

Performing Memory, Transforming Time

History and Indigenous North American Drama

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It is important to . . . connect our stories of the past to our future. Our future is the generations who will take their stories out into the world of the new millennium and who will create a new legacy for their future generations.

This is the “Persistence of Memory.”

—Muriel Miguel, “Director’s Notes on Persistence of Memory”

I

Indigenous drama and performance constitute—along with storytelling—the oldest literary genre in the Americas.¹ Ranging from the ancient Kwakiutl mystery plays to the Hopi clown dances, performative traditions have been primary modes of cultural expression all across the continent. In the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, some of these traditions were transformed into pan-tribal and more secular art forms, such as pow wows, pageants, or scripted plays, which also incorporated European American and Asian theatrical styles. When Lynn Riggs gained mainstream popularity in the 1930s (albeit largely without reference to his Cherokee heritage) and the first pageants were performed at the Six Nations Reserve’s Forest

Theatre in Ontario, Canada, in the 1940s, the path was paved for a contemporary Native theatre movement. And this movement is well underway. There are currently over 250 published and far over 600 unpublished plays by some 250 Native American and First Nations playwrights and theatre groups on the North American market.² Furthermore, the access to an abundance of material is increasingly improving: Mimi Gisolfi D'Aponte's pioneer collection of Native American plays, *Seventh Generation* (1999), was followed by eight other anthologies dedicated exclusively to indigenous plays,³ and Alexander Street Press's *North American Indian Drama*, a digital full-text collection of more than 200 indigenous plays, is even searchable by semantic parameters. On the other hand, however, this rich and exciting field of American performance is only rarely acknowledged by university curricula, let alone by theatre audiences or the general public.⁴ Despite the abundance of primary sources, scholarship in the field is only just beginning to gain momentum. With a few notable exceptions (such as Linda Walsh Jenkins's 1981 article on Native performance art, Jeffrey Huntsman's investigation of traditional ritual drama and contemporary forms in *Ethnic Theater in the United States* [1983], Christopher Bigsby's chapter on "American Indian Theatre" in *A Critical Introduction to Twentieth-Century American Drama* [1985], or Christy Stanlake's *Native American Drama: A Critical Perspective* [2010]), the general practice has been, for the longest time, one of neglect. As Shari Huhndorf diagnoses, "drama remains the most overlooked genre in Native American literatures" (2006, 313).

II

In 1967, a play entitled *A Season for All Things* was published by an Anishinaabe graduate student and community advocate in Minneapolis. This "play of voices, about forty-five minutes" was an inquiry into historical images of Native people, and it "was selected from the writing, speeches, and letters of historical, political, and literary figures in the context of [Minnesota] state history."⁵ Unfortunately, the text has been out of print, and the one copy that should be stored at the Minnesota Historical Society's archive is untraceable, much to the astonishment of both the librarian and the author himself. This author is Gerald Vizenor, who explains that

I wrote and produced *A Season for All Things* while working as a Native advocate in the Native community near Franklin Avenue and Elliot Park in Minneapolis. I encour-

aged several Natives to play the parts of historical figures and to read from what historical figures had written about Natives. Young Natives were very eager to act, or rather mock, the voices of historical figures, such as governors, missionaries, and others who wrote about their experiences with the Anishinaabe (Chippewa) Natives in Minnesota. . . . I think the play was performed several times in the community, and even the audience seemed to take part in the rage and irony.⁶

Beside the fact that this play is lost and deserving of additional detective work, the story of *A Season for All Things* highlights the interface between history and performance in three crucial ways, which I would like to use as prolegomena for this book.

