

“STORIES ARE SITTING ON RADIO WAVES:” TIME IN *BURNING VISON*

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Abstract. *The most impressive and potentially confusing aspect of Marie Clements' 2003 play "Burning Vision" is its treatment of time. While the plot or rather parallel plots can be pieced together after a few readings (involving native Dene, Japanese, or American characters), the representation of time is more challenging and thought-provoking. Short scenes and brief dialogues seem to fly at the reader like shrapnel. Besides the effect of flickering movie images, this method of rendering time seems to affirm the old idea of past, present and future existing simultaneously in a work of art, or perhaps the postmodern idea of Harvey's time-space compression. Besides these possible readings, Clements' consistent use of changing radio frequency to announce yet another stage-scene / time-frame invites a more radical approach to this text. This research aims at showing the moral significance of the author's rejection of chronological time. When the space-time reality is observed in terms of quantum physics, everything happens now and therefore has a powerful moral impact. In the spirit of connecting science and art, the ideas of Minkowski, David Foster, Wilson Colins and others will be brought up as popularised by Michio Kaku in his "Hyperspace" (1994).*

Key words: *time, frequency, quantum physics, morality, Canada, Marie Clements, "Burning Vision"*

INTRODUCTION

The international reputation of Marie Clements was probably confirmed through the closing performance at the Aboriginal Pavilion during the Vancouver 2010 Cultural Olympiad, when the world public had an opportunity to see *The Road Forward* premiere on 28 February 2010. The performers were members of aboriginal groups, and the choreography, composition, and sculptural set were likewise made mostly by indigenous artists. Clements, who created and directed this musical performance and multimedia installation, is herself of Metis/Dene origin. She lives on unseeded Coast Salish territory

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otherwise known as Vancouver, as critic Rita Wong would say. The phrasing is indicative of her political activism aimed at fighting against racism, violence, sexism, and personal inertia related (not only) to the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. At the same time, it emphasises Clements' awareness of the land, shared by many of her countrymen, and emphatically expressed by her friend, Tuscarora composer Jennifer Kreisberg: "You know when our people say we are the land? That isn't just a nice feel-good Kumbaya term. We really are the land, and the land informs our music, and what we sound like" (Lederman 2015). An earlier play about the significance of mankind's connectedness to the land was premiered at the Firehall Arts Centre in Vancouver eight years before *The Road Forward*, on April 26, 2002. *Burning Vision* figures today as one of a dozen of Clements' acclaimed plays, which is still exceptional for its treatment of time.

Burning Vision is an extremely complex text, filmic in design, and even more complex as a theatre experience. The most unexpected story line is the one that connects the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with the Sahtu Dene aboriginal group living in the region of Great Bear Lake. Namely, the uranium ore that was used for the making of the atom bombs dropped on Japan was mined from the deposits lying close to eastern shores of the lake and in the neighbourhood of the Dene bands. Being conveniently located, Sahtu Denes were employed as diggers and coolies, hauling radium and uranium ore in cloth sacks to the boats for further transport down the so called Highway of the Atom¹. They worked for the company Eldorado Gold Mines Limited at the site that got to be known as Port Radium in the LaBine Point region. They did not know that they were involved in the Manhattan Project nor that they were exposed to lethal radiation.

NUCLEAR SCIENCE AND ABORIGINAL MYTH (RARE EARTH ELEMENTS)

The Manhattan Project involving the USA, the UK and Canada was developed to meet the growing need for radioactive materials at the onset of WW2 when uranium mines in Europe were mostly controlled by the Nazi. The potential of nuclear power had been anticipated and its military use envisioned by scientists, so new sources of ore were urgently searched for in the wilderness of Canada. Two prospectors and owners of Eldorado Gold Mines Limited, the LaBine brothers, following the trail of earlier explorers, came across an area by Great Bear Lake rich in high-grade pitchblende, the ore of high density and black in colour that contains uranium. They started exploitation at the Eldorado mine in 1932, which was later nationalised by the Canadian Government during the war, allegedly secretly, for strategic interests. As a matter of fact, as Cross explains, the US government ordered 220 tons of Eldorado uranium ore for secret research and used it in the first chain-reaction experiments to produce a nuclear bomb: "Uranium ore from the mine was used in secret laboratories of the Manhattan Project at Los Alamos, New Mexico, to fuel the first atomic weapons, named Little Boy and Fat Man, dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki" (Cross 2012: 16-17).

