performance journals regularly chronicle the work of queer and trans artists, even racialized and Indigenous ones, sometimes even written by queer and trans writers. Queer artists are visible in the sector, there are several small and mid-sized companies across Canada mandated to program queer and trans work, and occasionally, queer arts workers are even represented in institutional leadership (though rarely are trans artists or queer BIPOC artists). Especially in major Canadian cities, queer artists are visible and staple parts of the scene.

Further, many affinity-based creative spaces, or barrier-reducing initiatives that prioritize marginalized groups, help to correct the imbalances in representation that are borne of overt and subconscious discrimination, create opportunities, and empower artists who might otherwise be relegated to the margins. Such initiatives have helped my own career. I have believed in, designed, and helmed many such spaces.

But so easily, that by-us-for-us, equity-seeking impulse can be distorted and appropriated by institutions that aren't actually trying to transform. Like the wider tides of industry, the theatre sector periodically purports to take up progressive change (as in the summer of 2020 after George Floyd's murder by the Minneapolis police when theatre companies en masse issued

solidarity statements with Black Lives Matter) but always returns to its neoliberal resting place, where austerity, competition over community, capital over creativity, and cult of personality all prevail. Indeed, rather than facilitating foundational change, the neoliberal co-opting of identity politics means that institutions now teach us that the same lived experiences that have unfairly provoked exclusion, isolation, and disenfranchisement (including within these institutions) are also the identities that can be commodified for professional advancement.

From theatre school, to emerging artist programs, to awards and prizes, to appealing to the tokenizing checkboxes of programmers, what does it do to the queer artist psyche to come of age in an environment that teaches artists to mine themselves for trauma to then turn into artistic material? What happens when you internalize the understanding that the parts of yourself that have been forged through interpersonal and intergenerational violence are the parts that will most easily endow you with professional success and notoriety? We forget to wonder if we list our social identities in our artist bios to honour our ancestors and communities or to elbow our way to the front.

How can we keep putting ourselves out there when it becomes impossible to tell if your good, hard, skilled work has earned you a spot in a given “room” or if you are there to check a box? In the process of being commissioned to write this very piece, while I sought to clarify the curatorial intention of engaging “responder” pieces to the ten feature articles in order to best conceive of an approach to the task, I was told that the responder pieces would help diversify the issue vis-à-vis the mostly white roster of feature writers. My ticket into this room: a brown-faced headshot and Muslim surname; a queer who is also a woman and of-colour; the correct casting choice to respond to a piece by a white male scholar’s historiographical critique of a too-white and too-male queer history. But, would I not have—have I not—made similar considerations when in curatorial roles? As Olúfemi O. Táíwò says in his book *Elite Capture*, “The first rules we learn to follow are the ones that apply to the room we are in” (Táíwò 137)—and not the ones from elsewhere that could transform “the room.” I suppose I have lasted as long as I have in this sector by playing the same game.

Arts institutions are particularly expert in practising what Táíwò calls the “politics of deference”: “Centering the most marginalized in my experience has usually meant handing conversational authority and attentional goods to whoever is already in the room and appears to fit a social category associated with some form of oppression—regardless of what they have or have not experienced, or what they do or do not know about the matter at hand” (Táíwò 140). This masks real inequity and perpetuates the status quo, because certainly, the more we “cosmetically elevate the perspectives *in* the room, the harder it becomes to change the world *outside* of the room” (140). What this costs us is significant. When arts institutions privilege visibility and the semblance of change above all else, it weakens, if not dismantles, the possibility for real community-based political organizing, for actual transformative shifts toward inclusion and liberation. In Maurice Mitchell’s article “Building Resilient Organizations,” he puts it thusly:

Genuflecting to individuals solely based on their socialized identities or personal stories deprives them of the conditions that sharpen arguments, develop skills, and win debates. We infantilize members of historically marginalized or oppressed groups by seeking to placate or pander instead of being in a right relationship, which requires struggle, debate, disagreement, and hard work. This type of false solidarity is a form of charity that weakens the individual and the collective. Finding authentic alignment and solidarity among diverse voices is serious labor.

Perhaps my problem here, as it often is, is that I am applying thinking about organizing and social change to the performing arts sector. It is my own insistence on believing that the arts are fundamentally a site for practicing social change that keeps me disappointed in the sector’s immutability. My vision for a better world is grounded in abolition, a framework I’ve come to know thanks to the stewardship of many organizers, artists, and facilitators, especially Black feminist thinkers and doers, whom I have had the good fortune to share space with and read the work of. As adrienne maree brown writes, “We must work hard at getting abolitionist practice functional at a small scale so that large-scale abolition and transformative justice are more visible, rootable, possible” (brown 3). I know that theatre can be the perfect site for building these muscles. The rehearsal room can be a laboratory for generating and navigating conflict, practising the interpersonal skills that will enable us to make prisons obsolete and grow an abolitionist society: making

mistakes, owning them without shame, hearing and integrating other perspectives, collaborating on repair and ways forward. The stage can be a space for imagining alternate realities. The real-world, real-time venue of a theatre brings audiences and artists breathing the same air together like no other art form. Public arts institutions at their best could truly serve the public's interest.

When we push past the trap of visibility and the co-opting of identity-based spaces by neoliberal institutions, we can experiment with what queer theatre really can be. Indeed, the most nourishing moments of my career have been when rooms of people come together to explore the transformative impulses of theatre. This is what queer theatre in 2026 can look like: the youth theatre project where Black and Brown young women and trans youth use their voices in public for the first time; the community arts project where working artists and queers from other, more storied walks of life strip themselves of rank and credentials and create together; the national retreat of QTBIPOC artists where we workshop abolitionist approaches to creation and rigorously rest; the co-created queer spaces to exist in, to be seen or unseen, to be unspecial; the arts-based organizing project, where shared interests drive collective action. Queer theatre can be a space to wrestle with ideas and how we share them and why, to strengthen our ability to do that wrestling elsewhere, and, certainly, to hold each other's humanity as we do so.

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A Year in the Life: *Canadian Theatre Review*, 1988

Kim Solga

February 1988

Thirty-six years ago, the Calgary Winter Olympics opened in my very-much-not-hometown, 300 kilometres down the highway from my childhood bedroom in North Edmonton. I was thirteen, awkward, and unhappy in my changing, expanding body. Above all, I desperately wanted to feel the pull of pride that my Calgary pals were able to own as that spectacular flame, glowing with the promise of global recognition, travelled into the Saddledome. Calgary was way cool, and everyone knew where it was; Edmonton was invisible. Women's figure skating star Liz Manley dominated my imagination in the two weeks of those games: her delightful pink costume and cowboy accessories, her bright smile, her childlike overwhelm at coming second in the world. I cut out the colour front-page photo of her biting her silver medal from the *Edmonton Journal* and pasted it onto my closet door. There was Liz, just for me: she was everything I wasn't, but she was also the promise of what, perhaps, I could someday become.

How strongly these memories came back to me as I binged Carolyn Taylor's *I Have Nothing* in the autumn of 2023. Taylor's Crave miniseries leaps from one of her stand-up routines, in which she imagines choreographing an Olympic-level pairs figure skating routine to Whitney Houston's "I Have Nothing." In the series, her dreams come true: she makes the routine happen, with help from Sandra Bezic, David Pelletier, and Ekaterina Gordeeva in the skates, and so many of the 1988 icons (Katarina Witt!! Kurt Browning!!). *I Have Nothing* is a love letter to Carolyn's teenage self. In another bedroom on this land sometimes called Canada, she, too, was glued to the 1988 Olympics on the CBC, obsessed with the figure skating, busy dreaming a new Carolyn into being. At a time when she could still barely admit to herself her

emerging queerness, the games offered her a window into performances of becoming, transformational feats of strength and self-assurance, a way to dance herself into the world, anew.

In February 1988, watching Liz skate and dreaming of summer drama camp, I, too, began to understand performance as a route forward, a path into my future. That same year marked the passing into law of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act—a crucial moment of self-actualization in the history of our shared cultural imaginary, riddled with hope, imperfection, and some very strategic forgetting. Finally, 1988 was a watershed year for what would someday become my chosen discipline, as it marked the establishment in critical consciousness of feminist performance theory.¹

And so: when Jenn Stephenson asked me to contribute my reading of a year's worth of journals to this special issue, I knew right away it had to be 1988. While I was watching Liz on my parents' TV, what were the preoccupations of the scholars, artists, critics, and others binging on *CTR*, paving the ground ahead of me? Do those preoccupations resemble in any way the concerns we fret over now, or are they worlds away? I was eager to find out.

1988: *CTR*'s version

Issues 54 through 57 of *CTR* are, in order, *Shakespeare in Canada* (Spring 1988, edited by Ann Wilson), *Collaborations: Rethinking Collective Creation* (Summer 1988, edited by Alan Filewod), *Theatre and Ethnicity* (Fall 1988, edited by Natalie Rewa), and *Critical Practice in Canada* (Winter 1988, edited by Robert Wallace).

Scanning the titles online, my first impression was commonalities: I could easily imagine all these themed issues transposed into our critical present. Our relationship to Shakespeare has recently re-entered the spotlight via, among other projects, York University's Recasting Shakespeare in Canada symposium (April 2023); the offshoot *Shaking Up Shakespeare* podcast,

¹ Elin Diamond's "Brechtian Theory/Feminist Theory: Towards a Gestic Feminist Criticism" was published in *TDR* in Spring 1988; Jill Dolan's *The Feminist Spectator as Critic* and Sue-Ellen Case's *Feminism and Theater* both came out as monographs that same year with University of Michigan Press and Routledge respectively. I'm indebted to these feminist scholars and eternally grateful for their teachings.

hosted by Marlis Schweitzer, Liam Lockhart-Rush, and Hope Van Der Merwe; and my own forthcoming book, *Women Making Shakespeare in the 21st Century*. The tradition of collective creation has shape-shifted over the years, through devising to audience participation and again to practice-as-research. Winter 2023's issue of *CTR* examines casting and race in our colonial present and is edited by Mariló Núñez, Jamie Robinson, and Marlis Schweitzer, with Yasmine Amirkhani, Liam Lockhart-Rush, and Zoe Marin. And questions about the ethics of reviewing practice have only grown more complex in the decades separating 1988 and 2024, as Indigenous, global majority, disabled, trans, and non-binary artists such as Kim Senklip Harvey and Yolanda Bonnell agitate powerfully for critical sovereignty. As I read my way through *CTR*'s 1988, what I found overwhelmingly were the seeds of today's conversations being sown, as our creative and critical communities began to grapple with the challenges, especially around equity and de-colonization, we still circle today.

The year's bookend issues, on Shakespeare and reviewing culture respectively, both take up in different ways the all-important question of who gets to decide what is 'good' theatre. *Shakespeare in Canada* begins with an introduction by Ann Wilson; she asks readers to query why productions of Shakespeare remain "monuments to the greatness of the playwright" ("Shakespeare"). Most of the articles that follow are review essays assessing recent productions, chronicling what Wilson calls "attempts to rescue Shakespeare's works from the deadliness of ... lifeless reverence" ("Shakespeare"). The productions surveyed include two *Tempests* in Toronto (for Toronto Free Theatre and Skylight Theatre, the latter starring Monique Mojica as Ariel), Guy Sprung's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Vancouver Playhouse, 1987), two works from Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan, and a handful of Shakespeares in St John's. None of the works featured come from the Stratford Festival, though the issue does include a thought-provoking piece about the material constraints of the Stratford main stage by Ric Knowles, as well as a conversation between Cecil O'Neal and John Hirsch, the Artistic Director at Stratford from 1981 to 1985.

For me, the joy of this issue lies in its critical tensions. On one hand, it thinks through Shakespeare's fraught place in the contemporary culture of a settler colony; on the other, its writers struggle at times to move past the bardolatry clung to by those for whom Shakespeare's borrowed cultural capital has

propelled careers of great privilege (including in the academy, of course). This tension is nicely captured in the contradictions that animate several of the review essays. Every review author—I note with some consternation— is male, and the majority are based in English departments. These facts do not necessarily prejudice their assessments, but they do explain method and approach. Despite their varied tones and perspectives, each article begins from the (spoken or unspoken) assumption that there is a Shakespearean source text against which we can and should measure the productions at hand; even those reviews that offer excitement over the risks taken by companies and directors ultimately praise fidelity. In what is otherwise one of the most forward-thinking pieces in the issue, for example, Mark Fortier excitedly describes René-Daniel Dubois's *Pericles* only to add, by way of a hook, "Anyone who has come expecting Shakespeare's *Pericles* is by now disconcerted. But even those who are open to adaptation and distortion begin to wonder how this will relate to Shakespeare" (13).

Paul Leonard's assessment of Richard Greenblatt's *The Tempest* offers a hallmark of this style of review. Not knowing quite what to make of Greenblatt's choices, and not knowing what to do with that not-knowing, Leonard slips quietly into 'critic knows best':

Richard Greenblatt is an accomplished director. . . . Yet this production was deeply flawed; although it seemed to delight and even enthrall the audience . . . *to me it made no sense*. Why has Prospero been introduced as a drunk? Why are the costumes of the shipwrecked courtiers so strange? Why is Caliban suddenly transformed into a rock star . . . ? The questions kept piling up, unanswered. (*The Tempest* 8; my emphasis)

From Leonard's perspective, the production should *obviously* make sense to him, and it should make sense as recognizably Shakespearean. He is an elite reader, and he has an essay to write: the production should anticipate his questions and answer them! The joy of the audience counts for little, and he gives no credit to Greenblatt for having a concept for the play that might make sense *on its own terms* (or to readers who are not academic critics). This is not to say Leonard's assessment of Skylight's *Tempest* lacks nuance or critical value; elsewhere, the article is thoughtful and insightful. But at the heart of Leonard's reading, despite his own best intentions, lie unexamined assumptions about the power relations among director, scholar-reader, and

Shakespeare (as emissary of both elite culture and colonial inheritance), as well as about the place academic criticism should occupy in that triangle.²

These same assumptions animate *Critical Practice in Canada*, the Winter 1988 issue, to which scholars and reviewers contribute essays laying out two central concerns for the future of the ecosystem. The first of these concerns can be summed up by Paul Leonard's (yes—the same person!) provocative question, "[H]ow is the theatre critic to write in postmodern culture?" ("Critical Questioning" 4).³ In a pair of key introductory essays, Leonard and Ann Wilson set out what is at stake in a culture of critique that assumes that critical assessments of theatre productions are ideologically neutral and that criticism's "primary function is to pass judgement on work as either 'good' or 'bad'" (Wilson, "Deadpan" 15). Wilson firmly states that "criticism is always a political act" because in its declaration of judgment, it "inscribes a relation of power" between judged and judge. Responsible execution of critical authority, she argues, can therefore happen only when critics "acknowledge the terms" by which their cultural authority is constituted (15). Leonard, meanwhile, invokes demographic shifts in now officially multicultural Canada as he argues for the urgency of the project of critical self-awareness:

[A]s Canada becomes more genuinely multicultural, and as the social critiques of feminists, people of colour, the disabled, and the oppressed gain greater currency, it becomes difficult to maintain the illusion of homogeneity that is required to sustain confidence in metanarratives—a homogeneity implied by my use of 'we' and 'our.' ("Critical Questioning" 8)

Leonard's comments remind us that IBPOC and LGBTQ2+ artists have always called out "the illusion of homogeneity" operating in (white, mainstream) reviews of their work—though with the rise of digital cultures and social media tools, that calling out today has the capacity for significant impact,

² Greenblatt wrote a letter to the editor about Leonard's assessment; it appeared in issue 56 (back when *CTR* published letters!). He commented, "I don't argue that [my vision for the play] may have not been communicated clearly enough to the audience who viewed the piece. I only argue that Mr. Leonard should not presume to know the basis of my artistic intention or ideological analysis. He is not privy to that information, nor has he the right to assume it."