First, *A Season for All Things* creatively engages with historical encounters between people of European American and Native American descent. It thus marks a characteristic feature of the genre: in response to the long, unfortunate tradition of colonialist image control and *indian* simulacra⁷ that have displaced Native theatre from North American stages, a large number of indigenous plays focus on revisions of history. From Columbus's and the Spanish, French, or English colonizers' arrivals (in LeAnne Howe and Roxy Gordon's *Indian Radio Days*, Hanay Geiogamah's *Foghorn*, or Floyd Favel's *Governor of the Dew*) to boarding school experiences (in Vera Manuel's *Strength of Indian Women*, Shirley Cheechoo's *Path with No Moccasins*, or N. Scott Momaday's *Indolent Boys*), and from the Trail of Tears (in Diane Glancy's *Pushing the Bear*) to the silencing or misrepresentation of Native people in history books (such as Sacajawea in Monique Mojica's *Birdwoman and the Suffragettes* or the women of the Thompson River Valley in Tomson Highway's *Ernestine Shuswap Gets Her Trout*), the history of North America is continually rewritten on contemporary indigenous stages.

Second, Vizenor's play tells us something about the history and historiography of Native American drama as a genre. *A Season for All Things* was written, produced, and published in 1967, and thus half a decade before what many critics consider the "beginning" of indigenous theatre in the United States—the 1972 New York premiere of Kiowa playwright Hanay Geiogamah's *Body Indian*.⁸ It thus shows that Geiogamah was not, as critics such as Jeffrey Huntsman and Christopher Balme have assumed, the first Native American playwright (see Huntsman 1980, ix, and Balme 1999, 56). Even before Vizenor, there was an increasing indigenous presence on stage: Arthur Junaluska (Cherokee) and E. Claude Richards

(Huahotecan) are credited with founding “the first Native American theatre company in the United States” in 1956 (Heath 1995, 147). Rolland Meinholtz (Cherokee) cofounded the performance section at the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) at the University of New Mexico, Santa Fe, in 1966, and Jay Silverheels (Mohawk), George Pierre (Colville), and Noble “Kid” Chissell (Cherokee) formed the Indian Actors Workshop in Los Angeles (see Jenkins and Wapp 1976, 12). Besides Lynn Riggs’s plays in the 1920s and 1930s, predecessors to Geiogamah’s influential work also include Raven Hail’s *The Raven and the Redbird: Sam Houston and His Cherokee Wife* (1965), *To Catch a Never Dream* (1969) by Bruce King (Oneida), *The Dress* (1970) by Nona Benedict (Mohawk), *Yanowis* (1971) by Monica Charles (Klallam), and *Survival in the South* (1971) by Minnie Aodla Freeman (Inuit). As Gerald Vizenor’s play demonstrates, many works have been forgotten or lost, so that the historiography of indigenous North American drama requires accurate research and a multiplicity of sources and voices—especially those of the artists and writers themselves.

Furthermore, as is always necessarily the case with artistic work, the increasing visibility of indigenous plays and productions has led to the emergence of a canon: some playwrights and companies are more widely acknowledged or considered more influential than others. In the United States, plays by Hanay Geiogamah, Spiderwoman Theater (Kuna/Rappahannock), William S. Yellow Robe Jr. (Assiniboine), and Diane Glancy (Cherokee) are among the best-known and most frequently anthologized works; in Canada, Native Earth Performing Arts and De-Ba-Jeh-Mu-Jig, Tomson Highway (Cree), Drew Hayden Taylor (Ojibway), Daniel David Moses (Delaware), and Marie Clements (Métis) are usually listed as the most influential contributors to the scene. In this context, *A Season for All Things* serves as a reminder that there is—even in a genre itself long displaced—a struggle over power and recognition. All canons involve hierarchies, and any attempt at literary or cultural historiography involves precarious balancing acts of selection and combination, inclusion and exclusion. The choices and selective processes needed for a framework limited by the realities of publishing are always difficult, and this volume is no exception to the rule.

The impossible project of writing “the” history of this genre would have to include hundreds of individual voices and ignore the rather profane practical aspects of academic publishing (the space between book covers is limited, and so is time: playwrights are busy raising funds, applying for grants, working on new plays, or teach-

ing; some have left the stage or moved on into different fields). As in any anthology or collection of essays, the necessary selection process includes absences, as well. In line with this insight, this collection of voices does not claim to be representative or even just characteristic. It is based on the awareness that canons are there to be continually revised.