Little Boy and Fat Man² are the names of two characters in Clements' play.

¹ "Highway follows uranium from the mines of Great Bear Lake to Port Hope, Ontario, then to the main processing centres of the Manhattan Project in the United States: Los Alamos, New Mexico; Hanford, Washington; Oak Ridge, Tennessee" (Freeman 2012).

² Julie Salverson shares her chilling experience: "At the National Atomic Museum in Albuquerque, there are sterling silver earrings for sale in the shapes of Little Boy and Fat Man, the two bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki."

The exploitation of uranium, radium and silver ores lasted intermittently for 50 years, from 1932 to 1982, and when finally the truth of its toxicity could not be concealed anymore, Port Radium Mine Remediation Plan on one hundred pages was introduced in 2006 to clean an estimated 1.7 million tons of radioactive mine *tailings*³. The site was proclaimed cleaned up in 2007.

What remains on the site is ‘a village of widows,’ to use the name of Peter Blow’s 1999 documentary which is “an intimate film from the perspective of the community” of Deline Sahtu Denes (LeTourneau 1999). Now, many years after the mine was closed, only 800 people of the Dene population remain. Cindy Kenny-Gilday as one of their activists claims that they are the one and only tribe on Great Bear Lake. Having been living there in the sub-Arctic circle forever, they remain attached to the land and its cycles, following the caribou and the fish. Today they know that their food source has been exposed to radiological contamination, just like the drinking water, building materials for their homes, and the objects of daily use inside them. “Not just the men but families were generally exposed to the various waste landfills and lake dumps over the years” (Kenny-Gilday). During the clean-up young Dene men were doing the job on the hot spots without proper instruction, protection and facilities: “Standards of hygiene appropriate to hazardous radioactive materials and gasses (radon) were not enforced, much less taught or recommended” (van Wyck 2015). Even the sacred sites have been contaminated, while the second post-war generation now grows in the village of widows in cultural disarray without the traditional guidance from their grandfathers, fathers and uncles who died of cancer caused by excessive radiation. A 1991 government survey found the Deline people were twice as sick as any other Aboriginal community in the country, claims Paul Barnsley (1998).

One of the characters in *Burning Vision* is the Widow, a woman whose late husband was an ore carrier for the Eldorado Mines.

While the LaBine Brothers, also characters in the play, search for pitchblende following scientific methods based on their knowledge of minerology, the ancient wisdom of aboriginal people finds a way to communicate the natural truth through myths which contain the same kind of insights as does the scientific expertise. Since time immemorial, the Dene people knew of the Forbidden Rock, the place which they were supposed to avoid, as is clearly indicated by its name. The vision of an old medicine man has been engraved in their minds and passed onto new generations to warn against the danger of meddling with the Rock.⁴ Theresa Baton recounted this vision to Julie Salverson:

Long ago, there was a famous rock called Somba Ke – “The Money Place” – on the eastern shore of Great Bear Lake in the Northwest Territories. Loud noises came from this place and it was bad medicine to pass near it. In the old days, a group of caribou hunters camped at Somba Ke for a night. One of them – a man named Ehtsé Ayah, known in his community as “Grandfather” – had a dream and saw many strange things: men with white faces climbing into a big hole in the ground, a great flying bird, a big stick dropped on people far away. This would happen sometime in the future, after we are all gone, the prophet said. In his vision, everyone died. Everyone burned (Salverson 2011).