³ I find it exciting and moving that Leonard reappears in this issue to think consciously through a question that fits so neatly his earlier, problematic assessment of Greenblatt's *The Tempest*. It reveals the hard work authors are doing in these issues as they grapple with the animating tensions of their moment.

allowing historically marginalized artists to become their own theatre's gatekeepers (and protectors).

Both these essays tend to use 'critic' and 'criticism' generally enough that the line between 'reviewer' and 'academic critic' gets fuzzy; this didn't bother me especially, since the issues they raise are relevant to both. It did, however, highlight another tension in the issue, that between academic and non-academic contributors and the nature of their concerns for arts reviewing and reporting as a career, let alone a discipline.

The "crisis of legitimation" ("Critical Questioning" 8) in reviewing culture that Leonard theorizes is also central to this issue's running concern with the slow death of reviewing traditions in print media. In a long feature called "Working through the Weeklies," Mark Czarnecki surveys recent offerings in *The Georgia Straight*, *Voir*, *Now*, *Macleans*, and the *Montreal Mirror* and charts the need to appeal to advertisers and "service" users (37), which crowds out more serious, longer, or nuanced critique. While several of the academic contributors to this issue (rightly) worry about theoretical and ideological self-awareness among their peers, contributors from the professional reviewing community fear the literal end of the line for anything they might have to write in the future, theoretically rigorous or not. As I worked through the issue's pieces on best practices in (and the many pitfalls of!) reviewing for radio, I found myself wishing I could teleport everyone into the early 2010s, when theatre critics could become rock stars thanks to their blogs, and when nobody had yet to beg their nieces to help them figure out *TikTok*.

Natalie Rewa's *Theatre and Ethnicity* would have been at press when Canada's Multiculturalism Act received royal assent. I found it to be the most compelling and forward looking of the four issues here, largely because it is the most attuned to questions of both cultural materialism and intercultural collaboration. It's also effectively diverse. Leading the issue (as usual) are a pair of scene-setting essays, this time not from academics but (female!!) culture workers: Carol Off (then a current affairs correspondent for the CBC) and Jini Stolk (then Executive Director of Toronto Theatre Alliance). Off leads with a hot take on one of the most challenging issues facing IBPOC artists in the wake of 'official' multiculturalism—figuring out how to secure funding under a patronage model that collects artists of colour under 'heritage' and everyone else under 'the arts.' Off notes that one of the ironic effects of the

multicultural rise in mid-1980s Canada was the sidelining of work by 'ethnic' companies that queried or experimented with the ideas animating official multiculturalism (7). Beverly Yhap of Cahoots, cited by Off, reveals the Catch-22 neatly: a pair of shows Cahoots sought to stage from China "didn't clearly foster government goals of bridging communities" and thus were ineligible for Heritage support; meanwhile, as the play was Chinese in origin, the Canada Council looked away. Nail in coffin: because Cahoots already received operating funds from the Ontario and Toronto Arts Councils, those funding pathways were closed too (Off 7).

Stolk, meanwhile, examines the future of non-traditional casting in Toronto in her anchor article, making a nuanced case for the need for much more open and equitable casting practices in the city. As she notes, basic equity is at stake, but so is money, as well as community representation. "Artists who are calling for a colour-blind stage have to answer to those who believe they have a responsibility to represent each playwright's vision in its purest form," she writes, especially given that companies could hardly afford to alienate their subscriber bases in what were then post-Black Monday economic times (10).⁴ Yet community also offers ethical considerations for Stolk: "If theatre is to remain relevant and maintain an audience, we must find new ways to reach out to the community" that has yet to see itself reflected onstage, or in traditional subscriber bases (10).

The remainder of this issue features examinations of a huge range of projects happening across the country and includes pieces on two Indigenous-settler collaborations (between Headlines Theatre and Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en Tribal Council, by Virginia Cooke, and between the St John's Resource Centre for the Arts and Innu from Labrador, by Terry Goldie), two pieces on the state of Black theatre in Canada, and several pieces featuring Asian artists, including Beverly Yhap of Cahoots reporting on the challenges of making non-white theatre in a city where so few artists of colour are being trained up and given regular opportunities to shine and hone their craft (25, 27). "How much apprenticeship is enough?" Yhap asks rhetorically; it's a question that theatres like Stratford and Shaw are, despite strides, still dodging today.

⁴ On Monday, 19 October 1987, global stock markets crashed, losing an estimated US\$1.7 trillion. See [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Monday_\(1987\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Monday_(1987)).

Summer 1988's special issue on collective creation also speaks to its multicultural moment but in quite different ways to *Theatre and Ethnicity*. There are broadly two strands of collaborative practice featured here: one is auteur-driven work, largely by Quebecers, including Robert Lepage and Michael Levine, in which aesthetics come first; the other is community-based collective creation, unabashedly populist (such as R. Murray Schafer's *The Greatest Show* in Peterborough), though often led by an impresario. Implicit throughout the issue are some troubling but unspoken binaries: Quebec versus 'everywhere else'; collectively built theatre as a form of new nationalism versus the dregs of a top-down, colonial-era theatre 'for' the public good; collective creation versus artistic collaboration. As Filewod notes in his introductory editorial:

[A]s the collective methodology [of the 1970s national theatre heyday] increasingly displaces the weight of creative responsibility from the actor/writer to the director and designer, the term ['collective creation'] gives way to a widespread preference to describe *new work as collaborative*. This may indicate a step forward for many who find that mention of collective creation evokes the tradition of the actor-created text, a principle that has been superseded in many of the collaborations documented in this issue. At times, however, I sense a denial of the past, as if we are slightly embarrassed by the air of folksy nationalism that clings to our memories of the collective creations of the 70s. (my emphasis)

The tension between Canadian theatre "then" and "theatrical difference" now (Wallace) played out across the issue, for me, as an outsized lauding of new work from Quebec in the wake of (as Filewod puts it) mild embarrassment at everything else. Sadly, no IBPOC or Indigenous work appears in the issue, and only one feminist show (the Very Best Bad Girls' *The Last Will and Testament of Lolita*)—a far cry from late 1980s New York and the heyday of collective creation at the WOW Café, I couldn't help thinking to myself. Maybe some of that energy would have helped to put the 'sophisticated auteur' versus 'folksy nationalist' binary in this issue into a bit more perspective.

In 1988, I could not have imagined the scholar I would become; all I could do was gawp at the talent on my TV and dream. While I've taken the critical measure here of 1988's worth of *CTRs*, I want to end by thanking every contributor to every one of these issues, living or not, for the critical paths

they forged ahead of me—of us. Gloriously flawed, their work forms the shoulders on which we stand today. The questions they explore and the contradictions they trouble in these pages laid crucial groundwork for the ideas we continue to work today.

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A Year in the Life: Publishing *is* and *as* Recording

Kelsey Blair

On 28 February 2010, I stood on a street in Toronto. It was night, and the sidewalk was uncharacteristically empty. This was not, as one might expect in late February in Toronto, because of the weather. Instead, it was because the Canadian men's hockey team was playing in the gold medal game at the 2010 Olympics. The Olympics were hosted in my home city of Vancouver. I had decided not to travel back for the event. In the middle of a master's degree, I felt I could not afford the trip. And, also, it was one of my first years living away. I was trying to prove to myself I did not *need* to go back. When Canadian player Sidney Crosby scored the game-winning goal, cheers filled the night air and a deep sense of homesickness thudded in my chest.

In her article "A Year in the Life: *Canadian Theatre Review*, 1988" (this issue), Kim Solga also begins with an anecdote about a Canadian-hosted Olympics, the 1988 Games in Calgary. She recalls the vivid sensations of being 13 years old and watching figure skater Liz Manley perform her routine. With this performance as her anchor, Solga introduces her choice to survey the four 1988 issues of *CTR* for her contribution to the fiftieth-anniversary issue. In so doing, Solga begins to signal the complex weave between performance, publishing, and the personal.

In reflecting on Solga's piece, I was reminded of Diana Taylor's *is/as* distinction. Theorizing performance, Diana Taylor conceptualizes the distinction between saying that a phenomenon *is* a performance, an ontological category, and examining a phenomenon *as* a performance, an epistemological approach (2–3). "A Year in the Life" prompted me to extend this distinction beyond performance and think of it in relation to publishing. When used as a verb, "recording" means "to relate, narrate, or put on record" ("Record, *V.* (1)"). When used as a noun, "recording" might refer to "the action

or an act of setting down in writing ..." ("Recording, *N*"). In these senses, the publishing process—the interconnected acts of writing, editing, and circulating works such as *CTR*'s four 1988 issues—*is* an act of recording. Indeed, as Solga demonstrates, the 1988 issues relate various authors' observations about themes including Shakespeare, collective creation, theatre and ethnicity, and critical practice.

At the same time, Solga approaches the issues epistemologically, searching for what we might learn from the themes and threads and spaces between words. In so doing, she foregrounds the ways in which publishing can also be understood *as* recording. As Solga explores these traces, the four 1988 *CTR* issues do not only register the authors' intended messaging. Like trying to tape a conversation in a public space, the issues also capture the inadvertent and the ambient: individual assumptions (about how productions of Shakespeare should or should not interpret text in the Shakespearean issue, for example) or more general trends (such as tensions between academic and non-academic contributors in the criticism issue). These details are, perhaps, particularly important in the context of publishing and performance in Canada.

In publishing, the acts of writing, editing, printing, and circulating are concrete for the individuals performing the tasks, but are mostly hidden from the reader. This erasure is, in fact, built into the process. Editorial feedback or peer reviews are rarely published. Day-to-day communications, and the accompanying glimmers of the interpersonal, are not printed. There is no ledger that lists all the missed deadlines (thank goodness!) or the time it took to secure image permission rights. These omissions are both convention and necessity. Imagine the vulnerability of published peer reviews. Think of the tomes of material if every communication and draft was published. And yet, the process of erasure allows for various degrees of evasion.

As Solga notes, the authors of the Shakespeare issue are mostly male and largely located in English departments. This is part of the record. How this came to be, however, is not. How did the editing process work at *CTR* in 1988? How were the authors of the four 1988 *CTR* issues selected? To help answer some of these questions and better understand editing and publishing in the late 1980s, I reached out to the editors of the four 1988 issues. Natalie Rewa, Robert Wallace, and Alan Filewod replied.

The 1988 issues were published following a reorganization of the editorial process in 1987, wherein the editorial structure of *CTR* moved from a sole editor model (Wallace) to a group of four scholars: Alan Filewod, Natalie Rewa, Ann Wilson, and Robert Wallace. In this model, the editorial collective discussed a year's themes and issues, and then each editor toiled independently on their issue: working with contributors (and possibly guest editors), selecting the featured playscript, and securing visual materials. According to Wallace, few unsolicited manuscripts were received, and editors usually reached out to potential authors to solicit contributions. While limited use of email was available at universities, editors largely communicated with contributors via phone, fax, or mail.

In terms of editing timelines, Rewa noted that "editors had to work timing based on an annual routing from University of Toronto Press of when the issue was to appear." Alongside individual approaches and editing styles, this meant that a piece might go through a revision cycle (with feedback often communicated via phone calls). According to Wallace and Filewod, it was also possible that an editor would revise an article without consultation with the author, particularly in the case of late submissions that were close to the publisher's deadlines. In the design and proofing stage of the process, editors worked closely with University of Toronto Press publishing personnel. Rewa recalls that a "significant deadline was that to get all the edited, marked up typescripts and peripheral materials to the copyeditor," who at the time was Olive Koyama. Meanwhile, Filewod fondly remembers driving to Toronto to work with the University of Toronto Press's designer Beth Earl Rose, with whom he would "spend the day" and "physically lay out the magazine." Wallace also highlights working with Earl Rose, noting that his "favorite memory of editing *CTR*—any issue—was sitting with Beth Earl in her office at U of T, working through the design of the issue, page by page."

The editors' recollections function as a kind of flashlight, illuminating easy to overlook details while also highlighting the many textures that are not reflected in the printed product. A keen reader can find a note about the editorial reorganization on page 3 of the Shakespeare issue. They can also find the names of Beth Earl Rose and Olive Koyama listed in the front matter of each of the 1988 issues. At the same time, the editorial meetings, the typed manuscripts, the phone calls, the days spent at the University of

Toronto Press office, and the personal and interpersonal joys and stresses have fallen away. This highlights the tension, between what gets registered and what does not—a topic which is particularly important in the context of this issue of *Performance Matters*, an issue that attempts to acknowledge the often-obscured dynamics of publishing in the field of theatre and performance and beyond.

As both the editors' remembrances and Solga's approach highlight, the personal frequently gets lost in the process of editing. Each of the 1988 editors highlighted personal and interpersonal details: the people they worked with, the pressures and pleasures of the role. Similarly, Solga connects her relationship to *CTR* by remembering watching Liz Manley at 13 years old and noting that, in 1988, she "could not have imagined the scholar" (132) she would become. Relatedly, on that Toronto street in 2010, I could not know that the homesickness and loneliness I felt would become an anchor in my intellectual career. Indeed, the game would become the case study for one of my first conference presentations in theatre and performance studies and later one of my first publications in the field, in a special issue of *Canadian Theatre Review*.¹ Sometimes, performance does that: it impresses itself upon a body in unexpected ways. And, sometimes, an impulse to record that impression follows. One of the challenges, of course, is the ephemerality of performance itself. As Peggy Phelan famously argues, "[P]erformance becomes itself through disappearance" (146). The articles that fill the pages of journals in any field variously seek to index, make legible, perform, capture, or otherwise chronicle something that is vanishing, vanished. This desire to share performance through the record is, indeed, what often connects editors, authors, and readers, both in and across time.

As an epistemological approach to publication reminds us, however, the process of recording and sharing is neither simple nor neutral. Writing about performance can be, as it was for Solga and me, deeply intertwined with the personal. Publishing can be, as it was for the editors and authors of the four 1988 *CTR* issues, individually, collectively, and contextually revealing. Approaching publication epistemologically reminds us of how important it is

¹ Editor's note: Blair's article, "Hockey Sticks and Heartstrings: The Men's Gold Medal Hockey Game and the Affective Legacy of the 2010 Olympic Games" was published in *CTR* 164 (Fall 2015), "Vancouver After 2010," edited by Peter Dickinson, Keren Zaiontz and Kirsty Johnston.

to understand publication both *is* and *as* recording—to read for the intended alongside the fragments of the ambient and the hidden.

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Hourglasses and Hammers: A Reflection on Forty Years of Interculturalism in *Canadian Theatre Review*

Barry Freeman

Winter 2005. I had just wrapped up work on the Prague–Toronto–Manitoulin Theatre Project (PTMTP), which had brought together participants from the University of Toronto and DAMU, a theatre conservatory in Prague, Czech Republic. That year, the ensemble had been joined by another partner, the Debajehmujig Theatre Group, based on the Wikwemikong Unceded Territory on Manitoulin Island in Ontario. The late playwright Daniel David Moses had also joined the project as its poet and lyricist. The experience was both transformative and challenging. It occurred to me that I might unpack it in the PhD program I'd just started at what was then the Drama Centre at the University of Toronto. Someone pointed me toward French theatre scholar Patrice Pavis's 1996 edited collection, *The Intercultural Performance Reader*. The book's chapters mostly explored the Eastern forays of famous Western directors, which wasn't useful, but what was useful was the new term Pavis used to organize the discussion: 'interculturalism.'

