

Identities at Odds: Dramatic Syncretism and Indigenous —————
Identities at Odds: Dramatic Syncretism and Indigenous
Identity Representation

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Abstract:

The central aim of this paper is to foreground syncretism as a cultural as well as a communicative component of indigenous and native playwrights' constructions of the indigene. Dramatic syncretism is a widespread phenomenon in Africa, and the Caribbean, and is increasing in strength in the "Fourth World" or aboriginal cultures in North America and Oceania. It is a conscious programmatic strategy to fashion new dramatic forms in English as a Europhone language, a process that manifests varying degrees of bi- or multiculturalism. The study is laid upon the idea that those syncretic texts are used as methods of representation to articulate indigenous and aboriginal identities in the postcolonial discourse. The study attempts to examine syncretism and other modes denoting the impurity of cultures like hybridity, creolization, and transculturality as strategies of reconciliation between the "essentialist", "authentic", and "born" native identities and the "borne" identities imposed by the colonizer. The study picks up on this element by featuring localized and historicized dramatic readings of native indigenous identities constructions but in a way that avoids seeing these constructions as unified and stable to account for the paradox of the concepts of "authenticity", "purity" and "essentialism" often associated with representations of indigeneity in postcolonial discourse. Dramatic syncretism in this sense is a model of deconstructing western cultural imperialism, i.e., a model of decolonizing the stage.

Keywords:

Indigenous identity- Essentialism-Syncretism- Dramatic Syncretism

Introduction:

Indigenous people or the "First Nations" and their works of literature have been the celebration of postcolonial studies in many ways. Indigenous playwrights have been always preoccupied with problems of securing their cultural identity, narrating their deep colonial experiences, and achieving self-worth and self-determination. However, in their attempt to capitalize on their pure indigenous cultures, they have fallen into the trap of essentialism set for them by western imperialism. Only gradually did indigenous playwrights throw their timid gowns, re-appropriating the language of subjection and reforming it to become a new form of expressing their own experiences. The task of indigenous playwrights by now has been the double process of rediscovering and reinventing their native performance techniques and then accommodating them within the metropolitan dramatic forms of the colonizer. Dramatic syncretism can account for such a positive form of cultural intervention which does not imply either uprooting or derogating a specific culture.

Indigenous people representation: essentialism vs syncretism:

To begin with, a basic definition of the "indigenous", "native", "aboriginal", or "indigenes" must be given. They are "those populations that were already resident when Europeans or other colonizers invaded, occupied, and/settled their traditional territories". (Hawley 247) These are not, per se, the right terms or the only terms that could have been used. Where alternatives are used, such as tribal peoples, national minorities, First Nations, or even more localized terms such as the Indians, Māori, or aboriginal are also used, the terms indigenous/native are most inclusive and yet the most widely accepted by indigenous people

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themselves and international organizations. Over the years, a variety of descriptive labels have been affixed to the "indigenous/native" populations. Some of these labels are neutral terms like "domestic nations" or "nations within" while others are overtly politically radical ones such as "internal colonies", "captives" and "occupied nations", as indicated by Chadwick Allan (*Blood Narrative* 239).

While Britain was the largest nineteenth-century colonial power, colonized parts of Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and even the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia have been annexed and to varying degrees colonized by the British. There have been different sites of confrontations between the indigenous and the invaders or independence seekers and/or the imperial force. But at the same time, indigenous populations of these countries have been all affected by the process of decolonization and are "postcolonial" in the sense that Peter Hulme refers to as a "process of disengagement from the colonial syndrome." (66)

The problem with indigenous populations today, whether they are a majority or a minority in their countries, is that world colonialism is not dead. They still suffer what Stuart Hall calls "the after-effects of colonialism" (223). Indigenous people are victimized, suppressed, disposed of, displaced, and rooted out. The reality of the world's indigenous populations has been all too much monotonously the same: controlled by those who conquered them.

By Taking Hall's words, it can be said that the analysis of indigenous peoples, their histories, and literature depend heavily on the vocabulary and concepts of post-colonialism. Post-colonialism stemmed from the limitation of the Eurocentric theory to accommodate for the history, life narratives, and stories of indigenous peoples around the world who share one experience: having been colonized for so long. post-colonialism

does not only reflect previous colonies; those countries that gained independence, but also it manifests decolonization strategies of native people, where the colonizer is dominant. Post-colonialism, in its most recent version, tackles the neo colonizing hegemony that takes over the native inferiors in a purely capitalist world dominated by multinational corporations.

