

Further (Farther): Creating Dialogue To Talk about Native American Plays

Diane Glancy

There has been conversation at various conferences toward making a literary theory for Native American plays in which the unseen world often intrudes as though it were seen. The parts not connecting until the play as a whole is seen and sometimes it (the meaning) still trails.

A script is a blueprint for a story which the character enters. Or a character which the story enters. A story wants something but something gets in the way. How it is resolved is the character.

A play connects to a power source which is a structure of action. A cord into a socket. Dramatic language is like electricity. Which is hard to explain. It accesses invisibility and all those things going to it. A play is a small town. With an interstate bypassing it. Yet connected to the power plant by the river. A new oral tradition with breath, which is the condition of performance. A planet of being. A location. A vectoring, which is a conflation of crossroads in different perspectives.

A native play is maybe less constructed. Relying at times on campfire or lights from a trailer on the edge of darkness. Not moving to a clear finish with all kinds of imperatives, those little divisions between the spruce and the pines. But accessing the spirit world and the physical world. Combining the shadow world and the real world. Asking which is which? Is the shadow world the spirit world, and the real world the physical world we live in? Or is the shadow world the real, and the real world we live in the shadow? Or are both distorted until it only seems they are separate?

It is something like magic realism, but we have to invent native terms.

Improbable realities.

Realized improbabilities.

Improbable actualities.

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Ritualistic imagination.

Imaginative realism

(On a plane from Albuquerque, once it was over Minnesota, I looked down on frozen lakes that had been crossed with snowmobiles and trucks pulling ice-fishing houses. I saw patterns marking the ice with hatchings that looked like broken glass.)

A story in the process of theory.

What is similar and what is not (this came while waking from a dream).

Trying out terms.

Bulling a bulldozer.

A snowmobile on a frozen lake which is only sometimes frozen.

Oneiric magnetism.

A pull of boundaries into one another.

Accessible dualism.

Dualistic accessibility.

Dualistic realism.

Naturalistic dualism (except there are more than two things going on in a native play; it's more of a bricolage, a staging of variants).

Boundary crossing (so that what is separated on a map— the definite lines between states, for instance, are not there when you look down— but being on the ground, there are only highway markers saying, *entering Iowa*, but otherwise the borders are invisible unless the Red River between Texas and Oklahoma).

Spirit scripting.

Script settings.

Scene 2

There is a going into a world that is not the travel you're accustomed to. But it exists side by side, but is not known. Unless to those within it. It could be said *here it is* without explanation. But there has to be a way to look at it. Otherwise what is it? Emphasis of story over character development? A change of story? The story as character or the telling of the story as character?

Or, if you are there at a certain time / a certain place / it becomes visible like broken glass travels over ice.

Blended settings.

Unboundaried orations.

Seismic *orflations* (inflated orations).

Syncretic *ortations* (each speaking within each).

A dramatic, oral-traditional, many-voiced, poly-multiple, *multipole*.

A play which migrates around ceremony including the time of year / the elements (a snowmobile on a frozen lake which is only sometimes frozen

depending on the weather) / the particular occasion / the particular voices that give *line*.

A confluence.

A collusion.

When I see the word, petroglyphography, I think of verbal petroglyph.

Voice writing (which a native play is).

Overlay (not where is the conflict / resolution? character change? but process unfolding, the storytelling is the plot).

A dialogue coming from different places. A dialogue without hearing the other (something else from a dream).

Dubious actualities.

Implausible realities.

The believable occurrences of *unbelievability*.

Access to the unseen world(s).

A cohabitation of this world and the other(s) (but without making unrealistic separations). Or *here are other worlds also which are here*.

Intertextual facings.

Interfactual *textings*.

Interfactings.

Overstories with understories.

The intermix of overlaps.

The intercalation of 1.) the physical world, 2.) the dream world ((2a.) those dreams also while waking), 3.) the spirit beings ((3a.) the *spirits being*), 4.) the ancestors (ancients), 5.) the imaginative experience which is a strip of all between.

Scene 3

It's when the voices no matter where they're from are well, good; each one speaking outward from the core of experiences, from thought; feeling their way along the dark road to, well, be dramatic about it.

The voices of a longer story. One buffalo walking, overspilling its prairie. Nor does there seem to be soldiers anymore with regiments moving to orders; but a process of exchange, relationship and interaction, the one voice in many voices, the successive voices, the cumulative voices in manifold expressionism; moving to a fragmented cognizance; a recognition of self in the cross-genre democracy of writing; taking the tool turning it back to them with new knifeness.

Authority tied in a spiderweb effect if you've ever watched frost grow. A winter approach to spiderwebs; some garnering a gnat or insect from time to time.

Explications inward of our destination to civilization in these various combinations; a town hall of all of the voices together.

An expanding theory with various centers of the universe, taking in more than one view, more than one multiplicity. The common pervades and speaks the common in a new broken commonality, obedient to the call of changing, manifolding, powwowing, renewing, conviving. Incongruent to get at the matter of the things. To gist existence, all the while sharing the burden, the glory of the stage.

And in the separations, the sewings of meaning again, the contact, at last, with other tribes, other settlements.

Denouement

A native play is often orbiculate. To circle back to terms: realized improbabilities probably describes the network of possibilities for the unlikely elements of the topography of the native stage. The improbable happenings that fill the native stage. The acceptable improbabilities. The indirect directions. Blizzard, the cold and heat, thunderstorm, humidity, humor and bleakness, tornado and calm, flood and drought, -all the other upheavals of native theater.