Likewise, recent developments in indigenous American studies have rightly shown a turn toward a more inclusive angle, covering the Americas or even the Western hemisphere as a whole. The Kuna notion of *Abya Yala*, or the pan-indigenous “Continent of Life,” which Tamara Underiner uses for her approach in this volume, is highly useful in this context. Although the present study also touches upon the francophone parts of Canada (in Henning Schäfer’s chapter), and (in more detail) upon Mexico and Central America, the focus is primarily on Canada and the United States. A transhemispheric inquiry into Native American performance remains desired and needed, across barriers of languages and disciplines.

Acknowledging the fact that many voices are needed to begin the story, this study gathers voices both academic and creative, from Europe, the United States, and Canada, and from different disciplines and cultural backgrounds. The contributions collected here are narrative points of departure: they consider themselves work in progress. *Indigenous North American Drama: A Multivocal History* is thus an homage to, rather than a comprehensive assessment of, a rich, diverse, and vibrant genre.

III

“Native theatre,” as Drew Hayden Taylor summarizes, “is much older than that scant few years. It is as old as this country, as old as the people who have been here for thousands of years, as old as the stories that are still told today. It is merely the presentation that has changed” (1996b, 51). The history of indigenous theatre, drama, and performance in the Americas is long and complex; and its recording (or narrativization, which history always is) would be the project of a decade, easily filling several volumes. Even though such a comprehensive chronological approach to the genre has not been written, several selective surveys have been attempted. Linda Walsh Jenkins and Ed Wapp Jr. pioneered the research into this field in the 1970s, when they drew attention to Arthur Junaluska’s productions in New York in the 1950s (Jenkins and Wapp 1976,

12). In 1983, Jeffrey Huntsman tried to classify traditional dramatic forms according to purpose and listed various twentieth-century initiatives, noting rather generally that “Indians today are continuing, not only to renew traditional dramatic forms and to incorporate outside elements into older dramas, but also to assimilate and adapt the forms of Euro-American drama” (Huntsman 1983, 369). Two years later, Christopher Bigsby saw the influence from the reverse side, emphasizing that “the public ceremony which western theatre worked so hard in the 1960s to foreground, . . . has always been an essential element of Indian life and a vital expression of individual, tribal, and racial identity” (1985, 369). The need for historical orientation within this newly discovered field was obvious, and most publications of the 1990s, while not going into historical detail, mentioned pioneer companies and institutions such as Hanay Geiogamah’s American Indian Theater Ensemble,⁹ Red Earth Performing Arts (Seattle), the Institute of American Indian Arts (Santa Fe), A-Tu-Mai (Southern Ute, Colorado), Indian Time (Niagara Falls, New York), or Navajoland Outdoor Theatre (Navajo Country). An unpublished dissertation by Sally Ann Heath (1995) was the first attempt at probing more deeply into the genre’s practical side by providing research on the twentieth-century development of Native American theatre companies. Annamaria Pinazzi’s “The ‘Fervent Years’ of the American Indian Theatre” provides a survey of exemplary plays from the 1960s to the 1990s, subdividing the dramatic works within this time period roughly into “traditional,” “modern,” and “historical” plays (1997, 110).¹⁰ In addition to these invaluable collections of data, however, critics also called for a more inclusive understanding of indigenous performative traditions (including ritual, ceremony, pow wows, and dance), and for a better awareness of the problematic “translation of one culture’s performance events into another peoples’ language” (Jenkins 1975, 66). In 1999, a substantial step toward such a comprehensive understanding was taken by Hanay Geiogamah and Jaye T. Darby’s *American Indian Theater in Performance: A Reader*, which collects approaches to Native theatre from various angles. After the turn of the millennium, four more essays—by Christy Stanlake (2001), Ann Haugo (two essays, both in 2005), and Shari Huhndorf (2006)—as well as individual chapters in monographs (in Christy Stanlake’s *Native American Drama*, in my own study of *Native North American Theater in a Global Age*, in Günter Beck’s *Defending Dreamer’s Rock: Geschichte, Geschichtsbewusstsein und Geschichtskultur im Native Drama der USA und Kanadas*, and in Marc Maufort’s *Labyrinth of*

Hybridities: Avatars of O'Neillian Realism in Multi-ethnic American Drama [2010]) provided further historical groundwork.