Focusing mainly on power struggles and the intersection of cultures, post-colonialism, and its theorists attempted to offer examples, terminologies, and explanations for such binary categories of the colonized/ colonizer relationship. Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) expressed the idea of this polarization in what he coined as the 'Other' as a European construct of 'the Orient to be everything Western civilization is not – 'exotic', 'uncivilized', 'backward', 'childlike' (7) This ties into Franz Fanon's notion of a 'Manichean Allegory', the dualistic concept of binary opposites, where one can see conflict in terms of light/dark, Civilized/Savage in his *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961). Post-colonialists believe these binary relationships as the recurring mode of explanation of indigenous/ Native people's experience in previous colonies, such as India, the Caribbean, and African countries.

In the typical binary opposition offered by post-colonialism, the colonized indigenous and their encounter of contact with the colonized are set at the margin, while the "metropolis"/ colonizer is located at the very centre. Indigenous attempts to self-express against the centre are coined by Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1989) as "writing back". In "writing back" from the margin, indigenous writers deconstruct the notions of the colonial cultural centre as their narratives are always considered "isolated national offshoots of English Literature" (*The Empire* 7).

While post-colonialism offered ways and methodologies to account for the oppression, suppression, and decolonization

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strategies of native people in past colonies, the situation is not the same in what is termed the “Fourth World”; settler colonies, such as in the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. For those indigenous populations, colonialism is not over yet and they are still marginalized in their own land.

Postcolonialism, as a cultural umbrella, though useful, has limitations within its general terminologies and methodologies that shrink the historical experience of indigenous people with its abstractedness. According to Post-colonialists, Indigenous writers had been given two minimal options: either authenticity or hybridity.

Behind the reality of a history of invasion, oppression, and western hegemony lies another reality. In all post-colonial countries, the history of the oppressed- indigenous people- among them was not written by themselves. It was written instead by those who controlled them. Most post-colonial critics tend to believe that the ahistorical, universalizing, depoliticizing effects of the postcolonial do things for the good of indigenous people. Too often the sole function of postcolonial discourse seems to serve is the critique of a dominant, western philosophical discourse." Merely a detour to return to the position of the other as a source for rethinking the western self" (Chrisman 129)

Moreover, the dilemma of indigenous people today has been doubled by the fact that the question of indigeneity has been both rooted and routed in contemporary postcolonial and cultural studies. Indigeneity today is studied as a continuum of indigenous and diasporic situations. As we try to grasp the full range of critical accounts on indigeneity and the indigenous, it is crucial to recognize indigenous patterns of making themselves visible. We need to discover the jagged path between the seductions of premature, pluralist post-colonial assumptions and the resistant indigenous dynamism and interaction.

The problem of the conceptualization of the idea of indigeneity and indigenous people is not as simple as it looks. The problem lies, among other factors, in the essentialist image constructed of a subordinate as set by a superordinate discourse. In his famous essay, "The Return of The Native", Adam Kuper states that "essentialism is one of the biggest threats provided by the colonizing project. (390)

In his essay "Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences", Bhabha again makes it clear that ideas resulting from cultures in contact are immensely valuable because they do not only represent colonial struggle but also suggest a possible critique of the aesthetic and the political values often ascribed to the unitary of cultures. He believes that cultures are not "unitary" in themselves, simply because human culture is totality in itself and yet because the idea of judging the other as "the other" entails that we put ourselves in their position. (207) He adds that all "cultural statements and systems" result from "this ambivalent place of enunciation", thus all claims of alleged purity and originality of cultures became untenable. (208)

This idea of ambivalence, discussed by Bhabha, is similarly seen by Ashcroft as an indicator of positive capacity on part of the colonized culture:

Ambivalence is not merely the sign of the failure of the colonial discourse to make the colonial subject conform, it is the sign of the agency of the colonized -the two-way gaze, the dual-orientation, the ability to appropriate colonial technology without being absorbed by it- which disrupts the monological impetus of the colonizing process (*Post-Colonial Transformations* 23)

An essentially pure culture isn't there at all. Cultures do change and changing is what makes them alive. Salman Rushdie

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has a similar account of cultures as being essentially non-pure and transformative:

Do cultures actually exist as a separate, pure defense for defensible entities? It's not *mélange* adulteration, impurity, pick 'n' mix at the heart of the idea of the modern, and has it hasn't it's been that way for almost all this shook-up century? Does the idea of pure cultures, in urgent need of being kept free from alien contamination, lead us inexorably towards apartheid, towards ethnic cleansing, towards the gas chamber? (qtd in Ashcroft *Post-Colonial Transformations* 25)

As the contemporary accounts discussed above are beginning to assert, the syncretic and hybridized nature of post-colonial experience refutes the privileged position of a standard monocentric view of human experience. Cultural authenticity is a myth and any attempt to prove utter purity is in itself a symptom of inauthenticity. the desperate need to claim authenticity leads to contradictory and illogical assumptions about the nature of cultural production itself” (Ashcroft *Transformations* 30). Interestingly, authenticity and essentialism do not seem to be favored by native writers themselves. Mudrooroo- the aboriginal novelist and theorist- claims utter purity and essentialism as an impossible option for indigenous cultures. He admits that although aboriginal cultures are pure, indigenous, and “rooted in the soil”. They:

Aboriginal culture (or cultures) alone is (are) indigenous and rooted in the soil. They, like every other culture on the globe, are subject to change and are changing constantly. I want to emphasize that such a thing as a stone-age culture (static and unchanging), is a myth created by those who should have known better and still put forth by those who

should know better. All societies and cultures change and adapt, and this is fact not theory. (228)

It is ironic that while the colonizer tries to enforce a cunning, illusory form of its own essentialism/ indigeneity, indigenous people are trying to refute indigeneity as a limiting stereotypical process.

Inauthenticity or to say it right, not adopting a solely authentic voice, is sometimes the only way for an indigenous writer to validate his native writing in a discourse environment that is possessed by the colonizer. In the article, Griffiths explains how the Australian Aboriginal peoples want and wish to assert their sense of “authentic” and “pure” as a way to recuperate what they lost during the colonial period. He also explains that this claim resulted especially in the media as “the authentic” Australian Aboriginal versus the “inauthentic” political activist. However, in that sort of dispute, the matter is who has the more powerful story. There is an assertion that the European story is more powerful and important than the Aboriginal story; as a result, it is why Griffiths says that it is “crucial” for the Indian community that their stories continue to be told. He also writes about the concept of silencing the native and the European reaction to the “Native” story. The importance of recuperation of Aboriginal culture and story is claimed to be very important in their process of resistance. This conflict is a good example of the myth of authenticity because the problem is which sides possess the genuine “authentic voice” and most of all if there is an “authentic voice”. (237)

Griffiths argues that “authentic speech” can be used within a discourse of “liberal violence” as a “cultural commodity”; however, as seen from Griffith’s analysis, it cannot be used as a political or a cultural strategy. Hybridity confirms the fact that the assertion that there is a ‘pure culture’ is indeed a myth

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because it is impossible to have a culture that did not mix with another, either during the pre-or post-colonization era.

There appeared a need to look beyond the typical, restricting notions of the dual polarities of earlier post-colonial studies and their tendency to enforce alleged, empty notions of cultural purity. Encouraged by post-colonial critics who were hailed for providing alternate modes of cultural contact such as hybridity, syncretism, and creolization, indigenous writers themselves began to freely adopt mixture in their attempt to refute the boundaries of the colonial power and work as spokesmen for their indigenous nations. Despite the existence of numerous terms that all pour into the idea of cultural exchange resulting in new forms, syncretism is the model built up in this thesis to highlight the mechanics of the cultural encounter between the indigenous writers exemplified and the surrounding colonizing body in their countries. Syncretism can be used within the theoretical framework to focus attention precisely on accommodation, contest, appropriation, indigenization, and a host for other dynamic intercultural and intracultural transactions.

Syncretism provides a useful theoretical framework for analyzing and identifying the relationship between an author's indigenous inheritance, which required the cultural values and traditions which together form the playground of a unique worldview. But unlike a conscious reinterpretation of an existing legend or written text which is forced, syncretism is an unconscious and procreative act, one which naturally occurs when a writer instinctively reconciles the seemingly disparate cultural, linguistic, and experimental elements

Syncretism as a Cultural and a Post-colonial Paradigm:

Looking at the etymology of the word syncretism, the word could most plausibly derive from the ancient Greek prefix 'syn', 'with', and 'krais', 'mixture' which are combined in words such as Syngkrais which means mixing together a compound or

idiosynkrasia, meaning peculiar and individual. The word "syncretism" was derived from the Latin syncretismus which, in turn, referred to the Greek synkretismos, meaning a merger of communities. Approaches to the notion of syncretism vary, depending on whether beliefs and value systems are exclusive or inclusive. In religions that are exclusive, for example, syncretism can be seen as a form of betrayal, as a divergence from a singular truth, whereas nonexclusive belief systems can accommodate other traditions and even to incorporate them into their own.