Thinking 'interculturally' gave me a fresh way to think about the PTMTP. I wrote a paper for my graduate dramaturgy class analyzing the "dramaturgy of intercultural meeting." I recently re-read it, with the benefit of two decades of further thinking, and I could see how this new concept was clarifying. I could also see how it completely turned my attention away from any problems. A footnote eight pages into the paper reads: "[T]he choice to set aside post-colonial issues in a European/Canadian/First-Nations collaboration is itself politically charged." Back then, I could still imagine that the European co-directors of the PTMTP could make a "choice" to "set aside" something called "post-colonial issues." The next year, in 2006, I participated

in the PTMTP again, this time as an assistant director. Would this new source of knowledge help me steward the creative and ethical challenges of the rehearsal room?

Anchoring interculturalism

Summer 1982. *Canadian Theatre Review* (*CTR*) founding editor Don Rubin includes the text of a lecture given by Richard Schechner in Toronto called “The Performer: Training Interculturally” in *CTR* 35, which was on the theme of acting training. Schechner’s text, which marks one of the first appearances of the term in *CTR*, offers a wide taxonomy of global practices, touching on Noh, Kathakali dance, and European auteur directors. Reading it now, it’s hard to process statements such as “We acquire pan-human information at the level of world culture” (38). And yet the text does deliver on Rubin’s editorial promise for the issue, which set out to question the “traditions” of theatre training. As editor, Rubin was responding to a changing landscape for theatre education: actor training programs were popping up all over the country, including the National Theatre School, which was trying to find its footing. When Schechner used other global traditions to interrogate what training was for, or whether we ought to be committed to standardized forms and styles, yes, he engaged in some romanticizing of global practices, but he also unsettled the assumptions that were quickly getting baked into Canadian training programs.

If we take the pages of *CTR* as a barometer, Schechner’s interculturalism drifted right on by Canadian theatre scholarship at the time. But perhaps because of the term’s sheer elasticity, it eventually went on to become an orienting concept in the broad effort to shift away from the colonialist and nationalistic trappings of early Canadian theatre scholarship.¹ It took nearly another decade for inter-culturalism to get another mention in *CTR*, in a short 1990 opinion piece by Svetlana Zylín, then Artistic Director of Playwrights Workshop Montreal (*CTR* 63). Zylín, lamenting the withdrawal of government funding for theatre in the 1980s, noted theatre’s value in promoting “intercultural understanding and harmony” (39).

¹ It is worth remembering that for nearly two decades of *CTR*’s history, the term ‘indigenous theatre’ (lower case) did not describe Indigenous theatre (upper case) but an ‘authentically’ ‘Canadian’ theatre discrete from British and American practice.

It is fitting that Zylín followed Schechner in using this term, given that she was a member of the generation of post-war European immigrants to Canada who, despite all the talk of need for an 'indigenous' Canadian theatre, were bringing different energy, ideas, and ways of working to rehearsal halls and classrooms across the country. Joined by other immigrant artists from Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America, and dovetailing with a growing solidarity among Indigenous artists, this alliance of communities together lobbied for a cultural ecosystem in Canada that was more diverse than the anglo and franco repertoires. Natalie Rewa curated a discussion of the shift in an important *CTR* issue titled *Ethnicity* in 1988, in which Beverly Yhap historicized the moment:

Twenty years ago, the challenge was getting out from under a colonial mentality, creating an indigenous theatre, a Canadian theatre. It's still the same; only now the players are a motley group burning with the fervour to perform work that recognizes the new Canadian reality. That reality, a coming of age by communities—immigrant, native—is what this second generation of theatre artists is all about. ("On Their Own" 30)

Yhap's eloquent statement seems prescient in retrospect, but she was also describing an evolution that was well under way. What she envisioned for her own company, Cahoots Theatre Projects, was certainly not Schechner's interculturalism, a 'West and the Rest' paradigm within which Western artists and scholars would look to Eastern aesthetics for renewal (Lo and Gilbert 32). Interculturalism in Canada would instead trade in the multicultural language of the moment, manifest in Zylín's "intercultural understanding and harmony." To some extent, interculturalism would continue to be wielded as what Jill Dolan called a "utopian performative" (5), exemplified in phrases such as "intercultural bridge" (Levin 55) and "intercultural connections, learning, and collaboration" (Afolabi 39), or in its use in the mandates of organizations that use explicit intercultural language such as Cahoots (Yhap, "Performing" 6), Pangea Arts (Specht 44), and Urban Ink (Roberts and Roberts 73).

At the same time, the pages of *CTR* also display a constant skepticism of intercultural utopias, evident in more moderated phrases such as "intercultural dialogue" (Guevara 49), "intercultural encounter" (Nigam 17), "intercultural exchange" (Defraeye 92), and "intercultural exploration"

(Dénomme-Welch and Magowan 55). This conceived of interculturalism as a cultural process rather than a guaranteed emancipatory outcome. Influential in effecting that shift was Ric Knowles, *CTR* editor-in-chief from 2004 to 2011. Starting with his critiques of Robert Lepage's highly visible productions, and in prolific writing for more than a decade thereafter, Knowles tackled the cascading problems with working interculturally: for example the "fuzzy universalism" of some work on the international festival circuit (*Reading* 89), the "intercultural promiscuity" of the theatre anthropologists ("Inter/Cultural/Performance" 4), or the ways we can work to strengthen "fragile intercultural solidarities" among an ecology of minority communities ("Inter/Cultural/ Performance" 3). Knowles curated a pivotal *CTR* issue titled *Intercultural Performance* in 2009, which might be the high watermark for the term's use in Canadian theatre discourse. In that issue and in his multiple books on the subject, Knowles answered the older top down models of interculturalism with a call for a grassroots version built from below (*Theatre* 59). Working upward would come to mean anchoring interculturalism in creative-scholarly praxis, which Knowles both models and theorizes, emerging from his artistic collaborations with artists such as Monique Mojica, Nina Lee Aquino, and the late Majdi Bou Matar. These fruitful collaborations pursued a grounded interculturalism, better suited to the task of renegotiating the terms of engagement in a country founded on acts of genocide and theft, formed by successive waves of colonizers and interweaving diasporas, eclectic in its knowledges and traditions.

Hourglasses and hammers

Spring 2015. A full-circle moment. I'm at the University of Ottawa, gathered at the Canadian Association for Theatre Research annual conference for a keynote delivered by Patrice Pavis. I'd finished that PhD about the PTMTP, the one that Pavis's writing in the 1990s had helped me imagine. I'd become a faculty member at the University of Toronto, teaching about interculturalism and globalization, and was working on the book that would become *Staging Strangers*. I'd been doing my own 'grassroots' interculturalism, writing out of my relationships to the Debajehmujig Storytellers (as they'd been renamed) and projects by the visionary director Mumbi Tindyebwa Otu. At the conference, on 31 May 2015, Pavis delivered a keynote in French, which I was able to follow with a printed English translation. He reflected on his experience as a visiting professor in Korea, theorizing multiple modes of

performance from traditional plays to K-pop. But I recall the keynote feeling like an intercultural collision itself, palpably exposing the difference between European and Canadian modes of intercultural thinking. I was struck at the time by how Pavis still positioned himself as the locus of meaning, his analysis oriented toward making Korean performance traditions 'legible' to a presumably unfamiliar Western audience. It used his own 'hourglass model' from the early 1990s in which intercultural spectatorship comprises a source (or 'foreign') culture at one end, a 'target culture' at the other end, with the flowing sand of the 'hourglass' representing cultural representation going through various filters on the way (Pavis). That model had been critiqued, some noting the need for the hourglass to be "turned upside-down" (Lo and Gilbert 42), so I asked a question—that-was-really-a-comment because I wanted to know what Pavis thought of how intercultural praxis had evolved in Canada. I remember my question-comment flopping. When writing this piece, I looked up my notes from the keynote, and I'd written only one line: "When you only have a hammer, everything looks like a nail."

These days, the hourglass needs more than flipping. The cultural ruptures we've experienced since—anti-Black, Asian, and Indigenous violence; callouts highlighting institutional paralysis; revelations about long-standing abuses of power in the rehearsal room, to name only a few—cry out for new languages and knowledges. In recent *CTR* issues—*Equity in Theatre* (CTR165), *emPowering Theatre* (CTR170), *Time's Up* (CTR180), *Theatre after the Explosion* (CTR186), or (pause) *A Pandemic Time Capsule* (CTR188)—intercultural language gives way to the language of race and racialization.² The tone of the writing in these issues also feels rawer, a kind of no-bullshit plainness in naming problems head-on (the very problems I'd suggested could be "set aside" in that graduate paper).

Fifteen years ago, Josette Féral asked in *CTR's Intercultural Performance* issue, "Does interculturalism still have a true meaning? Can it still help us think about the phenomenon it is supposed to account for? What does it tell us about the current state of artistic practices?" (7). To refresh Féral's

² The word 'intercultural' does not appear in the *CTR* issue *Actor Training in a Changing Landscape* (CTR 160), and it's used only twice in *emPowering Theatre* (CTR 170). In (pause) *A Pandemic Time Capsule* (CTR 188), 'intercultural' is used twice, but 'race/racial' appears twenty times; in *Time's Up* (CTR 180), 'intercultural' appears zero times, and 'race/racial' eight times; in *Casting and Race* (CTR 193), 'intercultural' appears zero times, and 'race/racial' forty-five times.

questions for today: Has the explanatory potential of interculturalism waned? Does it provide a clarifying lens on the politics of performance, or does it now unhelpfully blur our focus? Might interculturalism have couched issues of race in technical language to make discussing race more comfortable for white scholars and educators? Was interculturalism ever up to the task of unsettling the explanatory position of white privilege? When Jill Carter explains that the absence of “bone deep change” in Canadian theatre has necessitated acts of Indigenous “refusal” (8), or when Yolanda Bonnell asks that Indigenous work receive more informed criticism or else critics should just stay away altogether, I do not think they are looking for tweaks to ‘intercultural exchange.’ These are declarations that our institutions and practices continue to fall short and that until such time as we can do better, some must define their own separate space, recalling the title of Yhap’s 1990 essay, “On Their Own Terms.”

Allowing time, admitting knowledges

Winter 2024. I’ve been through a year of loss, losing both parents within a year of one another, as well as two dear friends and colleagues. Inevitably, this reflection, like everything for me at the moment, became personal, the memories and relationships forcefully pushing their way into view. I kept thinking of Daniel David Moses especially. I spent scores of hours with him watching rehearsals of the PTMTP’s devised show, first in Toronto, then in Prague, then up on Manitoulin Island. Sitting in the dark in the house seats, we witnessed some unfortunate shortcuts in the work, at times some cheap jokes based on ugly ideas. There were side conversations. I listened and learned. He and I and some others conspired to push for some small changes. One time, we got particularly uncomfortable about a body-shaming joke that came up in an improvisation and quickly got included in the show. A group of us stayed after to work out how to restage it as a scene that would expose the historical baggage of racialized standards of beauty. The directors accepted the changed scene, although, truth be told, it was probably only because we’d made it funnier rather than kinder. It was remarkable how little time it took us that day to open a small window through which the audience might glimpse a different way of knowing.



Figure 1: Daniel David Moses and Barry Freeman at Studio Ypsilon Café, Prague, Czechia, in 2006. Photo by Leah Takata, used with permission.

It was no revolution. The PTMTP had done a lot of good but had run its course. Daniel David knew it, though at the time I wasn't sure he knew that I knew it. One morning in Prague, I met him for a coffee at the theatre's café, both of us being early risers. I was especially ornery that day about all the compromises of the work, and I remember unloading my frustrations on the poor man. Daniel David, whom we tragically lost in 2020, was hilarious and could be energetic and effusive, but he could also sit with perfect comfort in silence for long stretches, bringing the deep attention of a poet. That morning, he listened to me intently, smiling in a knowing way, commiserating a little. But what left an indelible impression on me was the grace with which he received my rant, which had been naïve in the sense that what I was complaining about was already so well known to him. Someone snapped a

photo. For me, what Knowles earlier called “interculturalism from below” comprises a patchwork quilt of such moments.

That interculturalism has had a conceptual presence across thirty years of *CTR* suggests that it was useful in making Canadian theatre wider. It did so by adapting itself into a grounded, materialist praxis proceeding from good relations. Today, we are rightly talking more about how good relations must involve addressing harms and revisiting the lines between artistic ‘risk’ and personal ‘safety’ for everyone. In one of my favourite pieces of writing ever to be published in *CTR*, Nikki Shaffeeullah’s “Safety and Justice in Our Artistic Spaces,” Shaffeeullah explored “how people and organizations can position themselves to minimize harm, hold themselves accountable when harm is done, and be open to shifts in processes and culture that create new frameworks for safe, generative, and innovative creativity” (9). One of her pragmatic suggestions is to “allow time” for things to surface organically. Funny, all these years, and it only occurs to me now that the ‘hourglass’ of Pavis’s model was accidentally a metaphor for limited time: that if we don’t devote enough time to understand one another and how we might best work together, we should almost expect to fail. Shaffeeullah’s piece is continuous with the “collaborative mode” Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert wished for interculturalism twenty years earlier (39), but in drawing wisdom from transformative justice and abolitionist frameworks, she models how we may learn from the struggles of Black, Indigenous, and other racialized communities. If Canadian theatre manages to be wider still in the future, it will owe the change to its openness to other knowledges, not decontextualized “pan-human information,” but knowledges tethered to the lives and bodies of everyone at the table.

Acknowledgement

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Here We Are, in the Middle

Yvette Nolan

When I was serving as artistic director at Native Earth, we started doing this thing. It's a physical thing, a way of reminding ourselves why we do the work. We extend one arm behind, extend the other arm forward. That arm behind us, that's the ancestors, the arm before, that's those who come after us, and here we are, here I am, in the middle of the continuum. I do the work for those who came before and those who come after. This action, arms outstretched like you have just drawn and released an arrow from the largest bow, arms outstretched as in Virabhadrasana II, Warrior 2, is also a reminder that we carry the knowledge of our ancestors forward, we pass it on to our descendants, blood, artistic, or otherwise.

The back and forth of discussion is what moves us forward. Discussion in circles, in gatherings, in classrooms is how we remember those who came before, our teachings from them, and how we pass that knowledge along to those who come after. Hearing each other, hearing ourselves, being willing to say things out loud—or on the page—and then be challenged on them by others—editors, scholars, gentle readers—and be asked to re-examine them. Staying open to the possibility of change, of growth, of learning.

Ric Knowles is cited in Barry Freeman's article "Hourglasses and Hammers: A Reflection on Forty Years of Interculturalism in *Canadian Theatre Review*" (this issue)—of course he is, he has literally written the book on *Theatre and Interculturalism*, as well as edited the *CTR* issue *Inter/Cultural/Performance*. Ric's thinking and writing about interculturalism has changed over the years, what he knows has shifted as he learned, and he has done some of his learning in front of us. In response to seeing an early iteration of Native Earth Performing Art's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, he wrote an article titled "The Death of a Chief: Watching for Adaptation; or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bard," in which he unpacked his resistance to what was on offer, talking about his disappointment with what

we showed in our first workshop, assessing his expectations, and recognizing that they may have “blinded” him to what we were actually attempting to do (62). In the article, he tracks his own evolution as a scholar, alongside the evolution of the work of a small, scrappy Indigenous company.