In addition to chronological surveys of the genre's development, the historiography of Native theatre also requires a closer look at the hi/stories of individual playwrights and theatre groups. Lynn Riggs's heritage was revived by Phyllis Cole Braunlich and the University of Oklahoma Press's republication of three of his plays in 2003. Robert Nunn has edited a collection on Drew Hayden Taylor's plays (2008), and it is needless to say that the dramatic works and achievements of Tomson Highway, Diane Glancy, Monique Mojica (Kuna/Rappahannock), LeAnne Howe (Choctaw), Daniel David Moses, Floyd Favel (Cree), Hanay Geigomah, William S. Yellow Robe Jr., Ian Ross (Ojibway), James Luna (Luiseño/Diegueño), Yvette Nolan (Algonquin), Marie Clements, Margo Kane (Saulteaux/Cree/Blackfoot), and many other playwrights and performance artists active in the Native theatre scene today would deserve similar publications. Some of their stories are beginning to be told in this volume.

The same holds true for theatre companies and groups. Few steps have been taken toward the recording of an impressive history: Jennifer Preston has written a journal article about Native Earth Performing Arts' tenth anniversary in 1992; and the company's twenty-fifth anniversary was celebrated with a memorial video that is available online.¹¹ Similarly, Spiderwoman Theater, the longest-running women's theatre company in the United States, has been acknowledged by two memorial events: One part of the exhibition *New Tribe, New York: The Urban Vision Quest* showed a thirty-year retrospective of their work at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian's George Gustav Heye Center in New York in 2005, the catalogue of which has been published (McMaster 2005). In 2007, the idea of honoring this legacy was taken up again by the Native American Women Playwrights Archive (NAWPA) at Miami University, Ohio, which hosted a conference dedicated to Spiderwoman Theater, and which also features an online exhibit of the group's history.¹² Furthermore, Shannon Hengen's book *Where Stories Meet: An Oral History of De-Ba-Jeh-Mu-Jig Theatre*—a collection of interviews with former members and current staff of Canada's "longest-running Native theatre [company]" (Hengen 2007, 14)—is a milestone that illustrates how much remains to be done: a similar volume could be envisioned for each of the other most influential theatre companies, festivals, and institutions in Canada and the United States. In this volume, Rolland Meinholtz tells the story of how the Institute of American Indian Arts became one of the nuclei

of the Native theatre movement; and complementary hi/stories are needed for Hanay Geiogamah's Native American Theater Ensemble, for Don Matt and Jon Kaufman's Red Earth Performing Arts in Seattle, for the American Indian Theater Company in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and for the highly successful Native Voices Festival hosted every year by the Autry National Center in Los Angeles.

IV

This volume's three sections seek to explore the three central trajectories of historical inquiry: surveys of major developments (in the United States, Canada, and Central America), contributions of individual playwrights to the scene—their experience, their visions, and their perspectives on the genre—and finally, critical analyses of historiography, history, and cultural memory, both as modes of representation and as issues negotiated on stage. The first section, "Indigenous North American Performance: Surveys and Methodologies," addresses the dimension of the history/historiography of indigenous performance cultures from a larger perspective. It clarifies the terminologies and key terms for studying the field, provides surveys of the theatre movements in the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Guatemala, and thus serves as a general introduction. This introduction also offers a fundamental framework of "data" and historical developments without simplifying the genre into narrowly prefabricated temporal or linear categories.

