

Editorial

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With the publication of this issue my period as editor of *TRI* comes to an end. I was fortunate in being able to inherit from my predecessor, Brian Singleton, a flourishing academic journal that had attained a reputation for academic excellence combined with a broad international perspective. I am often asked to define *TRI* in comparison to other affined periodicals. This is a difficult but nonetheless important question, not only for the editorial board but also for potential authors. If we look at the policy statement (on the inside back cover) then we find a very broad remit: ‘articles on theatre practices in their social, cultural, and historical contexts’ but also, and perhaps more particularly, a desire to reflect ‘the evolving diversity of critical idioms prevalent in the scholarship of differing world contexts’. The last three words are perhaps the most important in respect to the journal’s specific focus. *TRI* is dedicated to reflecting theatre and performance internationally; it gives special preference to articles outside the usual Euro-American mainstream. In this sense the journal aims to reflect the diversity of the membership of the International Federation for Theatre Research/Fédération internationale pour la recherche théâtrale. It is not, however, a mouthpiece of the organization or any of its constituent bodies. Editorial independence is essential for the functioning of any peer-reviewed journal lest it be seen as catering to interest groups or persons whose political prowess may far exceed their scholarly standing.

The most difficult decisions editors have to make are rejections, particularly when submissions receive mixed reports from readers. In such cases the decision to publish lies ultimately with the editor, whose decisions are made on the basis of these reports. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the editorial board and all the other readers – who for obvious reasons must remain nameless – who provided reports on articles amidst very busy schedules. I also crave forgiveness from those readers whose strongly worded recommendations I sometimes (very seldom) disagreed with. Like democracy, the peer-review process, for all its manifest weaknesses, is still the best system we have for the advancement of scholarship.

This number includes a focus on dramaturgy. I would like to thank Gad Kaynar and Freddie Rokem for suggesting and preparing this issue. Dramaturgy is probably that area of theatrical production where scholars and academics, or at least their perspectives, are best tolerated. Yet as all the articles emphasize in one way or another, the task of the dramaturg is a difficult one. Except in countries such as Germany where it is an established profession, the function of the dramaturg is only slowly gaining recognition.

Even the spelling has not yet been standardized in the English. While the *Oxford English Dictionary* specifies ‘dramaturge’, within the profession the German spelling ‘dramaturg’ is preferred. The latter has been adopted for all the articles in this issue. Is the dramaturg a play-reader, a literary manager, or even an integral part of the intellectual and creative process behind a production? The following articles reflect on these different functions. In keeping with the somewhat hybrid nature of the profession itself, these articles also reflect a different scholarly idiom than that which is normally published in *TRI*. All four articles in the focus emphasize the authors’ personal scholarly and artistic involvement in the projects they write about. While I admit quite frankly that my entire academic training has been predicated on notions of detachment and ‘objectivity’ that preclude scholars from examining their own artistic endeavours as scholarship, I have become aware that such assumptions are being increasingly challenged. The current movement towards ‘practice as research’, especially as developed in the United Kingdom, is questioning the once clear divide between artistic practice on the one hand and scholarly writing on the other. I predict that in the future the journal will have to contend with many more submissions framed in this new scholarly idiom. With this and all the other editorial tasks in mind, I wish my successors, Freddie Rokem and Elaine Aston, patience, acumen and equanimity for the coming three years.