When they were first sold in the museum’s boutique, Japanese tourists complained and the earrings were removed. But when I visit in 2004 they are back, displayed on the shelf with other assorted souvenirs” (Salverson 2011).

³ “In total, some 37 million ounces of silver, 10.5 million pounds of copper and 13.7 million pounds of uranium oxide (U3O8) were produced over the operating life of the mines. Tailings produced from uranium and silver operations has been estimated in the order of 900,000 and 800,000 tons respectively. Most of the uranium tailings were deposited in Great Bear Lake” (Port Radium Mine Remediation Plan, 2005: 1).

⁴ Though genuinely interested and concerned, we are acutely aware of our outsider position in relation to Indigenous traditions we are trying to inform ourselves about.

Knowing this myth of the burning vision, Marie Clements writes a play where the LaBine brothers, the strange people with white faces, come to the Black Rock, dig shafts deep into the ground and take the dust of uranium, yellowcake, far away to drop it on innocent people and burn them. The prophecy proves correct in the sense that the rock was a source of money for some, while everyone burned, on the spot or later on: not only the Japanese people, but the Dene ore carriers, the white miners, the American radium painters, as well as their present-day descendants, the mankind exposed to various forms of radiation today. The irresponsible use of the nuclear power affects all of mankind and all life on the planet. Contributing her *Burning Vision* to the Eco-theatre, Clements exposes the abuses of science by corporate capitalism and brings to life intuitive knowledge that comes from man's innate connection to the land.

THE STAGE WITHOUT (CHRONOLOGICAL) TIME (THE FREQUENCY OF DISCOVERY)

The play is divided into four acts to reflect Clements' awareness of the significance of number four for the Dene mythology: "Traditional Aboriginal cultures in Canada describe the world in four elements – rock, wind, water and fire. The number four is intrinsic to their world: four seasons, four directions, four stages in life" (*Visio Ardent* 5). However, Clements chooses to call her acts 'movements' as if to suggest dynamic relationships that happen on the stage between her characters from different time periods: a Japanese fisherman Koji speaking to the fish he caught and a Metis woman Rose talking to a flour sack, the Brothers LaBine discovering the Black Rock, an American bomb test dummy Fat Man and a Dene Little Boy at the heart of the Black Rock, the Widow speaking to the boot she sacrifices to the ritual fire to invoke her dead husband, the Japanese Grandmother advising Koji to talk to the cherry tree. All these characters are on the stage at the same time, in absolute darkness, until light falls on them and they come to life. Yet, these are not independent realities because they can hear or rather anticipate the presence of the other, always on the verge of establishing communication against the backdrop of the atomic detonation⁵ broadcast live by the U.S. Radio Announcer. The effect that Clements produces is of simultaneous existence of different time frames. These are not flashbacks or flash-forwards of the main character because there is no main character, the movement is neither forward nor backward in time and yet the result is not static but extremely dynamic. This distortion of conventional temporality is not part of European Modernism or Postmodernism either although time appears to be fragmented and non-linear. The past is not recalled in the present to inform the future or call for a new insight into the subjective nature of time. Rather, it seems that time does not exist or at least it is not conceived of in the conventional way.

When considering the treatment of time in the play, the Dene heritage of Marie Clements is probably significant. It is well-known that the conception of time among Amerindian aboriginal populations differs from Occidental chronological understanding. As Nicole Gombay explains in her 2009 essay, time for Euro-Canadians is absolute, linear, quantitative and therefore "technical time" (Halpern and Christie 1990: 151) while time for Inuit is contingent, qualitative, cyclical and therefore ecological time (Evans-Pritchard 1939). Obviously, this is a consequence