Similarly, Barry returns to his earlier self in “Hourglasses and Hammers,” examining his experience with the Prague–Toronto–Manitoulin Theatre Project (PTMTP) some twenty years ago. Barry is reflecting on forty years of interculturalism in the pages of *CTR*, and he tracks it admirably, but he also displays his own growth. This Barry is wiser than the 2005 Barry, and he looks back on his grappling with the terms, the words, the nomenclature. As Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert noted decades ago, “the terminologies are woolly, to say the least” (32).

Words are so fraught. The meaning with which they are endowed shifts and changes. Feminism, inclusion, civilization . . . words that are one day descriptive and the next, derogatory. I am regularly chastised for using the word “halfbreed” to describe myself, in spite of the fact that I feel that Maria Campbell reclaimed it for us in her 1973 book of the same name. Many of us have been challenged when we use the word “Indian”—even though we are all—Canadians and Indigenous folk alike—still held in thrall by the Indian Act, established in 1876. Ask your institution what policies they have in place to “authenticate” Indigenous identity and I guarantee you that “a valid Indian Status or Treaty card” will be the first acceptable form of verification.

So with interculturalism. Josette Féral says that it has “at its core the concept of difference. . . . Could we not say that studying this difference, far from freeing us and allowing a dialogue between cultures, ultimately results in the reinforcement of individualities and specificities that work against the cultural dialogues it attempts to establish” (7)? That may well be true, but the implication is then that different is bad. Are we at a place and a time where we recognize difference and work together across difference? Is the problem who gets to name the difference? Is the problem the impetus behind the desire to work together? What if the players want to work together because of the similarities they sense between the different players? Lo and Gilbert do much work unpacking the meaning and the application of intercultural in their “Toward a Topography of Cross–Cultural Theatre Praxis,” in fact making

something of a wish for intercultural practice, twenty-plus years ago, pointing many of us towards many possible paths.

These conversations happen intergenerationally in the pages of *CTR*. They happen across geographies, and across time. The late, great Daniel David Moses teaches me again through Barry's piece—as he taught Barry back then. Lo and Gilbert teach me again, as they taught Selena Couture, who generously shared their 2002 article with me when I could not find it in the library. Note the language in the title—*Toward* implies movement, reaching for, evolution. There has been, as Barry notes, some scepticism about “intercultural utopias” (141) in the pages of *CTR*, as scholars and thinkers and artists and writers grapple with the word, the definition of the word in this particular moment. Good, let us wrestle with the language, let us tussle with the ideas, let us not erase the past, but understand that we can't get there from here, without going through this.

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An Account of Durational and Distributed Encounters with *Corpus CTR*

Selena Couture

When I was invited to consider archiving and *Canadian Theatre Review* (*CTR*) for this issue, I happily agreed, as a performance historian who has both spent time in archives and critiqued the assumptions and power embedded within colonial archives. I admit to a fondness for *CTR* stemming from my performance in a student production of “This Is for You, Anna” (*CTR* 43)¹ and the six times *CTR* has hosted me and some of my collaborators. In recent years, I’ve found *CTR* to be welcoming—inviting even— and open to creative scholarly writing. As a way of returning the hospitality, I invited the corpus² of *CTR* to cohabitate with me for a few months. I was very interested to see what would happen if we spent some time together while thinking about archives and archiving. The drama department librarian at the University of Alberta—the indomitable Lucinda Johnston—didn’t bat an eye at my request to invite *Corpus CTR* to my office for the fall 2023 term. After I made *Corpus CTR* comfortable, I invited others— faculty, students, staff, friends, and colleagues—to spend time with us, to physically encounter the materiality of *Corpus CTR* in ways that emerged from their experiences, perspectives, and artistic practices. Having *Corpus CTR* visiting for so long allowed us to circle around it, to handle it, to serendipitously encounter its pages. All the while, I considered how *Corpus CTR* relates to the idea of archive, asking, what are the implications of approaching it as one, and what valuing might happen in such a process?

¹ The play was first developed in 1983–85 by Nightwood Theatre and the Anna Collective. The play has returned to *CTR* repeatedly: Shelley Scott discussed a University of Lethbridge performance of it in *CTR* 121 (2005), and Kailin Wright discusses a production at St Francis Xavier in *CTR* 180 (2019). It is also the focus of MacArthur, Roberts, Scott, and Zisman Newman’s piece in this issue.

² The Oxford English Dictionary defines ‘corpus’ as “[a] body or complete collection of writings or the like; the whole body of literature on any subject” (“Corpus”).

A Threshold of Archival Desire

In addition to the pleasure of visiting with *Corpus CTR*, my research was also informed by critiques of archiving.³ As Punjabi, German, and Jewish literary scholar Julietta Singh asserts in *No Archive Will Restore You*, calling something “an archive gives it heft, grants it the status of an intellectual pursuit” (23). Singh builds on insights from Derrida’s *Archive Fever*, which questioned the reliability and clarity of both the concept and the container of the archive, Singh notes that while no one can understand the archive, we also cannot stop reaching for it (25).⁴ I also link this archival wariness to Singh’s analysis, in *Unthinking Mastery: Dehumanism and Decolonial Entanglements*, of the “qualities of mastery, [as] definitional foreclosure can itself become a practice of masterful exclusion” (43), and her recommendation that “an uncertain practice of experimentation,” may offer “the most powerful method by which to exceed mastery’s hold in the everyday production of the human through neocolonial politics today” (42). Singh cites Sara Ahmed’s *Queer Phenomenology* and the consideration of archives as phenomenological devices whose contents, if one becomes oriented around them, can become core to constituting oneself (Ahmed 113–18). Suddenly, the stakes of my experiment in cohabiting with *Corpus CTR* seemed more significant, and I recognized the necessity of a porous and distributed practice that stays at a threshold, allowing me to be open and responsive without ever completely entering and losing myself.⁵

While cohabitating with *Corpus CTR*, I also took part in “Performing Archives: The Practice of Gathering,” a Hemispheric Encounters residency.⁶ The

³ All of this is, of course, deeply informed by discourses in performance studies on archives, including Diana Taylor’s *The Archive and the Repertoire* as well as Rebecca Schneider’s *Performing Remains*.

⁴ Her account of archiving her body is inspired by Italian neo-Marxist political theorist Antonio Gramsci’s exhortation to “know thyself ... as a product of the historical processes to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of tracers, without leaving an inventory.... Therefore it is imperative at the outset to compile such an inventory” (Gramsci qtd. in; Said, qtd. in Singh, *No Archive* 18). Singh asserts that the “body archive is an attunement, a hopeful gathering, an act of love against the foreclosures of reason. It is a way of knowing the body-self as a becoming and unbecoming thing, of scrambling time and matter, of turning toward rather than against oneself. And vitally, it is a way of thinking-feeling the body’s unbounded relation to other bodies” (29).

⁵ Porousness, becoming/unbecoming, the threshold, and penetration are all discussed in Singh’s *No Archive Will Restore You* (29–31). She defines ‘threshold’ as “that space—physical, psychic, and temporal—from which you can no longer sustain a performance of yourself as a discrete and bounded entity” (58).

⁶ Hemispheric Encounters: Developing Transborder Research-Creation Practices is a multi-year SSHRC Partnership research project that “brings together scholars, artists, activists and community organizations

invitation asked participants to consider: “How might archives amplify, address, activate, confront, perform? How can the archive be a realm for social and environmental justice? For healing?” and stated an interest in “radical, embodied, and unruly approaches to archives, in the possibilities inherent in live exchange, in the alchemy of presence” (“Performing Archives Programme” 5). The four-day residency in Tkaron:to featured activations by fifteen archivists, artists, scholars, and grad students from Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, New York, Boston, and Edmonton/Vancouver. Some of the insights arising from these impactful, thought-provoking experiences were directly applicable to my ongoing experiment of cohabitating with *Corpus CTR*. In a discussion of what we mean by ‘archive,’ it quickly became clear that the necessary citational practice of meaning making and signifiers—especially in the multiple languages present—allowed for an almost continuously proliferating understanding of the term. Claudia M. Friedel, an archivist at Boston University, spoke about the critical importance of selection, gathering, cataloguing, record keeping, and the metadata that make the work transmissible to archive users. She also spoke about the necessity of keeping an awareness of the context of content and said that some archivists associated with the digital transformation of the European cultural heritage sector (Europeana Foundation) use the metaphor of a current to describe the mutuality and dynamism of this processing practice. This was a very generative metaphor and led to considerations of river currents (and their obstructions), electrical currents that carry energy, and the transactional nature of monetary currency. Jehan Roberson, a writer, interdisciplinary artist, memory worker, and PhD candidate in English literature at Cornell, emphasized the dwelling-place meaning of ‘archon’ and noted that the site itself influences the metadata that can be created. Also, citing Cheryl Harris’s “Whiteness as Property” and Singh’s *No Archive Will Restore You*, she examined the tension of possession in an archive alongside the thresholding that is part of a selecting process. Interdisciplinary artist and archivist Joyce LeeAnn also emphasized that the only access point is the present—and that we must understand what we each need to be present, in order to enter into the portal of the past.⁷ Such presence eventually also needs to become

from across the Americas to explore hemispheric performance as an artistic practice for addressing social and environmental justice” (*Hemispheric Encounters*). It is organized into three research clusters: Ecologies, Mobilities and Oralities, and an Archiving Stream. The Archiving residency included participants from the Ecologies Cluster and Archiving Stream.

⁷ This was the list I generated: shoes off, feet on the ground; attention to my authority—own it; a way to move body, circulate blood; and to be seen by others who are co-present with me.

collectivized in some way, so that it can be in the world and act effectively. We practised this collectivizing through many of the performative activations during the residency and grappled with how to develop what Mexican artist, curator, and education researcher Sofia Olascoaga called these convivial muscles.⁸

Gathering at the Portal of the Present to Recall *CTR*

I come now to the results of my convivial time with *Corpus CTR*. When the journals arrived in late September, my research assistant (Sarah Jackson) and I took stock of what we had and arranged them in chronological order: forty-one bound volumes—starting with volume 1 in 1974 and going up to CTR 140 in 2009—and individual issues from 141 to 193. Sarah (who researches feminist historiography, women’s music hall acts in nineteenth-century London, and contemporary burlesque) immediately created a coding system to track when and how women’s performances and scholarship were preserved in *Corpus CTR*. As the weeks went on, we added bobblehead bookmarks with images of the people in our department who had published in the journal. The corpus began to sprout colourfully and playfully, beckoning visitors.

A particular pleasure of this process came from the students, friends, and colleagues who took up my invitation to visit. Watching how people approached the archive and discussing the methods of encounter became parts of the experiment. Xavia Publius, a PhD candidate researching 2010s US television shows and fan methodologies, was immediately struck by the overwhelmingness of, as she put it, “the gang’s all here.” She noticed an affective draw of *Corpus*, which was more heightened than the pleasure of browsing in library stacks, where one knows that something may be checked out, so a large journal collection may still not be complete. She explained articulations in TV fan cultures that engage with enormous bodies of

⁸ These discussions built on concepts from Ivan Illich’s 1973 text *Tools for Conviviality*, which critiqued industrial society and aimed to create conviviality through communal creativity and democratic ethics. Such autonomous tools enable their creative users to meet their needs as producers and users (Atasay and Bourassa 75). See also the podcast episode “Sofia Olascoaga” on Radio Web Europe’s *Son[i]a* for a description of her collective research process “Between Utopia and Failure: An Affective Genealogy,” which looks at the history of the practices of communal living in Cuernavaca, where Illich and many other intellectuals and activists (along with Olascoaga’s family) attempted to live by these principles.



Figure 1: A view of *Corpus CTR's* corner of the office. Photo by Sarah Jackson, used with permission.



Figure 2: Close-up of *Corpus CTR* with traces of visits. Photo by Sarah Jackson, used with permission.

work (e.g. long-running soap operas) where the entry point is rarely the beginning. Instead, fans start where they happen to land and work backwards and forwards, following curiosities of plot lines and other affective lures. After choosing an issue, she mused on the possibility of interacting with it by adding a note that would be stored until the next person opened it. We also considered whether *Corpus CTR* had a particular desire to be read and handled—is that an inherent part of a print publication’s life?

My visit with a colleague, Yelena Gluzman, felt like a small oasis of calm and focus. I oriented her to *Corpus*, and then she read an issue published the year she was born and my co-authored article in the *Radical Hospitalities* issue, while I read a different issue alongside her. She said she liked being able to look into a small corner of the journal and a small corner of my work. In the midst of the busyness of campus life, this co-reading shared space felt briefly rejuvenating. Another visit briefly turned the space into a dance studio. Drama faculty members Lin Snelling and Piet Defraeye’s practice of encountering the texts within *Corpus CTR* was an enlightening demonstration of how the metaphor of a current could be applied beyond the practice of archiving (as Friedel described it) to a dynamic and mutually influential processing of textual material. They came to my office one day with a pot of tea and set themselves up to dance with the journals and each other. The result of this—and my commentary as I sat behind the camera—is [available at this link](#). Their connection to each other, the memories that the journals sparked, and gestural re-enactments of them flowed through their bodies and speech, swirled around the obstacles surrounding them, and briefly electrified the space.

Joyce LeeAnn’s emphasis on the present/presence in order to enter the “portal of the past” quickly became clear as more visitors encountered *Corpus CTR*. Most began by reaching for one that was published in a year that was significant in some way to them: the year they arrived in Canada, the year they started theatre school, the year they graduated, the year they were born, the year of an important historical event ... and on and on. After the first delight at connecting the historical artifact of the journal to their chosen year, they then set about perusing the pages and, often, delighting in the serendipity of finding an article of great interest to them. For example, Lyudmyla Honcharova, a PhD student researching martial arts for actor

training, happened on two articles on training and survival in the journal published the season she was born.

After these initial encounters, I asked visitors to look at *Corpus CTR* and ask it questions. This generated a series of sticky notes that accumulated over the months, arrayed above the shelves on which *Corpus CTR* sat. The questions included: When was the first article on Indigenous theatre? When was the first article about Indigenous theatre written by an Indigenous person? When was the first issue in which women authors outnumbered men? How many articles have been published on Shakespeare? How many independent artists have published work, or are the artists who publish always embedded with institutions? Are there any articles on theatre and the horror genre? Some questions were about the actual materiality of the journal issues: When was the last time one was stamped with a return date? When did themed issues start? When did the glossy multi-colour design start?⁹

As we worked to answer these questions (especially the ‘first’ and ‘how many’ questions), Claudia Friedel’s statement on the significance of metadata as the key to transmissibility of an archive quickly became clear. In keyword searches of ‘Indigenous,’ ‘Native,’ and ‘Indian,’ over 160 articles were unearthed (this excludes the early years of publication that use ‘indigenous’ and ‘native’ to describe white settler Canadian work in opposition to British or US work). Not surprisingly, since 2015 (when the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action were released), twenty- eight of the thirty-four issues published have included publications on Indigenous theatre (approximately eighty-five articles, editorials, reviews, or scripts; about 25 per cent of the total published). This is a significant change from the previous forty years, which included sixty-three articles (about 4 per cent of the total published). This doesn’t include *CTR* 68, *Native Theatre*, edited by Monique Mojica in 1991.¹⁰ None of this considers the content of these pieces: this is merely a data analysis. Also interesting is a keyword search of ‘land,’ which

⁹ Some of these questions were answered easily by handling parts of *Corpus CTR*: The last physical issue checked out of the library was *CTR* 1990, due on 20 April 1998. The first woman whose work was discussed was designer Mary Kerr, in *CTR* 2 (1974). Others were quickly answered with keyword searches; e.g. the horror genre showed up twice—once with reference to the clown duo Mump and Smoot and once referencing The Electric Company’s show *The Fall: Industrial Horror*.