Within anthropology and social sciences, syncretism has always been given a more affirmative meaning. One early illustrative analysis involving syncretism was conducted by Melville J. Herskovits- an anthropologist and author of *The Myth of the Negro Past (1941)*. In it, Herskovits tried to refute the myth that Africans lost their ancestral heritage and managed instead to maintain their indigenous culture. As an anthropologist, he began to show the Africanisms still inherit in the behavior of blacks including the retention of mood or habits such as walking, speaking, laughing, dancing, singing, sitting postures burning to carry, and almost all details of daily life including respecting church more than law. Specifically, in terms of syncretism, he found that:

The cultural processes that will be operated will be those of addition and synthesis to achieve congruence with older forms, rather than a subtraction and substitution, with the resulting fragmentation (Herskovits xvi)

Syncretism, as chosen as a method of resistance and self-definition is sparked mainly by the mechanics of the colonizer. Otherness is the big billboard seen here. It is not race differences, but rather the perception of the connotation of otherness "race

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differences” implies. Syncretism has presumably always been part of the negotiation of identities and hegemonies. Rosalind Shaw and Charles Stewart see it as a means of resistance:

Syncretism may be (or perhaps only looks like) a form of resistance because hegemonic practices are never simply absorbed wholesale through passive ‘acculturation’; at the very least, their incorporation involves some kind of transformation, some kind of deconstruction reconstruction that converts them to people’s own meanings and projects. (20)

For indigenous writers, the negotiations between a myriad of dominant ideologies and their own unique cultural experiences often result in the drama that contains complex statements of identity. These statements are inherently bound together with countless definitions, created by both the dominant culture and the indigenous people themselves, of what it might mean to be "indigenous".

One strategy evident in native drama centers on the desire to distance the dominant ideology. Some playwrights react against the mainstream culture by constructing native characters that are separatist in many ways; in other words, these characters speak to the fact that what it means to be indigenous is different from being swamped by the dominant culture of the colonizer. This strategy, usually, but not always ignores syncretism. This strategy can become problematic because such essentialist impulses often lead to statements of identity, that, paradoxically, instead of confronting and combating dominant stereotypes, actually enforce the mainstream of the "indigenous". Writers who use this strategy may believe that they are defying the stereotype and replacing it with the "real", but what is conducted here is a picture of the “hyperreal”, a real without any origin or reality. In

effect, these writers end up simulating the images and models of indigeneity they want to destroy.

On the other hand, writers who embrace syncretism and use it as a fuel for the articulation of native identities or realities often create plots and characters which seem to insist that understanding the self is bound up with understanding the world in which one lives. These native or indigenous playwrights construct characters that consciously acknowledge the complex dynamics of the worlds in which they exist and reject dominance thus bespeaking the uncertainty and fluidity of identity. They find both danger and strength in all illusive but not unattainable confidence, and thus they refuse to give white audiences or native audiences the expected romantic native. Rejecting prescribed roles for the native while simultaneously pointing out that syncretism is an inherent part of all people, those playwrights seem quite aware of the fact that to be indigenous, just as to be white, or female or any label humans apply to themselves or others, one is in a constant state of dialogism. Such dialogisms must be exposed by native people to expose their versions of indigeneity.

The strength of these syncretic texts is that they tend to break away the semantic field of the typical indigene with its connotations of fixity. These plays seem to be powerful statements of the sovereignty of motion, the ability, and the vision to move in imagination. They are examples of the natives as vital and able to assert control over their lives and destinies, and in doing so they are menacing the control of their colonizers too.

In contrast, the truly syncretic creation involves an amalgamation or fusion of different cultures into a new culture. As Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin write in *The Empire Writes Back* (1989), syncretism is "the process by which

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previously distinct linguistic categories, and by extension, cultural formations, merge into a single new form" (14).