⁵ Wikipedia informs us that "Trinity" was the code name of the first detonation of a nuclear weapon, conducted by the United States Army on July 16, 1945, as part of the Manhattan Project. Ironically, the code name "Trinity" was assigned by J. Robert Oppenheimer, the director of the Los Alamos Laboratory, inspired by the poetry of John Donne. Available at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinity_\(nuclear_test\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinity_(nuclear_test))

of different ontological frameworks. “A society founded on notions of control builds systems in which time does not flow in being, but is rather compartmentalized and objectified as something outside of the self” (Gombay 2009). This is how the Occident comprehends time and endeavours to control it just like all other aspects of life. Contrary to this Euro-Canadian mind set, instead of living in the perennial future, Inuit live in the eternal now, in a state of perpetual becoming where every moment is important and should not be sacrificed for what is to come since future is unpredictable and uncontrollable. Being controlled by technical time is harmful, which Clements shows through the character of a beautiful American woman who is a radium painter. Namely, radium was used to paint dials on clocks in the 1930s so they could shine in the dark, and the women doing the job were advised to lick their brushes for a better effect. The Radium Painter in the play loses half of her face and glows in the dark, a monstrous picture of the destructiveness of our civilizational options. Halpern and Christie place the comprehension of time in the colonial context, as quoted by Gombay:

[...] the clock was used to determine when the bells were rung to call people to church or to set the hours of work in factories. Such uses of time to establish social control have extended to establish power over the Other in more overtly colonizing ways; thus “[...] we chronologically absorb [the Other] as we spatially absorb them through territorial conquest” (Halpern and Christie 1990: 152).

This idea was put forward by David Harvey in his book *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (1989), where he connects watches and maps with an objective, reliable and scientific outlook on reality that seemingly empowers a person:

All Enlightenment projects had in common a relatively unified common-sense of what space and time were about and why their rational ordering was important. This common basis in part depended on the popular availability of watches and clocks, and on the capacity to diffuse cartographic knowledge by cheaper and more efficient printing techniques. But it also rested upon the link between Renaissance perspectivism and a conception of the individual as the ultimate source and container of social power, albeit assimilated within the nation state as a collective system of authority (Harvey 258-9)

However, for indigenous Dene bands in North America social power is collective while time and space are synchronised and everything is interconnected, just like on the stage in *Burning Vision*. Further, the Hopi language, as recorded by Wharf, contains no reference to time at all, either explicit or implicit:

[...]the Hopi language is seen to contain no words, grammatical forms, constructions or expressions that refer directly to what we call time, or to past, present, or future, or to enduring or lasting, or to motion as kinematic rather than dynamic [...] (Wharf 1950: 27).

Our contrasts of the flowing time and static space are absent from their world view, which sees time and space as two inseparable aspects of one reality. Wharf claims that the Hopi language gets along perfectly without tenses for its verbs which is unimaginable in the phenomenology of the West. Among Aboriginal peoples reference to time is unimaginable without connecting it to place.

Therefore, locational and temporal connections seen on Clements’ stage may invoke Harvey’s compression of space and time. Harvey traces the experience of space and time especially from the mid-19th century when a specific change in the experience of space and time happened, to Modernism and Post-modernism. In Chapter 15 he introduces the phrase

‘time-space compression’ to refer to the effect of acceleration in the pace of our civilisation brought about by advancements in technology and associated with a change in the perception of space as shrinking. Fat Man embodies this trend when he admires his TV loudspeakers and looks around his space:

Hi Fi... Hi Fi Fee Fo. I am a part of the world, Daddy Oh. I am part of the world just like this new Hi-Fi equipment. Just like this *Playboy* which states: “A high-fidelity system is commonly accepted as a badge of sophisticated masculinity” (Clements 2002: 29).

Having a good TV set makes Fat Man feel cosmopolitan while Harvey makes clear that the compression of time produces acceleration in consumption and gives rise to the image as commodity. Fat Man learns from *Playboy* that to be dressed for the part is half the battle, and Clements seems to illustrate Harvey’s ideas about image as commodity putting these words into Fat Man’s mouth:

If you look the part people are just as happy to accept that. We want the unreal real thing. We don’t want studies. We want tests. We don’t want thinking, we want reaction. Highly skilled unthinking reaction. Nice space” (Ibid.)