¹⁰ Mojica’s issue has approximately twenty-one articles, artist reflections, editorials, memoirs, memorials, and four scripts. If we do include this issue, the percentage of articles related to Indigenous performance from 1974 to 2015 rises to 6 percent.

returns twenty-nine articles. The few articles published before 1988 either have 'land' in the title of the play or are describing immersive theatre. In 1988, Natalie Rewa's issue *Theatre and Ethnicity* included Virginia Cooke's article "Our Footprints across Canada," which discusses the BC Supreme Court drama of the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en people's land claim to over 58,000 square kilometres of land in northern British Columbia¹¹ and Headlines Theatre's national tour of *No'Xya' (Our Footprints)*, produced in cooperation with the Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en Tribal Council (Theatre for Living). After 1988, approximately two-thirds of the articles with the metadata keyword of 'land' reference Indigenous land relations.

A keyword search of 'Shakespeare' reveals 101 articles—at least one every year from 1974 to 2016 (except in 1983, 1998, 1999, 2010, and 2015). Thirty-two of these were published in two special issues on Shakespeare (1988 and 2002). This is approximately 5 per cent of the articles published in *Corpus CTR*. There hadn't been any published since 2016 until two came out in 2023 (this seven-year absence almost exactly echoes the proliferation of articles related to Indigenous performance since 2015). Other keyword searches arising from questions, curiosities, and conversations yielded other data: seventy-four articles with the keywords 'feminist/feminism' (starting with a special issue in 1985); forty-seven articles with metadata related to labour/working class/socialism (with a special issue in 1999); 102 articles referencing what we now refer to as 2SLGBTQQIA+ (the first six are in a special issue from 1976, *Homosexuality and the Theatre*; fifty-one—or half of the total—appeared in the past ten years). 'Toronto' searched as a subject term yields 152 articles (second only in number to articles related to Indigenous performance).

To move on from keyword data searching, the months-long duration of the visit in my office also created other ways to understand *Corpus CTR*. As time went on, I developed a practice of having lunch with *Corpus CTR*, selecting random issues from the shelves and reading whatever caught my eye. Over the months, these included a piece from *CTR* 70 by Marianne Ackerman

¹¹ The court case, known as *Delgamuukw v. BC*, significantly impacted Aboriginal rights and title in the legal system, and helped establish oral history as valid evidence in Canadian courts (Beaudoin). For an excellent consideration of this case and the performativity of colonial courts in relation to the deliberate separation of Indigenous and colonial temporal frames, see Ryan Hartigan's "This is a Trial, Not a Performance!": Staging the Time of the Law."

about the development of Robert Lepage's *Alanienoudiet*, which was built around the "idea" of a longhouse, and British tragedian Edmund Kean's visit with Wendat people in 1825. I read a piece from *CTR* 72 by Tim Fort (my undergrad design professor) about watching a production of *Oklahoma!* in Inuvialuit while he was there helping with a high school show. In late November, I lunched with *CTR* 9 and found out she was all about Beverly Simons—obsessed with her, really—reviewing *Crabdance*, publishing a new play by Simons, and including an interview with her. A week later, I lunched with *CTR* 79/80 and read the opening articles of the double issue that celebrated twenty years of publication. Two of the things I learned: Don Rubin described himself as an "intellectual casualty of the Vietnam war," and *CTR* actually began as the *York Theatre Journal* in 1971 (5). In his retrospective article on the development of the critical field, Ric Knowles explained the shifts from Rubin's editorial interest in political advocacy to Bob Wallace's in understanding various communities across the country, and eventually to Alan Filewod, Natalie Rewa, and Ann Wilson working as an editorial team. Knowles observes a shift from information reporting and advocacy to political analysis. He also quotes Filewod's first editorial (*CTR* 55), which questioned the metaphor of cultural growth leading to a "anthropomorphic maturity," and called it part of "the cultural debris of our colonial origins" (Knowles 13). Knowles asserts that the shift to co-editors moved *CTR* away from a "logocentric" focus on single authors or playwrights to a "multilectical gaze through a compound eye" that celebrated collaboration (12). This insight resonated with my recent experiences with *CTR*, and reading Knowles's reflections on this from the twentieth-anniversary issue deepened my appreciation for Wallace, Filewod, Rewa, and Wilson's editorial labour. This personal process and the reflections it stirred in me brought back to mind Singh's description of the desire to reach for an archive—and Ahmed's assertion of how orienting oneself around it can be part of constituting a self.

Concluding with Care

What I've shared is by no means a summary or mastery of what *Corpus CTR* contains—or what its existence over these past fifty years means to Canadian theatre—and this hasn't been my goal. Instead, this has been an account of what happened during the quotidian cohabitation with this body of work and what this sort of durational and distributed process can help us learn from a corpus. I've recounted the overlapping encounters with

numerous people who crossed the threshold of my office door and danced, read, handled, and otherwise visited with *Corpus CTR*. There was also a lot of time during its residency when *Corpus CTR* was irrelevant and part of the background, when we ignored it. What I am struck by, beyond the data analysis and selected summaries shared with you here, is the conviviality of the process. This was a pleasurable experience: I shared time, stories, curiosities, and information with many people. We learned a bit about each other and those who have come before us as we learned from *Corpus CTR*. In the end, I began to see *Corpus CTR* as an accumulation of conviviality that has resulted in fifty years of writing. These words are remnants of the care and collaboration that goes into not only the production of performances but also the production of publications. Each article takes hours of labour by multiple people, only a few of whom have their names printed. Here's a thought experiment: consider if the researching, practising, drafting, and revising of an article takes approximately 200 hours, and editing, copy-editing, laying out, proofing, printing, publishing, marketing, and administrating labour takes another several hundred hours per issue. We could then picture that the 200 issues of *CTR* (working with an average of sixteen articles in each one) signify roughly 700,000 hours of collaborative human work hours (along with the paper, ink, electricity, and other resources used in publication). Or each one, like the one you have in your hands now, is the result of possibly 3,500 hours dedicated to the conveying of these ideas, perspectives, and thoughts to you. And you, dear reader, will then invest your precious time in the reading, processing, and perhaps sharing of what's being conveyed. We write because we care, you read because you care, and all of this attentive care is housed in these pages to be passed on.

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Matters of the Everyday In-Between: Making the Relationality Ac/Count

Leah Decter

While there are many fruitful and resonant threads on which I could tug in my response to Selena Couture's "An Account of Durational and Distributed Encounters with *Corpus CTR*" (this issue), it is her chronicling of care-full encounter that has stuck with me.¹ In the spirit of Selena's cohabitation with the CTR archive, I invite you, the reader, to think of my offering as a visit.

Selena's account begins with reflections on the hegemonic function of archives and the strategies through which they can be subverted and activated toward environmental justice and social change. She considers this, in part, through the concept of "uncertain practice[s] of experimentation," which, as she points out, Punjabi, German, and Jewish literary scholar Julietta Singh argues might be "the most powerful method by which to exceed mastery's hold in the everyday production of the human through neocolonial politics today" (Singh 42, quoted in Couture, this issue 153). The summaries and data analysis that follow in her account speak to the histories, content, and contexts of this particular archive, providing a glimpse into the changing terrain of the study of theatre and performance in Canada over the timespan of *CTR*. This type of unflinching scrutiny of the archived (and unarchived) record is a vital practice for any discipline as it traces the intellectual desire-lines that have been trodden to get to where we are today. Such accounts can assist in moving forward with care in defiance of stances of mastery that turn away from footfalls that have been rendered less visible.

¹ I use the term "care-full" as a way of slowing down the idea of care and thinking of its activated capacities in terms of duration, depth, and resonance.

While cohabiting with *Corpus* unearthed important patterns and elisions over the timespan of *CTR*, it is the accounting of care-full encounter that rises to the surface in the conclusion. This discussion addresses the extended time Selena and *Corpus* spent together both actively and passively, the exchange between the *Corpus* and her colleagues who visited, and the engagement between writer and reader embedded in the words, pages, and volumes of *Corpus*. This notion of encounter—of uncertain relational experimentation—is discussed alongside a speculative calculation of the “human work hours” (162) involved in the creation of *Corpus* as a whole, 700,000, and 3,500 for each issue. Ultimately, the conclusion situates *Corpus*, and the encounters with it, at the intersection of the everyday, time, labour, and relationality. For me, the conflux of these elements reflects a sense of unhurried care, a principle and practice that is central to catalyzing environmental justice and social change, within or outside of the archive.

In my nearly twenty years in academia, informed by decades as a practising artist that preceded and ran concurrently with this period, I have thought a lot about the qualification and quantification—the value(ing)—of labour and the ways this correlates with relationship building. In this time, I have written with interdisciplinary, community-engaged artist, singer-songwriter and critical thinker Cheryl L’Hirondelle, who identifies as cree/halfbreed; german/polish, as well as with Tahltan Nation/French-Canadian performance artist and scholar Peter Morin about the trust, duration and friendship that forms the bedrock of our collaborations. This reflects deep, accountable, and reciprocal approaches to collaboration that are not directed toward outputs, although what we may call outputs can and sometimes do result. These approaches live in the spaces in-between: The spaces between individuals and communities who are differently affected by systems such as colonialism and whiteness, the incommensurable spaces in-between that Cheryl and I discussed when referencing Māori scholar Kuni Jenkins and Pakeha (settler) scholar Alison Jones’s concept of “working the hyphen” (L’Hirondelle and Decter; Jones and Jenkins), which is sensitive to the uneven terrain of political and social power dynamics. The spaces of trust we create in friendship in the time in-between the *work*, as Peter and I discuss in reference to our project, *x: where our paths cross* (Morin and Decter). The spaces between divergent practices, between strengths and vulnerabilities, between territories as we cross paths of ancestries, geographies,

commitments and accountabilities. These in-between spaces are also spaces of the everyday.

Selena's discussion of the "time when *Corpus CTR* was irrelevant and part of the background," when it was being "ignored" (162), reiterates the value of the in-between as well as the value of duration in the everyday. Here we can see connections between unhurried care and the uncertain experiment as a "powerful method" for disturbance within the context of "everyday production" (Singh 42). To function as an irritant to the status quo of settler colonial whiteness or any other hegemonic structure, or to stimulate environmental justice and social change, this resistance to mastery must both confront and be present in the everyday because this is where the status quo is quietly and surreptitiously replicated. The everyday *in-between* adds a liminal quality that can be mobilized as experimental, undirected, and generatively uncertain. In this way, as well as refusing mastery, it has the potential to defy the colonial value/s of productivity that are pervasive across Western culture and glaringly so in academia and creative sectors such as art and theatre. As time shared at the intersection of mundane activities and uncertain encounters, the everyday in-between can seed genuine, sustainable relationship building. This is the kind of relationship building that extends beyond the office, theatre, or studio door, the confines of the gallery or the page, and outside of workshops, residencies, and conferences, the kind that is not contingent or focused on production or advancement, mutual or otherwise.

These in-between spaces make a home for unhurried care. However, unhurried care and, I argue, the durational quotidian labour of its necessary relationality—the labour of the in-between—are generally unrecorded, unrecognized, and as such, excluded from records and archives. By archives, I mean to include those resulting from practices of reporting—the qualifying and quantifying that shapes academic culture. This inattention to accounting, both in the narrative and numeric sense of the word, leads to a lack of visibility, and this tends to result in a devaluing—or perhaps more accurately, a non-valuing. In turn, these biases contribute to replicating "relational" practices in academia that are often expedient, extractive and transactional as opposed to being based in care-full in-between encounters of trust, time, reciprocity and accountability.

Throughout my time as an academic—particularly the years from 2020 to 2025, when I held the position of Canada Research Chair in Creative Technologies at NSCAD University in Kijikpuk/Halifax—I was subject, as academics are, to yearly reports. These reports included such categories as Research Highlights, Research Funding, Industry Engagement, Quality of Training, Impact of Research Results, Knowledge Creation and Mobilization, and Research Collaborations. Certainly, such categories are relevant to metrics of productivity in academia. Moreover, they gesture to accountability, which is vital, particularly in the context of academics who hold privileged and relatively autonomous positions. The scope of this text cannot extend to a discussion of to whom they/we are accountable; however, I suggest that this remains an urgent question. That aside, I endeavoured to approach these reports as an opportunity to take account of and reflect on the activities, offerings, and evolutions of my work. I always meant to keep track of and report on the relationship building behind each of these categories, not within an existing category like “Research Collaborations,” but rather a category of the everyday in-between that recognizes the labour of building trust over time. This would include visits that are not transactional, that have no intention of output or objects of production. Visits that, nonetheless, or perhaps *because* of this, profoundly inform our practices through time spent sharing the everyday spaces in-between.

I failed to find a way to mark and account for these everyday encounters, to insert this category into my reports. This was at least, in part and ironically, because of both the labour involved in tracking them and the concern that the act of tracking might imbue these experiences with transaction and extraction. I also recognized the tensions between external scrutiny and excessive labour, on the one hand, and asserting visibility and value, on the other. I learned the importance of what is shared in the in-between from community-based art projects beginning in the early 2000s, from attending open-ended artist residencies, particularly those convened by writer, artist, and cultural organizer Ashok Mathur in the 2010s, from the collaborators I have been fortunate to work with, and from many other experiences. From this I know that we can learn a lot more from one another by revealing, taking account of, and valuing the everyday uncertain experiments in the in-between. In other words, the ways we honour these labours in our practices and in the archives that render value and visibility within the systems in

which we work matters, even if doing so in a sustainable, ethical way often poses significant challenges.

With this in mind, and in the spirit of Selena taking the time to make space for, and account for, the uncertain experimentation of non-extractive relationships, perhaps our visit here can be motivation to do the same—to make space in practice for activating the everyday in-between, the unproductive and the uncertain, all of which is crucial to making relationality with integrity. Perhaps it's a provocation to think about how real relationship building might be accounted and recognized in tandem with other labours in our practices, and how this might be accomplished in ways that preserve the very features that make it so profoundly valuable.

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CTR Editors in Conversation: Mentorship, Collaboration and Invitation

Robert Wallace, Natalie Rewa, Ric Knowles, Laura Levin, and Jenn Stephenson

In an extension of our issue's theme of reassembly, we (co-editors Selena Couture and Melissa Poll) asked five former editors of *CTR* to join us in a roundtable conversation on 17 March 2026 by video conference. The five participants here are Robert (Bob) Wallace (script editor, 1981–1983; sole editor, 1983–1988; editorial contributor, 1988–1991); Natalie Rewa (co-editor with Alan Filewod, 1992–1995; member of editorial team, 1996–2004); Ric Knowles (co-editor with Alan Filewod, Harry Lane, and Ann Wilson, 1996–2004, 2004–2011); Laura Levin (Views and Reviews co-editor with Andy Houston, 2004–2010; sole editor, 2011–2016; associate editor, 2017–2023); and Jenn Stephenson (Views and Reviews co-editor with Natalie Alvarez, 2004–2011; sole editor, 2016–2022; associate editor, 2023–2025).¹ Collectively these five editors contributed to stewarding the journal for over forty years and represent a woven tapestry of editorial mentorship and training. The five people who participated in this roundtable come from several eras of editing *CTR*, each within highly distinct cultural and publishing landscapes.