Beginning in the northernmost part of North America, Henning Schäfer gives a survey of the development of contemporary Native theatre in Canada. His summary traces First Nations performance culture chronologically from the tradition of storytelling to contemporary theatre conventions all across the Canadian theatrical landscape. Adding a few methodological stepping stones, Ann Haugo provides a similar framework for Native American theatre and drama in the United States. Like Schäfer, Haugo identifies continuing challenges (funding, training, networking) and exemplarily highlights the interplay between artists and audiences as well as between theatrical and scholarly communities. Focusing on Mexico and Central America, then, Tamara Underiner rounds off the introductory section with a summary of theatrical development south of the U.S. border. Underiner zooms in on three particular issues that arise from any discussion of contemporary Native theatre: history (both theatre as historiography and the history of theatrical forms),

languages on stage, and the cultural infrastructure that helps (or fails to help) playwrights to reach their audiences.

The second section, entitled “Individual Hi/stories: Visions, Practice, Experience,” is the pivotal and most substantial part of this study. Here, Native American and First Nations playwrights comment on their own contributions to indigenous theatre, their experiences, their audiences, and aspects they consider crucial for the development of the field. From Rolland Meinholz’s memoir on the beginnings of Native American drama at the Institute of American Indian Arts to Daniel David Moses’s humorous inquiry into the Shakespearean tradition, and from Diane Glancy’s exploration of dramatic writing techniques to Tomson Highway’s unique combination of classical music theory and drama, this section illustrates the genre’s rich and vibrant mosaic of manifestations.

The engagement with Native companies and playwrights’ perspectives on their work is indispensable for the development of methodological approaches to indigenous theatre and drama. Since the late 1980s, there have been heated discussions over critical authority, the problematics of spectatorship and the pitfalls of appropriation. Alan Filewod’s claim that non-Native critics can never free themselves from the colonizing gaze (“my watching is an appropriation, even when it is invited” [Filewod 1992, 17]), the discussion over Tomson Highway’s alleged misogyny (see Baker 1991 and Schäfer’s chapter in this volume), or non-Native critic Susan Bennett’s (1993) attack on another non-Native critic, Jennifer Preston, for writing an article about Native Earth Performing Arts, are only three cases in point.¹³ Who may speak about the genre? Which angles are appropriate? What ideological backgrounds have to be taken into account? Most importantly, who benefits from the discussion of the genre? Within what Rob Appleford has perceived as a “climate of distrust” (1999, 49), the terminological or methodological frameworks for critical approaches to Native drama are as heavily contested as they are necessary. Christy Stanlake states in her recent study on *Native American Drama* that “in order to read these plays, one must be prepared to read with a perspective that is sensitive to the ways in which Native epistemologies shape the dramaturgy” (2010, 21). Native theatre is informed by a multiplicity of intellectual and cultural traditions, many of them different from European American frameworks of reading. There is thus no history of the genre without indigenous perspectives.

As the second section of this book also reveals, most aboriginal American playwrights agree that the oral tradition is a central

aspect of their work. Like Bruce King, who states that “[t]heater and performance are about storytelling” (2000, 167); William S. Yellow Robe Jr., Drew Hayden Taylor, Diane Glancy, and Spiderwoman Theater more or less explicitly consider themselves “contemporary storytellers” (Pulitano 1998, 28). At the same time, many playwrights and groups have developed unique perspectives on their dramatic work and creative processes—both individual and collective. While N. Scott Momaday proclaims that plays “are poems in form and oral tradition in spirit” (Momaday 2007, vii), Choctaw playwright LeAnne Howe emphasizes cross-generational memory in her work. She has coined the term “tribalography” for her process of creating drama:

As I thought about my identity as a Native writer, as a Choctaw woman, it became clear to me that “everything does matter.” When I write . . . I pull the passages of my life, and the lives of my mothers, my mothers’ mothers, my uncles, the greater community of *chafachûka* (“family”) and *iksa* (“clan”), together to form the basis for critique, interpretation; a moment in the raw world. . . . Then I must be able to render all our collective experiences into a meaningful form. I call this process “tribalography.” (Howe 2000, 214–15)

De-Ba-Jeh-Mu-Jig, one of Canada’s longest-running Native theatre companies, has developed an improvisational technique called “4D,” or “Four Directions,” which—as artistic director Ron Berti explains—has become the company’s general policy over the years:

[T]he Four Directions creation process, apart from being a culturally and socially specific method for creating new works, has also become a core principle that applies to everything the company is engaged in. It requires that we adopt a holistic approach to all things, and acknowledge the importance of the relationship between, and the association with each other. It means we recognize that we create with our entire selves—our emotional, our physical, our intellectual, and our spiritual selves. . . . That is why we say, “The artist is the creation, and the performance is the celebration.” (Hengen 2007, 67)

Perspectives like these are indispensable for any study of indigenous North American drama, since they shape the method-

ological groundwork that Diane Glancy calls for: “an expanding theory with various centers of the universe, taking in more than one view, more than one multiplicity” (Glancy 2002, 204). Especially in light of what Ann Haugo calls the “‘explosion’ of Native theatre” in the twenty-first century (2005b, 347), the history of indigenous American drama and performance has to begin with the artists themselves, their own approaches and critical angles. By collecting the voices and expertise of Rolland Meinholtz, Diane Glancy, Daniel David Moses, Floyd Favel, Monique Mojica, and Tomson Highway, this book’s central section provides a dialogue, in printed form, on the creation and perception, the functions and reverberations of Native theatre.

Finally, the contributions to section 3, “Representations of History: Critical Perspectives,” approach the topic from the sites of reception. Illuminating in further detail the reverberations of history and historiography on stage, this chapter explores some of the most crucial questions for the study of the field, including language, representation, and the appropriation of historical figures and events.

Marc Maufort opens the section by engaging with the interplay between history and memory in three plays by First Nations writers. Reading Shirley Cheechoo’s *Path with No Moccasins*, Tomson Highway’s *Ernestine Shuswap Gets Her Trout*, and Marie Clements’s *Burning Vision* against the critical backdrop of postcolonialism, Maufort shows a wide range of possibilities for the performance of cultural memory. His analysis identifies alternative methods of approaching the past and demonstrates how, through various manifestations of magic realism, trickster discourse, and cultural hybridity, contemporary indigenous theatre actively resists the “ghettoizing” of “Native historiography.”

In a detailed analysis of Monique Mojica’s play *Birdwoman and the Suffragettes*, Günter Beck then explores two different modes of historiography in a similar way: the individual process of remembrance and the more formal process of an institutionalized memory. Mojica’s play, which centers on the story of Sacajawea, illustrates the ways in which historical figures are exploited for various political purposes, including the male, white discourse of Manifest Destiny and a Western feminist agenda. Both these forms of appropriation, as Beck argues, distort American history and thus silence both Sacajawea’s own voice and her hybrid status.

Finally, Klára Kolinská rounds off this section with an outlook at the inter- and transnational reverberations of indigenous North American drama. Having translated six First Nations plays into

Czech, Kolinská elucidates the challenges of making Native theatre more widely available to audiences beyond the United States or Canada, while staying true to the cultural values embedded in the individual works. Whereas elements in Cree, Ojibway, or other indigenous languages undermine the process of appropriating Native plays in an English-speaking context, the translation of these plays into yet another language doubles this problem of representation and poses additional difficulties for the genre's reception.