Nevertheless, although Clements also criticises consumerism, cupidity and technocracy, the episodic dramatic structure of her play does not comply with Harvey’s compression of space and time. Though seemingly compressed, the time in *Burning Vision* is not chronological, and the space is shared by all as envisioned both by the Dene mythology and quantum physics.

STORIES ARE SITTING ON RADIO WAVES: MIND AS A RADIO SET (WATERWAYS)

It is curious that Marie Clements opens her play with stage directions describing intense darkness pierced by light, and with strange noises of the deep earth reminiscent of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. It reminds one of the beginnings of the universe, the great nothing that precedes everything we know of today. Then the stage directions proceed: “The sound of a radio dial gliding over stations of scenes into different cultural tones as if stories are sitting on radio waves” (Clements 2002: 19). This seems to be a good dramatic strategy since it introduces the cultural stories of this play: “...miners looking for radium, a mainstream white North American male, a Japanese American woman convicted of treason, a Métis woman working in her father’s Hudson’s Bay Company store, a Japanese fisherman just prior to the bombing of Hiroshima, a beautiful American woman working as a radium dial painter...” (Clements, 2003: 2), to quote only a few. The story which is heard first on this invisible radio is the one of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki while the last one invokes the voices of the radio announcers in three languages, Slavey (the Sahtu Dene language), Japanese and Canadian English, calling their beloved dead back home. These are powerful images which recall the futility of war and the pain of loss.

However, Clements’ consistent use of changing radio frequency to announce yet another story as a stage-scene invites a more radical approach to this text. On page 20, stage directions explain: “The sound of the radio dial being run over stations. It stops and tunes itself again.” The image which becomes visible to the audience at that moment is of “a naked Indian boy-man, scared and huddled in the darkness at the centre of the earth.”⁶

⁶George Bernard Shaw in *Back to Methuselah* expresses the intuition that life may exist on higher energy levels: “In the hard-pressed heart of the earth, where the inconceivable heat of the sun still glows, the stone lives in fierce atomic

The other characters on the stage remain invisible until the radio tunes to their frequencies. This definitely recalls quantum physics and the idea of multiple realities or the multiverse in which we live. Although implausible to the mind of many a layman, this idea is not that improbable to an ever-increasing number of modern-day scientists from Einstein and Kaluza from the beginning of the 20th c to cosmologist Max Tegmark from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and theoretical physicist and string theorist Brian Greene from Columbia University. Going back to the religions and philosophies of ancient civilisations which also speak of multiple planes of existence does not help much since they are often seen as colourful metaphors. On the other hand, expert elaborations of various versions of the pluralistic nature of reality are stupefying and baffling to the non-initiated. For that reason, Michio Kaku’s popular versions of the most scientific, though still hypothetical, attempts to explain the nature of the universe come in very handy. Michio Kaku is a professor of theoretical physics and a co-founder of the String Field Theory which aspires to become the theory of everything. As a follower of Einstein, he believes that the theory of relativity could be reconciled with quantum mechanics through the idea of multiverse. In relation to *Burning Vision*, his explanation of the quantum theory of time seems quite relevant. In a 2008 interview Kaku explores the idea propounded by David Foster, the author of *Intelligent Universe* (1975) and *The Philosophical Scientists* (1985), which Colin Wilson presented in his book *The Occult: A History* (1971), that the mind is a radio set that can ‘tune in’ to thousands of different vibrations in the ether. Kaku explains:

[I]f you have a radio in your living room...and you have all frequencies in your living room; BBC, Radio Moscow, ABC, but your radio is tuned to one frequency – you’re decohered from all the other frequencies. You’re only coherent with one frequency. We now believe that the universe is vibrating and that there are vibrations of different universes right in this room (Kaku, 2008).