We initially proposed the following discussion prompts: strategies for managing editorial responsibilities; reflections on feminist editing practices; the difficulties and solutions regarding publisher/editor funding dynamics; and their thoughts on the challenges facing editors of journals such as *CTR* today.

¹ Other editors of the journal include Don Rubin (1974–1982); Alan Filewod (editorial collective member, 1988–1992; co-editor with Natalie Rewa, 1992–1995); Jill Tomasson-Goodwin (book reviews editor); a University of Guelph–based editorial team consisting of Alan Filewod, Ric Knowles, Ann Wilson, Harry Lane, Alan Watts (1996–2004); and Heather Davis-Fisch (2023–2026). The current editor is Kim McLeod.

As you will see below, once the participants started sharing their knowledge of the history of the journal, a discussion quickly opened up about questions regarding the readership, practices of mentoring, and the importance of assembly both for editorial teams as well as guest editors and authors commissioned for themed issues. The editors reflected on the kinds of formal experimentation they encouraged and how such a vast list of contributors to the journal was created (some of whom were welcomed to publish materials in nontextual formats).

We are excited to share the edited transcript of this conversation, which recounts some little-known stories of early years of the journal as well as the feminist roots of the editorial choices that have had significant impact on the practice and scholarship of theatre in a Canadian context.

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Selena Couture (SC): Thank you all for coming. We're so glad to be in conversation with five former editors of *Canadian Theatre Review*. To begin, Natalie, you had a question you wanted to pose to Bob Wallace, or an invitation to Bob to speak about some of his experiences. . . .

Natalie Rewa (NR): Yes, my invitation is to open up the discussion by inviting Bob to remark on how he began editing four issues by himself. How did his knowledge of theatre and how it was evolving become the fabric of his approach?



Figures 1 & 2: Bio photo of Natalie Rewa from the time when she first began working with *CTR* (left) and her current photo (right).

Robert Wallace (RW): The way I remember it, the group of people that founded *CTR* in the early 1970s was unwilling or unable to continue working with the journal a decade later and, as a result, they began to invite others to join the editorial board with an eye to eventually taking over. At that time, the staffing of *CTR* depended largely on the Department of Theatre on the Keele campus of York University, about which I knew little as I was teaching at York's other campus (Glendon College) on the other side of Toronto.² To me, it seemed odd for Don Rubin, the founding editor of the journal, to ask me to solicit and edit play scripts, but I accepted his offer nevertheless, presuming he approached me because I had recently published a book with Cynthia Zimmerman (*The Work*, 1981), a collection of interviews with Canadian playwrights, and, years earlier, an article in *CTR* about a play of mine, *No Deposit No Return*, that was produced in New York in 1975. Although I knew him casually, our paths rarely crossed. Moreover, I knew nothing about editing journals let alone how to find and edit plays for publication.

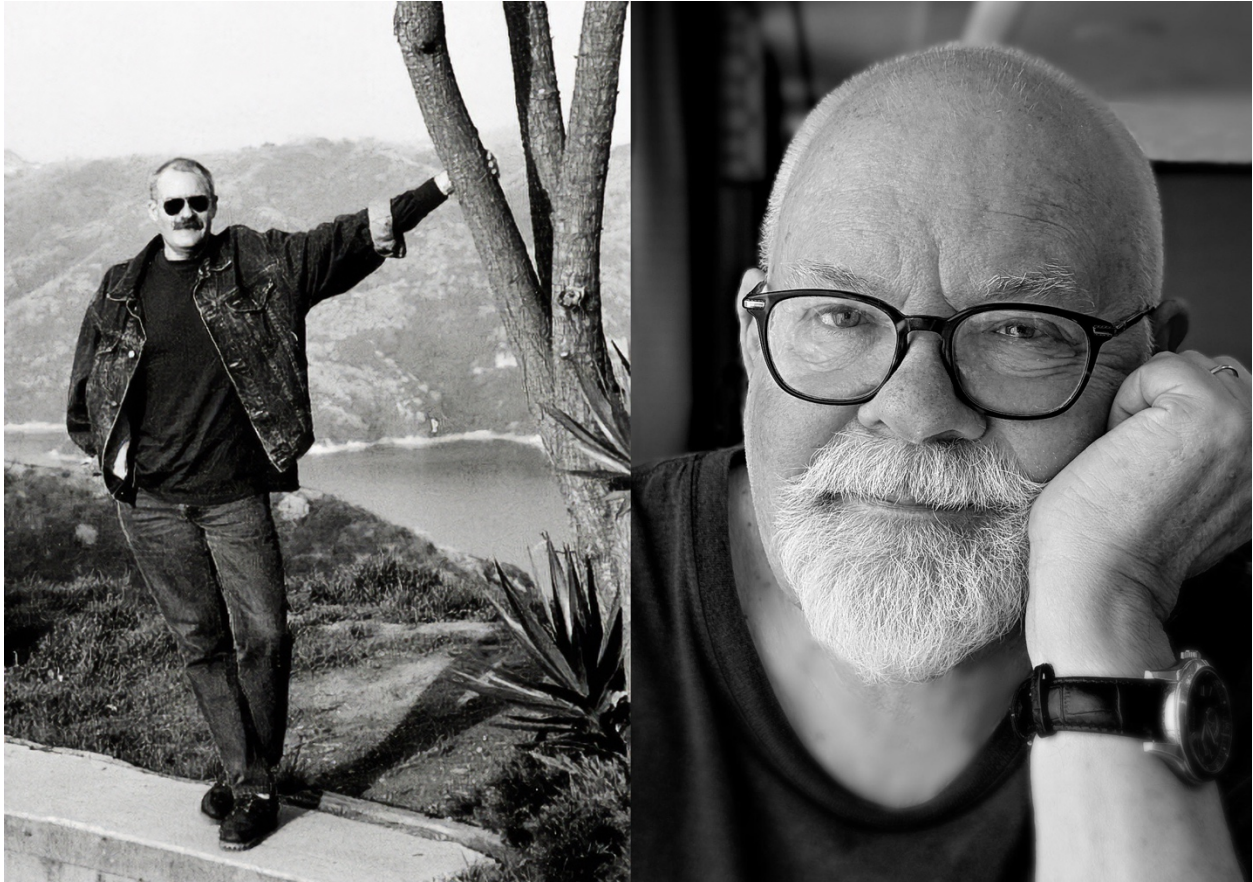
² Keele, the main campus of York University, is located in North York. York's bilingual Glendon campus is located in Midtown Toronto. York University campuses are located on the Toronto Purchase Treaty No. 13 lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the lands of the Anishinabek of the Williams Treaties First Nations. Both campuses are also situated on the traditional territories of the Huron-Wendat and the Haudenosaunee.

When I began selecting scripts for the journal, I was pleased to discover it wasn't as difficult as I had expected, primarily because my connections in the Toronto theatre community and my engagement with emerging networks of Canadian playwrights such as PUC (Playwrights Union of Canada), of which I was a member, had led me to meet and hang out with theatre people. Still, almost immediately, I began to wonder, Who are these *CTR* scripts for? And why are we publishing any particular one? Did the journal publish scripts that wouldn't be published elsewhere, or did it compete for desirable scripts with other publishers? More importantly, perhaps, I wondered if we published certain types of scripts? Plays from across the country, perhaps, or conversely, ones from cities where theatres have given them major productions? Do we publish plays that haven't been produced and plays that will never be done, or do we publish only those that have been produced and become popular? Do we publish plays in translation? And what about radio scripts and screenplays? My questions continued to multiply.

In retrospect, I have to admit that what bothered me most was the lack of guidelines pertinent to my task. There was no protocol to follow in approaching writers and no format to use in presenting scripts—none that I was given, at any rate. In some ways this felt liberating because it allowed me to do what I wanted. But in other ways it was daunting. "Just go out there and find plays you think should be published and prepare them for the press." Ultimately, instructions such as these led me to interrogate not only what we published but for whom we wrote. In turn, these questions prompted me to wonder about the mandate of the journal. Who is *CTR* for? Who and where are our readers? Are we writing for a national readership of theatre artists and audiences or for a more general "arts" crowd? And, in either case, what do they want or need to read?

When I sought answers from others, especially the other editors, whom I rarely saw, I didn't receive much feedback. Although the journal listed an editorial Advisory Board on its masthead, I didn't meet any of its members in the ten or so years I spent with *CTR*. If the board convened during that time, I wasn't invited to a meeting. Quite quickly I concluded that I was tasked exclusively to find scripts that would fit the theme of the issue in which it would appear—a theme I was given without consultation. When I accepted the job, I decided it made sense to include the script of a play in a theatre journal. But now other concerns began to undermine my decision. A play isn't

necessarily theatre, is it? Nor is theatre necessarily a play. Is it necessary to publish a play because it will facilitate a production? How and why was I to justify my choices?



Figures 3 & 4: Robert Wallace from the time when he first began working with *CTR* (left) and his current bio photo (right).

SC: I'd like to pick up on that question: Who are we writing for? In the history of the journal, I don't know if anyone ever landed on any one answer. I think it's just been asked over and over again.

RW: I'm glad to hear that because the question is absolutely central to the vitality of the journal, in my opinion, even if answers fail to clearly emerge. How does anybody write anything if they don't know for whom they are writing? Who are our readers? What do we want them to know?

None of the editors at *CTR* addressed my queries, but they liked the scripts I chose well enough that I continued to do my job. Even when things began to fall apart—financially, I mean—which seemingly had nothing to do with me, I continued to submit my scripts on deadline, usually to Joe Green, who by then was the editor-in-chief or managing editor of the journal (his title kept changing . . .). Actually, Joe’s real title was Dean of Fine Arts, the York faculty that funded the journal, along with the Department of Theatre, from the very beginning. If it hadn’t been for their support, and the hard work of Joe and Don, *CTR* wouldn’t have come into existence and wouldn’t be around today.

SC: I’m glad you’ve brought up the issue of money and the publisher. This is key to how we’ve ended up publishing these articles about *CTR* in this *Performance Matters* issue.

I would really love to hear from the other editors about how, in their time as editors, they grappled with the question: Who are we writing for . . . who’s the audience? Or is it . . . who’s the audience [or readership] for each particular issue?

Laura Levin (LL): Thanks, Selena. Bob, we haven’t actually met in person, but it would be great to have a drink and bond about some York things since we both have worked there at different moments and on different campuses but, sadly, missed each other.

It’s so interesting how things change over time. My experience was very different from Bob’s. I was mentored into editing at *CTR* by Ric. I must have been around 27 years old when Ric generously invited me to come on as a review editor; I was very young, just out of grad school, and had a lot to learn. While I cycled through a bunch of different positions at *CTR* from 2006 to 2023 (first, review editor; then, associate editor; then, editor-in-chief), I had a really clear sense throughout this time about the audience our publication was talking to, and this came from Ric’s clear vision as editor-in-chief about *CTR*’s mandate. Ric always stressed that *CTR* was a publication that aimed to bridge artistic and scholarly communities in a meaningful and unique way. As junior editors, that goal was always front of mind: it was emphasized at all of our meetings; it was present in our Canada Council and Ontario Arts Council grant applications; and it informed how we made decisions about what content to include.

As part of this mandate, we were excited to be speaking about—and more importantly with—not a monolithic “Theatre Community” but a wide range of culturally diverse *performance communities*; we were trying to engage voices from historically marginalized groups who had not been given a platform to speak and whose theatrical work had largely not been spoken about. Jenn, you came in as editor shortly after me, and we worked together for years at *CTR*. Did you have a similar sense of this as the audience and focus as well? And Ric, if I have this wrong, please feel free to correct me!

Ric Knowles (RK): Yes, that’s right.



Figures 5 & 6: Laura Levin from the time when she first began working with *CTR* (left) and her current bio photo (right).



Figures 7 & 8: Ric Knowles from the time when he first began working with *CTR* (left) and his current bio photo (right).

Jenn Stephenson (JS): Laura, that's my experience; that's the genealogy from where I come in. I followed you, but I was mentored by Ric, because I was Views and Reviews co-editor with Natalie Alvarez around that time. And that was one of our preeminent thoughts. We continually asked, Who are we writing for? And it was this idea of bridging a traditional scholarly academic community and practising artists and writers and theatre makers. How successful *CTR* has been in talking to theatre makers has always been a question. This is something we grapple with. We say, this is what we want to do, this is our intention. We speculate on how successful we've been. I think it's an open question. Maybe some of that comes back to one of your provocations, Selena, about funding? About . . . about access? About what the journal costs and where and how it's available? I think there's always been this kind of dream . . . I heard it again recently . . . that *CTR* is available in every green room in the country. Well, even if it isn't, there's this idea we carry with us that it should be, or could be, or that we desire that, which I think is really fascinating. It's something we feel is part of our mission. And yet, I don't know if we've ever been really successful at cracking that. It's an interesting tension, I think, in thinking about readership. But it comes down to funding and who pays, and where *CTR* is being read. For those of us who are affiliated with institutions versus people who are outside of the confines of academia.



Figures 9 & 10: Jenn Stephenson from the time when she first began working with CTR (left) and her current bio photo (right).

LL: I remember there being a real tension around this, because there was this expectation that *CTR* would be sold in bookstores alongside popular magazines. We had to be careful about the theoretical language that was being brought into each of the issues because a lay reader also needed to be able to engage with the ideas in each article. And that was always a tricky dance: we had to figure out how to approach that as an editing problem—almost a dramaturgical problem. There’s a politics to editing in this respect. I would always find myself thinking about the funding and those buying the magazine, and wonder, for example, . . . Should I edit this Judith Butler or Deleuze out? Will this be too heady for the non-specialist reader? Is the author I’m editing getting too deep into the theory without sufficient explanation? Should I pull them back? On the other hand, if I’m editing the work of an emerging scholar who is working through these ideas for the first time, should I just let this author take pleasure in the theory . . . give them the time and opportunity to play with dense and dazzling ideas? I wanted *CTR* to be an encouraging space for doing that, as well as for introducing lay readers to political theory they might not encounter elsewhere. So, for me, this was a tricky aspect of editing to negotiate, and very tied to the question of funding and the very different audiences reading *CTR*.

Melissa Poll (MP): I'm here to listen but just wanted to add that in my career, I've been inside academia and back from being a performer . . . and the only time I had access to *CTR* was when I was at school. When I was a freelance artist, living pay cheque to pay cheque, I was interested in *CTR* and staying on top of what was happening in the Canadian theatre scene, but it just absolutely was not something that I could afford to buy.

JS: I just want to underscore this point about access. *CTR* has been very successful in expanding the base of writers. We very frequently have first-time writers. Not only emerging scholars but people who don't always think in writing. And so that's been really interesting. *CTR* has been a space for people who think in images, or who think in sound, or for whom writing 3,000 words in a chunk is not their main mode of expression. I think that's something where we have been able to create quite a bit of access. Less in terms of the readership, but more on the writer side, which is interesting.

NR: That last point, I think, is the one I'd like to speak to. The question of whether people were coming from a university, whether there was a lot of academic writing or whether potential contributors were working in an adjacent media was important for me. I found it very important to bring in people who, as Jenn mentioned, were not writers. And so, one of the elements that I thought was really interesting was when Monique Mojica was editing the First Nations issue [*CTR* 68]. Rebecca Belmore came by and proposed a "centrefold" as another kind of addition to the issue. And that was manageable. Such additions amplified whose voice is going to be loud, and present, and present in a *public* way. I think that was what guided *CTR* creating a new space for itself. Similarly, as a guest editor [*CTR* 152], Laura accepted my proposal to break from the convention of a play script and to feature François Barbeau's visual essay of the dramaturgical materiality in his costume design for Cirque du Soleil.