Because syncretism in post-colonial, anthropological theories, and post-modernist discourse has been always attached to processes of indigenization, the history of syncretism incorporates another contemporary interest, the role of the native/local (including the post-colonial) not as another/ outsider but as an active, creative part of, and participant in the mixture. Attention to syncretism turns the so-called politics of difference into ethics of positive interaction since it focuses not on identity but identification as a result of contentious contact. Thus, we move from questions of nativism and authenticity not to celebrations of contamination, but an ethical acknowledgment of conflict. Syncretism is not about mere pluralism or diversity. Unlike hybridity, which can regress into an apotheosis of creole cultures and crossbreeding, syncretism does not glorify otherness but rather features competitive encounters of heterodoxy and interactive, double-way interaction.

Resorting to the colonizer's language, literary heritage, theories, and rituals by the indigenous writer is not a badge of shame. It is an extremely demanding process in which the indigenous writer compels himself into a double process of digesting a foreign system of cultural signifiers and then remolding them in another accessible way in which he caters not only to his native people but to the colonizer's as well. Mudrooroo referred to the inevitable fusion happening between the original native culture and that of the colonizer as a "Pie of perfection made up in the sky". He does not see any shame in finding Aboriginal themes and topics being discussed in "polished English" as long as writing in English would be the means through which aboriginal culture lives and grows. (231)

Indigenous and aboriginal literature is inescapable syncretic, and this blending of cultural material is certainly not

surprising for cultures who were borrowing from and influencing each other many centuries ago, ever since colonialization started. Writers who show their native people as authentically embedded in hybridized syncretized, and transcultural worlds choose a different strategy for negotiating with the world through the lenses of their experiences. They seem to understand that in a complex world, personal identity is a complicated issue, especially for the marginalized indigene faced with the stereotypes of the dominant colonizer's culture. Those writers attempt themes and to construct the characters who risk losing the self within the varied voices and experiences which inform them and the consciously acknowledge the complex dynamics of the world in which they exist and function while simultaneously rejecting the simulations of dominance, and act which speak to uncertainty and the fluidity of identity. They offer to their audience, whether indigenous or white, what they are craving.

It is useful to examine how a syncretic identity can be and is being represented in an indigenous drama written by a native dramatist as a tool for exploring and articulating a specific instance of indigenous identity, an instance that includes the dominant colonizing culture but also rejects cliches and the stereotypes. Indigenous writers tend to inaugurate both western and native characters, themes, and mythologies with deeply felt indigenous beliefs in a place whose mythological structure is profoundly native while rejecting the essentialist doctrine of purity spoused on them by the loud, overpowering imperial institution. The writers exemplified in this study, similar to all indigenous writers, are part of the big conversation surrounding the act of defining the self. They each clutch personal and culturalist straws of definition. it is the job of the coming pages to highlight how these straws of personality are put together and the different ways of doing that.

Identities at Odds: Dramatic Syncretism and Indigenous **Syncretism on Stage:**

In his key study *Decolonizing the Stage: Theatrical Syncretism and Post-Colonial Drama* (1999), Christopher Balme coins the term "Theatrical Syncretism" and sees it as a "conscious, programmatic strategy to fashion a new form of theatre in the light of colonial or post-colonial experience" (2). It is viewed as one of the most effective means of decolonizing the stage because it utilizes the performance forms of both European and indigenous cultures in creative recombination of their respective elements, without slavish adherence to one tradition or the other." (Ibid) Balme differentiates syncretic theatre from intercultural theatre in terms of its producers, its deployment of indigenous cultural texts, and its activation of multiple cultural and aesthetic semiotic codes.

It is important to note here that dramatic or theatrical syncretism, as depicted by Balme treats indigenous texts as cultural ones. They are seen not through the lens of the typical interpretative strategies of the European canon such as characterization, plot, and themes alone. Instead, the hermeneutic performative functions of the texts' cultural signifiers are also put to the test. The focus is on the textuality of the performative tools, and their due cultural codes appropriated by the dramatists to function as living signifiers of otherness, resistance, and transformation.

Syncretism is used by indigenous playwrights as a tool to break away from the confines of the western metropolitan, refute hegemony, and find themselves a place on a global theatre agenda. Western traditions are approached, appropriated, and challenged at times to prove that essentialism is a big trap imposed by the colonizer himself and that fusion does not negate the idea of the true representation of indigenous identity. While implementing syncretism, indigenous playwrights show variant responses to bi- or multi-culturalism.