Michio Kaku only popularises the ideas which he with many other scientists finds well-grounded in the theoretical and empirical knowledge available to the mankind at this stage. The focus here is the fact that the universe is a structure of vibrations at different frequencies moving like waves and containing information. The reality we are capable of perceiving is the one of our universe because we are cohered with its frequency, which does not exclude the existence of other universes, unknown to us. This is similar to the old idea that the focus of our awareness creates our reality (Everett 1957) but with a huge difference. Our awareness does not seem to play a significant part in perceiving other cosmic realities. Foster’s image of the mind as a radio set is of great help in understanding this quantum universe. Indeed, when we listen to a radio programme at one frequency, all other, maybe millions of radio programmes, seem not to exist although basic knowledge of acoustics tells us that we are at the same moment surrounded, not to say penetrated, by all these other programme frequencies. The radio set cannot receive them unless its dial is set to a different frequency when we get to hear them. Likewise, mankind cannot receive information from other parallel universes because the wave function of our universe has dicohered from all the other coexisting realities. We are out of phase with them, and they

convulsion, as we live in our slower way. When it is cast to the surface it dies like a deep-sea fish...” (quoted from Wilson’s *The Occult* p.679). This is an impressive similarity with Clements’ vision in which Little Boy represents the heart of the earth in the form of uranium ore which was not supposed to be pulled out. When it is, it becomes an atomic bomb with a devastating effect upon the surface of the earth.

cannot enter our awareness. We are not on the same wavelength.⁷ Kaku concludes: “This is the modern interpretation of the quantum theory, that many worlds represent reality... this is called modern physics...get used to it” (Kaku, 2008).

The aspect which is relevant to *Burning Vision* is that of simultaneous coexistence of all these realities which is related to the concept of time. Clements creates this effect by keeping all her characters on the stage all the time, and focusing on some of them through the change of radio frequency so that the audience becomes capable of tuning in with them. A large segment of Movement Two called “Rare Earth Elements” is taken by the interaction between Little Boy and Fat Man, the two atomic bombs. Clements’ criticism of the abuse of science is clearly indicated by Little Boy’s writing Einstein’s famous equation in Fat Man’s room: $E=MC^2$ (energy equals mass times the square of the speed of light). This also shows that Clements has sufficient knowledge of modern physics to understand that Einstein’s equation essentially gave birth to the atom bomb due to his insight that even a nucleus of an atom contains huge energy. Further, she seems to know that the two bombs were different (gun-type and implosion-type weapons) of which the Fat Man was much more powerful than the Little Boy. This is how she represents them in her play. Finally, her stage instructions make clear that she is also playing with the basic concepts of physics: space, time, depth, width, etc. with which her characters begin to interact. The way the Widow describes the traditional nomadic way of life connected to space, finishing each sentence with the word ‘time’ recalls Minkowski’s concept of four-dimensional space-time which implies that space and time are inseparably interlinked. They actually make one whole just like matter-energy which should be taken as a single unit. The point is that in Minkowski space-time everything exists at all times but moves between places. That is what is depicted in *Burning Vision*. Searching and discovering the uranium ore by the LaBine brothers, transportation of the ore by Dene ore-carriers and stevedores, dropping of the atom bombs by American forces, mourning of the Widow, dying of Koji, a Japanese fisherman, his meeting with his grandmother in the other world, destiny of Tokyo Rose, love-affair between the Miner and the Radium Painter, the lives of an average American and an average Metis woman after the war, all these events and processes happen simultaneously at different places. Clements ingeniously represents the concept of four-dimensional space-time in visual terms by the organisation of the stage, but she also confirms it through the words of the Dene See-er. At the beginning of Movement Three, aptly called “Waterways” to suggest the vibrations of the universe in hyperspace, the Dene See-er speaks the wisdom that modern science has rediscovered in our times:

Can you read the air? The face of the water? Can you look through time and see the future? Can you hear through the walls of the world? **Maybe we are all talking at the same time because we are answering each other over time and space.** Like a wave that washes over everything and doesn’t care how long it takes to get there because it always ends up on the same shore (Clements 2002: 75) (bold V.L.)