SC: Ric, do you want to talk about your editorial stance?

RK: I think Laura . . . already did. I . . . I should acknowledge, first of all, that the person who brought me into *CTR* was Bob. He got me to edit an issue in 1986, I think. And I appreciated that. And I actually think that Bob's tenure at *CTR* was the time when we best reached theatre practitioners. I think that that

was a glory time for *CTR* having the capacity to do what I always thought it should do, which is bridge that gap that Laura talked about, between practitioners and theorists. And I feel like I've spent my life trying to do that in all kinds of fields.

So, yes, the other piece was that *CTR* has always led various, I don't want to call them trends, but shifts in discourse, going from nationalism in its earliest issues through regionalism. . . . Bob brought me in to do an issue on Atlantic Canada—through regionalism, to a focus on other kinds of communities that were not geographically based. One of the things that I tried to do was to pick up on what Natalie did. She edited the first issue on what was then called "ethnicity." I tried to push off from that into doing special issues on different cultural communities, as well as including people from different cultural backgrounds in all issues. I tried to do one special issue a year on a specific cultural community. And I tried to do one issue a year on a professional concern, whether it was lighting design, or directing, or process, translation, whatever, to try to reach different communities with different issues, as opposed to reaching all communities with all issues. I think it was, to a degree, successful in the sense that it met those communities as writers. I'm not sure whether it met them as readers.

RW: If I could just jump in here for a minute, I think it's important to emphasize what you and all of us have said in various ways, which is we're writing for different people and different communities. My question was, Who are we writing for? Obviously, it can't be answered the same way in every issue. I'm sure there are a number of people who wonder why we have "theme" issues in the first place—issues in which we organize articles in relation to particular topics or foci. This approach was evident to me from my earliest involvement with the journal. Certainly, the early editors, particularly Don, strove to organize the issues that way. But, by 1984, I think that approach had shifted somewhat. The thematic approach was becoming more problematic because it had built-in expectations that weren't necessarily those of our readers, we were discovering. In any particular issue, there were the expectations of (maybe) a small group of readers like theatre practitioners, and it was probably thrilling to them to read articles about lighting, to use Ric's example, but maybe not others.

I guess what I'm getting at here is a larger question: To what degree is the journal free to say, okay, this particular issue ISN'T for everyone? This issue is for theatre technicians. This one is for playwrights. This issue will appeal mainly to performance theorists. This one's for people who are interested in nonverbal communication on the stage. This one is for. . . . We could go on. We could build so many silos we wouldn't know on what farm we were working.

CTR can't be everything for everybody. A journal, like a magazine or a book, has to pursue an identity. Its editors must determine not only who they're writing for but what they want their readers to know or think about. What are we driven to communicate?

Personally, I can't write about anything much anymore. I mean, I know so little about so little. Ironically, that's what I would write about if anyone wanted to read it. [Laughs.] But they don't. [Laughs again.] People who know about everything, I don't know where they are, but if they want to write for *CTR*, that would be fine. Okay, I'm being silly, but I think you get my point. . . .

So another question emerges: How do we find our writers? How do we look for them? Well, I think we find them by searching for them everywhere, all the time; certainly, this was what I did when I found myself gathering a clutch of writers once I became the journal's sole editor in the mid-eighties. Of course, I looked to the theatre community first—to people working in theatre. I didn't seek out theoreticians or historians but rather sought practitioners, or I tried to. Theatre makers. Actors, directors, designers. And along with them, I added a few theatre critics and academics. And for a while, this seemed to work.

Now? Well, I'm not sure if it works anymore or not. Everything seems more splintered these days, more dispersed. I mean, the world is more obviously splintered or we experience it that way. Now I think we can afford to say, "We do this, only this. We didn't do that then. We won't be doing that tomorrow." As a result, the question shifts to, What is this thing, *CTR*? What is it now? Not just who are we writing for, but who are we and where are we at? What is this time, this epoch? And how does it compare to the seventies and eighties? Even the nineties.

JS: One of the things I want to underscore when thinking about *CTR* is that it is thematic. When you think about what we have all done collectively over the decades, it is kind of amazing. *CTR* is a journal that is uniquely thematic every time. There are no general topic issues. And related to what we've been talking about, the readership for every issue is unique. And there's all these little pods of specialists who read a particular themed issue. And maybe there's some people who read every issue. And so, the readership is always new. But the writers are also very frequently new. One of the things we do as editors is that we're always coaching new contributors. On top of that, the fact that every issue has a unique theme, that means we'll be bringing in guest editors, so the editors are new, too. When you think about the complexity and the risk of editing a journal this way, it's actually kind of outlandish.

RW: Yes.

JS: But it's . . . I don't know, I think it's part of the charm of what we've tried to do over the years. The contributor list is vast. Because of this commitment I inherited from Laura, who inherited from Ric, who inherited from . . . I don't know where this idea originated. I think it's kind of great, but it really informs the work that we did as editors.

RW: Which is. . . .

JS: . . . a lot of coaching, and shepherding, and managing, and, and being okay with people who don't know. And it creates so much idiosyncrasy across the issues, and wild swings of voice and tone. I kind of love it. But it is actually absurd.

LL: I agree, Jenn. There's something beautiful about gathering small groups of people who are passionate about a particular topic. The thematic issues helped to build community . . . sometimes vibrant micro-communities formed through building discourse around particular topics.

Just to give one example: I co-edited an issue on Jewish performance with Belarie Zatzman, a colleague of mine at York. Belarie was an expert in this area; I was not. But as a Jewish woman who had never thought about the way in which my identity intersected with the practice that I loved, theatre, it was

incredible to have the opportunity to spend time over the course of two years talking with people passionate about where these two things intersect. And it was helpful for the artists making work in this space to be engaging with other scholars thinking deeply about Jewishness in relation to performance, sometimes because they hadn't previously thought about their work in this way and sometimes because it opened up a space for debating what "Jewishness" even means now and in an art context. The issue made community because it was a moment in time where a bunch of people came together to see themselves as a "we," to pause and ask: Wait, what is it that we are doing and why does it matter?

I think we could see this with so many other field-defining issues, like Moynan King's edited issue on queer women and trans artists' performance [*CTR* 149]. Moynan saw the issue as an opportunity to bring together a group of artists who needed to think together about the interventions they were making and had already made in changing the hetero and gender normative face of performance in Canada.

As an aside, it is worth noting that curated conversations—where editors assembled artists to collaborate on a published dialogue around a particular theme—were an important part of thematic issues, and Moynan set the bar high for these. She organized a conversation among ten-plus women and transartists, staged in Allyson Mitchell and Deirdre Logue's Feminist Art Gallery (FAG). The room she created for that dialogue was filled with emotion, laughter, and excitement, as many of these artists had worked together for years, while others were mutual fans and meeting each other for the first time. The discourse started there within this group spilled out in the years beyond it into other articles, books, and cabarets, leading to many meaningful collaborations. This also reminds me of the raucous and joyful launch parties that we organized to launch many *CTR* issues. These were other moments where issues led to public assembly which in turn led to community formation.

I would love to find a way to trace some of these kinds of events and their impacts. How did *CTR* make possible not only forms of community but new directions in people's lives and careers? Publishing in *CTR* has helped emerging authors to think about going to grad school. Publishing scripts here helped dramatic texts to be read by theatre companies and later get staged

in vibrant productions (e.g., Darrah Teitel's *Corpus* in *CTR* 153). We could trace these impacts in a more concerted way.

NR: Just a very short comment about tapping into “invisible” communities that have far-reaching implications. This is also about rethinking how geographies are remapped: Toyoshi (Yoshi) Yoshihara, who translated Canadian plays into Japanese for Japan, was in Vancouver.³ Initially, he said, no, no, I’m a translator, I don’t write. He began thinking about this possibility and spoke to someone who confirmed that he ought to write. So, this was a case of *CTR*’s editorial community spreading invisibly and making such contributions significant.

MP: I just have to chime in on this. *CTR* helped me build and reinforce my feminist communities. Natalie Alvarez edited my first piece for Views and Reviews, and then I went on and I worked with Keren Zaiontz and Peter Dickinson (who’s also a fierce feminist). Later, I worked with Karen Fricker, who had been my PhD supervisor, so it not only created a community for me, but it brought me back to my feminist community. I was so inspired by all of the powerful women and people that I got to work with and be mentored by at *CTR*.

JS: Natalie, I absolutely recognize that experience of persuading people who didn’t want to write, that really, we wanted to hear from them, and that this was possible, and we would figure out a way. And maybe we could do an interview, or they could do a collage, or they could do something else. And so, that experience resonates with me. This also included persuading people I didn’t even know to write. I would contact people I did know, and I would say, I don’t want you to write for this issue, but who do you know? Who’s in your circle? Who are you working with these days? And so, again, so many unknown, or as-yet-unknown voices came into *CTR* through our editorships, I think that was important.

NR: Could I just add, I think one of the interesting aspects of theatre activity is that there are communities and people who were doing work that wasn’t part of a runway. And one of those was the Labrador Integrated Arts Festival

³ Toyoshi (Yoshi) Yoshihara went on to translate over fifty Canadian plays, establish Maple Leaf Theatre in Tokyo, and was invested into the Order of Canada in 2013. Yoshihara published articles in *CTR* 85 and 179.

in Goose Bay that I attended, where small groups of children and their teacher—the size of the cast was governed by the seats on the small planes flying in Labrador—wrote and performed their own plays for the other participants. The performances and workshops during the festival were dynamic. I contacted Tim Borlase to ask for an update on the goings-on in Nain. His article reflects the activity of the festival several years later.⁴ So that elasticity of curating an issue, giving space to that kind of work, given the geography of the country, remains important to me. The assembly of an issue was linked to a perception of the journals that were active in the period—to consider how *CTR* adds vocabularies to the discourses.

RK: We've been talking about getting people to write. I think one of the things that *CTR* did, uniquely in my experience of editing more academic journals where it's quite different, was getting people to *edit* issues of *CTR* who would never have been an editor, to bring them on board as a co-editor and work with them, teach them to edit, if you like. But give them the opportunity, and give ourselves access to their knowledge. The one for me that I was proudest of was Djanet Sears. Now, Djanet ended that experience saying, I'll never edit again. But she did one issue about a topic that she was very passionate about! I do think that's an important thing that I think all of you have done. We have all worked with co-editors that probably would never have edited a journal in their lives.

JS: We handed over the whole issue to complete newbies, which is amazing! This is great! But, very much not the usual thing.

LL: Yeah it felt like we were taking real risks here. The best kind of risks.

RK: It was three times as much work for us as editing those issues ourselves would have been.

LL: It was.

JS: I remember once, an issue fell out of sequence, and Laura, you and I stepped in, and we knocked it out in, like, six months. We could move that

⁴ "Coming to Our Senses: Notes from the Labrador Creative Arts Festival," *CTR* 56. Tim Borlase and Noreen Heighton were the co-founders of the Labrador North Creative Arts Festival in 1975.

quickly because we had done it before. But that's not typical. We took the hard way around, Ric, absolutely, by giving the keys to the kingdom to people for whom that was not their experience.

LL: But that's also a feminist practice. It's an anti-gatekeeping approach. At some journals, an editorial team might ask, Does this person have the academic chops or the editing experience to write about this particular topic? Instead, we took big risks on artists who we felt had something important to say, whether or not that they had the "proven" editing or writing background. We were working against these patriarchal and elitist ideas of expertise that had been around for so long and that would have kept so many of us out—kept us out of publishing spaces and rooms where we had something to contribute and could help to shift and deepen the conversation.

And Ric, you were talking about the invisible labour that the editors were doing in mentoring new writers and editors. That's also a kind of feminist support, right? As an editor, you make the decision to say, "My job is to create the conditions that let *you* shine in what you're doing. I'll sit back and support you in taking the lead as first-time writers and emerging editors." We had language for this: we called this "shadow editing." It meant: I will commission this fabulous artist to be the lead editor on an issue, and I will be there in the wings—not as a named lead on the issue, but as backup—to offer support if anything tricky comes up. We were on standby if there were questions about journal protocols, if a guest editor needed advice about what curatorial direction to take, or if they needed backup in dealing with a difficult writer or something like that. We were *accompanying* them, offering our experience, but otherwise giving them space to dream, take big risks, and take the spotlight.

Sometimes this feminist editing practice involved "shadow" editing and sometimes co-editing, because editing with another person—a full collaboration on an issue—can also be an excellent site for mutual support and mentorship. But fundamentally, the point was to lend support so that a person who hadn't had the experience of editing before could jump in and do it, or so that a leader within a particular community or area of professional artistic practice would be centred as the person to steer the ship on a

particular theme. I really value this approach even if, as you say, Jenn, it was scary and sometimes the results were mixed!

JS: Yeah. If you look at the issues over time, they're wildly uneven. I don't mean that as a kind of a negative quality thing. They're different. And that's great! Maybe back to Bob's original point, the journal is not one thing, it's a thousand things. Under this one umbrella.

RW: I'd like to insert a bit of personal information here, if I may. In 1987, my partner and I moved to Montreal for two years. And I was still editing the journal, most issues, trying to find guest editors for others. I introduce this because I was invited to work with the editors of *Jeu* for the duration of my stay in Montreal, the group that edits that wonderful theatre journal.⁵ And when I say I worked with them . . . well, actually, it would have been great if I could REALLY have worked with them, but in fact, my French was so miserable, I couldn't. I was in Montreal to learn French as much as to learn about Le Théâtre québécois . . . the names of artists, québécois artists, critics, like the members of *Jeu*. . . Anyway, my experience at *Jeu* allowed me to connect with more theatre people, a NEW group, writers and editors who worked differently than I did. It was a revelation.

There were as many as twelve people who would gather at a large table in the workspace at CEAD [Le Centre d'essai des auteurs dramatiques] for an editorial meeting, let's say. . . . This could be an impromptu meeting or a once a week date, but definitely it happened at least once a month, usually on a Sunday. And the talk was pretty wild, meaning it was very open but intuitively organized. Each of us appeared to represent different perspectives and different attitudes. . . . And there were tensions among people beyond just linguistic ones. Yet everyone was interconnected in their sense of what they were creating, and why. Now, that had a big impact on me. And the manner by which they created it changed the way I felt about editing when I returned to Toronto in 1989. And it changed my career. For one thing, I left *CTR* in 1991 or so . . . which means, ultimately, I was only with the journal for about a decade—a period of considerable change.

⁵ Bob is referring to the Quebec-based quarterly francophone journal *JEU: revue de théâtre*. For more information see their website: revuejeu.org/.

I loved working at *Jeu*, despite feeling inadequate much of the time. I loved the back-and-forth communication, the give and take, the explosion of energy that could blast open a meeting unexpectedly. Sometimes, you know, as with any group of people, some of us would be affected emotionally by current events and personal involvements, by language, past history, relationships. What I'm getting to, I guess, is that the world would enter our meetings along with the topics and concerns of the theatre we were gathered to discuss. I didn't have that at *CTR*, where I mainly worked alone or on the telephone. And as much as I scrambled to work with writers from across the country, I ultimately found only four or five who could commit to writing for the journal on a regular basis. Ric, you were one of them.

