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Reviews

American Gypsy: Six Native American Plays. By Diane Glancy. Volume 45, American Indian Literature and Critical Studies Series. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002. ISBN 0-8061-3456-9. \$34.95 cloth.

American Gypsy: Six Native American Plays is Diane Glancy's second published anthology of plays. The collection includes *The Woman Who Was a Red Deer Dressed for the Deer Dance*, *The Women Who Loved House Trailers*, *American Gypsy*, *Jump Kiss*, *The Lesser Wars*, and *The Toad (Another Name for the Moon) Should Have a Bite*. For Glancy, "An American Gypsy is a Native American who knows migration and rootlessness" (43). Although each individual work can be read and produced separately, taken together, the entire collection forms its own integrative poetic whole, interweaving longing, the need to belong, and the search for tribal connections, issues Glancy (Cherokee and German/English) explored earlier in *The West Pole* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

This anthology marks an important new direction in Glancy's development as a playwright. For the most part the plays in her first collection, *War Cries* (Duluth, MN: Holy Cow! Press, 1997) follow more conventional linear dramatic structures. In this new anthology, Glancy, best known for her award-winning poetry, fuses lyricism, circularity of traditional storytelling, contemporary Native issues, and experimental styles in a range of dramatic forms. As Glancy wrote in "Two Dresses," her autobiographical essay, "I write in other genres than poetry, but everything I write is from the poetic perspective: not the old poetry with its emphasis on rhyme and rhythm, but the contemporary word art that reveals underlying meanings and relationships" (107) (in *I Tell You Now: Autobiographical Essays by Native American Writers*, eds. Brian Swann and Arnold Krupat [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987], 167–182).

This poetic experimental fusion dominates the works in *American Gypsy*, as each work focuses on "underlying meanings and relationships" through innovative, often daring forms, which Glancy introduces in the preface and discusses in more detail at the beginning of each play. Thus, for readers and directors seeking traditional western-style plays, this anthology might initially seem somewhat perplexing and remote, as it disrupts conventional expectations for Western theater. Concluding the preface, Glancy reflects on her unique approach to playwrighting in this anthology:

Script is the arbitrary and interactory process of organizing variables that resist and should.

Script makes story of explanation.

It coalesces the array of arbitrary elements into patterns of images upon which the action rides. (xi)

Overall, Glancy's boldness and innovation in dramatic conceptualizations, forms, and styles open new spaces in Native and women's theater and make *American Gypsy* an important new collection. A careful reading of each work is highly rewarding.

The first three plays move through powerful dialogue and highly imaginative images. *The Woman Who Was a Red Deer Dressed for the Deer Dance* opens the collection. This moving one-act play probes the relationship between a Cherokee grandmother and her estranged granddaughter, as the grandmother struggles to connect the young woman spiritually to her Cherokee heritage through the power of her stories. In *The Women Who Loved House Trailers*, Berta, Jelly, and Oscar, three artists, share their perspectives on migration and art with whimsical dialogue and word play on multiple meanings for "house trailer." *American Gypsy*, set near Anadarko, Oklahoma, explores the burdens of cultural dispossession, poverty, and tragedy that too often intrude into contemporary Native life.

The next three works are even more experimental in form. *Jump Kiss* is organized around a series of Plates and Fragments which function as shifting scenes of memories that reflect the internal conflicts in the unnamed speaker's life and psyche. In describing the play, Glancy writes, "*Jump Kiss* is an explanation ceremony. A recovery of events and experiences and relationships for the purpose of understanding what has passed" (87). The daughter of a controlling European American mother and a deferential Cherokee father, the narrator in middle age struggles with the price of assimilation as a child and young adult, which denied her opportunities to fully embrace and understand her Cherokee heritage. Poignantly, the speaker frames her life with the lines, "One night Grandmother Spider crept on the binding of my book, yet my hand reached instinctively and sput out the life," which begin and end *Jump Kiss* (88, 143). These repeated lines emphasize first the narrator's transgression and then her hard-won psychic reconciliation with her past as the piece comes full circle.

The Lesser Wars is a trickster tale between Coytoe and Tecoyo, who are androgynous. According to Glancy, this piece "explores the risk of relationship with the *other*, the risk of knowing self, and the risk of relationship with the structure of writing" (145). *The Toad (Another Name for the Moon) Should Have a Bite* is a touching dream-like monologue by a middle-aged woman reflecting on a tour to the Great Wall of China and searching for her place in the universe.

The final section "Further (Farther): Creating Dialogue to Talk about Native American Plays" offers Glancy's reflections on both traditional ele-

ments and experimental qualities of contemporary Native theater. The anthology ends with production histories and performance notes. Particularly helpful in describing the dramaturgical process of staging her work are Glancy's notes about the workshopping process for *Jump Kiss*. She first describes rehearsals for a staged reading on 10 March 2001, by Native Voices at the Autry in Los Angeles, directed by Dolores Apollonia Chavez, who also played the lead; then further recounts the later workshopping with dramaturge Jean Bruce Scott and director Randy Reinholz as the piece moved towards its world premiere in 2002. In the staged production for Native Voices, *Jump Kiss* was reworked dramatically to include a Narrator, Narrator's younger self, Sister; Brother, her brother as a young boy; Mother; and Father. To enhance the imagistic quality of the piece, Reinholz added multimedia slides and music (207–216).

Each work in *American Gypsy: Six Native American Plays* is highly lyrical, vividly imagined, and multivocal, driven by language and image rather than action. As Berta explains in *The Women Who Loved House Trailers*, "Words are medicine for a journey" (39). The recent successful productions of *The Woman Who Was a Red Deer Dressed for the Deer Dance*, *The Women Who Loved House Trailers*, and *Jump Kiss* show that under the guidance of a skillful director and gifted actors, the evocative qualities of these plays translate successfully to the stage, especially through the use of imaginative set designs and multimedia. Each play in this collection offers exciting new roles for Native women to develop and perform in a variety of settings—from staged readings to professional productions.

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Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands. By James F. Brooks. Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia/University of North Carolina Press, 2002. 419 pages. \$55.00 cloth; \$22.50 paper.

In 1991, Southwestern history witnessed its most acclaimed and controversial publication. Ramon A. Gutierrez's *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away* (Stanford, 1991) garnered the historical profession's major book awards and catapulted colonial New Mexico onto syllabi across the land. Sweeping in scope, meticulously researched, and powerfully conceptualized, *When Jesus Came* offered U.S. historians a stark challenge: ignore the multicultural, hybrid, and centuries-old dialectic of Spanish colonialism and Indian adaptation at one's own risk. For the Southwest not only came under the influence of Europeans generations before the founding of Jamestown, but also became home to cultural, economic, and social processes that bore little resemblance to the more traditional subjects in U.S. colonial history of civic culture, republicanism, and entrepreneurial development. A necessary corrective to generations of Anglocentrism, *When Jesus Came* helped inaugurate the borderlands paradigm that now increasingly characterizes early American history.