The Dene See-er seems to intuitively or mystically comprehend the time-space continuum, and the essential significance of everything in a world where there are no physical barriers, and no distinction between past, present, and future, because in his world-view everything is

⁷ This informal phrase in common usage today and dating from 1927 in its meaning of ‘mental harmony’ (Collins English Dictionary - Complete & Unabridged 2012 Digital Edition) can bring the whole quantum idea closer to mind: if we are not on the same wavelength, we do not understand each other, we are two different worlds that do not interact, although they coexist.

interconnected in the eternal present through vibrations: “The universe is a total construction of waves and vibrations whose inner content is ‘meaning,’ and man is a micro-system of the same vibratory nature floating at some depth in the universal and meaningful wave system” (Wilson 624), claims David Foster. The Dene See-er is tuned in to these other frequencies that we conventionally call the future, and consequently, he can see and know more. However, all mankind has this capacity which Clements hints at through the words of her character Round Rose at the end of Movement Three: “In the dark I can hear it trying to come inside me like I am the radio. Like, I am the radio and everything is coming through me and everything is getting bigger and louder...” (Clements 2002: 29). The stories of our civilisation are sitting on waves, potentially within our grasp. “It’s like we’re on the radio dial and trying to dial into different worlds,” explained Clements (Brian Lin, *Raven’s Eye*).

“DID WE DO SOMETHING WRONG?” -
SEARCHING FOR AN ART OF MEMORY (RADAR ECHOES)

Movement Four opens with the words “Did we do something wrong?” as an introduction to the theme of moral implications of past actions. Namely, it was only in the 1990s that the Dene people realised they had been implicated in the worst crime against humanity. Questions had been already raised because of the high occurrence of cancer in the Great Bear Dene population until eventually the deadly tie between the mining at Port Radium and the bombing of Japan was confirmed. *They Never Told Us These Things* (1998) is the name of the report prepared by Dene representatives which was followed by remediation measures of the Canadian Government. However, what is even more significant is the visit that six Dene and Metis activists paid to the people of Hiroshima in 1998 in order to apologise for their fathers’ unknowingly participating in this tragic event. As soon as they learned the truth of how they had been abused, they decided to establish a connection with the people of Japan, and acknowledge their responsibility⁸. Conveying apologies does not obliterate devastating and long-lasting effects of hypocrisy, manipulation and selective memory in the cultural context of Canada.⁹ Still, as Clements says in an interview, “the momentum was coming to figure out a way to reclaim our humanity” (in Dickinson 2015: 42). The Dene activists did what they could, just as Marie Clements did what she, as an artist, could do.

Discussing Cubism in her excellent introduction to the anthology *Three-dimensional Reading: Stories of Time and Space in Japanese Modernist Fiction, 1911-1932*, Angela Yiu almost describes what Clements has done in her play:

⁸ “We are suffering intense guilt and grief in our community that the materials we carried to the barges and to the aircraft went to make an atomic bomb that killed many tens of thousands of human beings in Japan. Our people feel that if they had been told what they were helping to do, they would not have done it.” This excerpt from the 1998 Report illustrates the feelings of the Sahtu Dene.

⁹ Clements’ character Round Rose directly criticises the common practice of apology:

You can’t really be sorry for something you don’t want to remember can you. Selective memory isn’t it? Let’s be honest, hell, you can’t even apologize for that shit you did yesterday never mind 50 years ago. Indian residential schools, Japanese internment camps, hell, and that is just in your neighbourhood. But it’s all right ... everybody’s sorry these days. The politicians are sorry, the cops are sorry, the priests are sorry, the logging companies are sorry, mining companies, electric companies, water companies, wife beaters, serial rapists, child molesters, mommy and daddy. Everybody’s sorry. Everybody’s sorry they got caught sticking it to someone else ... that’s what they are sorry about ... getting caught (Clements 100-101).