My experience at *Jeu* changed my whole attitude to how I thought a journal could be run, so much so that in 1989, or whenever it was—Natalie, you possibly remember the year—I decided I was going to move on, to leave the journal to others. I was burning out for a number of reasons. I invited Natalie and Anne Wilson and Alan Filewod, committing to stick with them for a year or two, and the four of us were going to be a little collective, in my mind, like the group at *Jeu*. Now, we did achieve something of that feeling, but not a lot. We met a couple of times a year to discuss how the journal was progressing and to project what we wanted to do with it over the next eighteen months. We brought our hobby horses to bear on, you know, what each of us would like to edit, and it was good, but it was only the four of us, and I think, Natalie, you could speak to this probably better than I can. [Natalie nods.]⁶ I mean, we were all very busy, just like you guys. It was difficult to organize a meeting. At least there's Zoom now. We only had the telephone, and we made good use of calls, and we held a few meetings in my house around the dining room table, and, you know. . . .

Jeu has a whole building, and they WORK there, together. They publish their own journal and, as I see it . . . they make it themselves. I mean, production really is that tangible, the connection between what they write and what they publish, HOW they publish. When I left *CTR*, I was . . . hoping this would happen with our new group. I think perhaps I edited two more issues over

⁶ Further response ... Natalie nods and says: Bob did bring this energy back with him to Toronto, and I too experienced some of the public contributions made by the *Jeu* team in Montreal. At one of the early World Stage Festivals in Toronto (Harbourfront), he organized a panel and invited me as a panellist.

one or two more years. But slowly, it . . . well, you tell me. You tell me how it evolved from there, because it changed, right? And I don't know where it's at today.

So when I ask, who are we writing for, how do we find our writers, what is it that we choose to write about, the answers come down to you and the people you find to work with, the ones you bring in. I don't know who they are anymore, who you are, if I'm being honest. If I was to walk into a room where you are—not a virtual room like this one—if it was the first time for all of us to meet—like my first meeting at CEAD, a room filled with people I didn't know, where I didn't know what to expect—what would happen? I knew most of their names, I knew a little bit about them but I, you know. . . .

How does a group integrate and interact? How do you pull it all together? Because I think that space (where we work) and the act of piecing the journal together determines how it evolves. You fill it with your ideas, your presence even, you feed it, you make it come alive. So to hear you talk about your successes is great; it's a real education to me, and I'd like to hear more.

JS: I want to tell you, Bob, that exactly . . . what you're describing, of getting together at someone's house for dinner and planning the next eighteen months, we still do that. Exactly.

RW: Well, I'm glad.

JS: But what we did learn was that the group had to be a lot bigger than four people. We needed closer to eight.

RW: Yes, definitely.

JS: To keep it going and not burn people out, but I'm telling you, plus ça change. . . .

RW: That's great.

RK: The story is different for me. For a few years, a group of us at Guelph—Alan Filewod, Harry Lane, Alan Watts, Ann Wilson, and I—worked as an editorial collective. But eventually the editorship devolved onto me. So it

went the other direction. And I found it . . . easier, and more stimulating to work with not the same group of people all the time. Not that there was anything wrong with working with the group of us that we had. But we all got to know one another too well. I found bringing in guest editors, after that experience, more exciting. And it's another piece of what my experience of editing *CTR* was, that again, unlike other journals, where one edits to one's strengths, I think I edited to my weaknesses. I'd propose an issue because I didn't know anything about it. And it was a chance to find out about it.

RW: That takes guts.

SC: This discussion about collaboration and invitation, and how that supported your editorial passions, aligns with our editorial practice in republishing these articles. Because we are in a significant moment of crisis of academic publishing in theatre in Canada, we wanted to invite many people into the discourse. Our editing of this *Performance Matters* issue is one way of addressing the crisis.

Kim Solga, Nicole Nolette, and Karen Fricker are approaching other aspects of the crisis with other methods of organizing. They all involve assembling—in different ways—including the roundtable at the CATR [Canadian Association for Theatre Research] conference in Victoria this summer. How do we face this crisis? Well, we need to assemble and then we need to reassemble and remind each other who's here, who cares about this, and what can we each contribute to learning and moving forward from this.

LL: Bob, it's incredible to hear that some of that energy of coming together as an editorial collective came from you and those experiences you wanted to bring to *CTR* from *Jeu*. That's really moving. Ric, you say you were moving away from that approach by focusing on bringing on guest editors as another model, but I certainly felt like I was part of a really close-knit team when I was brought in as an editor. The kindness that you, Anne, Catherine, Harry, and Andy showed me was extraordinary. The closeness within the editorial team intensified over the years and often through really remarkable, informal meet-ups. I remember having the editors over to my house for at least a meal or two; we would talk about the journal and the field for hours—often late into the night. Heather Davis-Fisch left my house after 3:00 a.m. one

morning. We also had these meetings at CATR conferences each year. I have vivid memories of sessions over meals, sometimes at bars.

I want to honour what Bob and Jenn were saying about how deeply important these moments of assembling are for publishing and editing. These moments I'm describing really felt to me like a feminist practice of gathering. They were spaces where we could be humans with each other, where we could let down our professional guards and get to know each other better. I was having children during this period and going through so much: learning how to be a mother, an editor, a professor . . . all these different things. When Heather stayed at my house until late at night, we were talking about becoming parents, the joys and real challenges of that messy period of life. These kinds of networks of support and care were instrumental to the experience of editing at *CTR*. So, maybe we didn't call ourselves a collective, but that's what I felt that we were.

Selena, you were talking about the moment that we're in right now, and that Nicole, Karen, and Kim will invite us to come together at CATR this year to talk about how we assemble and show up for each other and at difficult moments. I think that is a terrific idea. It feels especially important as we are seeing the erosion of spaces for assembly—which might sound weird because digital media has made it easier to gather in some ways.

Something fell apart during the COVID-19 pandemic—in a general sense in terms of interpersonal relationships, but also within our field. We haven't found a way to address this. CATR was a vital place for people in our field to meet. Then there was at least one year where we couldn't do this because of the pandemic risks. The conference shifted online. And later it would return to being in person but there was also an online component. Some of these developments are really important for accessibility reasons. At the same time, it has felt like fewer and fewer people have been attending both online and in person, and few people were coming for the whole conference; they just drop in to one or two sessions. We need to rebuild spaces to speak collectively and thoughtfully about what has been going on in the field—whether we are talking about what happened with the censored article, or what has been happening with budget cuts in departments across the country, or. . . .

When I mentioned some of these things at CATR in Regina last year, people were like, What's going on? There is a kind of splintering happening within the community that we need to address not only in relation to publishing but also in relation to theatre and performance studies more broadly. Where do we gather and talk about situations that are urgent for theatre makers and scholars? How do we collectively give support for scholars like Melissa working in the context of the US? We should see our futures as deeply enmeshed and be building much wider networks of support locally and transnationally. Now more than ever we need venues like *CTR* and CATR to bring us together to talk through this stuff as a community (and as many, many *communities* within a community).

RW: Yeah, I mean, ultimately, it makes sense, too. Theatre is . . . community, ideally. That's what it's always been about. If we want to write about theatre communities across the country but are unable to work together as a community, we're out of sync somehow.

JS: True.

RW: I'm not saying that's happening. But like you, Laura, I think it has to be re-emphasized, reprioritized.

LL: I think "out of sync" is the right way to put it. Something feels out of sync.

NR: If I could I just interject . . . on feeling out of sync, there's a sense by which whatever is the thematic issue takes the spotlight for the moment and then the larger community across the country doesn't hear itself doing itself. This has to do with the way the journal is structured, and where livestreaming fits in with copyright and archival access.

In the last two years *Opera Canada* journal has returned to their practice of publishing who's doing what, where in which province. This may be a way of finding some "sync."

RK: I was wondering when we might start talking about the way the journal is structured. It used to include the listings of who's doing what, where in the journal's very earliest days, and I remember when it stopped and I missed it. But I do think the structure is quite interesting. The articles, the script, and

the . . . its various titles, Views and Reviews, Carte Blanche, or whatever it's been over the years. But that three-part structure is something . . . I don't remember, in all the time I was involved with *CTR*, ever questioning it. Should we?

LL: Absolutely, there is still some reverence to the articles + script structure. At the same time, I think that this structure *was* questioned in some ways. During my time at *CTR*, there was a lot of play with form. Sometimes we published scripts, but we also sought out other dynamic formats to disrupt what was expected here: a costume portfolio, photo portrait series, performance recipes, audio tours, manifestos. . . . I loved the issue that I co-edited with Barry Freeman where authors helped us to stage *CTR*166 as a Wrecking Ball (following the Volcano Theatre's political cabaret format) with multiple short, humorous performance interventions. The issues that took the biggest risks with form were often the most interesting, and the ones that showcased the most exciting writers. That said, I agree that it would be great to keep pushing in the area of form and issue structure.

RK: I agree. What's interesting about those issues is that—and every issue could do this—is that the structure of the issue could be determined by the theme.

NR: Absolutely! Absolutely! I have felt that for a long, long time.

SC: I'm wondering if there's anything else any of you would like to discuss about issues we're facing currently?

JS: I want to say thank you to you, Selena, and thank you to everybody, because, you know, I was one of the co-editors of the fiftieth anniversary issue that has been dismembered. And so I came into the call feeling kind of sad. It's hard, it's really. . . . My feelings about *CTR* are really raw at the moment. So, this has been really good for me. This has been a really, really good, good conversation to gather with, you all, who . . . are my ancestors. I mean that in a nice way. No, it feels really good to be part of this lineage and to be in community with all of you at this moment, which really feels really heavy for me, so it's really good. Thank you.

NR: I think I would like to address the chilling effect of the dismembering of the issue. I did write to the press about this, especially since I recall other instances of navigating content.

SC: I think that there were nine months of negotiations, at least, if not more. . . .

JS: A lot of work was done. A lot.

SC: Yeah, this is also part of the sadness and the rawness, I think, that, Jenn, you're speaking to.

RW: Can you explain to me what you are talking about? I'm not sure what this . . . conflict is.

JS: So, in a nutshell. . . . So the fiftieth anniversary issue, which was co-edited by Heather Davis-Fisch and me and Seika Boye, contained an article with which a reader disagreed.

RW: Yes, I read it.

SC: And to explain further . . . after the editors received a complaint, many solutions were proposed and negotiations ensued over many months, until the directors of the press chose to remove the article. Nine other articles were rescinded to object to that decision.⁷

RW: It's really unfortunate what happened. You know, I suppose the journal almost fell apart when Don left. Would it have if it weren't for the work of Joe Green? Really, in the 1980s, Joe saved *CTR* by selling it to the press. But there were strings attached, as always. [Long sigh.] I wasn't involved in the discussions about the sale, so I don't know what Don or other people had to say, but I do know that York's new Dean of Fine Arts (Prof. Lionel Lawrence) was crucial to the negotiations because money was an issue. *CTR* was broke, bankrupt, Joe said, when he explained that the press had offered to buy it. As he told me then, they only wanted the journal if it had an editor who knew the

⁷ See the introduction to this issue for more context.

ropes, which meant they wanted me because no one else who had worked on the journal still wanted the job. I mean, all the main players had quit. As Joe put it, “They’ll buy us, you know, it’ll be a good deal for them and for us, but only if you agree to stay on—at least for a while. . . . Will you do it?”

I wasn’t exactly ambivalent when I answered him, but I hesitated nonetheless. Still I said yes because I believed in the journal, though I wondered how I’d manage to edit it on my own—at Glendon, without secretarial help and few resources. But to be honest, once I made the commitment, I already had begun to think of people I could approach for help if I could survive the job solo for a while. And, you know, I’m not sorry I did because, look, *CTR* is still here. I must emphasize, though, that I didn’t know anything about the press when I took the job and, to be frank, I still don’t. I have had no dealings with them over the years.

In fact, the first meeting I had with the press wasn’t with anyone from its administration but with Beth Earl, who became Beth Earl Rose, the designer of the magazine. It was with Beth that I changed the format of *CTR* from journal to magazine size. This was her suggestion, and I was thrilled by it, for it allowed us to introduce a more extensive use of photographs, which I had always wanted to do partially because of my admiration of *Jeu*, whose editorial approach relies heavily on images, and not just for illustration. And, as I said, Beth and I worked well together. Really, she ignited my desire to continue with the journal because I could see in her design skills the quality of the products edited by the press and the care it took with editing. Working with Beth, I knew the journal could improve—its look, at least—because of her aspirations to make it a visual success, a showpiece even. She provided creative ways to incorporate the images I gave her. We collaborated well and the press left us completely to ourselves, as far as I know.

There was absolutely no intervention, no control that I was aware of. Nobody demanded anything of me, though Beth enforced some design rules that probably were her own. The press left us alone, or so it seemed to me then.

I’m terribly sorry to learn what the editors are going through. It’s very sad. Reprehensible. Wrong.

LL: This issue feels particularly hard because we are feeling chilling effects against free speech on so many fronts. Many of our colleagues in the US are being made to censor their syllabi because they're too feminist. The anti-EDI [DEI in the US] police are scanning for particular words or anything that seems vaguely aligned with progressive social justice critiques. This is also a moment when protestors at many Canadian universities are being silenced for speaking out about human rights issues internationally. As painful as it has been to see how things have unfolded with respect to the article in question, at least this moment of censorship is bringing many of us in the community together to have these kinds of conversations, and we haven't been able to experience this for the last couple of years. . . .

SC: One of things to consider is that *Performance Matters* is an online and open source journal, so there's a considerable irony to republishing these works here now, and particularly the work which received the complaint, in a journal that's going to be open source and no longer behind a paywall. The censored article will actually be more accessible to more people than it was even in the original issue.

Although it is primarily an online journal, *Performance Matters* has recently added the option to "print on demand." One of our visions—and this is related to the assembling and reassembling we spoke of earlier—is to encourage people to print this copy of *Performance Matters* and attach it to the issue of CTR199–200 that was disassembled. The articles that are being republished are the articles as originally edited, with the addition of the responses. A big part of our desire to do this work is to honour the editorial work that you did.

MP: I feel like we're doing this in partnership with the CTR199–200 editors. Selena and I have always thought that this work is to honour them, and those authors that chose to rescind their articles, and to make something new. And expand it, but we . . . played a lot with this act of feminist reassembly. I'm vibing on the recognition of assembly right now. Thank you to Bob.

SC: So, I think we probably should wind up. I just want to say thank you so much. I love that this was a conversation. It went in directions that we couldn't have anticipated. I learned a lot, and I really appreciate your time so much.

MP: Thank you so much for your generosity. This is . . . this has held me up during some really hard times in the US. In the classroom, we feel very limited in what we can say, so I speak often about Canada. I talk about women's health care; I talk about our freedom of speech; I talk about social safety nets. I'm just so inspired and, and grateful, to be involved in this conversation. You're lovely, gracious people, and I'm lucky to know you.

LL: Thank you so much.

JS: And I will see some of you in Victoria in May, in person.

LL: Yay! Bob, I'm serious about getting that drink! I'm so sorry I missed you at York.

RW: Thanks to everybody for including me in this discussion. I was sort of surprised to be invited. Actually, I didn't think I would have much to say after all these years but, as always, I ended up speaking far too much. So . . . thank you.

LL: I learned a lot.

SC: You added a crucial piece around the drive to assemble. I think that's really key. . . .

RK: Thank you for including me, too, as the dead hand of the past.

RW: You look lively to me—even on my tablet.

NR: This has been a stimulating discussion, which, I think, has been really important, and maybe even theatrically cathartic. So, thank you. Farewell, and all the best to all.

JS: Good to see you, Natalie. Bye-bye.

LL: Bye, Natalie.

SC: Alright, everybody. Take care, good night.

LL: Nice seeing all of you. Bye.

RW: Good night. How do I turn this off?

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