The issue of cultural transmissibility by which Kolinská concludes this volume seems central to the study of indigenous North American drama, especially in the twenty-first century. Native American and First Nations performance artists such as Drew Hayden Taylor, Spiderwoman Theater, Tomson Highway, or James Luna have become well known in the international contemporary theatre scene. From the beginning of Emily Johnson's and Te Ata's tours to Europe and Latin America, Native theatre artists have reached out across and beyond the Americas to an extraordinary extent, seeing their work staged at the Sydney opera house (Margo Kane) or in Tokyo (Tomson Highway), and touring Asia or Europe. A festival entitled ORIGINS: First Nations Theatre from around the World (organized by Gordon Bronitsky and Michael Walling), was launched in London in September 2007, followed by IndigeNOW, an annual festival of indigenous opera (from North America, Sweden, and Australia) in Australia in 2010. Annamaria Pinazzi is working on a translation of eight Native plays into Italian, and Albert-Reiner Glaap has edited Drew Hayden Taylor's *Toronto at Dreamer's Rock* for German high schools. All of these ventures across different languages and continents show that Native North American drama and performance have a transnational, if not universal appeal, and thus the potential for influencing and enriching theatrical traditions around the globe.

The historical inquiry into indigenous American drama requires many more voices, and many more angles—both theoretical and practical—in the years to come. More work is needed on the interactions between theatrical communities and their audiences, the differences between reservation-based and urban theatre groups, and the local and global arenas that Native playwrights and companies use as sites of creative development. Questions of gender and gender relations in Native plays deserve more attention in future analyses, as do the interrelations between Native theatre and scholarship. In addition to collecting voices from North America and Europe, as this volume does, the transcendence of English-language boundaries is necessary to see indigenous American drama across

the hemisphere, as well as in relation to other indigenous cultures worldwide. As Joseph Roach excellently demonstrates in *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), new approaches to indigenous drama tie in most rewardingly with the recent advances into Atlantic, transhemispheric, and transnational American studies. Similarly, the recent collection on *American Indian Performing Arts: Critical Directions*, edited by Hanay Geiogamah and Jaye T. Darby (Los Angeles: UCLA American Indian Studies Center, 2010), combines criticism on contemporary performances with a section on historical stagings, both from international angles. Connecting shared points of reference, and combining analyses of plays by artists such as Tomson Highway, Monique Mojica, or Daniel David Moses with their own perspectives on theatre, the collaborative study presented here furthers the transnational promotion and understanding of indigenous North American drama. As work in progress on a dynamically evolving genre, this book marks an optimistic beginning.

Notes

1. In matters of so-called political correctness, disclaimers about the use of “Indian,” “Native American,” or other terms precede almost every publication, and breaches of that protocol are reviewers’ most popular targets. Aware of these terminological inadequacies, and with respect to indigenous people’s sovereignty and inherent right to the North American continent, I am strategically using the hyperonyms “Native,” “Native American,” “First Nations,” “indigenous,” and “aboriginal” interchangeably in cases where a comprehensive term is needed. Since these terms are as much a discursive construct as “Western” or “European,” and for purposes of differentiation, I am also using distinct cultural affiliations wherever possible.

2. These numbers do not include those published in the monumental digital collection *North American Indian Drama* (Alexandria, VA: Alexander Street Press, 2006).

3. These are, in chronological order: Hanay Geiogamah and Jaye T. Darby’s *Stories of Our Way: An Anthology of American Indian Plays* (1999), Margo Kane, Greg Daniels, and Marie Clements’s *DraMétis* (2001), Heather Hodgson’s *The Great Gift of Tears: Four Aboriginal Plays* (2002), Monique Mojica and Ric Knowles’s *Staging Coyote’s Dream: An Anthology of First Nations Drama in English* (2003), Jaye T. Darby and Stephanie Fitzgerald’s *Keepers of the Morning Star: An Anthology of Native Women’s Theater* (2003), Shirley A. Huston-Findley and Rebecca Howard’s *Footpaths and Bridges: Voices from the Native American Women Playwrights Archive* (2008), the

second volume of *Staging Coyote's Dream* (2009), and Ann Elizabeth Armstrong, Kelli Lyon Johnson, and William A. Wortman's *Performing Worlds Into Being: Native American Women's Theater* (2009). All of these anthologies contain three or more plays by Native American or First Nations dramatists. In addition to these, Native North American drama has been published in at least twenty-eight more general anthologies, and there are twelve collections of three or more plays by individual playwrights, such as Joseph Bruchac, Hanay Geiogamah, Diane Glancy, Joan Shaddox Isom, Bruce King, N. Scott Momaday, Yvette Nolan, Lynn Riggs, E. Donald Two Rivers, and William S. Yellow Robe Jr. These do not yet include the large number of plays published individually or in journals.