Adopting syncretism on stage is built upon the assumption that the dramatic text/ performance is a cultural entity that is capable of accommodating various and seemingly inharmonious signifiers that belong to two or more cultures. This can be done by adopting a purely western masterpiece and locating it in a new “indigenous sky”. An example of this is *Gods Are Not To Blame* (1971) written by the Nigerian playwright Ola Rotimi (1938-2000). The play is an adaptation of Sophocles’ Oedipus. Taking the theme of human misfortune, Rotimi’s play is a hit, a solid tragi-parody highlighting the country's self-caused wounds. The immense power of Rotimi’s version as a syncretic as well as a culturally denotive text loams at the list of reasons. History and culture are used as a large canvas for the indigenous identity. It is an explanation of the past and the present of the colonizer/colonized relationship. It projects the future as well. *Gods* juxtaposes the Greek myth with an essential Yoruba model of transmission.

Moving to the Caribbean, Derek Walcott (1930-2017), is considered another figure whose poems and plays represent syncretism at its highest. His play *Dream on a Monkey Mountain* (1967) embodies a careful fusion of the traditions of European naturalism, realism, Brechtian theatre, and historicity with St. Lucian dances, rituals, and folk music. The use of polished English as knit with tribal language is an excellent example of how a syncretic should function to represent the indigenous identity.

A similar attempt has been made by Hone Kouka (1968-), the New Zealander to approach a European text and refashion it in a native Māori blood. His *Nga Tangata Toa* or *The Warrior People* (1994) is a genuine adaption of Ibsen’s *The Warriors at Helgeland* (1857). However, instead of rendering Ibsen's play, he composed a different text in light of Ibsen's personality connections, plot, and subjects, embracing the fantastic chance to

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sensationalize parts of Māori culture that he has never seen before an audience. In this manner, it was that a mid-nineteenth-century Norwegian exemplary in light of old Icelandic legends brought forth a late-twentieth-century New Zealand exemplary set in 1919 and established in similarly ageless standards, assuming that is the word. Kouka's building on a European framework on which to build his theme is an attempt to reinforce the dialogic capacity of his text. It is a method to bring the two identities on stage as confronting and interwoven. Ibsen's dramatic formula of presenting only the as-it-were the final act. The Viking saga is immediately relocated to a Māori land that is welcomed home by the mihi dance at the beginning. Kouka wants to reinforce his fusing formula from the start. The bare stage, with the Māori posts hanging from the ceiling offers a meeting point for Kouka's syncretic tradition. The comparison made between the full-blooded 19th-century theatrical tradition with the formal, non-naturalism Māori ritual result in the creation of characters that are bigger than life. They force the actions of the play into damage and darkness.

Two more examples of syncretism at work are from Canada as exemplified by *The Rez Sisters* (1986), written by the native Cherokee Tomson Highway (1951-), and *The American Gypsy* (2002), written by Diane Glancy (1941-), the Cherokee coming from Turtle Island (The UAS). The endeavours of those two indigenous writers of Canada and the US have been to reinforce a Cherokee/ Cree national presence within literary discourses in which the native Indian himself becomes a cultural relic of history as well as a political agent in history. The context of most native replays is essentially political, historical, and representational. It is political since it occupies itself with the "unique legal and political status of Indigenous peoples as pre-existing extraconstitutional sovereigns possessing original and inherent rights to sovereignty and self-determination". (Brown 4)

It is doubly historically representational since it exposes rhetorical, representational, discursive, and often dialogic routes through which Native peoples imagine, assert, and represent themselves in modernity as nation-peoples. Indigenous drama is an extension of the national identity, not a product of it.

Though not directly building on specific western texts, both Highway and Glancy write in the colonizer's language, depend on Brechtian techniques and traditions, and encapsulate history, orality, and rituals in purely indigenous themes and locales.

Dramatic Syncretism: A Final Word:

Based on the above discussion of syncretism as a theoretical, cultural, and dialogical construct, it can be concluded that syncretism is the perfect cultural model to accommodate the decolonizing attempts of such playwrights. Syncretism is not new and will not fade. It will always remain a successful encounter for culture in contact. One obvious reason for this conclusion is that colonialism is never over.

Bringing it locally, syncretism has always been there in the Arab world in Arab drama and theatre as a decolonizing methodology and a mode of identity representation. Traces of it can be found in Tafiq Al Hakim, Yusuf Idris, to mention names. It is there in Algeria. It is a marked cultural symptom of countries with local minorities like Nubia and Nubians in Egypt. Syncretism, thus, is a rich field that can open up a Pandora box of further studies.

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