Thus three-dimensional reading here refers to a cubist reading that involves the discovery of a conceptual depth in a two-dimensional presentation of time and space, when the modernist writer breaks away from the seemingly coherent and stable representation of linear time and external reality in a single perspective and re-imagines the world in multiple time and spatial planes jostling simultaneously and spontaneously in a text, as in the way dreams seep into consciousness or when past and future time crowd into a present moment to generate a spectrum of meaning and possibility in an otherwise flat surface (Yiu 2013: 2-3).

Indeed, in the stage version of her *Burning Vision* Clements combines visual art in its presentation of space, and literary art in its appeal to our sense of time to show that they are inseparably but not chronologically linked. Theatre is the right place for this invocation of the moral feeling which is stirred by memory. The act of remembering brings the past into the present and breaks the linear concept of time, even if one does not believe in multiple realities. In her vision, multiple time and spatial planes jostle simultaneously and spontaneously not only through the set-up of the stage space but also through double casting. Round Rose, an older version of famous Tokyo Rose, “a 1940s radio siren that embodied the erotic fantasies of U.S. Army men” (Clements 15) is also a contemporary young Metis woman Rose, working in her father’s Hudson’s Bay store. The Widow who keeps a fire of love for her husband is at the same time Koji’s Grandmother searching for him after the bombing. The Indian Chief on television becomes the Dene See-er. The Brothers LaBine are the two stevedores, the Miner is the Dene Ore-carrier... and eventually they all hear or interact with each other, across space and time. Koji and Rose fall in love, the Miner wants to marry the Uranium Painter, Fat Man makes a family with Round Rose and Little Boy, a loaf of bread falls from one world into another, and the Japanese look just like the Dene. Everything is connected since time does not separate these events. The art of memory (van Wyck) is probably in the ability to feel the vibrations of the sound of a radio dial, the ticking of the clock, the noise of the radar, the clicking of a Geiger counter, and the heartbeat of Rose’s unborn half -Metis, half Japanese child that Clements repeats throughout the play. We need to be cohered with these frequencies instead of believing in the grand illusion that the passing of time excuses us from moral responsibility.

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“PRIČE PUTUJU NA RADIO TALASIMA:” VREME U DRAMI *BURNING VISION*

Najimpresivniji i potencijalno zbunjujući aspekt predstave Marie Clements iz 2003. godine "Burning Vision" jeste njen tretman vremena. Dok se zaplet ili bolje rečeno paralelni zapleti mogu razumeti nakon nekoliko čitanja (tu su starosedeoći narod Dene, japanski i američki likovi), predstavljanje vremena je toliko specifično da podstiče razmišljanje. Kratke scene i dijalozi pogađaju čitaoca poput šrapnela. Pored efekta treperenja filmskih slika, ovaj metod prikazivanja vremena potvrđuje staru ideju da u umetničkom delu prošlost, sadašnjost i budućnost postoje istovremeno, ili možda postmodernu ideju Harvijeve vremensko-prostorne kompresije. Pored ovih mogućih čitanja, dosledna upotreba promene radio frekvencije da najavi još jednu pozorišnu scenu / vremenski okvir poziva na radikalniji pristup ovom tekstu. Ovo istraživanje ima za cilj da pokaže moralni značaj autorkinog odbacivanja hronološkog vremena. Kada se prostorno-vremenska stvarnost posmatra u smislu kvantne fizike, sve se dešava sada i stoga ima snažan moralni značaj. U duhu povezivanja nauke i umetnosti, ideje Minkovskog, Dejvida Fostera, Vilsona Kolina i drugih biće predstavljene onako kako su popularizovane kod Mičija Kaku u njegovom "Hiperprostoru" (1994).

Ključne reči: vreme, frekvencije, kvantna fizika, moral, Kanada, Marie Clements, "Burning Vision"