4. As I have argued elsewhere, there are various reasons for this substantial displacement from the canon (see Däwes 2007a, 45–87). Indigenous American theatrical traditions were subject to colonial oppression, prohibition, appropriation, and other forms of exploitative power. Moreover, Native American performance was widely considered in opposition to Western theatrical traditions and thus relegated into the fields of anthropology or religious studies. Beside this methodological diffusion, the genre has been marked by a crucial indistinctness of authorship and authority. From nineteenth-century melodramas to the annual Karl May festival in Bad Segeberg, Germany, plays about, not by, Native American people have been tremendously successful, privileging a practice of identity building that Philip J. Deloria calls “playing Indian” (1998, 1–9). Thus displacing the complexity and political power of actual indigenous performance culture, the practice of “colonial mimicry” (Bhabha 1994, 91) guaranteed European American image control, the dissimulation of historical guilt, and a sense of superior selfhood. In consequence, the Other of Native performance was overwritten by Wild West Show aesthetics: the place of the indigene on American stages had been replaced by the *indian* simulacrum.

5. Gerald Vizenor, “Lost Seasons,” e-mail message to the author, July 19, 2004.

6. Gerald Vizenor, “Theater,” e-mail message to the author, November 3, 2004.

7. In using the italicized spelling in small letters for the image instead of the actual people, I am following Gerald Vizenor, who marks it as “a simulation with no referent and with the absence of natives; *indians* are the other, the names of sacrifice and victimry” (1998, 27).

8. As McCandlish Phillips noted after the premiere of Hanay Geiogamah's *Body Indian* in 1972: “When the history of the American Indian theater is written in, say, the year 2054, it will probably record that it all began back in 1972 in a narrow loft at 74A East Fourth Street on New York's Lower East Side” (1972, 56).

9. Don B. Wilmeth, for instance, claims that “[o]nly Geiogamah (Kiowa Indian) has gained any real national attention” (2000, 146).

10. Individual studies (like Günter Beck's, and my own) have tried to gain terminological and methodological access to Native North American

performance culture—sometimes within the larger context of postcolonial studies (see Christopher Balme or Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins), and sometimes on its own account (see Christy Stanlake's inquiry into Native dramaturgy, *Native American Drama: A Critical Perspective*). The trend is also exemplified by special issues of academic journals (*Canadian Theatre Review* 68 [Fall 1991], *Aboriginal Voices* 2, no. 7 [September–October 1995], and the *Baylor Journal of Theatre and Performance* 4, no. 1 [Spring 2007]) as well as by collections of essays, edited by Per Brask and William Morgan (1992), Hanay Geiogamah and Jaye T. Darby (2000 and 2009), Rob Appleford, Ann Elizabeth Armstrong, Kelli Lyon Johnson, and William A. Wortman (*Performing Worlds Into Being: Native American Women's Theater*) and, most recently, Steve E. Wilmer (*Native American Performance and Representation*).

11. It can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bKITFXugsIY>.

12. The conference proceedings are included in *Performing Worlds Into Being* (2009); see especially Murielle Borst's chapter "Spiderwoman Theater's Legacy." For the online exhibit, see <http://staff.lib.muohio.edu/nawpa/spdrwmnarchv.html>.

13. Bennett particularly accused Preston of subjecting the group "to the tourist gaze of an American and international readership" (Bennett 1993, 12).